

PROTESTANT EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN FATHERS AND THEIR
INTENTIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE RELATIONAL
CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL FORMATION
OF THEIR CHILDREN

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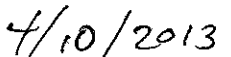

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ABSTRACT

PROTESTANT EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN FATHERS AND THEIR INTENTIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE RELATIONAL CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF THEIR CHILDREN

Steven Richard Clark

This quantitative study explored paternal intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children. The main research question was to what degree are Protestant Evangelical fathers intentionally involved in the relational spiritual formation of their children? The research was based on two domains: relational spiritual formation of children and paternal intentional involvement. Theological principles gleaned from exegesis of Biblical passages pertaining to paternal leadership were considered. A target population of Protestant Evangelical Christian fathers, married, with children 4-18 years old living at home, was identified in some 241 churches that adhered to the National Association of Evangelicals in the Greater Spokane, Washington area (GSAE). An accessible population of 64 of those 241 churches yielded a usable sample from 19 churches and 249 respondents.

The survey instrument implemented via SurveyMonkey was composed of reliable Likert scale oriented instruments (the *Personal Fathering Profile* and the *Spiritual Assessment Inventory*) that show construct validity and have been used extensively nationally. Researcher designed Likert scale questions and open ended responses based on past research and biblical principles were used as well. Data was downloaded from SurveyMonkey to SPSS for statistical analysis.

It was found that multiple positive, significant relationships exist around intentional fathering, spiritual maturity, spiritual intentionality, fathering satisfaction, involvement in the spiritual formation of their children, support from spouse and others, spousal oneness, primary reasonability, and spirituality as the most important area. With respect to involvement in their children's spiritual formation, these factors were positively and significantly related: intentional fathering, fathering satisfaction, spousal oneness, support from spouse and others, spiritual intentionality, spiritual maturity, and relational closeness to God. With respect to fathers seeing the most important area of their child's life as being the child's spiritual formation and the father being primarily responsible in this formation, there was a moderate correlation between these two factors.

Multiple practical implications based on the empirical results and theological input were given in order to encourage and equip Protestant Evangelical fathers in their intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children as well as to assist fatherless families. Limitations of the study were noted as well as recommendations for future research.

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Blessings,

Steve Clark

Fides quaerens intellectum

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Children need their dads. And few things are as pleasant a sight as a dad taking his little girl or boy out for a scoop of ice cream or teaching his child how to ride a bike or to read. Equally warming is a father and mother spending time with their children for no apparent reason but just to be together. Yet while these thoughts may resonate with many readers, American culture seems to have displaced fathers, with many fathers buying into the idea that they are not essential in the development of their children, leading to many disadvantages and developmental pitfalls (Amato, 1998; Blankenhorn, 1995; Kazura, 2000; McLanahan & Booth, 1989; Wilson & Prior, 2011). Fathers are essential in their children's development, not peripheral (Canfield, 1992), which is not to say that mothers are not integral; they are. But this fact, coupled with the Protestant Evangelical Christian foundation that the spiritual formation and destiny of a person is of ultimate concern, presents a concern if a father does not see himself as essentially involved. The following sentiment suggests that it appears within Protestant Evangelicalism that parents on the whole are not as involved in the spiritual formation of their children as they could be:

Too many parents are willing to drop off their kids at church and have someone "do religion to them." . . . As a result, too many children are missing the one

element that they most need—a relationship with caring adults who can lead them to contemplate God’s intended plan for their lives. (Ruppell, 2004, p. 344)

Because within Evangelical Protestantism it is often held that fathers are to be the head of the home, with that leadership requiring fathers to take responsibility for the state of the family’s affairs (Col 3; Eph 5-6; 1 Tim 3:4-5; 1 Tim 5:8; Prov 22:6; Prov 13:24), yet for so many the relationship between fathers, God, and their children is missing, this study explores the influence of a father’s intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of his children. The goal is to provide an assessment of Protestant Evangelical paternal intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children, encourage Protestant Evangelical fathers in their fathering roles and skills, and provide further insight for church leaders to meet this ever important need.

Description of the Problem

One of the greatest assets of fathers in general is that many desire to be great dads. Being a great father requires involvement, and involvement that is intentional—intentionality does make a greater influence in the life of another person, all other things being equal (May, Posterski, Stonehouse, & Cannell, 2005). Fathers are often very good at setting goals at work and in their hobbies, devising strategies to attain those goals, and actively practicing those strategies, all of which are acts of intention. But with respect to their children, simply being involved does not imply intentionality. One can be engaged in a lot of activity with someone only because of a shared interest, a sense of obligation, or because it is convenient. A father being intentional, then, is his awareness and accompanying striving to provide for, lead, and have relationships with his children.

Intentional fathering occurs when a father knows that nothing can replace him and his influence (Blankenhorn, 1995) and when he consciously makes choices and changes to be involved more and in better ways, as well as self-regulating or constraining activities that hinder his involvement.

Dallas Willard (2002) states that an essential characteristic of all mankind is that the human self requires rootedness in others (p. 36). In other words, the human is essentially a relational being meant to live and be formed in community (Wilhoit, 2008). And, given that fathers are significant in the positive development of their children, and from a Protestant Evangelical perspective the spiritual formation of the person is paramount, fathers are instrumental in their children's spiritual development. Yet American culture is becoming a culture not of relationality, but of rejection (Willard, 2002) and separation, where fathers are deemed replaceable or expendable (Blankenhorn, 1995; this is even seen in studies elsewhere, Adams, Walker, & O'Connell, 2011). This can be seen in children not knowing what name to put in the "Father's Name" blank on printed forms; fathers being devalued and having a smaller social role; fathers suffering from but also in some way also responsible for decultured paternity (Blankenhorn, pp. 10-18). Willard (2002) summarizes this paternally separated, unnecessary, or estranged cultural milieu as narcissism:

In social terms, the primary results of decultured paternity are a decline in children's well-being and a rise in male violence, especially against women. In a larger sense, the most significant result is our society's steady fragmentation into atomized individuals, isolated from one another and estranged from the aspirations and realities of common membership in a family.... (p. 4)

Perhaps this accounts for what researchers and practitioners are finding: a lack of parental intentionality and involvement in their children's sanctification process (Barna, 2003; May et al., 2005; Ruppell, 2004). While some research is increasing in the area of paternal involvement in spiritual aspects of their families (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; King, 2003), it is only in the last 15 years that scholarship has focused on paternal involvement (Hawkins, Bradford, Palkovitz, Christiansen, Day, & Call, 2002). Much of that research focuses on what fathers are not doing for their children (Bollinger & Palkovitz, 2003)—role-inadequacy or deficiency (Dollahite & Hawkins, 1998)—and still most research is maternally or parentally oriented (Culp, Schadle, Robinson, & Culp, 2000). Little to no research has been done which points specifically to parental intentionality (O'Leary & Warland, 2012) let alone to Protestant Evangelical fathers' intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children. Hence a goal of this study is to assess the degree and kind or character of this involvement and its relationships to other factors, as well to provide practical application for positive paternal involvement.

Background and Importance of the Study

Larry Fowler (2009) puts the dilemma in focus. He says that he asked a father, who by profession was a strategy consultant for major business firms, if he had a strategy or plan for his children's spiritual development. The father responded in amazement, "No," but followed with "I am glad I sat next to you" (Fowler, 2009, pp. 53-55). Fowler then references Psalm 78:5-7, which speaks of God's intention for parents: "our fathers. . .should teach them [statutes] to their children; that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born. . .that they should put their confidence in God and not

forget the works of God” (New American Standard Bible [NASB]). Fowler (2009) suggests several reasons why many churches or parents do not have plans or a drive to be intentional in the area of children’s spiritual development: they mean well, it is unmeasured, or they do not believe the research—it cannot be that bad (pp. 33-40). Though it is not intended as empirical research, Fowler’s overall emphasis in his book is on parents and their children and not the father per se.

This is similar to most extant research, as Chapter 2 shows: parents and mothers have been the predominant agents discussed in child development (Culp et al., 2000; Lamb, 1997; see also Baxter, Weston & Qu, 2011), especially with respect to religion (Coles, 1990; Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003; Geisbrecht, 1995; Mahoney, Pargament, Swank, & Murray, 2003; Ratcliff, 1992, 2004, 2008; Smith & Kim, 2003). Many researchers have focused on children’s spirituality (Allen, 2008; Bunge, 2001, 2004; Coles, 1990; May et al., 2005; Hay & Nye, 2006; Ratcliff, 2004, 2008; Stonehouse & May, 2010). Additionally, some researchers have focused on father-child relationships (Brotherson, Dollahite, & Hawkins, 2005; Canfield, 1992, 1995), with others zeroing in on the spiritual aspect of a father-child dyad, though these are usually externally oriented such as number of times a father goes to church in a given period (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; Hawkins et al., 2002; King, 2003; Palkovitz & Palm, 1998; Wilcox, 2002). Moreover, biblically it is often held that fathers are to be the heads of the home with that leadership requiring fathers to take the lead (not sole) responsibility for the state of affairs (Col 3; Eph 6; 1 Tim 3:4-5; 5:8; Prov. 13:24; 22:6). Lastly, other research explores the relational spirituality of children (Hay & Nye, 2006). So there is some focus on fathers and their

involvement with their children. Yet again, very little, if any research, has been done regarding fathers per se particularly regarding their intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children. After all, children are spiritual beings, made in the image of God (Hoekema, 1986; Saucy, 1993), and this spirituality is relational in nature (Hay & Nye, 2006). Accordingly, two domains will have the most salient theory and research presented in the extensive literature review in Chapter 2: the relational spirituality of children and paternal intentional involvement.

Statement of the Research Question

These issues can be summed up in the question guiding this research: To what degree are Protestant Evangelical fathers intentionally involved in the relational spiritual formation of their children?

Corollary questions are:

- 1) What is the connection between a Protestant Evangelical (PE) father's relationship with God and his intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of his children?
- 2) What is the connection between a PE father's relationship with his spouse and his intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of his children?
- 3) How is a PE father's satisfaction in his fathering related to his involvement in the spiritual formation of his children?
- 4) How do PE fathers view their part or responsibility in the spiritual formation of their children?

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, *Protestant Evangelical Christian* is defined as someone who ascribes to (or attends a church that ascribes to) the National Association of Evangelicals' (NAE) statement of faith, namely one who believes

the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God; there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory; that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential; the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life; there is the resurrection of both the saved and the lost—they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation; the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. (National Association of Evangelicals, 2010)

By *father* is meant a man who cohabitates with his spouse, the mother of his children (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2007), and who is accessible to his children and responsible for their care and development (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levin, 1987). Predominantly, fathers in this study are those who have one or more children through age 13 living at home. Fathers (and mothers for that matter) do not need to be biological parents, but simply married and cohabitating such that the children they refer to when completing a survey live with them.

Intentionality is an action done out of design or purpose and is not accidental (Webster, 1828). In spiritual formation human effort is needed though it is guided by and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Howard, 2008, p. 270).

One intends to live in the Kingdom of God by intending to obey the precise example and teachings of Jesus...not merely believing things about him. No one

can actually believe the truth about him (Jesus) without trusting Him by intending to obey Him. It is a mental impossibility. (Willard, 2002, p. 87)

Intention is brought to completion only by a decision to fulfill or carry through with intention (Willard, 2002, p. 88).

Involvement is a father's interaction with his children in the various developmental spheres such as education, discipline, recreational activities, spiritual conversation, praying with each other, Bible reading, and family worship time together (Brotherson et al., 2005; Canfield, 1990).

Relational spiritual formation of children refers to children's development of a conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, within the context of a community of believers that fosters that relationship, as well as the children's understanding of and response to that relationship (Allen, 2008, p. 11). By *relational* is meant that children are made in the image of God, who is a relational being, and as children are spiritual beings, they are relational spiritual beings (Boyatzis, 2004; Hay & Nye, 2006; Hertel & Donahue, 2001); their formation is relational, requiring parental and faith community support (Coles, 1990; Hoekema, 1986; Issler, 2004). Their spiritual formation is not private, nor developed in isolation.

Spiritual formation is interchangeable with Christian spiritual formation, Christian spirituality, discipleship, and sanctification, though some make distinctions among these terms (Howard, 2008). Spiritual formation is not externally oriented nor religiosity (Col 2:16-23; Howard, 2008, p. 268), but is the "intentional and Godward reorientation and habituation of human experience. It aims at mature harmony with Christ and is expressed in the concrete realities of everyday life" (Howard, 2008, p. 269).

It is described in one passage as “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, and [making] no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (Rom 13:14). It is the intentional communal process of growing in one’s relationship with God and becoming conformed to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit (Wilhoit, 2008, p. 23). The goal of spiritual formation reveals much of what it is—the cultivation of a relationship with God that necessarily implies transformation. One cannot have a relationship with God without being transformed (Porter, 2008).

Children, largely focused on as a group in the research and theory discussion, are up to 18 years old. Up to this age, not only are they under the direct watch and care of their parents, but their parents have the greatest influence in their development. The focus of the majority of studies—and this study predominantly—is on cohabitating, intact married parents and their children.

Population and Sample

The target population was Protestant Evangelical (PE) fathers with children residing in their homes from ages 4-18 in Greater Spokane County area in the state of Washington. There are approximately 241 churches that ascribe to the National Association of Evangelical’s statement of faith (NAE, 2010) in the target population area. This yielded approximately 16,260 PE fathers as a target population for the study. An accessible population was PE fathers from 64 of the largest Protestant Evangelical churches in the Spokane area. These 64 (of the 241 churches currently members of the Greater Spokane Area Evangelicals or GSAE and members of the NAE) had 200 or more weekly attendees (24 have 500 or more average weekly attendees). These larger churches

were used in order to access a larger number of fathers that fit the study parameters, have a higher response rate, and reach a larger and more representative cross section of the community (father ages, education levels, etc.). A sample of 760 was sought from these 64 churches allowing for double the required sample size for this population size in order to assure a response rate of minimally 50%.

Scope of Study

The scope or delimitation of this study was threefold. First, this was a quantitative exploratory study that focused on Protestant Evangelical fathers with children (ages 4-18) at home using an instrument that measures a father's spiritual relational maturity with God and factors regarding his fathering. That is to say, first the focus was on Protestant Evangelicals as opposed to other Christian traditions. The bar seems to be held high by Protestant Evangelicals in terms of their view of the spiritual nature of people, the need for others to know Christ, and being proactive in making him known: of all Christendom, then, this group should set a standard of sorts in their intentionality in their relationships spiritually with their children.

The study used a web-based as well as a hard copy survey to identify correlations regarding Protestant Evangelical fathers' intentional involvement in their children's spiritual formation. Variables such as a father's relationship with God (spiritual maturity and relational closeness to God), his intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of his children, a father's relationship with his wife, fathering satisfaction, and others were analyzed in order to suggest generalizations among fathers within Protestant Evangelicalism for current benefit and further research. The instrument used was

compiled from established instruments, predominately interval in nature, and having high reliability: The Personal Fathering Profile (Canfield, 1992, 2005, 2008; Canfield & Roid, 1994; National Center for Fathering, 1990) and The Spiritual Assessment Inventory (Hall & Edwards, 1996 & 2002). The instrument focused heavily on paternal involvement with their children, marital satisfaction, and relationship with and awareness of God. Clearly, most all surveys have a respondent bias and pressure to respond according to expectations (even if anonymous) but this is discussed in Chapter 4. Data was analyzed by using inferential statistics.

Secondly, while mothers and all they provide are invaluable, and children have a major role in these dynamics, fathers specifically are the focus. Indeed interviews with all those involved and diaries and such are valuable aspects of research. However the focus here was strictly fathers, their perceptions and expressed relationships, for there are no studies of this kind which relate to fathers alone, paternal actions, their self-perception as fathers, their relationship with God, and their intentional involvement all with respect to the spiritual formation of their children.

Thirdly, the fact that this study's focus was on fathers with children 4 to 18 years old at home was intentional. It was helpful to have a father's assessment of his level of intentional involvement and relational characteristics between his children and himself and God while his children are developing at home. This increased the likelihood of a more accurate self-assessment as a father may have a skewed response toward the positive the further removed he is from raising his children at home. People tend to forget the negative things as time goes by.

Assumptions of the Study

There were several assumptions underlying this study. Firstly, this study assumed that fathers can learn better fathering competencies as they mature in their relationship with God. Though challenging, being a better father is not only attainable but also enjoyable and rewarding (Canfield, 1992, pp. 3-13).

Secondly, this study assumed that all people are formed spiritually one way or another. Fundamentally human beings are not merely material as physicalists think but also spiritual beings. Along these same lines, science is not the arbitrator of what is true, for that very sentiment is not falsifiable (not subject to experimentation). The spiritual, immaterial realm is real. The mere fact that a person is the same person—with continuity of thoughts, emotions, and the like—over changing physical aspects of his or her body shows that to be true (Moreland & Rae, 2000). A person is not identical to his or her body, and is not his or her brain, but rather is an embodied soul or spiritual being (Hoekema, 1986; Saucy, 1993).

Thirdly, this study assumed that everyone has a worldview—a way that he or she conceptualizes the world, life, and its major components: God, the cosmos, man, knowledge, and morality (Kraft, 1989; Nash, 1992, 1999). Similarly, everyone ultimately acts upon his or her deep-seated core beliefs. What a person truly holds dear, deep inside (and much of that is not available to the conscious mind), is that upon which he or she acts (Willard, 1997). For example, if it is true (and the author assumes it is) that humans are spiritual beings then we must be attracted to what C.S. Lewis (1973) said, “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal...it is immortals who we

joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit” (p. 15). If one does not act upon these according to a professed belief, then either they do not truly hold to it deeply or they need to change their behavior to match a deep-seated core belief. These deep-seated core beliefs (either false or true) need not always be fully understood, either. For example, countless people daily trust flying in jet aircrafts without fully understanding how they work based on thrust and lift.

Lastly, this paper was written with the presupposition that all truth is God’s truth and that what is principled in the Bible coincides with what God has created and sovereignly overseen in the world (e.g., what is observable from a social science perspective). That is, there is a unity of truth (Carter & Narramore, 1979, p. 13).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to better understand to what degree and how Protestant Evangelical fathers are intentionally involved in the spiritual formation of their children. An implication then is that fathers can be encouraged in their fathering roles and competencies as well as church leaders can be assisted in meeting the needs of fathers in their congregations as leaders in their homes, faith community, and community at large. Relational spiritual formation of childhood and paternal intentionality and involvement were key domains discussed and reviewed regarding both theory and practice.

Considering that fathers are highly influential in the development of their children (Brotherson, Dollahite, & Hawkins, 2005; Canfield, 1992, 1995) and that the lack of paternal involvement is detrimental (Amato, 1998; Blankenhorn, 1995; Kazura, 2000; McLanahan & Booth, 1989), it is important to be sure children are given every

opportunity for their greatest development, that their fathers be involved. Because foundationally children are relationally spiritual beings (Allen, 2008; Bunge, 2001, 2004; Coles, 1990; Hay & Nye, 2006; Hoekema, 1986; May et al., 2005; Ratcliff, 2004, 2008; Saucy, 1993; Stonehouse & May, 2010) the most important area that a father can be involved in is the spiritual formation of his children.

Accordingly, this research hopes to reveal current relationships and tendencies of paternal involvement in the spiritual formation of their children that will guide future practical action. Church leaders, key within the intended audience of this study, need to be aware of and equipped in this area to help foster the transformations as needed.

Lastly, this study intended to give Biblical and empirical support for the research. Chapter 2 gives an in-depth review of two domains in order to show what is known in this area, what is not clear and what is not known: relational spirituality of children and paternal intentionality. Because the focus of this research is within Protestant Evangelicalism, Chapter 3 focuses on an integration of a Christian worldview with the research via theological survey and Biblical exegesis with a focus on the role of fathers. Chapter 4 presents the design of the research study to learn more about Protestant Evangelical fathers and their intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children with the research results. Final conclusions and implications are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This study was intended to advance further insights into a father's intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of his children, particularly from a Protestant Evangelical Christian perspective. Accordingly, this literature review culled relevant theory, theorists, and an extensive list of empirical studies concerning the domains of the relational spiritual formation of children and paternal intentionality and involvement with their children, with the intent to explore relationships between these variables. With this in mind, the background of both domains in this chapter was this leading question: How can fathers have a positive influence in the relational spiritual formation of their children? To do that each domain addressed subsidiary questions (all of which guide the review toward the current research question from Chapter 1 and guide the research design in Chapter 4). The first domain addresses how do parents influence the spiritual formation of their children? The second domain addresses to what degree are fathers involved in the spiritual formation of their children? and how do fathers influence the spiritual formation of their children? This extensive review established, (a) what is known in the area relevant to this study both theoretically and empirically per domain, (b) what is not clear after looking into those considerations, and (c) what we do

not know or what important information is still needed. That is, it concludes with a rationale for the study at hand because the very spiritual lives of children are at stake.

Rationale for the Domains of Relevant Research

The two domains or overarching areas of focus chosen for this study were not born out of convenience. The domains and related cognates, especially in the second domain, in both theory and empirical studies, have a paucity of references. Nonetheless, the domains were chosen because they reach to the core of essential humanness and development, expressed in the *imago dei*: its relationality and paternal care. The first domain is the relational spiritual formation of children. Children are relational spiritual beings whose formation is relational, requiring parental and faith community support, and is not private or developed in isolation. Because human development does not occur in a vacuum, but is relationally influenced, paternal intentional involvement in the parent-child relationship is an important component of the faith community that has not been studied sufficiently. Accordingly, the second domain discussed is paternal intentional involvement.

Domain of Relational Spiritual Formation of Children

While it may seem obvious to some that children are spiritual beings, the fact is that they are relational spiritual beings (Boyatzis, 2004; Hay & Nye, 2006; Hertel & Donahue, 2001) whose formation is relational, requiring parental and faith community support (Coles, 1990; Hoekema, 1986; Issler, 2004). Their spiritual formation is not private or developed in isolation. A child's spiritual formation and relationship with God

are influenced by significant others' (especially parents') images of and relationships with God, how the child attaches to the parents, and the degree to which the child's parents see the relationship as bi-directional.

Given a key presupposition that "the most significant aspect of every person's life is his or her spiritual health...and every choice we make is ultimately a spiritual decision" (Barna, 2003, pp. 28-30), children left to their own devices do not know how to make such choices or "live in a manner that brings blessing to themselves and others" (p.?). They have to be taught. And the more "intentional and clear minded we are regarding their spiritual development, the better off they will be" (p. 30).

Secondly, few adults "have a comprehensive view of what it might take to help young people grow into active, complete and passionate followers of Christ" (Barna, 2003, p. 61). Barna's (2003) national surveys suggest that

Four of five parents (85%) believe they have the primary responsibility for the moral and spiritual development of their children, more than two out of three of them abdicated that responsibility to their church...ten percent of parents who regularly attend church with their kids read the Bible together, pray together, etc...Even few families—one out of every twenty—have any type of worship experience with their kids. (p. 78)

Parents express the sentiment "after all I turned out pretty good" and do not have a sense of urgency about the issue. These parents supposedly reconcile a contradiction in admitting that they are primarily responsible for "meeting their children's spiritual needs" but do so by having others do it as if they are more skilled (Barna, 2003, pp. 78-79).

Despite the importance of children's relationship with God and their parents, it seems that many (perhaps most) parents and the churches they frequent pass off this responsibility. There are

too many parents who are willing to drop off their kids at church and have someone “do religion to them.” Too many Christian education leaders coerce people into becoming teachers. . . .As a result, too many children are missing the one element that they most need—a relationship with caring adults who can lead them to contemplate God’s intended plan for their lives. (Ruppell, 2004, p. 344)

It appears, then, that parents on the whole, even many well-meaning Christian parents, do not take seriously or understand the spiritual nature of their children such that they realize the importance and urgency of engaging with them spiritually. With so “little known about *how* parents influence children, and even less about how children influence their parents’ spiritual growth” (Boyatzis, 2004, p. 182), then, there seems to be a weighty need to look at the parent-child relationship.

Domain of Paternal Intentional Involvement

Though Chapter 3 argues from a theological perspective that within Christian tradition fathers are the spiritual leaders of the home, from an empirical research perspective, how involved and influential are fathers in their children’s development? For years, social scientists doubted that fathers had a significant role to play in shaping the experiences and development of their children, and, accordingly, fathering literature has lately been long on the empirical and short on theory, though Lamb and Pleck (1997), Doherty (1998), and Dollahite (1998), to mention a few, have put forth models of involvement. And while it may seem intuitive that fathers are important in the development of their children, it has not been made clear to what degree or in what areas—be they psychological, social, intellectual, or behavioral—fathers are important. One of the areas that needs to be addressed is the spiritual growth, spiritual formation, or—as some traditions refer to it—sanctification of children. Some fathers, agreeing that

their children's relationship with God is the most important relationship in their life, might find themselves in the following scenario:

If asked, "How do you nurture the faith of your children?" many parents might answer, "We pray at meals and at bedtime, read the Bible together, and go to church." Although these are significant experiences for children, *relationships* with parents and other significant adults provide the most formative influences for children. (May et al., 2005, p. 152)

Despite the importance of children's relationship with God and parents, it seems that many (perhaps most) fathers and parents pass off this responsibility to the churches they frequent. In short, it is the focus of this literature review to present empirical research and theory pertaining to the essential relational spirituality of children, parental involvement, and paternal involvement in the relational spiritual formation of children, given the relational nature of human spirituality among fathers, their children, God, and others in the faith community.

Review of Relevant Literature Related to Relational Spiritual Formation of Children

Children are relationally spiritual beings who are greatly influenced by not only co-parental spiritual involvement and larger social systems but especially paternal spiritual involvement. The current section reviews theoretical constructs, theorists, empirical research, and related instruments that relate to and substantiate this claim. In this section the question kept in mind is, How do parents influence the spiritual formation of their children? This question is addressed by looking at children's relational spirituality itself and by looking at parents' involvement in that spirituality (the next section looks more specifically at the paternal side of this involvement).

Before delving into theory for either domain, it is highly instructive to hear the words of Ana-Maria Rizzuto (1979) that humbly summarize the entire process:

Making theory is always a task too big for us. The richness and depths of the human experience . . .the convolutions of the private world of man. . .make any study of this sort hopelessly complex. It is therefore only with modesty and humility that one dares to talk in theoretical terms. . . .But theoretical thinking gives us an opportunity to look for new aspects of the phenomena which would have been overlooked in mere observation. . . .theory exists to assist in the understanding of complex reality: it is not reality itself. Theory is a tool, a shorthand, a vocabulary, to identify an aspect of human perception. . . .Theory is never completely true, only partly true to what we say and see. (p. 11)

Theories Pertaining to Relational Spiritual Formation of Children

Beginning this section on theory is a brief historical overview of the lack of research with respect to the relational spirituality of children and the commensurate marginalization of spirituality among youth. That is, the theory and history of children's spirituality are interrelated. Theories that do pertain to the spiritual formation of children, though varied, converge on relationality. The main theoretical thrust presented, then, addresses the following areas: (a) children have a deep, cooperative, and relational spiritual nature; (b) attachment theory aids the understanding of children's relational nature and formation; and (c) ecological and social dynamic concepts also help explain relational spiritual formation.

Perception and theory of the spiritual nature of children and their role in the community and research has varied greatly over time. Children's capability to be spiritual was marginalized (Bunge, 2001; Stonehouse & May, 2010) and not intentionally approached for too long in both day-to-day living and research. In fact, two millennia after Jesus' earthly ministry, the legacy of "spiritual marginalization of children lives on

in subtle ways . . . some rooted in church practice” (Watkins, 2008, p. 136). Ratcliff (2008) and Bunge (2001) agree that much of children’s spirituality was considered holistically early on, with a less dichotomized approach, and there was more discussion of it by early church fathers (Ratcliff, 2008, p. 21). But in terms of what moderns would consider research with respect to children’s spirituality, defined as “deeply significant experiences marked by awe, wonder” (Ratcliff, 2008, p. 22), very little exists. In 1892 Hall made tremendous strides, but until recently the view of children and their spiritual capabilities has been limited due to stage or developmental restraints a la Piaget (1951), Fowler (1981), and others (Ratcliff, 2008, pp. 22-32). Coles (1990) purposely avoids stage-oriented analysis, focusing on the child’s world through narrative and non-generalized conclusions (Ratcliff, 2008, p. 33). Hay and Nye (1998) emphasize that religion should not be equated to spirituality and the “day of imposing stage-oriented assumption on children was clearly passed” (p. 34). Stonehouse (2001) contributes to the mix by supporting the previously neglected depth of children: “even preschool children can offer comments that are characteristic of formal operational thought when more open-ended curricula are utilized” (Ratcliff, 2008, p. 32). Not only are children spiritually capable beings, but perhaps they could even teach adults as co-travelers in the journey. Others have recently expressed a similar need for the holistic view of children’s spirituality wherein there are far more influences, people, or systems operating in both directions (Allen, 2008; Boyatzis, 2008; King, 2003; Swartz, 2006).

The nature and place of children's spirituality: centrality or marginalization.

Ultimately how one views people is how one treats others. What alters one's view has as much to do with one's theology (anthropology) as with one's day-to-day influences.

Children have been greatly marginalized over the years, and especially so regarding their spirituality. Bunge's (2001) work is a tremendous resource regarding the place of children in spirituality, specifically within Christian thought. Her edited work makes a very clear argument that, in the history of the Christian tradition, children, who are spiritual beings in the fullest sense, have a central place in the family, which has a responsibility to proactively nurture children in their spiritual journey. Bunge (2004) provides a list of presuppositions and implications regarding Christian views of children's spirituality, as well. For example, children are gifts from God and a source of joy, sinful creatures and moral agents, developing beings who need instruction and guidance; fully human and made in the image of God; models of faith; orphans and neighbors, and so on (Bunge, 2004, pp. 45-50). Because of these attributes, extremes need to be avoided and balance attained. For example, because children are gifts and models of faith, adults can enjoy and learn from them. But, because they are also sinful creatures, it would be a mistake to say they are so innocent that they can just be set aside, not worried about, and left without instruction or training (2004, pp. 51-52).

Deep, cooperative, and relational. Much of the theory born out of, or supported by, research points to a deep, cooperative, and relational spiritual nature of children. First, children are spiritual beings who think spiritually, have complex spiritual ideas and experiences, and are not passive recipients of parents' unilateral influence (Boyatzis &

Janicki, 2003). Children's spiritual ideas are not to be dismissed as simple reflections of their immature thinking, but seen as contributing to spiritual conversation and learning with adults. In a recent study, Stonehouse and May (2010) express this dynamic well: "Children give us a glimpse of their spiritual potential" (p. 6) and "in our fast-paced busyness and distraction . . . we miss important insights that we need to learn from our children" (p. 23).

While the call to action to develop more specific children's spirituality research is appropriate, it is still beneficial to glean from what some have gathered about children's spirituality generally or in different contexts. Coles (1990) was foundational in moving from stage theory to listening to children as co-spiritual pilgrims in life who have a sense of wonder, pressing adults to agree with them. He researched the spiritual life of children, their inner lives, and particularly what they could teach adults about themselves spiritually. That is, children have something to say to and learn from adults, and adults have something to say to and learn from children. Boyatzis and Janicki (2003) and Hay and Nye (2006) acted upon the belief that children are spiritual and that they can think and experience on a spiritual level. Hay and Nye (2006), like Coles, furthered a relational spirituality focus moving away from stage theory orientation. They suggest that children have a spirituality that is at its core a relational consciousness pertaining to self and God, self and others, self and world, and self and self. They propose that "ordinary children talk about their spirituality and it is massively present in the lives of children" (Hay & Nye, 2006, p. 9). They go on to say that spirituality is so "natural" (Hay & Nye, 2006, p.

10), that “children’s spirituality is rooted in universal human awareness; that it is ‘really there’ and not just a culturally constructed illusion” (2006, p. 18).

Hood (2004) suggests that adults need to avoid dismissing children’s ideas as simple reflections of their immature thinking and, rather, to listen with anticipation. Children have something meaningful and personal to share (Hood, 2004, p. 246). Parents, and all those involved in children’s lives, are to talk *with* children and not *at* or *to* them. Fathers, and parents as a team, would do well to be diligent and intentional in planning and implementing family religious activities and personal spiritual disciplines both to model for the children and for the proper benefits one receives from such discipline. And adults should share themselves with children, making themselves open and vulnerable or transparent. In order for children to learn who the God is that they are to serve and how to do so, they have to see and be in the middle of it being done.

Second, children are co-pilgrims in a spiritual journey, co-constructionists in a bi-directional conversation with parents (Boyatzis, 2004, p. 189), helping their parents see God outside normal plausibility structures. They are co-pilgrims in a spiritual journey. That is, children have something to say to adults as well as to learn from adults, and adults have something to say to children and learn from children. This is described as bi-directional reciprocity or co-construction, rather than unidirectional transmission, which has often been the perception of the relationship. Boyatzis and Janicki (2003) found that mothers were more likely to engage in bi-directional communication with their children than were fathers. This communication was characterized by few corrections, regular open-ended questions, and modest communication of convictions. In this study, mothers

only seem to have engaged 5.4 times in 2 weeks. If fathers are less engaged than this (which they were in the study), then that indicates a lack of involvement (intentional or otherwise) on fathers' part. An immediate implication for this current study is the lack of paternal intentionality, even among those considered religious. By intentionality is meant the doing of an action out of design or purpose and not accidentally (Webster, 1828). In spiritual formation, human effort is needed, though it is guided by and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Howard, 2008, p. 270).

We intend to live in the kingdom of God *by* intending to obey the precise example and teachings of Jesus . . . not . . . merely believing things about him . . . no one can actually believe the truth about him [Jesus] without trusting him by intending to obey him. It is a mental impossibility. (Willard, 2002, p. 87)

Intention is brought to completion only by a decision to fulfill or carry through with an intention (Willard, 2002, p. 88).

Continuing on this construct of bi-directionality or co-construction, Kuczynski (2003) suggests a principle of "interdependent power asymmetry" (p. 11), which takes into account different types of power entering into transactions between parents and children. That is, this dyad has traditionally been viewed as more parent-down in power (asymmetrical), but in reality, it is more relational and bi-directional than operated by who has more power. Taking into account various frameworks such as systems or ecological theory as in Brofenbrenner (1979) and cognitive development mediated by others in community as theorized by Vygotsky (1978), one can say that children use cultural information and relations to solve issues. Parental behavior is not done "to" or "for," but "with" children (Kuczynski, 2003, p. 14).

Further supporting children's spirituality in relationship, Bellous, de Roos, and Summey (2004) suggest that children are co-creators of what they experience. There is an attachment that is not unidirectional, but rather reciprocal (Bellous, de Roos, & Summey, 2004, p. 209). Along those same lines, Kirkpatrick (1999) showed that people's views of God parallel their images of their early parent-child relationships. Additionally, "securely attached" children are more likely to be successfully socialized into and subsequently adopt parts of the attachment figure's (mom, dad, etc.) system of religious behaviors and beliefs than insecurely attached children (Bellous et al., 2004, p. 211). Per this finding, "mothers who have a loving idea of God have preschoolers who view God as powerful, loving and caring" (Hertel & Donahue (1995) as cited in Bellous et al., 2004, p. 211). Due to such a real correlation, Bellous et al. (2004) suggest a rationale for Jesus' stern warning in Matthew 18:6-7. Some of the implications relevant to this study from Jesus' warning in that passage are that parents and teachers do play important roles in the formation of children's God concepts; God concepts continue to influence people over the course of their lives; and God concepts can encourage or hinder attachment to a loving God (Bellous et al., 2004, p. 213). "Parents and teachers must grasp the significance of their encounters with children and the influence of their own God concepts on the development of a child's attachment to God (Bellous et al., 2004, pp. 201-202).

It is often through dynamics other than the family, that understanding the nature of children's spirituality can be improved. Boyatzis (2008) suggests using a social-ecology approach in acknowledging the need for multiple measures to capture a bigger

picture of family and children's spirituality (p. 51). Valerie King (2003) approaches a similar need though her study focused on fathers. As is discussed below, she further clarifies how religious fathers are more likely to be involved by increasing the measures included in the study. Boyatzis (2008) suggests there is a need to approach "children's spirituality from a specific faith-based perspective" since much of the research prior has focused on a broader base (p. 48). Like Allen (2008) and others, Boyatzis (2008) feels there needs to be a clear working definition and a model that embraces "different microsystems that have immediate and proximal impact (e.g., family, church, peer groups, school, etc.)" (p. 49). Also the most studied current social context is the family (Boyatzis, 2008, p. 49), which for this current paper is reason to look further into the influence of fathers within the family. It is often through other dynamics or microsystems as Boyatzis calls them, that understanding of the nature of children's spirituality can be improved. Swartz (2006) notes, according to Boyatzis (2008), that understanding of adolescent spirituality is enriched by measuring the interplay and different contexts of parents and peers.

Preparedness suggests that children may be cognitively equipped or prepared to understand some properties of God in a non-anthropomorphic way. This view, espoused by Barrett and Richert (2003), and discussed below in the section on Empirical Research on the Relational Spiritual Formation of Children, contrasts with, or minimally provides an explanation over and above, what scholars and religious practitioners have held for years; namely, that children conceptualize God in the same way that they conceptualize humans. Rather, preparedness implies that, with respect to God's power in creativity,

God's knowledge in mental attributes, and God's immortality, children seem to be predisposed to being able to discriminate between what is of God and what is of man or nature. In short, children deal with spiritual issues at a far more complex and deeper metaphysical level than has been presumed.

Another theory related to the influence of the intentional relationality of adults relates to adults' intentional use of symbols for and with children (Sharon, 2005). Children's sensitivity to intentionality can contribute to their symbolic understanding and development. Parents and significant others in the community would benefit knowing that adults using symbols intentionally benefits children. What constrains and guides symbol use is not physical form, but rather the intentions and conventions of a symbol's use. This has meaning for paternal modeling. If fathers know that children are highly sensitive to the intentional behaviors of others, they might be more intentional in what they do. That is, young children are so attuned to intentional cues that they are able to infer an agent's goal without ever seeing it realized. For example, a child may see an adult unsuccessfully attempt an action, and later imitate the action but not the failed attempt. So, as fathers model God to their children, might they be more intentional in their actions? This construct is also discussed further in *Empirical Research on the Relational Spiritual Formation of Children*.

Attachment theory. Important in all relational models is the body of work known as attachment theory, born out of object relations theory. Attachment theory helps one to appreciate children's relational spiritual nature and formation. There are several

key issues for this review pertaining to attachment theory: paternal attachment, relational beings, and cognitive and relational growth.

First, paternal attachment is an area that has long been neglected, but Bowlby, Karen, and Lamb speak of fathers as important in secure attachment. Bowlby (1988), the father of attachment theory, suggests that successful parenting is a principal key to the mental health of the next generation (p. 1). He touched on the marginalization of children long before any other researchers; prior to Bowlby (a psychoanalyst by training), Freud and those who followed him only looked at adults with a reductionist, materialistic, and behavioristic mindset. Children were nowhere on the radar screen and, in fact, atrocities were committed in the name of errant theory. For example, Karen (1998), a leading attachment theorist in the tradition of Bowlby and Ainsworth, reports that because at one time attachment was considered wrong, some children in institutions were purposefully moved from foster home to foster home to prevent attachment. These children eventually reached the point of never being able to develop feelings for others. Under the influence of this thinking, institutions even prop fed infants, ultimately denying them needed affection and relationality. The mortality rate was extremely high (Karen, 1998, pp. 17-19). Bowlby (1988) decries the fact that the richest societies ignore the difficulty and the significance of their most important job—raising kids:

Man and woman power devoted to the production of material goods counts a plus in all our economic indices. Man and woman power devoted to the production of happy, healthy, and self-reliant children in their own homes does not count at all. We have created a topsy-turvy world. (p. 2)

Instead Karen emphasizes that what children need, minimally, is to feel that the world is a positive place and they are valued (1998, p. 35).

A central feature of Bowlby's concept of parenting is the provision by both parents of a *secure base* from which a child can make sorties into the outside world and to which he can return knowing for sure that he will be welcomed when he gets there. Parents' roles are to be available, responsive, and encouraging and to assist or intervene actively only when clearly necessary (Karen, 1998, pp. 164-165). Ainsworth expands on this with her groundbreaking concepts of cooperation and interference.

From a Judeo-Christian perspective, this can be likened to humankind's essential nature as relational, being made in the image of God, who is a relational being. Just as humankind is secure in its ultimate attachment to God (God is a secure base), so, too, parents are a secure base for their children, modeling the secure base that God is. And just as parents provide a secure base for children from which to make sorties, so, too, God allows each person to make sorties in this life, knowing they can always return to Him with love and confidence. This attachment can be seen in Bowlby's "abandoning the Freudian notion of drives . . . and seeing rather an 'array of innate behavior patterns'" (Karen, 1990, p. 44). Bowlby, (1988) unlike Freud (who was more cause-effect, mechanistic, and adult oriented), is child-focused and enters into their early lives (p. 26) from a more parent-child aware perspective (p. 35).

Ainsworth, following Bowlby's lead, desires to get to the bottom of separation anxiety between infants or toddlers and their mothers. Because of Ainsworth, attachment theory is on the map and is widely regarded as probably the best supported theory of socio-emotional development yet available (Karen, 1998, pp. 28, 39). Despite

Ainsworth's research greatness, she does not touch on the father's role in attachment or influence on the development of his children. Others have since broached the subject.

Fathers and attachment. What role do fathers have in influencing their children spiritually? In order for fathers to better understand whether what they are doing is beneficial or not, there needs to be a benchmark. Bowlby (1988) notes that almost all previous attachment studies pertain to mothers and patterns of attachment to them (p. 10). To a great extent, almost exclusively, attachment research was maternal, focusing on maternal deprivation, maternal separation, and the like. Very little was paternally oriented. Mary Main and Donna Weston (1981) began the first studies of patterns of attachment of fathers shown to resemble closely those of mothers (Karen, 1998, p. 198). Ainsworth also acknowledges as equally important the way in which the father treats the child. Hence her study and others suggest that a father may be "filling a role closely resembling that filled by the mother" (Bowlby, 1989, pp. 9-10; cf. Karen, 1990, p. 200). So close is the father's role to the mother's that Karen says attachment research has shown that when a

child is securely attached to his father (or to another secondary caregiver), that will be the greatest help in overcoming an insecure attachment to his mother Ideally, insecure attachments needed to be dealt with prior to adolescence. (Karen, 1990, p. 63)

Evidence of this influence lends credence to the need to educate fathers that they need to be involved intentionally early on in their children's lives.

Michael Lamb (1976, 1997), a student of Ainsworth, looked into this paternal involvement. Lamb found that infants showed no preference for mothers over fathers even if they were secondary caregivers (Karen, 1998, p. 198). Fathers seem to provide a

higher level of stimulation than mothers and have a different role in formative power (discipline style) that was critical (Karen, 1998, pp. 198-199).

Supplemental research on the father's influence on the child arose later, as Jay Belsky was the first to evaluate marital relationships' influence on babies' attachments (Karen, 1998, pp. 321-326). For this reason, Belsky, along with Bowlby, were ardent stay-at-home-mom proponents and day-care opponents. Ken Canfield (2008) suggests that marital satisfaction and a father's involvement with his children are greatly connected. The key for Ainsworth, maternally or paternally, is that "all your child needs in order to thrive both emotionally and intellectually is your availability and responsiveness" (Karen, 1998, p. 416).

Humans are essentially relational beings, predisposed toward relational experience and bonding behaviors. Cognitive truths are important in spiritual formation, but the relational context for one to experience new ways of relating is significant as well. Spirituality is a relational issue. Karen (1998) asks, how people come to feel the way they do about themselves in the context of an intimate relationship. To add to that, how do relationships affect views of God? Who has influence on the child's sense of who he or she is and how he or she relates, ultimately spiritually? Specifically regarding spiritual formation and attachment, Morr (2003) found:

Adult attachment style and relationship with God are significantly related, in some cases moderately and in other cases only weakly. It raises the possibility that people relate to God in similar ways they relate to others. One of the implications of this connection is in the area of spiritual growth—one's relational style may need to be addressed and matured as part of the spiritual formation process. (p. 4)

That is, while cognitive truth is important in addressing insecurity, the relational context for one to experience new (mature) ways of relating is significant as well. And though Morr's study pertained to adults, with respect to fathers and their children it is reasonable to note that children are greatly influenced by their parents' images of God and relationship with God and others. The reverse is equally true: parents deeply influence their children's concept of God, understanding of God, feelings toward God, and belief in God (Dickie, 2006; Hertel & Donahue, 1995; Kim, 2008; Kirkpatrick, 1990; Rizzuto, 1976).

Dickie, Ajega, Kobylak, and Nixon (2006) suggest that nurturing parents affect young adults' self-concepts and their image of a nurturing God. Children perceive God to be like both of their parents: nurturing when both are nurturing, powerful when both are powerful—especially the mother. That is, parents' qualities are a more important predictor of children's God concept than the children's self-concept.

Kirkpatrick (1990), who suggests a more compensatory view of God concepts, feels that one's belief about God or relationship with God develops and can be predicted by attachment classifications (e.g., avoidant, secure, etc.) and parental religiosity. He suggests that those with avoidant attachment development and less religious parents (particularly mothers) are more religious in adult life. In either case—and there are other views as well—the theories center on the idea that children are greatly influenced by the parent's relationship with God.

God images. Rounding out this section on attachment is theory pertaining to children and their God images. Rizzuto (1979) suggests that human beings construct

concepts of God such that there is no such thing as a human being without a God concept, which correlates with a child's experience with his or her parents and the parents' view of God. Furthermore, "once a God concept is developed it cannot be made to disappear but can only be repressed, transformed or used" (Rizzuto, 1979, p. 90). Rizzuto suggests, based on clinical encounters, that there is an apparent correlation between the experience of one's parents and one's view of God. God is the ultimate parent and children learn via experience to trust God, see God as dependable, see God as able to meet needs, and see God as giving attention (Rizzuto, 1979, pp. 203-204). Interestingly enough, Vitz (1999) provides an intriguing theory in support of his *defective father hypothesis* that the prominent atheists (such as Russell, Freud, & Nietzsche) grew up without a father or father figure whether through death or abandonment, or with fathers or father figures who were abusive. This pattern is clearly in contrast to prominent theists or Christians of the same eras who had present and positive fathers or father figures in their lives.

Ecological and social dynamics. Relationships within the immediate family suggest highly influential connections in the paternal-God-child relationship. Yet the relational picture is even more all-encompassing. Ecological and social dynamic concepts help explain relational spiritual formation. Groome notes that Christian spirituality is seen as a relationship with God, oneself, and others in every dimension and activity of a person's life (Allen, 2008, p. 8). A working definition of Christian children's spirituality that Allen and Ratcliff posit is

the child's development of a conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, within the context of a community of believers that fosters that relationship, as well as the child's understanding of, and response to, that relationship. (Allen, 2008, p. 11)

This definition provides reference to one's relationship with God and others in the faith community (the heart of attachment theory and God images), the intentional effort denoted by fostering that relationship, and the intellectual as well as behavioral responses of belief and practices.

There are various dimensions in which Christian spirituality is seen in relationship to God, oneself, and others (Boyatzis, 2008; Estep & Kim, 2010; Wilhoit, 2008).

Boyatzis (2008) suggests using a social-ecology approach, acknowledging the need for multiple measures to capture a bigger picture of family and children's spirituality (p. 51).

Much of this approach stems from the ecological view of development a la Bronfenbrenner (1979).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological perspective on development emphasizes both the individual and environment, where the environment is a set of embedded structures or systems-within-systems and the influence of any one system on an individual includes interconnections with other systems. These systems are *micro*, *meso*, *exo*, and *macro*. The micro-system is the immediate setting, such as the home, family, or class. The meso-system is beyond the single micro-system setting and involves relational ties between micro-systems, such as between home and school, or between home and church. Another example is the home or family as the point of departure with the world of work as a key setting of the meso-system in adulthood. Further out in the ring of influences is the exo-system, wherein events that occur in settings in which the person is not involved influence his or her development. For example, cultural-political changes in religious expression may influence family-child (micro) and family-church (meso)

interconnections. This influence of the culture upon the family or the church is the exo-ecology. The macro level suggests that all three are interconnected. For Bronfenbrenner, and for current application purposes, there has been an over emphasis on the individual person and not enough on the environmental or ecological systems. That is, the influence of various systems needs to be considered.

Application of these principles for this review can be seen at various levels. Though Bronfenbrenner (1979) does not use the term *bi-directionality*, he does pinpoint the principle: “if one member of the pair undergoes a process of development, the other does also” (p. 6). Also, environmental-events most immediate and potent in affecting a person’s development are activities engaged in by others with that person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 6). Active engagement with or mere exposure to what others are doing often inspires a person to undertake similar activity (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 6). This can be seen in paternal modeling, mentoring, and the like at the micro level. At the meso level, for example, a father’s ability to perform effectively is a function of role demands, stresses, and support from other settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 7).

Although Bronfenbrenner’s views are not specifically spiritually targeted, they can be appropriated for spiritual application. Bronfenbrenner suggests that development encompasses multiple levels of influence, from the micro-system to the larger macro-system. That is, not only personal relationships but institutional relationships influence development. Not just father-child, but family-community, home-school, and societal institutions interacting with all of the above—and vice versa—influence development.

Along these lines, Amato (1998) notes that *social capital* extends far beyond the family into extended family, community, and social institutions.

While various levels of community are involved, some theorists hold that spirituality is with children not to or for them (Hood, 2004; Westerhoff, 2000). Westerhoff (1976, 2000) even writes of a broken ecology, the hidden curriculum of the schooling-instructional paradigm that not only is ineffective but misplaced as the only or preferred means to spew out spirituality. In reality, to ask the question, “Will our children have faith?” (the title of Westerhoff’s book) requires each person in the faith community to be intentional in his or her interaction with children and not to or for them.

Concluding this theoretical discussion on the relational spiritual nature of children is Vygotsky’s (Estep, 2003) social dynamic theory of cognitive developmental. It is a non-structuralist approach that can be applied to relational spiritual formation (in contrast to the structuralist approaches of Piaget, Fowler, Erikson, and Kohlberg). According to Vygotsky, learning leads or draws development out as one moves from a zone of actual development to a potential development through the zone of proximal development. Applying his socio-cultural theory to spiritual formation, faith is mediated between the community and individuals where more mature persons deliberately instruct others in this zone of proximal development (Estep, 2003; see also Jones-Neal, 1995; Kim, 2010).

Among many applications of social dynamic or socio-cultural theory is that spiritual formation occurs when faith is mediated between the community and individuals where more mature persons (such as family members or role models in the faith community) deliberately instruct others in this zone of proximal development. Real

learning is contingent on intentional instruction. Learning precedes and influences development. For example, a father can engage with his 4-year old child in spiritual conversation about how God can be trusted while the child is in an area of actual development that may be, according to some, far from that stage of understanding. While some 4-year-olds may not fully understand trust (not all adults do, either), others may glean some understanding from this conversation in the proximal development (the father intentionally dialoguing with his child in a deeper area) and be helped to move on to a more mature potential development. Spiritual insight develops when the child then, unprovoked or on his or her own unassisted initiative, connects trusting God with something in daily life. The father is the mentor, intentionally helping his children go from where they are (actual development) to a place where they could not go without adult or mature assistance (potential development) in proximity or by way of community (proximal development).

Empirical Research on the Relational Spiritual Formation of Children

In addition to relevant theory and theorists, empirical studies shed further light on the subject of a child's relational spirituality. In doing or reviewing research it is prudent to frame all discussion regarding research limitations and biases with humility.

Accordingly, while paternal influences have been historically minimized, the current emphasis on fathers should not go to the other extreme. Belsky (1998) provides a useful perspective: "the shared influence of mothers and fathers reminds us that when it comes to thinking about paternal contributions to child development, there is need to conceptualize the father in family terms" (p. 280; see also Amato, 1998, p. 268). Indeed,

as has been presented thus far, spiritual development is a relational, familial, communal process.

Empirical research has increased over the years such that studies now show that children are highly spiritual, and this spirituality is relationally nurtured. While most of the studies presented in this review, in both domains, are quantitative in nature, several are qualitative, especially with respect to parent-child interaction and children's spirituality. The first domain is culled from some 40 empirical studies, of which 15 are reviewed in this chapter (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2), and 6 ancillary studies are summarized in Appendix E. Due to space constraints that preclude noting them all, the main text studies are more commonly referenced in the domain itself, are more foundational to much of the research, or are more germane to the topic. The studies summarized in the appendixes, while perhaps referenced by or predating studies reviewed in the main text, tend to be less germane, less strong empirically, or to contain added ancillary information not worth full review. The first group of studies of the first domain emphasizes the relational spirituality of children and its bi-directional nature (see Table 1). It should also be pointed out that, while the majority of studies pertain to younger children (up to age 13, as noted in Chapter 1), there are some studies that contain an adolescent focus. Those studies and their content, however, are valuable nonetheless in this discussion because the adolescents are part of a family community that has fostered the issues under discussion (God concepts, attachment, religiosity, etc.). That is, the parent-child relationships and correlations regarding the variables discussed did not just happen during adolescence—out of thin air—but because of years of relationship prior to adolescence.

Relational spirituality and bi-directionality. In a diary-oriented study, Boyatzis and Janicki (2003; recapitulated in 2004) found that children are co-pilgrims in a spiritual journey and co-constructionists in a bi-directional conversation with their parents, rather than recipients of unidirectional transmission. In using a diary (said to be effective at $r = .70$) the authors were attempting to deal with the self-report biases often encountered with self-report measures—in self-reporting, it is often the case that what one thinks one does is not accurate regarding real time allocation. In this case the authors suggested that unidirectional transmission is often assumed when bi-directional reciprocity or co-construction is more accurate. Backing their efforts, they cited the oft noted principle that children have complex ideas about religion and are not passive recipients of parents' unilateral influence (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003, p. 254; they cite Coles, 1990; and Hay, 1998).

Because of this view of the reciprocity and depth of a child's spirituality, Boyatzis and Janicki (2003) investigated the frequency, content, and structure of parent-child communication to see if it was characterized by unidirectional communication (parent-to-child) or bi-directional. That is, was the communication reciprocal, with parents and children engaged as active participants in both of their religious experience?

The samples were cohort-based, parent-cohabitating families with one or more children from 3 to 12 years old, with parents responding at two different points (Time 1, $N = 23$; Time 2, $N = 15$). The reason for the attrition from Time 1 to Time 2 was unclear, though some respondents noted the inconvenience of the diary method. Within the sample, mothers were 27 to 48 years old ($M = 37.2$, $SD = 6.08$) and fathers were 31 to 54

years old ($M = 40.7$, $SD = 5.50$). The mean child age was 7.6 years ($SD = 2.74$), with the boy-to-girl ratio relatively equal.

Regarding results, Boyatzis and Janicki (2003) admitted that their conclusions were tentative given the sample, but “a bi-directional reciprocal style of communication seemed more typical than a unidirectional transmission style” (p. 252). A major finding from the survey and diary was that “parent-child religious communication has a mutual, bi-directional and reciprocal quality: conversations were marked by children’s active participation and expression of their ideas and parents’ openness to those ideas” (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003, p. 264). Of the 14 topics listed in the diary, *prayer*, *Jesus*, and *God* yielded the highest frequency (Time 1 $M = 3.7$, 3.2, 3.0 times per week, respectively; Time 2 $M = 3.3$, 3.2, 2.8 times per week, respectively). Within both 1-week time frames, families wrote an average of 5.4 ($SD = 2.7$) entries in their diaries, with mothers writing more often than fathers. The dialogue exhibited few instances of correction or giving out answers, which can shut down conversation, but rather more open-ended questions. Also, the diary method was shown to be very fruitful in gaining insights by showing real tendencies compared to survey report. For example, regarding the bi-directional nature of the communication (over unidirectionality), Boyatzis and Janicki expected parents might inflate the number of conversations and initiate conversation. Survey responses showed that mothers thought they initiated most of the conversations (paired t test of $p < .005$), whereas the diary entries showed children initiating and terminating conversation a majority of the time (65% in Time 1; 78.6% in Time 2). In almost half of the families, fathers did not participate in any diary entries, and

Table 2.1

Empirical Studies on Relational Spirituality of Children

Author, date, & strength	Subjects/Sample/Population	Type/Instruments	Results
Boyatzis & Janicki (2003) IS, EL	Time 1 $N = 23$, Time 2 $N = 15$ cohabitating-parent families with 1 or more children 3-12 years old. Mean child age 7.6 years ($SD = 2.74$). Moms (27-48 years old, $M = 37.2$, $SD = 6.08$); Dads (31-54 years old, $M = 40.7$, $SD = 5.50$). Predominantly Roman Catholic.	Mixed: survey/diary. Parent-Child Communications Survey (Bradbard et al., 1992): 49-item 7-point frequency scale. Parent-Child Communication Diary ($r = .70$).	Unidirectional transmission is often assumed when bi-directional reciprocity or co-construction is more accurate. Children have complex ideas about religion and are not passive recipients of parents' unilateral influence. Mother diary entries (5.4 times/2 weeks) were more numerous than father entries; conversations were characterized by few corrections, mainly open-ended questions, and modest communication of convictions.
Coles (1990) IA, ER	30 years of studying children.	Longitudinal, narrative: researched spiritual life of children, their inner lives, and particularly what they could teach adults about themselves spiritually.	Children are spiritual pilgrims in life wherein they are travelers on a road with some spiritual purpose in mind. When kids fall silent adults need to look: There is a great deal in wordless narration (drawings, faces, etc.). In listening to the children, the face of God is a prominent issue; they want to hear the voice of God; they are able to construct positive and loving views of God despite legalistic religious parents.

Table continues

Table 2.1 *Empirical Studies on Relational Spirituality of children, (continued)*

Hay & Nye (2006) IS, ER	<i>N</i> = 38 youth between Grades 6-7 and 10-11, random, girls = boys	Qualitative, grounded theory, interview, narrative. To avoid conversation influenced by terminology, conversations moved from loose structure, to spirituality, to personal experience.	The core of children's spirituality is a relational consciousness: (a) unusual level of consciousness relative to other conversations by children, and (b) conversations expressed in context of how children relate to others, God, and self. Children's spirituality is so natural (biological reality) that it is rooted in universal human awareness; that is, it is really there and not just a culturally constructed illusion. The adult world into which children are inducted is more often than not destructive to their spirituality. Children emerge from infancy with a simplicity that is richly open to experience, only to close off their awareness as they become street wise.
Firmin & Knight (2007) IA, ER	<i>N</i> = 24 (12 male, 12 female) Timothy-award recipients, purposeful sample. Admittedly homogeneous sample (predominately Caucasian, Evangelical Baptists, from Southern Ohio).	Phenomenological; in-depth interviews (semi-structured) based on protocol established by Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, and Tindell (1995)—by induction, data coded into motifs, categories, and general themes.	Community of others (AWANA leaders, parents, and friends) is important in the spiritual formation of youth. Fathers are part of parental encouragement described by "my parents kept on encouraging me" (p. 107). Four themes arose: salient AWANA influences (Memories in the Making), current participant life (Look at Me Now), participant social trends from AWANA until now (Sociality: Past to Present), and participant perception of AWANA (If It Was Up To Me). Scripture memory was the most recurrent memory, with relationships with AWANA leaders a close second.

Note: Strength of internal validity (I) for each research article will be indicated on the table by an "S" (strong), "A" (acceptable), and "W" (weak). Generalizability ("E" for external Validity) is "R" (fairly representative), "L" (limited/less than an author's intended target audience, and "N" (not generalizable). For example IA, EL is Acceptable internal validity, Limited Generalizability (external validity). Studies are in alphabetical order.

in almost 90% of all families, mothers participated in all of the diary instruments. While it is often found that the mother plays a larger role than fathers in religious socialization, admittedly due to spending more time and more quality time with the children, these findings are telling. Fathers in this study were not very engaged with their children in spiritual conversation.

In a classic qualitative study over 30 years regarding the spiritual life of children, Robert Coles (1990) researched children's inner lives, particularly what they could teach adults about themselves spiritually. He wrote, "the emphasis of this book is not so much on children as student or practitioner of this or that religion but on children as soulful in ways they themselves reveal" (Coles, 1990, p. xvii). Children are spiritual pilgrims in life wherein they are travelers on "a road with some spiritual purpose in mind" (Coles, 1990, p. 10). This can be likened to what Boyatzis (2004) calls children's relationship to adults in their spiritual journey: co-constructionists in a bi-directional conversation (p. 189). That is to say, children have something to say to and learn from adults, and adults have something to say to and learn from children.

Children, as Coles' (1990) narrative revealed, tend to have a sense of wonder, to press adults to agree with them, and to draw pictures (of God's face, for example) that connect with where they are in life regarding things like race, socioeconomic class, and family experience (p. 66). This can be likened to a plausibility structure children have. Some draw God with faces that fit within their reality, but others suggest, by not drawing God, that He cannot be drawn because He is so special. He is so different that He is outside one's plausibility structure. Not that too much should be made of this, but perhaps God is providing a lesson here. Though Coles did not make this point, in the Judeo-

Christian tradition (as well as the traditions of others Coles interviewed), the first of the Ten Commandments pertains to not making a false image (Rooker, 2010, pp. 22-56). For any time one makes a representation of God, it falls grossly short of who He is and of what He is capable. This then becomes an affront to God, for He is not being honored. Perhaps the children in Coles' study sensed this, but Coles did not lead the reader there.

Coles (1990) observed that children also want to hear the voice of God. One Muslim boy's way of sharing about God was similar to the way his parents spoke (a patronizing tone, Coles noted): "He speaks to me. He hears my prayers and He answers them" (p. 70). Other examples were the nighttime prayers of Anne (a Roman Catholic). Did she hear God's voice? Coles posited that it was not an adult's place to question whether she did or not, though his questions to her revealed his own disbelief when he suggested that the voices she heard were influenced by significant others in her life. After all, God sounded like her aunt, but a man's voice mainly (Coles, 1990, pp. 83-85). Nonetheless, children wanted to hear from God. One lesson that can be learned from this is brought to the forefront by Dallas Willard (1999) when he says, "God's communications come to us in many forms" (p. 26), and "the still small voice is the preferred and most valuable form of individualized communication for God's purposes" (p. 89).

Children also seem to be able to construct positive and loving views of God despite strict, legalistic, religious parents, as Coles (1990) characterized them (p. 120). This observation seems to rub against the grain of other findings that suggest that children are greatly influenced by their parents' image of God, relationship with God, or relationship with others (Hertel & Donahue, 1995; Rizzuto, 1976). Perhaps these

principles still hold true, and the children Coles interviewed had their images, dreams, and views of God influenced by others (friends of their parents, peers, etc.) despite their parents' strict legalism. Nonetheless, Coles found great depth and resiliency in children with major life issues (life-threatening problems, in some cases) who tried to understand what was happening and why (p. 100). Some children were remarkably profound religiously. There was the 9- to 10-year-old girl who said, "I don't want to waste my time here on this earth. . . .when you're put here, it's for a reason. The Lord wants you to do something" (Coles, 1990, p. 135). Coles noted that she was capable of looking outside herself. Yet with the skepticism noted earlier, Coles thought this was purely cultural (rural, fundamentalist), yet conceded that it was free of "explicit religious references" (p. 137). Then there was the young boy facing a terminal disease. He said to Coles, "please record every word I speak. I may be dead tomorrow, and this would be a chance for my words to outlive me!" (Coles, 1990, p. 102). Coles suggested that many of the children, like these, were "self-directed" (p. 292) toward God. "Children have thought long and hard about who God is, about what God might be like. . . . Their fingers express with paint, crayons . . . the inexpressible" (pp. 168-169).

Lastly, an implication that can be seen from Coles' (1990) study is that fathers do have an immense spiritual influence on their children at both extremes. Betsy's father had a relativistic influence on her view of God, as can be seen from Betsy's response to a question about her family's religious life: "Daddy said, 'Each person can have a visit from God. He'll be smiling . . . it's up to you'" (Coles, 1990, p. 46). Another said, "My daddy always says we're here to practice our own religion . . . not tell others what to do . . . hope the next person is as fair" (Coles, 1990, p. 55). From an Evangelical perspective

(of which this child's parents were not), this would be an example of a father misinforming his child that religion is private, not to be shared, and not about a relationship. The point here is not doctrinal but that paternal religiosity does influence children.

Further supporting the notion that children are spiritually relational, co-pilgrims in a journey with their parents and others is an ethnographic study by David Hay and Rebecca Nye (2006). These researchers acted upon the belief that children are spiritual (though not fully to the degree of Judeo-Christian *imago dei*) and that they can think and experience on a spiritual level. Accordingly, Hay and Nye buttressed their research on the presupposition that “ordinary children talk about their spirituality and it is massively present in the lives of children . . . yet hidden due to culturally constructed forgetfulness which allows us to ignore the obvious” (p. 9). Their “spiritual awareness is a natural human predisposition, often overlaid by cultural construction” (Hay & Nye, 2006, p. 10). Hay and Nye went on to say that spirituality is so “natural” (p. 10) that “children’s spirituality is rooted in universal human awareness; . . . it is ‘really there’ and not just a culturally constructed illusion” (p. 18); and, children are so essentially spiritual that their nature will never let this spiritual aspect go (p. 31). This resembles Rizzuto’s (1979) claim that a God concept, once formed, “cannot be made to disappear: it can only be repressed, transformed or used” (p. 90). And because it is so natural, this spirituality is actually found to be more prominent in childhood than adult life, because it is raw and less affected by secularized culture. In fact, Hay and Nye (2006) held to the principle that the

adult world into which children are inducted is more often than not destructive to their [children's] spirituality Children emerge from infancy with a simplicity that is richly open to experience, only to close off their awareness as they become street wise. (pp. 32-33)

This has important implications for further research, as it speaks to a need for fathers and their influence to be cautious not to impose adult issues and thinking but to actually learn from and with children—to see their wonder about spiritual issues.

For their grounded theory study, Hay and Nye (2006) restricted their randomly selected interviews, due to time and finances, to youth ($N = 38$) in Grades 6-7 and 10-11, to both girls and boys equally (pp. 86-108). To avoid conversation moving from personal spirituality to talk of God influenced by religious terminology, they moved conversations from loose structure, to spirituality, to personal experience. They found that traditional spiritual language does influence children's spiritual expression so that it is very difficult to investigate without it. Nonetheless, a lesson in procedure to be gained from the study is to lead a child's response as minimally as possible. It is important to let the children speak for themselves, much like in Coles' research (Coles, 1990, p. 93). Much of what Hay and Nye (2006) contributed that changed the landscape of children's spirituality was the finding that, while age, gender, class, and the like are factors, spirituality is not so cookie cutter, and its formation is not so much a function of age or formulated stages as had been theorized. This was a radical break from much of the stage theory of Fowler (1981) and others (Hay & Nye, 2006, p. 98).

New to the research on children's spirituality, Hay and Nye (2006) found that at the core of children's spirituality is a relational consciousness. This spirituality is characterized by an unusual level of consciousness, relative to other conversations by

children, and conversations expressed in context of how children related to others, God, and self. Children, then, are highly conscious and distinctly reflective spiritually (Hay & Nye, 2006, p. 108; cf. Hay, 2000, p. 38). This relational consciousness expresses itself in a child's aesthetic, religious, personal, and traditional experiences and his or her moral and mystical thoughts (Hay & Nye, 2006, p. 109). The implication is that adults, while involved, need to get out of the way, so to speak:

When adults are working with children they are primarily communicating a way of being human, how they themselves approach life. Nevertheless, the importance of relationship can be almost entirely concealed from a teacher who thinks of their task primarily as one of processing information or training in thinking skills. (Hay & Nye, 2006, p. 148)

Hence, the teacher is to (a) help children keep an open mind; (b) help children explore ways of seeing, taking into account cultural constructions; (c) encourage personal awareness; and (d) become personally aware of the social/political dimension of spirituality (Hay & Nye, 2006, pp. 149-150).

A study by Firmin and Knight (2007), further shedding light on the relationality of children's spirituality, revealed the importance of the context of the faith community, particularly with respect to fathers. Firmin and Knight (2007) followed up on a previous study (Firmin, Kuhn, Michanski, & Posten, 2005) that concluded that the role of parent is the most influential factor providing motivation for achievement in the AWANA program. Their purpose was to produce grounded theory driven to assess the effectiveness of AWANA programs: no prior studies had done so. This later phenomenological study was done 3 years post-graduation of 24 AWANA Timothy-award recipients (those who completed all four AWANA handbooks by the end of sixth

grade, in effect memorizing 310 Bible verses) and was to be followed up after 3 additional years (but was not a longitudinal study).

A purposeful sample was used to select 24 Timothy-award recipients (12 male, 12 female) in an admittedly homogeneous sample (predominately Caucasian, Evangelical Baptist, from Southern Ohio). Participants were interviewed in depth in semi-structured interviews based on protocol established by Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, and Tindell (1995) whereby the data, by induction, was coded into motifs, categories, and general themes. Four themes arose: salient AWANA influences during the participants' time in AWANA (Memories in the Making), current participant life (Look at Me Now), participant social trends from AWANA until the time of interview (Sociality: Past to Present), and participant perception of AWANA (If It Was Up To Me). Results suggested that Scripture memory was the most recurrent memory, with relationships with AWANA leaders a close second. Scripture memory was not, however, a frequent or existent discipline in the participants' lives currently, though there did seem to be increased relationship with God, desire to share His Word, and meaningful outreach to others. Most Timothy-award recipients suggested that "AWANA had insignificant impacts on their lives" (Firmin & Knight, 2007, p. 108). The study did confirm accomplishment of AWANA's goals of Scripture memory and leadership's influence on children.

Limitations of the design, by the researchers' own admission, comprised not only the homogeneous demographic sample that limited generalizability, but also possible research bias due to both researchers and participants being Evangelical Christians. For example, triangulation in the interview process could have been compromised if respondents gave answers they thought the interviewers were looking for, or if familiar

terms were presumed to mean the same thing to each party when they did not. Having a larger population with greater heterogeneity from which to sample would be valuable, as well as being careful to be as objective as possible in the interview process with definitions of terms and triangulation.

Valuable to the present study is this study's conclusion, building upon an earlier study, that a community of others (AWANA leaders, parents, friends, and leaders outside the family) is important in the spiritual formation of youth. Though it was not spelled out in this study, fathers may be part of the parental encouragement identified when respondents answered "my parents kept on encouraging me" (Firmin & Knight, 2007, p. 107).

Attachment, community, and God images. For children to understand that knowing God is a lifelong journey and act on that understanding, they need to see adults model lifelong learning and grow in their relationship with God (Stonehouse, 2001). The studies in this subsection emphasize the influence fathers or parents have on their children's image of God and how they relate to God (see Table 2.2).

Mahoney, Pargament, A. Murray-Swank, and N. Murray-Swank (2003) researched the implications of familial religiousness in marital and parent-child relationships. They were particularly interested in what they called *the sanctification of family relations*. While much research confirms the importance of religion in family life, very little research presents why or what it is specifically about religion that matters in family life.

At the outset it is important to note strengths of the study by Mahoney et al. (2003) that reveal its usefulness. For example, most prior research dealt with "individual

religious life with theology, church attendance and formal prayer” (Mahoney, 2003, p. 233). But Mahoney et al. suggested that religion is far more than abstract religious beliefs and ritual practices disconnected from the activity of daily life. Religion is very much connected; there is interface between the sacred and the secular. For some, becoming a parent is an example of the miraculous or divine spiritual nature of families, and “religion conveys [the] reciprocal message to offspring that their role in the parent-child relationship has spiritual significance” (Mahoney, 2003, p. 223). Additionally important is the intentionality that this belief creates in the family system, which manifests itself in a variety of actions. Among the many relevant outcomes were making greater personal sacrifices for the benefit of family relationships, forgiving transgressions, minimizing marital or parent-child conflicts, transmitting faith intergenerationally, deepening the sense of security and meaning of family relationships, and heightening intentionality in the family system that was communicated to the children. This finding of sanctified family relationship supports research, constructs, and instruments used by Ken Canfield (1990) and discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 4.

Mahoney et al. (2003) defined *sanctification* as the “process through which family relationships are made sacred” (p. 233). They hypothesized that sanctification has desirable implications for family life and that sanctification can occur in two ways: individuals can perceive an object as being a manifestation of one’s images, beliefs, or experiences of God (Manifestation of God), or as occurring without reference to a specific deity (Sacred Qualities).

Table 2.2

Empirical Studies on Relational Spirituality of Children: Attachment, Community, and God Concepts

Author, date, and strength	Subjects/Sample/Population	Type/Instrument	Results
Mahoney, Pargament, A. Murray-Swank, & N. Murray-Swank (2003) IS, ER	Study 1: $N = 97$ couples, most of whom viewed their marriage as having sacred qualities, believed that God is active in their marital relationship. Study 2: $N = 77$ middle-class white mothers randomly phone recruited. Study 3: $N = 152$ unmarried college students.	Correlational. Manifestation of God Scale (MG); Sacred Qualities scale (SQ).	Sanctification is associated with more adaptive functioning in marital and parent-child relationships. Higher scores on MG and SQ scales predicted more investment in marriage, less frequent marital conflict, and greater collaboration to resolve disagreements. Sanctification has psychological benefits (deeper sense of meaning in family, more secure about family relationships) and spiritual benefits (facilitating family members' personal spirituality, intergenerational transmission of faith, relationship investment).
Hall & Edwards (2002) IS, ER	Study 1: $N = 438$ collegians from private Protestant university (18-22 years old). Study 2: $N = 260$ private university, Christian college graduate program & Midwest Evangelical church Sunday school students.	Correlational. SAI, IM, (also Bori, SWBS, I/E-Revised, DSQ, NPI)	Spiritual maturity is characterized by quality of relationship with God and an awareness of God. Supported the factor structure of the SAI and new Impression Management scale.

Table Continues

Table 2.2 *Empirical Studies on Relational Spirituality of Children: Attachment, Community and God Concepts*, (continued)

Hertel & Donahue (1995) IS, ER	<i>N</i> = 3,400 mother-father-youth triads (purposeful sample based on random stratified sample by Search Institute (1983) survey of 8,000 youth, grades, and 10,000 of their parents)	Correlational. 319-item youth survey God Image; 329-item parallel parent survey.	Parallel between God-human and parent-child relationships (especially with view of God as loving vs. authoritative)—congruence between interfamilial social structure and believers' images of God. Parents' images of God reflected in youths' impressions of parenting styles which in turn predicted youths' and parents' images of God. Mothers played a larger role than fathers in religious socialization, admittedly due to spending more time and quality time with the children. Parental influence was strongest of any on children's belief formation. Fathers were apparently lacking in the religious socialization of their children.
De Roos, Miedema, & Iedema (2001) IA, ER	<i>N</i> = 27 kindergartners (36 boys, 36 girls; <i>M</i> = 63 months old) and 6 teachers in the Netherlands	Correlational. 30 minutes with children: (a) draw God; (b) open-ended questions; (c) 24-item pictorial scale of self/other; (d) 23-item closed questions; (e) doll family mother-child attachment; teachers STRS & BRS scales.	Teacher-child relationship predicted loving God concept. Mother-child attachment relationship, while connected to teacher-child relationship, did not predict God concept. Important note: Netherlands parents delegate religious training to teachers in religious schools, explaining some of the disconnect (teacher-child relation > mother-child, or parent-child, as predictor to God concept).
De Roos, Iedema, & Miedema (2001) IA, ER	<i>N</i> = 165 preschoolers (<i>M</i> = 63 months old), 107 parents, 16 teachers at 8 schools and 4 dif. religious denominations (Roman Catholic, Dutch Reformed, Orthodox Reformed, State School)	Correlational. 45 minutes with children: (a) draw God; (b) open-ended questions; (c) 24-item pictorial scale self/other; (d) 23-item closed questions; (e) doll family mother-child attachment; Teacher/parent God Concept: 3 open, 25 closed.	Parents and teachers' God concepts predictive of children's God concepts, but each in a different way. Children's God concepts did not resemble parents' more than teachers' God concepts—just different: Parents influence relational component, teachers influence content and prayer.

Table continues

Table 2.2 *Empirical Studies on Relational Spirituality of Children: Attachment, Community and God Concepts*, (continued)

Dickie, Ajega, Kobylak, & Nixon (2006) IS, ER	<i>N</i> = 132: Young adults (40 males, 92 females), 18-22 years old (<i>M</i> = 19 years old), primarily Protestant or Evangelical, Caucasian college students.	Quantitative mixed method. Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) and 6-item measure of God's perceived involvement in their lives (religiosity scale). Follow-up interviews rated parents, God, and selves on scales of closeness, nurturing, power, and punishing-judging.	Based on developmental attachment theory—nurturing parents affect young adults' self-concepts, image of a nurturing God. Children perceived God to be like both parents. God nurturing when parents (especially father) perceived as nurturing; God powerful when parents (especially mother) perceived as powerful. Parents' qualities more important predictor of children's God concept than children's self-concept.
Hood (2003) IA, EL	6 kindergarten children and all those involved in their faith (Conservative Protestant Christian denomination) community.	Qualitative. Interviews and observation. Five influences observed: family, faith community, broader community, the child as an active participant, and the study as context.	Context cannot be ignored in understanding children's religious concepts. Power of talking <i>with</i> children not <i>to</i> . Family is the primary influence on a child's development, and the child is affected by the parents' interactions with the faith community.
Rizzuto (1979) IS, EL/R	20 patients (10 male, 10 female)	Qualitative. Directed open-ended questionnaire (God Questionnaire); interviews.	Psychoanalytical case study evidence of a correlation between a person's experiences with parent and a person's view of God or God concepts
Barrett & Richert (2003) IS, ER	<i>N</i> = 52 (3- to 6-year-olds) American Protestant children	Quantitative experimental (QE).	Children appear capable and are cognitively equipped or have preparedness to understand (with more complexity than thought) some properties of God that differ from human properties in a non-anthropomorphic way. Strong correlation ($r = .63$) between age and answering "crackers" implies that, as children age, they understand that humans can be mistaken. But when asked about God knowing what was in the box, they answered "rocks," implying that God is not fooled.

Table continues

Table 2.2 *Empirical Studies on Relational Spirituality of Children: Attachment, Community and God Concepts, (continued)*

Kirkpatrick & Shaver (1990, 1999) IA/W, EL	<i>N</i> = 213 (33 male, 180 female); mail survey sent to 670 of more than 1,000.	Correlational. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religious Orientation scales (Allport & Ross, 1967) (Hazan & Shaver (1987)--Newspaper survey regarding parents, current romantic relationships, childhood parental relationship. Loving and Controlling God Images scales (Benson & Spilka, 1973).	Aspects of adult religiosity (belief about God, relation with God) can be predicted via attachment classification and parental religiousness. Avoidant as children are more religious as adults; lends to a compensating view.
Sharon (2005) IS, ER	<i>N</i> = 64 toddlers: Group 1 <i>M</i> = 36.4 months, Group 2 <i>M</i> = 30.7 months; Caucasian middle class.	Experimental. Used model rooms as symbolic aids in retrieving hidden toys in life-size rooms (referents).	By 3 years old children's sensitivity to intentionality can contribute to their symbolic understanding and development. Adults clearly and intentionally communicating the intent of a symbol to its referent aids greatly in the success of children understanding that connection and solving problems.

Note: Strength of internal validity (I) for each research article is indicated on the table by an "S" (strong), "A" (acceptable), and "W" (weak). Generalizability ("E" for external Validity) is "R" (fairly representative), "L" (limited/less than an author's intended target audience, and "N" (not generalizable). For example IA, EL is Acceptable internal validity, Limited Generalizability (external validity).

Mahoney et al. (2003) used the Manifestation of God (MG) and Sacred Qualities (SQ) scales in a three-part study. Study 1 (1999) was comprised of couples ($N = 97$, selected randomly via community childbirth records; $MG \alpha = .97$; $SQ \alpha = .87$), most of whom viewed their “marriage as having sacred qualities and believed that God was active in their marital relationship” (Mahoney, et al., 2003). Study 2 (2000) was of middle-class white mothers ($N = 77$, selected randomly via community childbirth records; $MG \alpha = .98$; $SQ \alpha = .74$) randomly recruited by phone. Study 3 (2002) was of 152 unmarried college students ($MG \alpha = .95$; $SQ \alpha = .90$).

Pertinent to this review, their study found that higher scores on the Manifestation of God and Sacred Qualities scales predicted several general areas of adaptive functioning in both marital and parent-child relationships (Mahoney et al., 2003, p. 232). Study 1 suggested that a sanctification of marriage is related to multiple aspects of better marital functioning. Study 2 suggested a sanctification of the parenting role and practices.

One limitation of the study was that it focused only on mothers, with no mention of fathers save in use of the word *parents* (Mahoney et al., 2003, p. 228). This tendency to leave out fathers supports the need for this current review and research regarding paternal-child spirituality. Another limitation was that the sample procurement was not clear. Presumably Studies 1 and 2 were done in the community of Bowling Green, Ohio, and Study 3 at the University of Bowling Green.

A study by Hall and Edwards (1996, 2002) in developing their Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) brought to light important spiritual relational issues. Though the SAI pertained to adults, its presupposition—that spiritual maturity is the quality of

relationship with God and awareness of God—is important for all ages. That is, this section deals with children’s relational spirituality, yet that spirituality, which is relationally based, is greatly formed by a parent’s or significant adult’s growing and lifelong relationship with and awareness of God. Hall and Edwards (1996) hypothesized that maturity in awareness of God is related to, moderately correlated with, but distinct from relational maturity or quality of relationship with God (p. 238). That is, *awareness of God* (degree of a person’s awareness of God’s communication and presence in his or her life) is moderately related to *relational quality* (different levels of relationship with God from an object-relations perspective).

Hall and Edwards (2002) suggested a use of the SAI would be to assess spiritual leaders in the church and, though not officially titled thus, certainly fathers are to be leaders in the church. In essence, the SAI is based on object relations (attachment theory, God representation/image theory), which indicates that “one’s relational/emotional development is mirrored in one’s relationship to the Divine, however that is perceived by the individual” (Hall & Edwards, 2002, p. 341). From a Christian perspective, Hall and Edwards (1996) posited that Mark 12:28-31 supports the contention that, if the essence of “human beings is relational, then spiritual maturity should be viewed in that light” (p. 235). “And as individuals grow in their spiritual maturity, they become more aware that life and religious experience are . . . woven together” (Hall & Edwards, 1996, p. 237). This awareness is a capacity to develop an intentionality of sorts.

In a 1996 study, Hall and Edwards developed the SAI to measure this spiritual maturity: awareness of God and relational maturity (instability, grandiosity, realistic acceptance, and defensiveness/disappointment). In 2002, Hall and Edwards further

evaluated the SAI and added a scale called the Impression Management (IM) scale to assess respondent bias or “illusory spiritual health” (p. 342). Results from their 2002 study supported the factor structure of the SAI, and its new Impression Management scale and correlations with other scales (Spiritual Well Being, Bell Object Relations Inventory, etc.) confirmed construct validity of the SAI (Hall & Edwards, 2002, p. 341). The reliability of the subscales can be seen in Table 3.

In addition to modeling relationships with God and family sanctification, God images and parenting styles point to the relational spirituality of the paternal-child dyad. Parents’ images of God are reflected in youths’ impressions of parenting styles, which in turn predict youths’ and parents’ images of God. Hertel and Donahue (1995), whose study was based on what was known as Durkheim’s metaphoric parallelism, provided a staple reference in much of the God-image or God-concept research and how it relates to parent-child interaction. Durkheim was a founding figure of modern sociology and anthropology. He held that religion “creates and reinforces acceptance of prevailing values, norms, and social order” (Hertel & Donahue, 1995, p. 186). This collective view, or metaphoric parallelism, holds that “theistic assertions are metaphoric representations of social facts, that is . . . there is a parallel between the characteristics attributed to the gods and real properties of the social world” (Hertel & Donahue, 1995, p. 186). Hertel and Donahue suggested that, in a related way, children’s image of God should reflect their families’ (a smaller social unit) religious concepts.

Durkheim’s thesis was tested for parallels between parenting styles reported by children and the images of God held by both generations (Hertel & Donahue, 1995, p. 186). That is, if the hypothesis held, then “social conditions within the family should

approximate the nature of the bonds that believers hold for their relationship with God” (Hertel & Donahue, 1995, p. 189). Of the six hypotheses emanating from this, only three are relevant to this review: Hypothesis 1 was that parents’ images of God influence their parenting styles; Hypothesis 2 was that children’s reports of loving or authoritarian parenting styles correlate with the child’s corresponding God image; and Hypothesis 3 was that children’s loving or authoritarian God images correlate with corresponding parental God images.

Hertel and Donahue (1995) surveyed 3,400 father-mother-child triads, selected from a larger nationwide sample (8,000 youths in Grades 5 through 9 and their 10,000 parents) of surveys completed by Search Institute (1982-1983). They further restricted analysis to fifth to sixth graders and their two-parent families of six major Christian denominations (Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, and Roman Catholic). They measured God images, parenting styles, and social class, while employing an overall least squares regression to test Hypothesis 1 (the parents’ influence on children’s images of God).

Their hypotheses held; therefore they concluded that Durkheim’s metaphoric parallelism holds. Parents’ images of God were reflected in youths’ impressions of parenting styles (Hypothesis 1), hence predicting youths’ God images (Hypothesis 2); and parental God images correlated to youths’ God images (Hypothesis 3). In effect, as fathers and mothers were seen as loving, those parents saw God as loving. Fathers and sons tended to see God as more authoritarian compared to mothers and daughters, but nonetheless fathers saw God as more loving than authoritarian. Mothers also seemed to play a larger role than fathers in socializing even the paternal God images of their

children, which seems to support the notion that mothers spend more time (quality and quantity) with their children. One limitation of the study was the possible misleading of a child's report of a parenting style.

Children need to be with other people who perceive God as friend in order to see God positively and imagine that a personal relationship with God is a possibility for them. Bellous, de Roos, and Summey (2004) summarized studies by de Roos, Iedema, and Miedema (2001, 2003) and others regarding the formation of God concepts among kindergarteners based on several premises: God concepts are formed early in life; young children spend a lot of time with parents and teachers; early attachment is proposed to have stronger influence on God concepts of young children than on adolescents or adults; and entering kindergarten is a major transition, creating potential secondary attachment (Bellous et al., 2004, p. 210).

Two studies in particular by de Roos, Miedema, and Iedema are presented here. They were reported in the same year, but with slightly different emphases. Both studies, like many noted in this review, tended to be either maternally or parentally based, pointing once again to the need for paternally based research.

De Roos, Miedema, and Iedema (2001) researched the development of God concepts among young children as influenced by their teachers and mothers. With a sample size of 72 kindergartners (36 boys and 36 girls; mean age 63 months), and six of their teachers, de Roos, Miedema, and Iedema conducted a quantitative correlational study based on 30-minute sessions with the children and instruments pertaining to Student Teacher relationship (STRS, $\alpha = .92$ to $.77$) and Behavior Rating Scales (BRS, $\alpha = .93$ to $.68$) that the teachers completed. The children drew pictures of God, answered

open-ended questions about the nature of God, completed a pictorial scale regarding themselves and others, and answered a 23-item structured questionnaire regarding God's characteristics. They also, using doll toys, were asked to complete or describe an ending scenario to three attachment-related story beginnings (this was video-taped). The inter-coder reliability for this procedure was quite high at $r = .82$ ($p < .0005$).

What de Roos, Miedema, and Iedema (2001) found was that teacher-child relationships predicted loving God concepts, whereas mother-child attachment did not predict God concepts (though the mother-child attachments did connect with teacher-child relationships). This supported their contention that, according to attachment theory a la Kirkpatrick (1999), the caregiver-child relationship quality predicts God concepts, and this relationship is influenced by maternal attachment, which affects concepts of self and other. In short, the "child-teacher relationship had a positive effect on a loving God concept via the self-concept" (de Roos, Miedema, & Iedema, 2001, p. 614), which was based on the health of the mother-child attachment.

Two important findings of the study are particularly relevant to this review. First, a child's God concept paralleled those God concepts of important relationships (with teacher and parents). Second, the authors admitted that a possible reason why, in their study, the child's God concept mirrored the teachers' and not the mothers' was because many of the children (62.5%) came from non-religious homes and the teachers (of whom 79% of the sample were in religious schools) were the only source of a God concept. This, then, brings up a point central to this current study. De Roos, Miedema, and Iedema (2001) found that parents in the Netherlands (where they conducted this study), while they did stress religious education, delegated that training to the schools,

and hence the child's God concepts reflected the teachers' more than the parents'. This seems not unlike many researchers' comments about Americans' approach within the broad range of Christendom.

This also coincides with another study by de Roos, Iedema, and Miedema (2001; note the different order of the authors' names between their two 2001 studies). This quantitative study was done with 165 preschoolers, 16 teachers, and 107 parents. Similar methods and measures were used, but unique to this study was looking at teacher and parental influence while considering denominations. Important here is their finding that the God concepts of children were influenced by both teachers and parents, but in different ways. Parents influenced children's God concepts relationally and teachers influenced children's God concepts with respect to content and prayer. Again, the point was made that parents tended to delegate this religious teaching to others.

Another important finding was the relationship between the teacher-child relationship and how the child viewed prayer. This is meaningful because teachers are significant adults from whom other adults can see the value of influence spiritually. Namely, the more teachers in this study expressed that they viewed God as friend, father, or someone who wants the best for them, the more the children had a biblical view of God (God is in heaven; God performs miracles; God is Jesus) and the more the children were inclined to pray. The more authoritarian, strict, or traditional the teachers were in their view of God, the more the children's God concept was of a powerful and caring God but the less inclined they were to pray. A limitation of the study, as of many, was its neglect of the paternal influence or assumption that it is not key to children's self-concept, which many studies in this review showed to be important.

A paramount implication from these studies and others summarized by Bellous et al. (2004) supports the current study's interest that parents, especially fathers, "must grasp the significance of their encounters with the children and the influence of their own God concepts on the development of a child's attachment to God" (p. 201) and their own self-concept. Also, the more fathers, mothers, and others stress the value of traditional goals for religious education, the more their children perceive God as a powerful, helping, and loving entity. Yet who can be more attentive than the father and mother to the individual child's experiences or know better what spiritual things to teach him or her and when? How aware and intentional are fathers or church leaders in this task? As has been presented in various studies and again comes to the fore here, people's view of God parallels their images of their early parent-child relationships.

A study by Dickie, Ajega, Kobylak, and Nixon (2006) studied the dynamics of young adult God concepts with respect to fathers, mothers, and the self. While they focused on young adults, their discussion of a child's perception of God shaped their research assumptions. Children perceived God to be like both parents. Parental qualities (such as nurturing or judging) were considered more important predictors of children's God concepts than were the children's self-concepts. Based on this developmental attachment theory, nurturing parents affect young adults' self-concepts, their image of a nurturing God. For example, when children's fathers were nurturing and mothers were powerful in early childhood, the children perceived God to be powerful and nurturing. In later childhood, children seemed to see God more like their father in early childhood and more like their mother or both parents in middle childhood (Dickie, Eshleman, Merasco, Shepard, Vander Wilt, & Johnson, 1997). Regarding young adults, Dickie, Ajega, et al.

(2006) suggested that God concepts seemed to be based more on life events or self-concepts. So why is there a difference in God-concept predictors between children and young adults? Dickie, Ajega, et al. (2006) hypothesized that children develop a relationship to God, or a God concept, as compensation or a substitute attachment for a lacking parental relationship. As they mature, young adults are more separate from parents and their God concept is more based on self-concept than parent concepts (Dickie, Ajega, et al. 2006, p. 58). More specifically, they hypothesized that young adults' self-esteem and self-concept would best predict their God concepts, as they are intervening variables between perceptions of parents and God.

A sample of young adults ($N = 132$; 40 males, 92 females; 18-22 years old; $M = 19$ years old), primarily Protestant or Evangelical, Caucasian college students completed the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) and a 6-item measure of God's perceived involvement in their lives (religiosity scale). In follow-up interviews the young adults rated their parents, God, and selves on scales of closeness, nurturing, power, and punishing-judging. An overall self-esteem score on the TSCS was used because its reliability and validity were considered strong yet the internal consistency of the individual scales had been challenged (Dickie, Ajega, et al, 2006, p. 60).

Dickie, Ajega, et al. (2006) found that men said their mothers were more influential than their fathers in developing self-esteem by way of nurture. They saw God as nurturing. Women said that their mothers and fathers created a model of nurture and power and saw God as nurturing and powerful. Male children, more than females, saw God as a punishing/judging parent. Adding to this current study, Dickie, Ajega, et al. found that God does not fulfill a substitutionary attachment role, but more of a

compensatory or supplementary role. Had the hypothesis of substitutionary attachment been supported, young adults' closeness to parents and God would have been negative or inverse; closeness to God would have substituted for a separation from parents, but this was not found to be the case.

One limitation of the study that the authors mentioned was that they were basing some of their substitute attachment hypothesis on prior research (Dickie, Eshelman, et al., 1997) that pertained to divorced or separated parents. Though they ran a multivariate analysis for father absence and found it did not support substitutionary theory, suggesting fathers did not have an influence, prior research by McLanahan and Booth (1989) and Blankenhorn (1995) greatly shaped the landscape to point to strong negative influences from paternal absence. The authors did note they were surprised by the findings that fathers were less influential than mothers in predicting closeness to God. Nonetheless, their study was very balanced in suggesting that the complementary nature of God concepts and the strong maternal influence on them might be due to the time mothers spend with their children and the relationships they build. This, however, has direct implications for the current study with respect to the role of the father and his intentional, greater involvement with his children on spiritual matters.

Hood (2004) expanded on the concepts of faith community in the spiritual lives of children in studying children's concepts of God. It would be useful up front to mention both limitations and strengths as they couch the importance of this study in the review. First, a limitation is that, as a qualitative study with a smaller sample size, it has limited generalizability, though the findings may be meaningful. Despite this limitation, the more research that is done at these levels, the greater the depth of insight is available. Hood's

study is yet another opportunity to expand the work of Coles (1990), Hay and Nye (2006), and others.

Second, a strength of Hood's (2004) study is the depth of insight regarding the accompanying effect of parents as well as the faith community and broader community upon children's spiritual growth and God image. Critical to Hood's study is the understanding that context is a significant factor, and not individualized growth alone, as so many stage theorists have influenced so many to think of how their children grow spiritually. Rather, or additionally, family is the primary influence on a child's development, and the child is affected by the parents' interactions with the faith community.

Hood's (2004) qualitative case study involved six kindergarten children who were all part of the same faith community. The six kindergarten children made use of all those involved in their faith community—the parents, Bible class teachers, and children's pastors of a conservative Protestant Christian denomination. Five influences were observed: family, faith community, broader community, the child as an active participant, and the study as context. Interviews and observation were used to get a contextually deep understanding that had, according to Hood, been missing in prior research (p. 233).

Drawing on the contextualist perspective of Johnson (1989), Westerhoff (1976), Rogoff (1990), and Bronfenbrenner (1979), Hood (2004) concluded that the faith community context cannot be ignored when attempting to understand children's religious concepts of God (p. 233). Adding to this community concept was a conclusion from Hood's (1996) earlier study, which researchers Boyatzis and Janicki (2003) noted as well: children influence their parents in spiritual growth.

In yet another study focusing on object relation and attachment theory to understand how people come to possess actual belief in the existence of God, Rizzuto (1979) asserted that every

human being constructs a concept for God so that there is no such thing as a human being without a God concept once made, a God concept cannot be made to disappear, it can only be repressed, transformed or used. (p. 41; see also Bellous et al., 2004, p. 203)

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, it is understood that “men who suppress the truth . . . are without excuse” (Rom 1:18, 20) “because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them” (Rom 1:19). The importance here is the apparent correlation between one’s experience of one’s parents and one’s view of God. God is the ultimate parent, and children learn via experience with their parents to trust God and see God as dependable, as able to meet needs, and as giving attention (Bellous et al., 2004, p. 204). For the child, his parents are the biggest visible beings that he experiences, being bigger and mightier than he (Rizzuto, 1979, p. 50). Once formed, the God concept cannot disappear, but only “be repressed, transformed, or used” (Rizzuto, 1979, p. 90). These concepts of God also greatly shape one’s self-concept and are refined throughout life.

Rizzuto’s (1979) case studies, based on years of clinical study using her God Questionnaire, also known as God/Family Questionnaires, provided evidence of a correlation between a person’s experiences with one’s parent and a person’s view of God, or God concepts. Rizzuto explained the value of case study in areas where quantitative measures are used, this case being no exception. Conclusions from statistically generalized studies may be “statistically correct yet not only lack clinical specificity . . .

[but] not do justice to large numbers of patients who have very complex and painful relations with their Gods [sic]” (Rizzuto, 1979, p. 5). Twenty adults admitted in clinical care were asked to fill out a questionnaire (the God Questionnaire) as if it were part of normal admittance. They and their family members were also interviewed in order to gather patient history (medical, psychiatric, religious, etc.). Accordingly, though no statistical reliabilities were reported for the questionnaire, it had some respectable level of internal reliability among the items, which were based on heavily related theories that cohere: psychoanalytic, object relations, and self-psychological. Face validity was high, as the items clearly related (content-related validity) to one’s family and relationship with God, and were corroborated via patient and family interview biography triangulation (Tisdale, 1999, p. 393).

Rizzuto’s (1979) work was balanced and objective. She stated aptly,

logic does not permit me to go beyond a psychological level of inference Those . . . who believe are unshakable in their conviction that God is a very live person. To understand them I must accept that belief as a reality to them. But as a researcher I will not make pronouncements appropriate for philosophers and theologians. (p. 4).

Since parents are so significant in the formation of their child’s God concept, to what extent do parents act as anthropomorphic examples? Barrett and Richert (2003) suggested that, while anthropomorphism may have its place, there is actually a very high level of what they call *preparedness*. This is akin to Coles (1990), Hay and Nye (2006), and others’ notion that children are highly spiritual and have much to contribute in and of themselves to their God concept. Adults are significant in the process, but children bring something to the table—namely, preparedness.

For many years, scholars and practitioners of religion and researchers thought that children conceptualize God in the same way that they conceptualize humans. Children do deal with spiritual issues at a far more complex level than adults often think, and preparedness, not anthropomorphism, is at the center of this. Yet Barrett and Richert (2003) suggested that children may be cognitively equipped or prepared to understand some properties of God in a non-anthropomorphic way. In short, their hypothesis was that children do not specifically use anthropomorphic reasoning in their early-developing conceptual structures to reason about God, but are cognitively equipped—through a predisposition or preparedness—to conceive of God in a non-anthropomorphic way.

Barrett and Richert (2003) stated that previous extensive “mind theory” research showed that “2-3 year olds have difficulty understanding beliefs as potentially different from person to person and potentially false. By age five most children understand that people may have false beliefs” (p. 304). If this is the case, then attributing to God what children attribute to adults or others would raise theological thorns: children would move from assuming God’s beliefs are infallible like mom’s or dad’s, to assuming that God’s beliefs are fallible like mom’s or dad’s. That is, children would move from theologically correct concepts of God to theologically inaccurate concepts. But if God has wired or *prepared* mankind, starting at a young age, to understand concepts of God that are unlike their concepts of mankind, then the dilemma is explained.

Barrett and Richert’s (2003) study consisted of 3- to 6-year-old American Protestant children ($N = 52$) using a cracker box filled with crackers or rocks. If 3- to 4-year-olds saw rocks put into the boxes, they felt their mother would say rocks were in the box and not crackers, believing that their mother could not be fooled. However, when

rocks were placed in the boxes in view of 5- to 6-year-olds, they said their mothers would say there were crackers in the box, knowing that their mothers could be fooled but God could not be fooled. The study revealed an $r = .63$, showing strong correlation between age and expecting the mother to answer *crackers*, implying that, as a child ages, he or she understands that humans can be mistaken. But when asked about God knowing what was in the box, they answered *rocks*; God would not be fooled. The correlation between age and God knowing if there were rocks in the box was weak at $r = .09$. That is, age did not affect knowing what God would know.

Accordingly, children appear capable of reasoning about many divine properties that differ from human properties and knowing the difference between human and divine qualities such as omniscience, omnipotence, and infallibility. Children deal with spiritual issues at a far more complex level than adults think and preparedness, not anthropomorphism, is at the center of this. Children may be cognitively equipped or prepared to understand some properties of God in a non-anthropomorphic way.

It seems that, regarding God's power in creativity, God's knowledge in mental attributes, and God's immortality, children are wired or predisposed to being able to discriminate between what is of God and what is of man or nature. That is, perhaps God designed people with early-emerging biases to conceptualize God.

Though not a limitation of the study per se, it would have been useful to find out what non-churched children would think. For example, some children may not have an exposure to spiritual things at all, given the family context in which they grew up, and it may be that nothing religious is in their plausibility structures. Perhaps seeing what they would say in the cracker box and rocks experiment would be informative. One would not

expect anthropomorphism to be a developing principle for children whose parents never uttered the word *God* to them. Some cultures do not even have a personal God concept (e.g., Buddhism) to consider fallible or not like another person. But what would such a study reveal, if preparedness is a widespread cognitive predisposition?

To their credit, the authors provided a deep literature review of previous thought on anthropomorphism—including Piaget (1951), Elkind (1970), and others—and recent research that counters anthropomorphic-only theory. In a balanced approach, they did not say that anthropomorphism is non-existent (it can fill in gaps), but that it is unnecessary and does not fully explain the development of children’s concepts of God. They also did not say that inevitably all God concepts come to fruition via preparedness, because there is also context, and it may be that parents do not nurture or teach a particular principle to reinforce a God concept, just as an athlete with *preparedness* for a certain skill may not develop fully without mentoring.

Barrett and Richert (2003) were careful to point out that some might unnecessarily conclude that the widespread principle of preparedness is some “kind of natural disposition for acquiring them [God concepts]” (p. 311). They did not say that epistemological structures precede metaphysical reality, but the other way around. That is, “wouldn’t God [who does in fact exist] design people with early-emerging biases to conceptualize God” (Barrett & Richert, 2003, p. 311)? The authors left this area up to theologians.

Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990, 1999) examined a compensation hypothesis model with respect to childhood attachments, religious beliefs, and God images. Compensation suggests that aspects of adult religiosity (such as belief about God and relationship with

God) can be predicted via attachment classification and parental religiousness. For example, avoidant attached children would tend to be more religious as adults.

The study comprised a sample of 213 respondents derived from a prior mail survey of 1000—concerning love—solicited in a newspaper by Hazan and Shaver (1987). Of that 1,000-plus respondent survey, 670 responses involved in the analysis were solicited for the Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990) study, with 290 saying they would respond. Of those 290, 213 (180 female, 33 male) answered measures retrospectively, assessing their childhood-parent attachments as well as their current religious concepts and participation.

Using multiple regression analysis, Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990) found that various aspects of adult religiosity, especially beliefs about God (God images and concepts) and relationship with God, can be predicted from childhood attachment classifications and parental religiousness. Of children with relatively non-religious parents, those with childhood avoidance (with mother) were more religious as adults than those described as secure or anxious (ambivalent). These same respondents (those with avoidant childhood attachment) also reported higher rates of sudden religious conversions in adolescent and adult years, regardless of parental religiosity. This suggests that God and religion are compensatory for people with avoidant attachment backgrounds. That is, God is a substitute attachment figure for them.

A feature of this study and, seemingly, most studies of this nature, and noted by Lamb (1987), is that paternal attachment issues are important in themselves but neglected outright—or minimally, subsumed—in parent studies, unlike mothers, who often are the focus of research variables. Hence a focus of this current research is to counter the

deficit. Hence Kirkpatrick and Shaver's (1990) study, as with many, seems to focus only on maternal attachment.

One limitation specific to this study is there was no mention of validity or reliability of instruments. Given that the authors criticized psychoanalytic studies due to lack of quantitative operationalization and method, this is something they should consider. Another issue is that they mentioned a highly skewed female response (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990, p. 331), which further supports this author's contention that paternal research needs to be continued. In fact, per Acock (1978), fathers have greater influence than mothers on the religious aspect of their children's lives. Also, orthodoxy does hopefully yield orthopraxy, and within the Protestant and Evangelical Christian tradition, conversion is ultimately a function of God's intervention despite the relationships one has with one's mother or father. That is, it is not one thing, such as attachment styles, that predicts religious outcome, but a complete matrix of relationships (parents, family, extended family, faith community, etc.). This idea seems to be lost or at least not accounted for in Kirkpatrick and Shaver's (1990) study, as in many.

Despite these shortcomings, Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990) are to be commended for using measures to get at relationships with God and not, as in many studies, simply a deistic, pantheistic (p. 321) or moralistic affinity toward religion. Since attachment theory is based on relationship, finding those with relationships to God (a personal being) is congruent with the attachment style prediction.

A final empirical study, experimental in nature, sheds light on children's sensitivity to intentionality and symbols that adults might use in relationship to them. Sharon's (2005) study was in the area of cognitive development and, though she did not

address spiritual issues per se, the study revealed much on the developmental, cognitive, and relational aspects of how children benefit from significant adults' intentional use of symbols. Due to the study's uniqueness, more description up front is given in order to understand the brief critique of the study.

Adults recognize, comprehend, and use various symbols daily (for example, flags represent countries and companies have logos). Symbols are often physical resemblances of their referents (pictures, photographs, etc.). But this is not always the case; in other words, perceptual similarities are not necessary for symbolism. But what is needed for a symbol to be viable is that the intended referent be clear to the people involved. So what constitutes a symbol is not the physical form but its intention. That is, symbols are intrinsically intentional. And for adults they are inherently intentional, but Sharon's study asked what role intentionality plays in children's understanding of symbols.

In general, at various stages of development, children deal with symbols differently. For example if a toy is hidden in a room and pictures are provided to show where the toy is, a 2-year-old will search "enthusiastically but incorrectly" (Sharon, 2005, p. 3); a 2- and-a-half year old will understand the representation but still perform poorly; and a 3-year-old, with detailed instructions, can find the toy based on the representations. The issue is not remembering the symbolically conveyed information, but recognizing the existence of the representational relation. Yet much of the prior research Sharon (2005) covered suggests that "young children are so attuned to intentional cues they are able to infer an agent's goal without ever seeing it realized" (p. 166). Sharon hypothesized that children's insight into a difficult symbolic relation might be increased by explicitly emphasizing (a) the experimenter's "communicative intent" to impart information via the

artifact and (b) the artifact's "intentional origins" and "intended function" (p. 166). In short, it is not enough to provide symbols and give directions. But if the adult provides the symbols and tells the child that the symbols were intentionally made to represent the situation and how, then greater association and problem solving occurs. How does Sharon's study relate to this current study? The key issue researched here is the adult's communication of the intention of the symbol to the child. This author suggests that this is very instructive, given God concepts, paternal-child attachment, and the like, in how fathers' involvement in their children's spiritual formation can improve. Such implications are discussed in Chapter 6.

The subjects of Sharon's (2005) study were 64 children divided into two groups of equal size and equal boy-girl distribution. Group 1's mean age was 36.4 months (range 35.5-38.0) and Group 2's mean age was 30.7 (range 29.6-32.4). Two Winnie-the-Pooh dolls were hidden, one in the full-scale room and one in the same place in a model room. Two 1:4 scale models of a room were provided—one with high similarity (all matching materials) and one with low similarity (different materials). The five steps to preparing the children for the study reveal the intentionality aspect:

1. Orientation of the models and instructions;
2. Introduction of the model in two ways—for the control group, a standard room ("Little Bears room"; Sharon, 2005, p. 169); and for the experimental group, an intentionality room ("I made something to help you find Big Bear"; Sharon, 2005, p. 169);
3. Collection of model parts and placement of them near life-size parts;
4. Return of model parts;

5. Placement for the trial.

Finally, the children were given the test to find the hidden bear.

The results were as the hypothesis predicted. The children in the intentional condition had success in finding the toy without help over 57% of the time, versus only 31% to 36% (young and older group, respectively) in the standard condition. A mixed method ANOVA was conducted on the number of errorless retrievals. “Results show main effects of condition, $F(1,56) = 5.92, p < .05$, and retrieval type, $F(1,56) = 78.85, p < .0001$, qualified by an interaction between them, $F(1,56) = 5.64, p < .05$ ” (Sharon, 2005, p. 171). The more intentional the adult was about communicating the symbol’s relationship to the intended referent, the greater the ability of the child to understand, and in this case find the bear in the life-size room based on the model room. It was routine intentional communication concerning the model, that is, it was a symbol made and intended to help them find the bear, that made the difference in success.

Instruments. Several instruments and methods used in the domain of relational spirituality of children are placed in Table 2.3. The bulk of these instruments were either frequently used in the domain research or would be worth considering using in part, in whole, or in combination for related future research.

Table 2.3

Instruments and Methods Regarding Relational Spirituality

Author, date, instrument	Factors measured, number of items	Internal consistency	Intended respondents
Boyatzis & Janicki, (2003), Diary	Diary method	.70	Mothers and fathers
Mahoney, (2003), Manifestations of God scales	Parenting as manifestation of God; sanctification	.95-.98	College-age students and adults
Mahoney (2003), Sacred attributes	Parents' perception of sacred qualities of God	.74-.90	College-age students and adults
Hall & Edwards (1996, 2002), Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI)	Awareness of God (AOG) - 19 items Disappointment (DIS) - 7 items Realistic Acceptance (RA) - 7 items Grandiosity (GRA) - 7 items Instability (INS) - 9 items Impression management (IMP) - 5 items	.95 .90 .83 .73 .84 .77	Church leaders
Bell et al. (1986), Bell Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (BORI)	Alienation (ALN) - 45 items Insecure Attachment (IA) Egocentricity (EGC) Social Incompetence (SI)	.9 .82 .78 .79	College-age students and adults
Ellison (1983), Spiritual Well Being (SWB) Scale	Spiritual Well Being (SWB): Religious Well-Being (RWB) - 10 items Existential Well-Being (EWB) - 10 items	.89 .87 .78	Adults
Gorsuch & McPherson (1989), Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Revised	Intrinsic (I) Socially-oriented extrinsic (Es) Extrinsic personally (Ep)	.83 .58 .57	College-age students and adults

Table Continues

Table 2.3 *Instruments and Methods Regarding Relational Spirituality* (continued)

Raksin & Terry (1988), Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI)	Authority Self-Sufficiency Superiority Exhibitionism Exploitativeness Vanity Entitlement	.73 .63 .54 .50 .52 .50 .64	College-age students and adults
Andrews et al. (1993), Defense Style Questionnaire	(40 items)	.90	College-age students and adults
Rizzuto (1979), God Questionnaire	God Questionnaire - 45 items	n/a	Psychoanalytical clinic patients
Benson, Williams, & Johnson (1987), Young Adolescents and Their Parents.	Youth: 6-item God as love, 3- item God as authority; Parent: 4-item God as love, 2- item God as authority	n/a	Youth in grades 5-9 and their parents
Pianta (1996), Student Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS)	Conflict - 10 items Closeness - 5 items Dependency - 8 items	.92 .79 .77	Teachers and kindergarteners
Haltiwanger (1989), Behavioral Rating Scale (BRS)	Behavioral manifestations of self-esteem - 7 items Involved - 5 items Positive emotions - 3 items	.93 .89 .68	4- to 7-year-olds
Dickie et al. (1997), God Concept Questionnaire	Children's concept of God: Loving God - 5 items Punishing God - 7 items	.76 .71	4- to 7-year-olds
Verschueren & Marcoen (1999), Attachment Story Completion Task	Mother-child attachment, intercoder reliability	.82	Kindergarteners and their mothers
Dickie, Ajega, Kobylak, & Nixon (2006), Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS)	TSCS - 25 items Interview on adjectives	n/a	Liberal arts church affiliated college students
Barrett & Richert (2003), Cracker box and rocks experiment	Quasi-experimental	n/a	3- to 6-year-olds

Summary of Domain: Relational Spiritual Formation of Children

At the outset of this section, the question asked was, how do parents influence the spiritual formation of their children? Accordingly, two issues were addressed by reviewing theory and empirical research: children's relational spirituality itself, and parent's involvement in that spirituality.

Although theory pertaining to the spiritual formation of children varies, some points to the relational aspect of their spirituality. Extant theory, born out of recent research, points to a deep, cooperative, and relational spirituality that children possess (Coles, 1990; Hay & Nye, 2006), and to God concepts being derived from parental views of God (Rizzuto, 1979). Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1979; Karen, 1990, 1998; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990), ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and social dynamic concepts of cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978) provide depth to this theory of relational spirituality.

Empirical research into this subject has increased recently and suggests that children are highly spiritual and that their spirituality is relationally nurtured (Hay & Nye, 2006). They are co-pilgrims in a spiritual journey (Coles, 1990), co-constructionists in a bi-directional conversation with their parents (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003; Firmin & Knight, 2007). Because spirituality is relational (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002), in order for children to understand that knowing God is a lifelong journey and to live it out, they need to see adults model this lifelong learning and grow in their own relationship with God (Mahoney et al., 2003).

Because parents are so essential in this relational spiritual development modeling, their parenting styles have significant effects as well. Parents' images of God are

reflected in youths' impressions of parenting styles, which in turn predict youths' and parents' images of God (Hertel & Donahue, 1995). Additionally, because it is important to display a healthy relationship with God, children need to be with others who perceive God as friend (Bellous et al., 2004) so that they may sense a personal relationship with God is possible for them as well. Accordingly, children's views of God parallel their images of their early parent-child relationships (Dickie, 2006; Hood, 2004; Rizzuto, 1979), though children seem to have in their spirituality and cognitive abilities a far greater ability to comprehend things of God than most give them credit for (Barrett & Richert, 2003). Finally, children are highly sensitive, even at a very young age, to the intentionality of adults in their actions and their use of symbols with respect to referents (Sharon, 2005). Applying this to parents' involvement in the relational spiritual formation of children, this is yet another way that intentionality plays a major role as parents relate to their children.

A key instrument in assessing relational spirituality is Hall and Edwards (1996, 2002) Spiritual Assessment Inventory. Though it is tailored to adults, it is nonetheless useful in assessing paternal spiritual maturity, which according to research will be important in what relationship fathers model to their children. Accordingly, this instrument was used in this current research and discussed in Chapter 4 as well.

Review of Relevant Literature on Paternal Intentional Involvement

Thus far the relational spiritual nature of children has been discussed in both theory and research. It has been suggested that children (and all humans, for that matter) are not only spiritual but relationally so, and that fathers have been sidelined in the

research pertaining to parents' influence on their children's development, even spiritually. This section delves into theory and research pertaining particularly to how fathers are involved with their children and families, with focus on spirituality. In short, this section has two questions in mind: To what degree are fathers involved in their children's spiritual formation? How do fathers influence the spiritual formation of their children? An important conclusion will be that there is not a large amount of research directly discussing a father's spirituality and his involvement in the relational spirituality of his children and far less to nil regarding his intentionality in the matter.

Principles or theory pertaining to paternal involvement from a biblical perspective are discussed in Chapter 3 and, considering that all that man observes to be true (and does not find out later to be false) corresponds with God's timeless truths, the remaining theory is gleaned from just that, observation or research. Hence, the following discussion notes studies, but only to preface the theory. The empirical section, presenting both qualitative and quantitative studies in this area, goes into more depth on paternal involvement.

Theories Pertaining to Paternal Intentional Involvement

This second domain's theory section briefly discusses how theory has developed historically pertaining to paternal involvement and intentionality in children's development. Following that, several main theoretical issues are discussed: (a) paternal involvement is related to the father's religiosity, (b) paternal involvement is related to various community dynamics (e.g. motivation, social support, marital satisfaction, etc.), and (c) intentionality is an important factor in a father's involvement.

While it has not always been the case, some theory now suggests that paternal influence on a child's development is at least equally as significant as maternal influence. Social scientists for years doubted that fathers had a significant role to play in shaping the experiences and development of their children and, accordingly, fathering literature has lately been long on empirical studies and short on theory (Culp et al., 2000, p. 27; Lamb, 1997, p. 1). Mothers were considered more important influences by early researchers despite some findings that fathers' religious behavior and religiosity were more influential on the children than that of mothers. Acock and Bengston (1978) held that, contrary to Lamb (1997), more research regarding mothers was needed. Lamb felt that fathers needed far more attention and, accordingly, was highly influential in this research.

With respect to child development, and particularly with respect to children's spirituality, there has been a significant amount of study focused on mothering and couples parenting, but comparably little pertaining to fathers specifically (Allen 2008; Boyatzis, 2008; Coles, 1990; Hay & Nye, 2006; May et al., 2005; Stonehouse, 2001). For example, as discussed in Review of Relevant Literature on Relational Spiritual Formation, studies on attachment theory, development of God images, and parental influences (spiritual, social, emotional, etc.) on children are predominately parentally and especially maternally oriented, with fathers as only secondary figures if they are present at all. Similarly, Adams, Walker, and O'Connell (2011) found in their content analysis of 160 bestselling, pre-school oriented picture books that referenced parents, that fathers are still considered "invisible" and uninvolved in an important sense. Fathers are "significantly under-represented in general and in terms of physical contact and emotional expression in relation to their children" (p. 267).

Fortunately there is growing interest in the involvement of fathers in their relationships with their children spiritually, especially from a Christian perspective (Canfield, 1994, 2008; Fowler, 2009). However, though there is not much direct discussion on the matter, some theorists and practitioners suggest there is a shortage of intentionality on the part of fathers in their children's spiritual formation within the Christian community. Parents in Christendom, it was suggested in *Review of Relevant Literature on Relational Spiritual Formation*, have predominately delegated the spiritual teaching and training of their children to others. Such a delegation would be problematic from a Protestant Evangelical viewpoint, discussed in Chapter 3 in depth. Research affirms the importance of paternal involvement on children's well-being and that children suffer in the absence of fathers (Blankenhorn, 1995; McLanahan & Booth, 1989). Theory is shaped by this research; hence the discussion makes note of some research in explicating theory with respect to paternal involvement or intentionality. Also, because most thinking in this area is not just paternally oriented, much of it will be couched in parental and even community language.

Paternal religiosity and involvement. Religious fathers (married, cohabitating, or divorced) are more involved with their children than their nonreligious counterparts, and fathers' religiosity has been found to influence adolescent religiosity (Geisbrecht, 1995). However, despite the importance of children's relationships with God, many Christian parents pass off responsibility for it to the churches they attend (Fowler, 2009). "Many children are missing the one element that they most need—a relationship with caring adults who can lead them to contemplate God's intended plan for their lives" (Ruppell, 2004, p. 344).

Paternal involvement in children's spirituality is related to various community dynamics. That is, fathering is a "multilateral relationship in addition to a one-to-one relationship" (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998). Fathers are not alone; they may be involved and intentional, but they are in community. Intentional involvement in the spiritual life of a child takes teamwork with others, like parents, youth pastors, and extended family. The greatest risk in this process is not non-believing families or households, but Christian hypocrisy (Jones, 2008). Furthermore, this teamwork, led by an intentionally involved father, should resemble a family-equipping model. In this model, the church (all those involved in the children's lives spiritually) champions the home by intentionally equipping parents to embrace primary responsibility for their children's spiritual formation through both integrated and age-specific learning experiences. The church embraces the responsibility to reorient programs and processes in order to shift discipleship toward the family. The home (father-led parenting, siblings, extended family, and friends) champions the church by training children to become committed, serving members of the local community of faith. The home embraces recognition that the church's purpose is neither to entertain nor serve as the exclusive domain for discipleship, but that church is to partner with home (Jones, 2008). Further influencing paternal success is pressure from the system. Fathers do desire to be good fathers, but one must consider family, community supports, and stressors when studying and encouraging fathering (Doherty et al., 1998).

This community aspect of the father-child dyad is explained in part by four factors: motivation, skills and self-confidence, social support, and institutional practices (Cummings & O'Reilly, 1997; Doherty et al., 1998; Krampe & Fairweather, 1993; Lamb

& Pleck, 1997). Fathers are more motivated toward greater involvement when the following occur: setting goals and having dreams (often a function of their own childhood; Lamb, 1987); receiving encouragement with support and positive feedback from significant others, as well as their social networks and societal institutions in which they work and live; and having a sense of skill in child-rearing. In short, it is fairly commonly thought that people like doing what they are good at or encouraged to do.

Along these lines, one of the support systems and skill sets that is suggested to have an influence on paternal involvement is marital satisfaction. Canfield, Hosley, O'Donnell, and Roid (2008) and Canfield (1992) suggest that high marriage satisfaction correlates to high paternal involvement with one's children. Also, a motivational aspect to consider is that, if marriage is seen as sacred, if family relationships are seen as a divine plan, then fathers will be committed to those relationships despite the cost and inconvenience (Dollahite, 1998). Not surprisingly, children derive a sense of emotional security from the quality of their parents' marital relationship as well as from the quality of parent-child relationships. "Children enjoy watching affectionate exchanges between their parents" (Cummings & O'Reilly, 1997, p. 57). And lastly, with respect to motivation, generative fathering has provided a theoretical construct as of late to explain paternal involvement with their children, particularly spiritually (Dollahite, 1998). Fathers see the importance of caring and generative mentors such as fathers, grandfathers, and older men, and men's need to receive blessings or go through rites of passage showing confirmation of worth and potential from elders. Much of this theory stems from Erikson's (1997) generativity principle, wherein adults develop along the continuum

from stagnation to generativity. This is developed in the subsection below regarding theorists on paternal involvement and intentionality.

Intentionality and core belief. Though perhaps most fathers desire to be good fathers, it seems that the largest discrepancy between what fathers consider to be important for being a good father and their actual paternal performance is in the area of moral and spiritual development: Most fathers see economic support as their main contribution (Canfield, 1996, p. 236). Therefore, an important aim of this current study is to explore paternal involvement and intentionality—a father’s positive influence through involvement with his children, especially with respect to their spiritual formation. Additionally, it is important to look at the way in which the father’s spirituality affects this. Unfortunately, as Fowler (2009) notes, what seems to be the case is that many Christian fathers (and parents on the whole) tend to have no target or goal, no teamwork, and no plan for the spiritual formation of their children, and greatly delegate their role in it to the church.

Fathers (as all people) act primarily upon their core beliefs, and these core beliefs can only be changed indirectly (Kraft, 1989; Moreland, 1997; Willard, 1997). If there is a gap between what some fathers believe and what they do, it really is not a disconnect. That is, they are behaving according to what they really believe at a deep, core level. In short, what some fathers say they believe about their children spiritually, they in truth do not believe; otherwise they would act differently. Or it may be that they are not informed of the implications of their actions based on what they truly believe to be the case. In other words, perhaps these fathers do truly believe in the relational spirituality and depth of their children, but do not realize that their plans or actions are less than optimal. Either

of these scenarios can be influenced indirectly for the detriment or betterment of the situation. Perhaps the reason for any degree of discontinuity between belief and action is lack of modeling of plans or actions. This is born out in some of the research reviewed in the subsections that follow. A major goal, then, of this current study is to inform and encourage fathering in the spiritual arena where possible. As it is, what fathers believe deeply is being influenced or shaped by pressures of the world, motivations, skill sets, and other forces. It should be noted that, of course, many fathers assume high degrees of responsibility and intentionally, but this small subgroup has not been studied extensively (Lamb, 1997, p. 4), and part of this study's aim is to research this subgroup.

Intentionality (discussed more fully in the remainder of this section) entails several key issues. Involvement does not imply intentionality. One may be engaged in a lot of activity with another person only out of shared interest, a sense of obligation, or convenience. Each of these areas is important in a father being involved with his children at all levels. But intentionality additionally involves what Canfield (1992) calls dedication and constraint. There is a dedicated effort to do or plan something (e.g., have family devotions or schedule a date night with one's child), and a constraint at times to not do one thing in order to do another (e.g., give up a favorite activity that occupies time or money in order to spend that time or money on the children). Intentionality might mean sitting down with one's wife to plan out activities, or a set of values and goals for the children spiritually; or perhaps revamping current family practices spiritually or time-wise in order to increase family time. Intentionality does have a great effect on one's influence over another person, all other things being equal; May et al., (2005) call such intentional efforts "hidden curriculum" (p. 160). Children observe and are affected by

how the significant adults around them live out their relationships with God. Because of this, parents need to truly realize that the “full potential for spiritual formation in the family . . . calls for the intentional planning of ways to be together with God” (May et al., 2005, pp. 160-161). Ruppell (2004), as well, highlights that intentional planning and communal effort may counter the “prevailing trend that too many children are missing the one element that they most need—a relationship with caring adults who can lead them to contemplate God’s intended plan for their lives” (pp. 344-345).

A similar notion that has gained momentum in cognitive therapy, clinical and child-family psychology, and now application in parenting is the notion of mindfulness or specifically mindful parenting. Mindfulness involves “intentionally bringing one’s attention to the internal and external experiences occurring in the present moment” (Baer, 2003, p. 125.). Generally, it is a way of paying attention on “purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). Though this notion of mindfulness has Eastern roots, it was applied to cognitive therapy, psychological functioning (bipolarity, schizophrenia, etc.), and more widely used in sub-clinical areas such as depression, anxiety, etc. Recently mindfulness-based interventions have been developed with the majority of programs associated with adult functioning (intra-personal): Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, relapse prevention of substance abuse, etc. With respect to mindfulness, as a general construct, there is nothing particularly mystical about it per se: We are all mindful to one degree or another. It is an inherent human capacity (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 146). According to these theorists, more on point is the problem of unawareness with which people live, or the unexamined behaviors, that contribute to human suffering

versus the mindful, purposeful awareness of one's inner and outer experiences in relationship to others. Duncan (2009) highlights three core features (present-centered attention and awareness, intention or purposefulness, and attitude reflecting how we attend) and five skills (acting with awareness, observing, describing, non-reactivity to inner experience, and non-judging of inner experience).

It is here that mindfulness, though originally applied in cognitive therapy (overcoming addictions, coping with chronic pain, etc., Baer, 2003) has application in parenting whereby parents intentionally bring moment-to-moment awareness to the parent-child relationship. According to Duncan, Coatsworth, and Greenberg (2009) mindful parenting has five dimensions (each is followed by an example).

1) Listening with full attention: parents who are mindful are sensitive to both the content of conversation as well as their child's tone of voice, facial expression.... Using these cues to successfully detect their child's needs or intended meaning.

2) Nonjudgmental acceptance of self and the child: fundamental acceptance of their child and selves (traits, attributes, behaviors) while providing clear standards and expectations. It does not mean resigned acceptance that relinquishes responsibility for enacting discipline but acceptance of the present with clear awareness and that there will be struggles.

3). Emotional awareness of the self and child: this emphasizes the parents' capacity for awareness of emotions within themselves and their children, and truly being able to listen with full attention, nonjudgmentally—that is rightly identifying emotions within themselves and their child so as to act accordingly and mindfully, not reactively or automatically.

4) Self-regulation in the parenting relationship: low reactivity to normative child behavior, pausing before reacting so as to maximize greater self-regulation and choice ultimately teaching children control. It is not denial of emotions, but minimizing impulsiveness.

5) Compassion for one's self and the child: Mindful parents feel a desire to meet appropriate child needs and comfort a child's distress without self-blame in various areas of parenting or pressure by parents to respond due to social evaluation or judging by others (pp. 259-60).

Theorists on paternal involvement and influence. Several important theorists that support or have influenced thinking and practice on paternal involvement and influence are Westerhoff; Lamb and Pleck; Dollahite and Hawkins; Erikson; Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson; Canfield; and Hood, to name a few. Given that very little or nothing has dealt with paternal intentionality per se, general contributions on the issue from Moreland, Willard, and Kraft are explored as a group.

Westerhoff. To bring this entire discussion of theorists into focus, it is helpful to begin with Westerhoff (2000, 2008), who, like several of the theorists reviewed here, does not address paternal involvement or intentionality per se. In his writings about the church and the question of whether children will have faith, he does, however, reject the schooling-instructional paradigm in the church as bankrupt, and offers instead a "community of faith-enculturation paradigm" (Westerhoff, 2000, p. 45). So he brings much to the relational aspect of spiritual formation, as well as the topics of community and parental involvement and intentionality.

Christian education in the church has one purpose: to aid in the spiritual formation of its members. The “church is formed to form” (Wilhoit, 2008, p. 15). It was formed as a community of people with God solely to develop others spiritually (Westerhoff, 2000, p. 43). As such, every activity and every aspect of individual and corporate life within the church should be intentional and oriented as a faith-community. Along these lines, for Westerhoff spiritual formation specifically holds to a relational model of equals within spiritual formation such that one should be doing things with children and not to or for them. Adults need children; children need adults. Westerhoff (2002) poignantly states how fathers (or any adult, for that matter) should relate to their children:

Surely we must share our understandings and ways with children, but we also must remember that they have something to bring to us and that what we bring to children is always under God’s judgment. Of course it is easier to impose than to reflect, easier to instruct than share, easier to act than to interact to be with a Child in Christian ways means self-control more than child-control To be Christian is to ask: What can I bring to another? Not: What do I want that person to know or be? . . . Should we not ask: Is schooling and instruction in a Christian community necessary for education? *Or is living as a Christian with others inherently educational? If we attend to being Christian with others, need we attend to schooling and instruction?* (p. 17)

Applied to paternal intentional involvement in spiritual formation (or *education* as Westerhoff discusses it) the task of the father (and all adults) is to intentionally consider all things in leading children in their formation within the faith community. Being involved in their spiritual formation is not sending them to Sunday school (although that may be a part), but as Sunday school is often and usually (according to Westerhoff) part of the bankrupt paradigm of the schooling-instructional model, this is not ideal. What is ideal is the father, in community with others, living out and intentionally orchestrating ways to teach children how to live out the faith (Westerhoff, 2000, pp. 45, 128).

Lamb. Highly influential in social science research on fathers is Lamb's (1997) contribution to the factors that influence paternal involvement. When speaking of involvement, many studies often refer to Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine's (1985) usage, which includes engagement (direct interaction with the child such as caretaking, play, or leisure), accessibility or availability to the child, and responsibility for the care of the child (Pleck, 1997, p. 67). In short, paternal involvement with children is influenced by four factors: motivation, skills and self-confidence, social support and stresses, and institutional factors and practices. Motivations such as enjoying being with their own children or not, pressures, and events that weigh for or against being with their children are important. A father's skill in taking care of his children affects his involvement as well. A father, as with most people, prefers to do something he is good at rather than something he is not. Related to motivations and skill is a third factor: support. Fathers are more inclined to be involved, even if the first two factors are negative, if there is encouraging support, especially from their spouses. Ken Canfield's (1994, 2008) research and Personal Fathering Profile (PFP) survey touches on this component—marital satisfaction. Most people are more likely to do what is uncomfortable, unknown, or above competency if they have and feel support. And lastly, from a more institutional level of support, if the work place or culture provides support or avenues for paternal involvement, then it will increase.

Canfield. Ken Canfield (1994, 1996, 2005; see also Canfield, Hosley, O'Donnell, & Roid, 2008; Canfield & Roid, 1990) echoes McLanahan and Booth (1989), Blankenhorn (1995), Wilson & Prior (2011) and others in stating that fathers are not peripheral to parenting, but crucial, and that effective fathering can and must be learned.

Marital satisfaction, fathering satisfaction, and fathering practices that are highly involved are keys to effective fathering. Canfield (1994) suggests that effective fathers are committed: they know their children, they are consistent, they protect and provide, they love the children's mother, they are active listeners, and they equip spiritually. A father's commitment seems to be the clearest difference between average and exemplary fathers. A father expresses paternal commitment in dedication to his children via activities, time, and planning and in his constraint from certain areas in order to maximize dedication to his children. Spiritual equipping ranks high for Canfield, as is born out in research to support his theory.

Another area often overlooked in discussion of father-child issues is the marital relationship. Canfield (2008), both in theory and research, posits that children need their parents in harmony, and this unified relationship is related to the likelihood of the father being involved. This area is referred to as marital satisfaction. Sanderson and Thompson (2002) confirm this relationship, suggesting that "a father's relationship with his children's mother is also likely to influence his level of child development" (p. 101; see also Ryan, Kalil, & Ziol-Guest, 2008).

Dollahite and Hawkins, a la Erikson. Dollahite and Hawkins (1998), extending the principle of generativity from Erik Erikson (1982, 1997) hold that fathering is generative work rather than a social role. Erikson's seventh stage within his developmental framework, generativity versus despair, as used by Dollahite and Hawkins (1998), and others, provides an explanatory factor in paternal involvement due to the purposefulness or making sense out of life in this stage.

Erik Erikson (1950, 1982, and revised in 1997 by Joan Erikson) was a leading thinker in human development who focused on how personal identity was affected by historical and cultural factors. His epigenetic principle (a term borrowed from embryology and its successive trait developments to suggest probable successive psychological stages of development) suggests that human personality gives direction and pattern to *becoming*, suggesting not determinism but interaction with significant others in stages. Current theorists suggest that the seventh stage, generativity versus despair, is a salient factor in paternal involvement due to the purposefulness and making sense out of life involved in this stage. In generativity (or stagnation), a stage of some 30 years in length, fathers and adults in general develop work commitments, family relationships, and obligations. There is a sense of care.

Accordingly, Dollahite and Hawkins (1998) suggest that paternal influence is affected by this generativity. First, human context creates needs in the next generation that fathers ethically are bound to meet. Second, fathers' and children's needs are met and each grows as a result. Third, as a father believes that his children are spiritual beings with divine purpose, he is encouraged in the knowledge that a power greater than himself is involved with his children. Family relationships then are seen as sacred and profoundly important and meaningful (Dollahite & Hawkins, 1998, p. 7).

Kraft, Moreland, and Willard. Kraft (1989), Moreland (1997), and Willard (1997) posit that one almost always lives according to one's deep, core beliefs, which can only be changed indirectly with intentionality. This intentionality is the purposeful stretching or bending of the mind towards an object or fixedness of attention, and an uncommon exertion of the intellectual faculties. Core beliefs or convictions are not

necessarily what one professes or claims to believe, or what one may express at a Bible study or declare in a doctrinal statement, though they may be. The convictions under discussion here are the actual core values of a person that guide the automatic and reactive aspects of how one lives and are often not the focus of one's conscious present thought life.

One's core beliefs include both true stable beliefs and false stable beliefs. One's core beliefs are not always the same as one's professed beliefs. Dallas Willard (1997) says it well:

We often speak of people not living up to their faith. But the cases in which we say this are not really cases of people behaving otherwise than they believe. They are cases in which genuine beliefs are made obvious by what people do. We always live up to our beliefs—or down to them, as the case may be. Nothing else is possible. It is the nature of belief One of the greatest weaknesses in our teaching and leadership today is that we spend so much time trying to get people to do things good people are supposed to do, without changing what they really believe. It doesn't succeed very well, and that is the open secret of church life We need to concentrate on changing the minds of those we would reach and serve. (p. 307)

Hence, one always, or almost always, lives one's life based on one's core beliefs; there is a direct connection between one's core beliefs and one's lifestyle, thoughts, feelings, and actions. These core beliefs cannot be changed directly (again, these are deep beliefs, not intellectual assent), but indirectly. Partly this is due to the tendency to not entertain ideas outside one's plausibility structures (Moreland, 1997, pp. 75-77). One does not know any better or differently about such a different paradigm. It is the process of maturation that involves a person's core belief being changed to embrace as much of reality as possible (Kraft, 1989). A presupposition here is that there is an objective, transcendent reality to which one's views correspond or not. What some view as reality is often an errant view

of what is reality but in truth is less than accurate. The more central the core belief, the more resistant or difficult it is to change (Moreland, 1997). The fallout of this viewpoint is that, throughout life, one must regularly and intentionally place oneself in situations so that one's core beliefs are influenced to embrace more and more of reality. For example, a father wanting to be better at his fathering might sign up for a fathering seminar, read books, meet with other fathers in order to have input from others that might shape, change, or radically change his view on how he is to raise his children. Such implications, along with other implications derived from this review and Chapter 3, inform questions noted in Chapter 4.

Empirical Research on Paternal Involvement, Influence, and Intentionality

How fathers influence their children has only been a research concern of late, and research with respect to spiritual issues has been far less common. Lamb (1976) was largely influential in paternal research awareness. Blankenhorn (1995) and McLanahan and Booth (1989) brought further awareness to paternal influences, particularly with respect to the consequences of their absence. This domain presents research (see Tables 2.4 and 2.5) on paternal influence at various levels, as well as some on parental influence, as there is far more maternal and parental research than paternal. Especially with respect to spirituality issues, it is often necessary to glean from less direct studies. Though this domain refers to numerous studies, it discusses 20 in detail. These 20 were culled from some 55 empirical studies read. Fourteen additional studies are briefly summarized in Appendix F. Again, space precludes noting them all in the main text; those that are included are based on foundational research or frequently referenced research. The

appendixes articles are less direct in most cases. As is noted in the Summary of Paternal Involvement and Intentionality, very little research directly deals with issues of intentionality and how a father's relationship with God influences or affects his involvement with his children. Hence many of the studies are used to glean ancillary insights.

Paternal involvement and religiosity. Paternal involvement is so important for the development and welfare of the child that a child's well-being suffers in the absence of his or her father. Research such as that of Blankenhorn (1995); McLanahan and Booth (1989); Williams and Radin (1999); and Culp, Schadle, Robinson, and Culp (2000) confirmed this. Amato (1998) commented that 85% of studies regarding paternal influence found significant association between father support and measures of children's well-being (p. 253). Sarkadi et al. (2007) inquired into fathers' involvement and children's developmental outcomes through a systematic review of longitudinal studies. The authors concluded that, considering there is an intuition that fathers are important for the development and welfare of their children, work needs to be done. In conjunction with that conclusion, according to Sarkadi et al. (2007), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently stated, "actively enhancing men's roles in their children's care and development is an important aspect of paediatric work" (p. 153). In their view, current governmental policies did not match these conclusions; hence they wanted to provide a supporting study in order to bolster arguments to change governmental policy in promoting an increased paternal role (Sarkadi et al., 2007, p. 154). As noted, Sarkadi's et al. (2007) method was a systematic review of studies, including constructs such as father involvement (Lamb, 1987, 1997), accessibility (cohabitation in

this study), engagement, responsibility, and other measures of involvement. Studies with biological and non-biological fathers, such as father figures, were included. Within the studies reviewed ($N = 24$), some 22,000 children were involved, and only a very small number of children ($n = 310$) were in studies not controlling for socioeconomic status (SES; Sarkadi et al., 2007, p. 156). At the outset, Sarkadi et al. found 63 longitudinal studies on fathers' involvement that were performed 1 year prior to measuring their children's outcomes. Of those 63, only 24 had adequate measures of father involvement or child outcomes for their purposes. Of these, 18 had information on SES; the other 6 did not (NSES).

Results of the review suggested that 17 of 18 studies examining the effects of father engagement (12 of the 18 controlled for SES) reported positive outcomes (Sarkadi et al., 2007, p. 155). The authors concluded that there is "evidence to indicate that father engagement positively affects the social, behavioral, psychological and cognitive outcomes of children" (Sarkadi et al., 2007, p. 155). Several of the studies with fathers (including father figures and biological fathers) cohabitating showed positive effects; when children lived with their mothers and her male partner, they had less adverse behavioral outcomes than those whose mothers lived alone (Sarkadi et al., 2007, p. 156). The authors suggested this implies a biological bond is not necessary for mediating outcomes. But they suggested further study to see the difference between biological fathers and father figures.

Sarkadi et al. (2007) demonstrated that active and regular paternal engagement in the child's life predicts a range of positive outcomes. For example, though it is not

Table 2.4

Empirical Studies on Paternal Intentional Involvement

Author, date, and strength	Subjects/Sample/Population	Type/Instruments	Results
Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg (2007) IS, ER	$N = 24$; combining 63 longitudinal studies on fathers' involvement performed one year prior to measuring their children's outcomes; of 63 only these 24 had adequate measure of father involvement or child outcomes.	Systematic review.	17 of 18 studies examining effects of father engagement reported positive outcomes. Father engagement positively affects the social, behavioral, psychological, and cognitive outcomes of children. Active and regular engagement with child predicts range of positive outcomes.
Williams & Radin (1999) IA, ER	Young adult children of fathers of intact, white, middle-class families who had been closely involved in early child rearing (T1 = 1977, $N = 59$ highly involved fathers; after 4 years, T2 = 1981, $N = 47$ of prior families; after 11 years, T3 = 1988, $N = 32$ of T2 families; after 20 years, T4 = 1997, $N = 21$ of prior studies).	Quantitative 20-year look: PICCI.	Increased father involvement in preschool years leads to more internal locus of control and self-perception of higher academic success. Hypothesis that adults raised in highly paternal involved intact families would have less traditional sex-role attitudes and less traditional expectation of parental roles is not supported.
V. King (2003) IS, ER	672 random married fathers, 168 divorced fathers.	Correlational: MIDUS (National Survey of Midlife Development in the US, 1995) database based on self-report questions	Religious fathers are more involved with their children than are less- or non-religious fathers. Several of the religious measures are significantly related to all the fathering involvement measures. Significantly, religious fathers report stronger relationships with their children, though the effect size is moderate.

Table continues

Table 2.4 *Empirical Studies on Paternal Intentional Involvement*, (continued)

Smith & Kim (2003) IS, ER	$N = 8,984$, 92% of eligible respondents were interviewed ($n = 4,753$ for 12- to 14-year-olds). 7,942 parents of youth respondents took a survey for comparison purposes.	NLSY (1997): nationally representative survey documenting the transition from school to work of youth living in the U.S. aged 12-16 as of December 31, 1996.	Religious families tend to have better relationships and foster greater involvement and religious development with their teens than do non-religious families. Early adolescents living in religiously involved families in the U.S. appear more likely to enjoy (significantly) stronger, more positive relationships than do those living in non-religiously active families. 59% of teens aspire to be like their father in highly religious families (70%+ in families with religious activity 5-7 times per week, 65% when parent attends worship 2 or more times per month, or 63% when parent prays, etc.) 53% of teens admire father in religious families vs. 42% in non-religious families and this increases to 55% and 64% as family religious activity increases.
M. Lamport (1990) IA/W, EL/R	S1: $N = 257$ aged 30-89 years ($M = 48$ years old) from 10 states in Northeastern U.S. in evangelical churches and study groups. S2: $N = 229$ aged 18-25 years ($M = n/a$) from 8 states in U.S. in Christian groups.	Descriptive.	Adolescence is a prime age period for conversion, though not as tight as some have suggested (i.e., not by age 16, but many by 18 or 20). Parents are most influential factors in becoming a Christian and development (though friends and church are important). Of parental influences, fathers have more influence over their adolescent children than mothers.
N. Geisbrecht (1995) IW/A, EL/N	$N = 132$ adolescents (67 males, 65 females); $N = 220$ parents (115 mothers, 105 fathers); Non-random, selected.	Causal Comparative. Correlational; Intrinsic-Extrinsic (Revised) Scale; Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, 1991).	Authoritative and supportive parenting style with spousal agreement is more instrumental than other parenting styles in fostering intrinsic religious commitment (greater influence than church, school, etc.).

(Table continues)

Table 2.4 *Empirical Studies on Paternal Intentional Involvement*, (continued)

Bartkowski & Xu (2000) IA, ER	<i>N</i> = 13,017 adults cross-sectional national probability sample (contiguous U.S.). Subsample of respondent fathers (married and cohabitating) with 1 or more resident child 5-18 years old.	Correlation: Wave 1 of NSFH (National Survey of Families and Households; Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988); paternal supervision, affective fathering, and father-child interaction.	Conservative Protestant Evangelical fathers are more likely than non-Evangelical fathers to engage in paternal supervision, involvement, and affective parenting.
Wilcox (2002) IA, ER	Wave 1 of NSFH (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988): <i>N</i> = 13,017 adults aged 19 and older; Wave 2 of NSFH (1992-1994): 82% response rate. Subset of 1,019 fathers cohabitating with children at time of survey.	Correlation: Waves 1 (1988) and 2 (1992-1994) of National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH; Sweet, Bumpass, & Call); one-on-one interaction, dinner together, and youth-related activities.	The family focus of conservative Protestant culture births greater paternal involvement. Religious participation is linked to greater paternal involvement in youth-related activities. Religion has a unique effect on paternal involvement, having a more significant difference in paternal involvement than civic engagement or conventional <i>habitas</i> . Religion is positively related to paternal involvement as measured by one-on-one engagement, dinner with one's family, and volunteering for youth-related activities.

Note: Strength of internal validity (I) for each research article will be indicated on the table by an “S” (strong), “A” (acceptable), and “W” (weak). Generalizability (“E” for external Validity) is “R” (fairly representative), “L” (limited/less than an author’s intended target audience, and “N” (not generalizable). For example IA, EL is Acceptable internal validity, Limited Generalizability (external validity). Studies are in alphabetical order.

possible to say exactly what the fathers' effective type of engagement is, fatherly engagement reduces frequency of behavioral problems in boys and psychological problems in girls. In short, there is enough evidence to support the intuitive assumption that engaged fathers are good for their children. Strategies and how this can be operationalized are yet to be decided.

A possible limitation of the study is its using *cohabitation* to represent what Lamb (1997) calls *accessibility*. By *accessibility* Lamb means that fathers are available for interaction to some degree (how meaningful that interaction is up for debate). Perhaps a presupposition that underlies much research is that being present—accessible or cohabitating—equates to meaningful interaction. This is not necessarily so, and it is the contention of the current paper that just being accessible or cohabitating in no way implies or guarantees interaction at a meaningful level. Sarkadi et al. (2007), for their study reviewing longitudinal studies, could not determine that availability. On a different note, perhaps the fact that 14 of the 24 studies reviewed were based on studies in the United States and the rest (7) in the United Kingdom pose some incongruity. Yet for current purposes this may not be a salient issue.

In reviewing many studies (just as in this literature review), each study in the Sarkadi et al. (2007) review may have methodological limitations, but the authors noted that, on the whole, an accumulative argument points to some valid conclusions, notably that active fathering and regular engagement with their children “predicts a range of positive outcomes” (p. 157). They also suggested several strategies in the professional fields for spurring child-family professionals to intentionally involve the father: speaking directly to the fathers and not the mothers in interviews and phone conversations and

making a concerted effort to not only include fathers but orient contact about their children to the fathers specifically (Sarkadi, et al., 2007, p. 157).

Another study delving into the effects of fathers' participation in child rearing was done by Williams and Radin (1999). Their 20-year follow-up centered on what might be considered exemplary, involved fathering. While the focus of the study was not religious, it contributed to the notion of the value of paternal involvement. Short-run longitudinal studies have shown that children, especially sons, benefit from high levels of paternal involvement. But no real long-run longitudinal work was done until Williams and Radin's.

Their objective was exploratory in assessing adult children's levels of internality or locus of control, perceived academic competence, and gender-role expectations related to paternal involvement. Regarding internal locus of control, Williams and Radin (1999) noted insights from prior research and theory by Taris and Bok (1996) that found that increased paternal involvement was linked to internal locus of control, while maternal involvement was linked to less internal locus of control. Regarding perceived academic competence, paternal involvement has been shown to have significant positive influence on this, and social learning theory (Bandera, 1986) suggests that cognitive development is facilitated by paternal availability, for sons in particular. Lastly, regarding expectations concerning gender roles, also following social learning theory (Bandera, 1986), parents have tremendous influence on gender-role expectations, especially with same-sex modeling. Children from egalitarian families adopted polarized gender labels at a later age than did those from traditional families. This implies that "children whose fathers are

highly involved in their care have begun to form flexible gender role attitudes at a very early age” (Williams & Radin, 1999, p. 329).

Based on these expectations from prior research, Williams and Radin (1999) hypothesized that, compared to similar intact families with relatively minor paternal involvement in child rearing, adult children from intact families with highly involved fathers would have (a) less traditional sex-role expectations in general, (b) less traditional expectations of future parenting roles, (c) more internal locus of control, and (d) a self-perception of higher academic competence. To test these hypotheses, they sampled young adult children who grew up in white middle-class families with intact fathers who had been closely involved in early child rearing. It was a quantitative 20-year look at the start, the first wave, (T1 = 1977, $N = 59$ children of highly involved fathers), after 4 years (T2 = 1981, $N = 47$ of T1 families), 11 years (T3 = 1988, $N = 32$ of T2 families), and 20 years (T4 = 1997, $N = 21$ of all prior studies).

Williams and Radin (1999) found significant differences in locus of control, particularly in sons. Increased father involvement in the preschool years led to more internal locus of control and self-perception of higher academic success. The hypotheses that adults raised in highly paternally involved intact families would have less traditional sex-role attitudes and less traditional expectations of parental roles were not supported, which seems commonsensical. When all was settled, the study at its core showed that an increased paternal involvement was related to an increased locus of control of the young adult children, especially that of the sons (Williams & Radin, 1999, p. 334).

While the study has several strengths (the weightiness of a unique 20-year study and the clarity of pointing to paternal involvement), it is not without issue. One limitation

of the study is the lack of clarity or validity in Williams and Radin's (1999) presupposition regarding traditional roles. They seem to have said that *traditional* implies that fathers work and are uninvolved, and that if a father is involved, this is nontraditional and egalitarian (Williams & Radin, 1999, pp. 329, 331). Firstly, they did not define traditional in the study. Secondly, even if this is what they meant by traditional, it seems wrong-headed. Would not traditional be fathers leading the family in all aspects, including faith development? For example, later in the study (pp. 331-332), William and Radin's presupposition is revealed if one asks this question: Why should it matter that a highly involved father thinks that a woman can work, have equal pay, etc. Those are unrelated issues. In other words, a father being more involved with his children is not a function of his views of egalitarianism. Perhaps the study or future studies like it could be done without labeling traditional or non-traditional unless such terms are defined. Lastly, on a different level, there was an attrition of nearly half from the original study (T1 = 1977, $N = 59$ fathers) to the last study (T4 = 1997, $N = 32$). But given the homogeneity of the sample, perhaps this is not a significant issue, particularly over such a span of time.

On a more specific note, it has been found that fathers' religiosity influences their children's religiosity and increases the quality of father-child bonds. Valarie King (2003) hypothesized that religious fathers would be more involved with their children than less religious fathers; more directly, "religiousness would be positively related to father involvement among married men" (pp. 383-384). King noted several reasons for her study: the role change of the father and its increased demands, the increase of feminism and the changing workplace, and the relatively recent scientific and policy interest in paternal involvement with its connection to the well-being of their children, to mention a

few (p. 382). Additionally, only three recent relevant studies had addressed a similar relationship, but with limited focus (Cooksey & Craig, 1998; Wilcox 2002; Xu, 2000). King asked the question, in the event that the hypothesis is supported, why does religion increase or affect positively fathers' involvement?

King (2003) utilized the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS database, 1995), but provided defined variables that nuanced issues hitherto not studied: father religiousness (religiosity, comfort, attendance, identity, and importance for children and denomination); father involvement (relationship quality, effort, future relationship, contact obligation, emotional support, unpaid assistance, and financial assistance); mediating factors (traditional family attitudes on marriage, family tasks, and marriage quality); and control variables (age, race, stage in life, education, health, employment, community involvement, number of children, and ages of children).

Regarding research procedures, a target population of fathers within the United States only was implied: for example, the policy issues given as justification for the study itself pertained to U.S. fathers; the database King (2003) used focused on the United States; the database population used to draw the digital dial random sample was 810 non-institutionalized U.S. adult males aged 25 to 74 (p. 386). Given this target population, sampling procedures approached a representative sample. Further, the sample (810) was demographically composed of married men (first marriage) with one or more children ($n = 672$) and divorced fathers ($n = 168$): Thirty responses were not used due to missing data. Included in the demographic control variables were the number of children, marital quality, biological affiliations, and the like. Subgroups (ranging generally from 25% to 35% of the total sample) included married and divorced fathers, controlled for variables

including age, race, and health. The return rate from the 1995 MIDUS database was 70% on a telephone interview, and of those, 86.8% responded with mailed questionnaires.

Other collection issues were not discussed. Validity and reliability were not discussed.

King analyzed the data using bivariate and multivariate regressions. She ran an analysis of the independent variable (father religiosity), dependent variable (father involvement), control variables, and mediating factors, progressively using four models (nested regression or hierarchical data structure) to assess what might contribute to fatherly involvement: Was it their religiousness or other issues?

In summary, several significant results arose supporting King's hypothesis. Model 1 results supported the hypothesis that religious fathers are more involved with their children than are less or non-religious fathers. Several of the religious measures were significantly related to all the fathering involvement measures with $p < .001$ (King, 2003, p. 388). Significantly, religious fathers did report stronger relationships with their children, though the effect size was moderate. In Model 2, when incorporating control variables, significant correlations still existed between religiousness measures and involvement, though some control variables weakened the effect size (e.g. both community involvement and marital status were associated positively with religiousness and father involvement, though minimally). Perhaps these types of fathers, being more civically minded and relational in the first place, would be more involved with their children regardless of religiousness. Models 3 and 4 suggested statistically significant results supporting the hypothesis, but also had moderate effect sizes, suggesting fathers' traditional attitudes (toward marriage, tasks, and family), as well as marriage quality,

contributed to fatherly involvement with children. In short, religious fathers, married or divorced, are more involved with their children than less or non-religious fathers.

Continuing in the theme of fathers' religious influence upon their children, Smith and Kim (2003) found that adolescents of religiously involved families are more likely to have significantly stronger family relationships than non-religiously active families. They employed the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY; 1997), which was a nationally representative survey documenting the transition from school to work of youth age 12-16 (as of December 31, 1996) living in the United States. A total of 8,984 respondents took the survey and 92% of eligible respondents were interviewed. Parents or parent figures ($N = 7,942$) of those youth respondents also took a survey for comparison purposes. As often is the case, the number of fathers involved was lower than the number of mothers, which was mainly attributed to low numbers of residential fathers (Smith & Kim, 2003, p. 7).

For Smith and Kim's (2003) study, there were 4,753 twelve- to fourteen-year-olds, involving 27 family relationship variables and eight control variables—all significantly related to family religious involvement. The dependent variable was the quality of family relationships, while independent variables (religion variables) were frequency of religious involvement (number of times per week); parental worship service attendance; and prayer with parent(s) ($p < .05$). Multiple regressions allowed for eight control variables, including age, race, cohabitating parent units, income, educational level, and others.

Smith and Kim (2003) found that religious families tended to have better relationships and foster greater involvement and religious development with their teens

than did non-religious families: “early adolescents living in religiously involved families in the United States appear more likely to enjoy (significantly) stronger, more positive relationships than do families not religiously active” (p. 7). Of the sample of 12-to 14-year-olds, the 11% who belonged to highly involved religiously active families were significantly more likely than the 36% in non-religiously active families to have stronger relationships with moms and dads, participate in family activities, and not run away from home. Youth from less religiously active families (8% of the sample did something religious 3 to 4 times per week, and 45% did something 1 to 2 days per week) were more likely than those from non-religious families to exhibit many, but not all, of the “positive family relationships characteristics” that highly religious families did (Smith & Kim, 2003, pp. 5-6).

Several intriguing findings regarding father-child dynamics particularly stood out. In each area, the more active the family was the greater the father-child positive relationship was. For example, all youth from religiously active families desired, to some degree, to be like their fathers compared to some youth in lesser religious families and no youth in non-religious families. All youth from any level of religiously involved families enjoyed time with, praised, admired, sought help from, and felt supported by their fathers more than those from non-religious families. Similarly, the same went for the youth seeing their fathers cancel plans in order to keep promises to be with their children, as well as experiencing their fathers being informed and caring about their school, friends’ names, and peer activities.

Though the study and findings are useful in showing the influence of not only parental religiosity on children but that of fathers specifically, several issues might draw

attention. First, surveying youth would get their perception of what their parent does, but often perception is not accurate. For example, with respect to prayer, youths may not see their parents praying over them at night or on their own throughout the day. And if parental response reports they do pray for their children, then that is most likely more accurate, albeit self-report bias. In the end, however, it seems that if a father (or either parent, for that matter) is intentional in an activity and does it often, then, like most habits, it will be noticed. That is, habits are noticed and if a youth's response is, *My father never reads his Bible*, yet the father says, *I read my Bible every day* (in private), then perhaps there is a disconnect in between perception and action. This points to another concern that is not well researched in paternal-child or parental-child issues: Assessment of religiosity is still not as fully relationally oriented as it could be.

Lamport (1990) also researched adolescent spirituality with respect to the age of conversion and faith development. Though it is an older study, its exploratory value is that it showed the influence of parents in an important time of life and suggested that paternal influence in the area of spiritual formation is profound (and, interestingly, perceived to be a greater influence than that of mothers by adult children). Lamport noted an oft cited but unsubstantiated claim that 85% of conversions within Evangelical Christendom happen prior to the age of 18 years. Others have suggested that conversions begin to occur at 7-8 years old, increase gradually up until 10 or 11 years old, rapidly increase up to age 16, and decline until 20 years of age (Starbuck, 1901). But Lamport agreed with the assessment by Ferm (1959) of such research that the samples almost always guarantee the biased results: "as long as the bulk of information regarding the age of conversion is obtained from people of college age, it is impossible to change the

average age of conversion” (as cited in Lamport, 1990, p. 21). Hence Lamport (1990) delved into two samples of greater age range to assess adolescent conversion and faith development issues.

The two samples used were Study 1 (S1) with $N = 257$ males and females ranging from 30 to 89 years old ($M = 48$ years old) from evangelical churches and study groups within 10 states in the North Eastern United States; and Study 2 (S2) with $N = 229$ adults from 18 to 25 years old from Christian groups within eight states around the United States (no mean age was given for S2). Surveys were mailed out to a trained point person from the churches or groups, who dispersed and collected the surveys to return to Lamport.

The results of Lamport’s (1990) study suggested that adolescence is a prime age period for conversion, though not as tight as some have suggested (not by age 16 but many by 18 or 20). Average age of conversion in the study was 15.5, and most by age 20 (60% prior to 20 years old and 54% prior to 18 years, which is far fewer than the claim of 85% by 18). With respect to the most influential factors in becoming a Christian and in development, though friends and church were important, parents reigned supreme (schools were not in the fray in this area). And of parental influences, Lamport suggested that fathers had more influence over their adolescent children than mothers. Initial implications of the study suggested that ministry within the church body must focus on this time of life and youth ministry must recommit to the “chief objective of promoting spiritual development of adolescents in our care” (Lamport, 1990, p. 27).

Despite the meaningfulness of the study, several questions might be asked. Why was the same sample not used to ascertain both areas—conversion and development?

That is, why not use the 30-89 age group for both? Why was no mean age given for the second sample? Why was the age of S2 so much younger in spread than S1? S1 was specifically evangelical and S2 generally Christian in nature. Why the difference there?

In short, Lamport (1990) noted that four factors positively influence youth in their conversion and development of their own personal faith: adult mentoring (parents lead in this area), peer leadership, service, and devotional life. Relevant to this current project, each of these areas could be held in mind as parents in general and fathers in particular are involved in the relational spiritual formation of their children.

Additional influences on general child development are parenting styles and spousal interaction. Authoritative and supportive parenting style with spousal support leads to increased adolescent intrinsic religious commitment (Geisbrecht, 1995). Authoritative parenting with love and parental agreement provides an environment for more positive outcomes for a child's development than any other style (Kim, 2008). Kim (2008) found that an authoritative parenting style (with love, reasonable discipline, and structure) is best in producing thriving children with a spiritual foundation. There is a positive "relationship between parenting styles and parents' religiosity, as well as their children's spiritual development" (Kim, 2008, p. 233). Generally, "more positive outcomes are found in the children of authoritative parents than in children of parents with any other style" (Kim, 2008, p. 235) and the parent-child relationship is reciprocal, wherein both parents and children affect each other (Kim, 2008, p. 236). Secure attachment is a function of parent responsiveness and sensitivity. This explains why 70% of participants in Kim's study with authoritative parents were securely attached (p. 238).

Kim also referred to Hertel and Donahue (1995), a study noted in *Empirical Research on the Relational Spiritual Formation of Children*, regarding God concepts or images. Parents deeply influence their child's concept of God, understanding of God, feelings toward God, and belief in God. Kim (2008) also suggested that proper biblical theology actually implies an authoritative parenting style (p. 245): the relationship between God and His loved ones models the relationship parents should have with their children. Love motivates discipline, which leads to righteousness and peace (Deut 1:31; Isa 49:15; Hos 11:1-4, 8; Heb 12:5-9; Titus 2:11-12). This seems to suggest that, among parents with Christian roots, fathers in the lead, with mothers, can take this example from the Bible as a model for proper, God-ordained parenting. Authoritative parenting involves, but is not limited to, the following characteristics: love, justice, firmness, mercy, instruction, discipline, consistency, soul building, and heart shaping (see Tripp, 1995).

In an earlier section (attachment, community and God images), it was suggested that there was a strong connection between parental images of God and a child's God images (Hertel & Donahue, 1995). Geisbrecht's (1995) study showed that parents had one of the strongest influences on their children, particularly in the adolescent years. Greater than church and school, parental influences were significant in the development of many facets of identity formation. Geisbrecht presented research congruent with past findings and specifically sought to find out in what way parents influence their children's religious development. He wanted to identify the correlation between several parental variables (parenting style, support, parental agreement, and parental religious commitment) and the religious commitment of adolescents.

Geisbrecht selected a non-random, convenient sample of 132 students (67 male, 65 female) from an evangelical, theologically conservative, private high school, and their parents (105 fathers, 115 mothers), and administered several instruments. To assess the religious commitment of the parents and adolescents, Geisbrecht utilized the Intrinsic-Extrinsic Revised Scale, (I/E-R; Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989; $\alpha = .63-.80$). To measure parental styles, he had the adolescents fill out the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, 1991; $\alpha = .80-.92$). To measure parental support, adolescents filled out the Cornell Parent Behavior Description (CPBD; Rodgers, 1966; $\alpha = .75-.88$). And to achieve parental agreement information, Geisbrecht used a formula involving differences of PAQ and CPBD. After the data were collected, he ran correlations to see the strength of relationships between parental variables and adolescent religious commitment (intrinsic = I, extrinsic personal = EP, and extrinsic social = ES), and then he ran MANOVA and post hoc tests to clarify further the relationships among those variables and further distinctions within religious commitment (intrinsic = I, intrinsic pro-religious = IPR, status quo = SQ, and anti-religious = AR).

The instruments he used, save one, seem to have had internal reliability. CPBD and PAQ results both had reliabilities and test-retest reliabilities above .80 (some even up to .92), though the I/E-R instrument had lower values (.63-.80). For the correlation between adolescent religious commitment and parental factors, $p < .05$ and in some cases up to .001. The results were statistically significant regarding the correlation between adolescent religious commitment and parental factors (religious commitment, style, agreement, and support). After the second phase, in which Geisbrecht ran a MANOVA, the post hoc revealed a $p < .05$ and provided significance to the relationships of intrinsic-

extrinsic religious profiles and adolescent religious commitment and parental factors. Geisbrecht appropriately presented means, standard deviations, and effect sizes. The effect sizes seem small for even the most significant correlations (e.g., $r = .38$ for adolescent religious commitment related to authoritative styles for fathers with effect size of .15).

Geisbrecht concluded that an authoritative and supportive parenting style with spousal agreement on parenting style appears to be instrumental in fostering intrinsic religious commitment. This is significant over and above the influence of church and school, though they too have an effect. This also seems to be more influential than any combination of permissive or authoritarian parenting styles. Additionally, the most important influence on adolescence is the parents' or role models' "authentic internalized commitment" (Geisbrecht, 1995, p. 235), not the superficial utilitarian conformity.

Conservative Protestant fathers are more likely than non-evangelical fathers to engage in paternal supervision, involvement, and affective parenting (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; Wilcox, 2002; see also Canfield, 1992, 1994). While there has been increased interest and research in fatherhood in recent years, little of it has focused on fatherhood and religion, and even less on how a father's relationship with God shapes their children's relationship to God. This seems to imply a lack of concern about this issue in contemporary culture. For example, Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson (1998) did not use religion as one of the many contextual factors in their discussion, despite its focus being an overview of research and theory: there just was not enough empirical data on it (p. 466).

To help fill this gap, Bartkowski and Xu (2000) gave attention to the “way religious ideologies may serve as cultural resources for the everyday practices of parenting among conservative Protestant (i.e. evangelical [sic]) fathers” (p. 466). That is, one might say that theory implies practice, or core belief is lived out in practice. So what Evangelical Protestant fathers do (or not) displays what they believe (or not). Kim (2008) and Wilcox (2002) noted a similar relationship between a father’s religiosity and the quality of relationship with his children. Smith and Kim (2003) found this principle in practice: Youths whose parents, and families by extension, are highly religious have better relationships with their parents than those with less- or non-religious parents. Bartkowski and Xu (2000) have been credited with noting that a father’s church attendance is positively related to paternal supervision, affective parenting, and father-child interaction (pp. 472-475).

Bartkowski and Xu (2000) then asked, are there religious variations in paternal involvement? (p. 478). Are conservative religious fathers significantly different from their non-evangelical peers regarding paternal supervision, affective fathering, and father-child interaction? A probability sample used to explore this consisted of 13,017 adults (cross-sectional from the contiguous United States) from Wave 1 of the National Survey of Families and Households (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988). A subsample of respondent fathers (married and cohabitating) with one or more resident children 5 to 18 years old was used as well. The dependent variables that operationalized paternal involvement were paternal supervision, affective fathering (emotional engagement), and father-child interaction (quantity of interaction), with alphas of .6, .6, and .76, respectively. Independent variables included the following: denominational affiliation (conservative,

moderate or liberal Protestant, Roman Catholic, or no religious affiliation), church attendance, and theological conservatism. For covariate or socio-demographic controls, they used gender-role ideology, family-role ideology, paternal commitment, and child-rearing values, to name a few.

Bartkowski and Xu (2000) found several significant relationships. In short, conservative Protestant fathers were more likely than non-evangelical fathers to engage in paternal supervision, involvement, and affective parenting; and a father's church attendance was positively related to paternal supervision, affective parenting, and father-child interaction (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000, pp. 472, 475). Regarding *supervision*, fathers affiliated with conservative Protestant denominations (i.e., Evangelical; Bartkowski & Xu, 2000, p. 475) were significantly more likely to supervise their children or monitor their activities; church attendance was a significant predictor of paternal supervision in all models; and the importance of scriptural commitments to paternal involvement was not significant. That is, the relationship between conservative theology and paternal supervision was not strong. Pertaining to *affective fathering* (emotional engagement), conservative Protestant fathers were more emotionally involved and displayed emotional warmth more than Catholics (and non-affiliated), and especially so with sons; church attendance was significantly and positively related to affective fathering; and a father's theological conservatism was not significantly related to affective fathering. The authors noted that the notion that conservative Protestant fathers are distant, unaffectionate patriarchs was not supported and, in fact, they found the opposite to be true. And lastly, with respect to *father-child interaction* or quantity of instruction, conservative Protestant fathers were more likely than others to interact with children; church attendance was a

positive and modestly significant predictor of father-child interaction; and theological conservatism had no significant influence on father-child interaction.

Though this was a worthwhile study with meaningful conclusions, a few questions arise. How did the researchers separate out a father being part of a conservative Protestant denomination (which seemed to have significance in each area) from a father holding conservative theological views (which seemed to not be significant)? That is, how can a father call himself a conservative Protestant but not adhere to conservative theological views? Unfortunately, this may support a disconnect of the kind discussed in the Intentionality and Core Belief subsection: People act on their core beliefs, and often people (fathers, for current purposes) are not fully informed or are not intentional in acting upon or knowing what they believe. Before moving onto the next study it is interesting to note that one of Bartkowski and Xu's (2000) conclusions, that theological conservatism had no significant influence on father-child interaction, DeMaris, Mahoney & Pargament (2011) found little evidence that religiousness enhances paternal involvement in "scut" work of infant care (diaper changing, fussy babies, etc.). That is biblically conservative couples "exhibit a greater gender gap in the child care than others" (DeMaris, Mahoney, & Pargament, 2011, p. 354).

In another study born out of the fact that scholarship on family has generally overlooked the influence of religion on paternal involvement in the family, particularly with respect to children, Wilcox (2002) researched this relationship, suggesting that religiously affiliated fathers were more likely than others to be engaged with their families and children. Religion was found to be a more powerful predictor of paternal involvement than gender. Wilcox called religion America's "voluntary institution" (p.

780) and tested whether men's religious culture and participation are related to the extent and type of their paternal involvement. As with other research to date, Wilcox noted the predominant emphasis on family and parenting and the lack of nationally representative quantitative research regarding paternal involvement and particularly how such involvement is related to paternal religiosity. Wilcox used the National Survey of Families and Households to examine the relationships between religion and three areas of paternal involvement: one-on-one activities, dinner with one's family, and youth activities (p. 780). Wilcox referenced prior research that suggested fathers who attend church frequently are more likely to be involved with, monitor, praise, and hug their children (p. 781). Important in many prior findings was that "religiosity, rather than a commitment to a distinctive religious culture, is associated with great investments in fathering" (Wilcox, 2002, p. 782). That is, the content of religious culture or affiliation does not shape parental, let alone paternal, practices and values.

Wilcox (2002) had several hypotheses. First (Hypothesis 1), because of the import of religious culture in shaping paternal behavior, conservative Protestant men would display greater levels of paternal involvement than unaffiliated fathers. Second (Hypothesis 2), because religion promotes family-focused behavior uniformly among parents (though this is unclear and debatable), church attendance would be associated with greater paternal involvement. And third (Hypothesis 3), a conventional *habitus* marked by religious attendance, civic engagement, and family-centered activity would account for a link between religion and paternal involvement (see Bartkowski & Xu, 2000). The point Wilcox (2002) was making here was that, if religious participation is a form of conventional behavior (like civic engagement), then religion should be found to

not have a different effect on paternal involvement from civic engagement in the same model. Yet, if religion has a unique effect on paternal involvement, then a “robust” or significant difference should be found (Wilcox, 2002, p. 783).

The sample was derived from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH). NSFH-1 of 1987-1988 (the same sample base as used by Bartkowski & Xu, 2000) comprised 13,017 adults who were 19 years and older. NSFH-2 of 1992-1994 was also used; it had an 82% response rate and included a subset of 1,019 fathers cohabitating with children at the time of survey. For dependent variables, Wilcox (2002) had *one-on-one interaction*, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .78, and measured on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = never or rarely; 6 = almost every day); *dinner together* (0-7 dinners together per week); and *youth-related activities*. Independent variables considered were conservative Protestant, mainline Protestant, Catholic, and unaffiliated. *Attendance* was measured on an 8-point Likert scale (0 = never; 8 = several times a week). *Civic engagement* was measured on a 5-point Likert scale (from never to several times a week).

Wilcox found that affiliated (religious) fathers were more likely than others to be engaged and that religion was a more powerful predictor of paternal involvement than gender. First, the family focus of conservative Protestant culture was found to birth greater paternal involvement, supporting Hypothesis 1 that conservative Protestant men would display greater levels of paternal involvement than unaffiliated fathers. Second, religious participation was linked to greater paternal involvement in youth-related activities, which supported Hypothesis 2, namely that church attendance would be associated with greater paternal involvement. And third, civic engagement was positively related to paternal involvement in youth-related activities, supporting Hypothesis 3 that a

conventional *habitus* marked by religious attendance, civic engagement, and family-centered activity would account for the link between religion and paternal involvement. Hence Wilcox (2002) found that religion was related to paternal involvement as measured by “one-on-one engagement, dinner with one’s family and volunteering for youth-related activities” (p. 788). And religion did seem to make a significant difference over and above civic engagement (or conventional activity).

A limitation of the study was the skewed view of activity or affiliation. For example, the study seemed to neglect the fact that the Roman Catholic Mass is offered every day and hence respondents had that option for an answer, whereas Protestantism is not as liturgical. Protestantism does, however, have non-local church activities, such as Bible studies, home groups, home churches, outreach, evangelism, AWANA, and the like. This feature, which was left out, might even strengthen the case for conservative paternal religiosity and involvement with kids.

Father’s Religious Influence on Work and Family

Two final quantitative correlational studies fall under paternal involvement and religiosity but specifically refer to a few variables that influence parental, maternal or paternal involvement with respect to work-family trade-offs (Ammons & Edgell, 2007; Civettini & Glass, 2008). It is important to address the influence that religion might have on a father’s work and family involvement.

Ammons and Edgell (2007) studied the religious influence on work-family trade-offs utilizing the 1996 Gender Module General Social Survey (GSS; Davis, Smith, & Marsden, 2005) yielding a final sample size (after delimitations from the original GSS of

$N = 2,904$ and the Gender Module N of 1,460) of $N = 867$ (430 men and 437 women).

Though they did not explicitly state the target population, the focus of the study was on a national survey where respondents had answered questions in part on religious involvement. The GSS had about 19% conservative Protestant women, 16% in the subsample of 437. Of those with young children, 4% of the subsample were conservative Protestant.

Work-family trade-offs are practical routines of action that coordinate paid employment and family life, whereas family trade-offs are compromises people make in their family lives because of the responsibilities of paid work and employment (Ammons & Edgell, 2007, p. 794). In general Ammons and Edgell (2007) hypothesized that religiosity (measure in church attendance) would have a gender neutral effect on men and women, encouraging both to make employment trade-offs and not family trade-offs (p. 820). Specifically they hypothesized that H1a) people involved in mainstream religious institutions (Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish) are more likely to make employment trade-offs to spend time with family than those who are not as involved in these institutions; H1b) they are less likely to make family trade-offs because of work demands; H2) After controlling for gender ideology, conservative Protestant women will make more employment trade-offs than non-conservative Protestant women and more than conservative Protestant men; H3a) After controlling for gender ideology, conservative Protestant men will make more family trade-offs and fewer employment trade-offs than other men, and fewer than conservative Protestant women; and lastly, competing with H3a, H3b) Conservative Protestant men will make more employment trade-offs than

other men, because they understand this as fulfilling the moral imperative to be more involved in their family.

To do this they had seven dependent variables (Employment trade-offs—promotion refused, overtime refused, cut back on hours; Family trade-offs—took additional work cutting into family time, unable to do the work they usually did around the house, missed a family occasion or holiday, unable to care for a sick child or relative) and six independent variables (Gender ideology, Job demands, Family demands, Human Capital, Religion, and Race and Religion).

Ammons and Edgell (2007) found that employment and family trade-off predictors vary by gender and that religion operates in a complex way to affect the likelihood of making these trade-offs (p. 814). A wider range of men's trade-offs are influenced by religion more than women. For example, women's employment trade-offs are influenced by work demands and not family demands or religious involvement. Women's family trade-offs are influenced by work demands, family demands, religion, age, and share of household income to which they contribute. Men, and not women, and their work-family trade-offs are influenced by family demands and religious involvement. However, men, similarly to women, are influenced by work demands, family demands, and religion in their family trade-offs. That is, overall family demands, gender ideology, religion (not work demand and human capital) predict men's odds of employ trade-offs (Ammon & Edgell, 2007, p. 816). In short, religion does have an effect on employment and family trade-offs for men and not for women's employment tradeoffs.

Some implications from Ammon and Edgell's (2007) study for this current study are 1) their study, as most if not all studies in this domain, use external measurements of religiosity involvement. There needs to be an assessment of a father's relational aspect of his religious involvement given attachment theory, God concepts, and the notion that spiritual formation is relational and parental influence is highly relational. Additionally, as Ammon and Edgell found, the more fathers attend church the less likely they will miss family events, add work into their schedule, etc. Perhaps this points to a core belief of family centeredness that is reinforced in a father. And lastly, Ammon and Edgell report one of several limitations of their study being that they have no way of knowing which respondents refused overtime or promotions that would compromise family time. So a measure would be helpful to give fathers an opportunity to discuss this.

The findings of Ammons and Edgell (2007) find opposition in some ways to a study by Civettini and Glass (2008) which studied the impact of religious conservatism on men's work and family involvement. While their study is less convincing than Ammons and Edgell's (2007) it too bears mentioning some insights for the current study.

Using 1988 and 1993 waves of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH: subsamples of $N = 4,519$ men in wave 1; $N = 3,016$ men in wave 2) Ammons and Edgell (2007) ask the question Does religious conservatism affect work-family outcomes of men, or more specifically Why is it that the "impact of religious conservatism on behavioral choices regarding work and family remains an understudied phenomenon?" (p. 173). While their review of the literature is scant, they note that though there has been some research showing a pattern of earlier marriage and family formation, lower education, withdrawal from labor force, increased housework, and

lower earnings by religiously conservative women compared to counterparts in mainline denominations, little is known of this pattern for men (Ammons & Edgell, 2007, p. 173). Several research questions surface for them: Do religiously conservative men marry and become fathers earlier than other men? Do they sacrifice career advancement, even in face of expectation that they serve as primary financial providers for their families? Do they out serve their wives by performing more housework and child care than other men or do they avoid domestic work to be in line with their religious beliefs about gender differentiation in family roles (Ammons & Edgell, 2007, p. 178)?

The overall hypothesis for the study is that men from conservative religious households will make earlier transitions to adulthood, work fewer hours, and earn less money than others. Additionally these fathers' belief in strong paternal involvement should lead them to spend more time in housework and child care (Ammons & Edgell, 2007, p. 172). Specifically they hypothesize (findings are noted by "yes" or "no" up front) that men from religiously conservative backgrounds will 1) marry earlier in life—no, 2) become fathers earlier in life—no, 3) spend fewer hours in paid employment per week—no, 4) earn lower hourly wages—yes, 5) spend more hours engaged in housework—no, and 6) spend more time caring for their children—no (Ammons & Edgell, 2007, p. 178).

In looking at these hypotheses, they use four dependent variables (age at first marriage, age at first birth of child, weekly work hours, weekly housework hours) and two independent variables (religious background—conservative, mainline, non-religious; class background—mother's educational level, fathers educational level, mother's

occupational prestige, and father's occupational prestige). Control variables are age, race, years of education, and gender traditionalism.

Before discussing their findings, several limitations and issues regarding Civettini and Glass's (2008) study need to be addressed. First, most if not all research has limitations or biases. However, as much as possible these should be noted in some fashion. This study seems weighed down in bias and equivocation. Regarding bias for example, multiple sections suggest the authors are not interested so much in the impact of religious conservatives on men's work (or family involvement) as much as they are interested in showing that religious conservatives have contributed to suppression of women, sexual division of labor, and inequality and that "religious conservatives sought the reestablishment of traditional nuclear families" undoing efforts of feminists and their "work-family reconciliation policies" (Civettini & Glass, 2008, pp. 173-174). The last statement of the study seems to belie the study's title and guise as focusing on male involvement: "our findings suggest that conservative religious ideologies may have a direct role to play in transmitting gender inequality in earnings" (Civettini & Glass, 2008, p. 189).

Another weakness of the study appears to be equivocation of sorts or at minimum an inconsistent view of religious conservatism and miss-categorization of Evangelicals, conservative Protestants, etc. This is important for future researchers in this area to notice. Most, if not all studies presented in this extensive literature review consider religious conservatives to be along the lines of what Ammons and Edgell (2007) note as Protestant, Catholic, and even Jewish conservatives. Civettini and Glass (2008) include Latter Day Saints (LDS), Jehovah Witness, Reorganized LDS, and several others in the

same breath as conservative movements, as well as such persons as James Dobson and such Para church organizations as Promise Keepers. Their clumping non-Christian systems (LDS, Jehovah Witness, et al.) in with Orthodox Judeo-Christian denominations such as Baptist, Charismatic, and interestingly overlapping categories such as “all Evangelical denominations,” “Born Again Christian,” seems to exhibit a misunderstanding of religious worldviews, possibly skewing their view of what shapes a father’s behavior. This is compounded when the authors express their findings based on fundamentally vastly divergent religious worldviews yet use primarily, if not only, orthodox Christian movements and persons as the exemplars of these findings. This is very misleading. That is, their research might be possibly skewed in religious worldviews from such divergent respondents. And then to attach those findings to a group that does not adhere to such beliefs is unwarranted.

Despite these limitations however, Civettini and Glass offer interesting results and insights that prove useful. As noted at the outset all but the fourth hypothesis were not supported by the findings. They found no evidence that religious conservative men (vs. mainline) respond to dual imperatives of breadwinning and involved fatherhood by decreasing their investment in paid labor to increase familial investment. Also, family formation and limited sex expression prior to marriage in conservative religion did not result in earlier transition into marriage or parenthood. Lastly, conservative religion had no effect on a father’s increased housework or child care.

Equally useful is one particular point made by the authors themselves that has been a common theme in most if not all research done prior regarding father-child dyads. Often the explanation for lack of significant effects of conservative religion on work-

family outcomes is that the effects of religious conservatives are predicated on high levels of religiosity (attending church). But active versus nominal may be an issue (Civettini & Glass, 2008, p. 187). They tried to adjust this limitation, but it is only measured qua religious attendance (an external measure), and found that being an active religious conservative affected only one finding. This raises an important question in the current study. Again most research done on familial religious habits are based on external measures such as going to church, being involved, etc.) There is a need and means to better assess a father's spirituality that is not only external but relational. The instrument in this current study achieves this balance.

Fathering perception and relationships. Not only are conservative Protestant fathers more likely than non-Evangelical fathers to supervise, be involved with, and affectively parent their children, but fathers' faith orientation is meaningful in their involvement with their children. Additionally, fatherhood itself seems to produce generative fathering growth in becoming more family-oriented (Palkovitz & Palm, 1998). The most significant pattern found regarding connecting with one's child was being personally involved in activities with one's child, particularly in activities they liked (recreation, play or learning, and work or important events; Brotherson, Dollahite, & Hawkins, 2005).

Palkovitz and Palm (1998) studied paternal religiosity (religious faith and practices) and moral beliefs based on the generativity theory of Erikson (1968) applied to generative fathering. Being a dad in itself, they hypothesized, would have a role in the influence of fathering with respect to changing religious belief, family-centered values, and moral views. The study addressed the question of whether fatherhood as an

experience influences men's development as adults and particularly as being a dad. Despite the acknowledgement of the bi-directional nature of parent-child relationships, Palkovitz and Palm (1998) noted the rather minimal or bleak attempts to outline these influences of parenthood on men.

The sample for Palkovitz and Palm's qualitative study involved 64 fathers contacted via early childhood family education programs, adult basic education, and correctional institutions (from which came the majority of the respondents). Forty fathers were from the East Coast region and 24 from the Midwest; they ranged from 17 to 50 years old, all with one or more children between infancy and 15 years old. Sound triangulation procedures were used in collecting and coding the transcripts. In ascertaining whether engagement in fatherhood roles presents a sensitive period for men for the development of religious faith, values, and morals, they asked three questions of each father.

The first question was "Has fathering influenced your commitment to religious belief?" For some respondents, there was no change; due to past negative experiences, religion was already central (religion served as an *axis mundi*; Eliade, 1987; see also Latshaw, 1998). Or if there was a change, it was not from fatherhood but from other life experiences. For some, there was change in the form of re-involvement, enhancement of a former or current faith, or increased interest in being a seeker of religious things with fatherhood as an impetus. In short, about half of the group reported some type of important change in "external behavior or commitment to religion as a result of fathering" (Palkovitz & Palm, 1998, p. 39). At issue here is the possibility that basic beliefs may not have changed as much as practice.

The second question was “Has fatherhood resulted in any shifts in your values?” Eighty percent of all respondents noted a shift or change in values, namely a shift from selfishness to child- and family-centeredness. That is, of all the issues raised in the study, this had the greatest response.

The third question was “Has fatherhood influenced your view of moral issues?” Only a slight majority suggested there was a change (without any rationale, this question was only asked of the East Coast subsample). Many fathers interviewed responded that a change occurred in order to be a good role model; they said things such as, “Before I can give them the morals I want them to have, I’ve got to really take a serious look at my morals” (Palkovitz & Palm, 1998, p. 41). Some fathers even changed their basic view on issues like abortion from being pro-abortion prior to fatherhood to pro-life afterward.

Several points from this study should be noted. Firstly, as noted on prior occasions in this review, Erikson’s (1968) theory of generativity was a useful framework for Palkovitz and Palm (1998). Changes in values from egocentricity to family-child centricity (parental generativity versus self-absorption) were expressed by 80% of the fathers (Palkovitz & Palm, 1998, p. 42), albeit the authors noted possible limitations on the effect of generativity shown in the study due to some respondents being incarcerated fathers with identity crisis or lack of moral guidance. Perhaps these fathers’ uncertainty yielded a carefree mindset in letting the children decide for themselves. Secondly, among the fathers in Palkovitz and Palm’s study, and perhaps fathers in general, there was a predominant mindset that the father’s role was provider and not religious modeler, which was a role delegated or acquiesced to mothers. Thirdly, independence in male

Table 2.5

Empirical Studies on Paternal Involvement: Fathering Perceptions and Relationships

Author, date, and strength	Subjects/Sample/Population	Type/Instruments	Results
Palkovitz & Palm (1998) IA, EN	<i>N</i> = 64 fathers from 2 U.S. regions: East Coast (<i>n</i> = 40) and Midwest (<i>n</i> = 24). Contacted via early childhood family education programs, adult basic education, and correctional institutions (the majority of the respondents). Age 17-50 years, all with 1 or more children between infant and 15 years old.	Qualitative: triangulation by both authors in collecting and coding transcripts.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has fathering influenced your commitment to religious belief? <i>Yes</i> about 50%. 2. Has fatherhood resulted in any shifts in your values? <i>Yes</i> for 80% (from selfishness to child- and family-centeredness—was greatest response of all issues). 3. Has fatherhood influenced your view of moral issues? <i>Yes</i> for slightly above majority, some even changed view of abortion to pro-life. 80% noted a paternal generativity of sorts (a la Erickson: generativity vs. self-absorption). Most fathers delegated responsibility to mother and felt children should make own choices about religion & values.
Brotherson, Dollahite, & Hawkins (2005) IA, EN	<i>N</i> = 16 fathers: purposeful and convenience sample; married with at least 1 disabled child, Central Utah, Caucasian (except 1 African American and 1 Chinese), of low to moderate socio-economic status, 20-40 years old, almost all Latter Day Saints.	Qualitative: narrative, grounded theory. In-depth interviews.	Most significant pattern from narratives—connecting to one's children focused on being personally involved in activities with a child (recreational activity, play, learning, work, or attending important events).

Table continues

Table 2.5 *Empirical Studies on Paternal Involvement: Fathering Perceptions and Relationships*, (continued)

Latshaw (1998) IA, EN	<i>N</i> = 4 nondenominational Christian fathers (34-38 years old, <i>M</i> = 41.5).	Qualitative; grounded theory, structured open-ended interviews on relationship between centrality of faith (<i>axis mundi</i>) and father role construction	3 major interdependent ideals in their fathering: 1. Perfect love of God: relationship, but lack of time for relationship. 2. Generativity of faith: pass on the faith which truly becomes the child's faith. 3. Spiritual authority of the servant (area where most men got metaphysical/spiritual about their fathering role).
Sanderson & Thompson (2002) IA, ER/L	<i>N</i> = 137 (90 European American, 47 African American) fathers of children between ages of 2 and 6.	Quantitative correlation.	Increased skill perception of father, gender role, ethnicity/family requirements = increased involvement. Wife working outside home = increased involvement. Marital satisfaction did not = increased involvement (but authors question that result).
Feldman (1981) IA, EL	Parenting couples (<i>n</i> = 42); and childless couples (<i>n</i> = 44) married average of 62 months. 37 of 44 questionnaires were returned (84%). Education was similar for both groups (for parent group, 16 years for men, 14.80 years for women; for childless group, 16.67 years for men, 16.30 years for women). Age and occupational status were similar. Mean age was 29.34 years for men and 27.75 for women. 49% of childless couples had no religious affiliation compared to 28% of parenting couples.	Quantitative correlation.	1. No significant difference attributed to respondents' sex. 2. No statistically significant difference between the 2 groups regarding family orientation. 3. Regarding self-concept, parents were more likely to have traditional attitudes toward women than childless couples. 4. Childless couples seemed to value masculine traits of achievement and independence. 5. No significant difference in marital satisfaction, but difference on the extent of positive marital interactions.

Table continues

Table 2.5 *Empirical Studies on Paternal Involvement: Fathering Perceptions and Relationships*, (continued)

Ryan, Kalil, & Ziol-Guest (2008) IS, ER	<i>N</i> = 893 drawn from Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS, a longitudinal birth cohort study begun in 1998 for 5 years with 4,898 families). Unwed families oversampled by design to examine nonresident father involvement following an unwed birth. (Sample also limited to couples with parents available.	Quantitative, longitudinal.	1. Greater economic resources and paying child support was positively associated with paternal involvement—ability to invest financially may motivate fathers to invest more time in children; financial investment may motivate mothers to facilitate fathers' time investment. 2. Harmonious relationship throughout the family system was positively associated with father involvement—these relationships both encourage and sustain paternal emotional commitment to their noncustodial children.
Canfield, Hosley, O'Donnell, & Roid (2008) IS, ER	<i>N</i> = 993 of National Survey of Men (Canfield, 1994): Mostly Protestant Christian men attending large Christian men's conference in United States 1994-1995. Ages 21-62 (<i>M</i> = 36.9, <i>SD</i> = 7.2). White (86.6%), African American (5.1%), Hispanic-American (4.5%), Asian-American (1.35%). Education averaged 2+ years of post-secondary. Metropolitan (49%), <50,000 pop. (32.5%), rural (18.2%).	Quantitative, correlation. The National Survey of Men (Canfield, 1994): 180 survey questions (5- or 7-point Likert scales) and 34 demographic questions. Personal Fathering Profile (PFP).	As marriage and family satisfaction were high and as non-marital sexual behaviors were low, so was the involvement of fathers with their children (father closeness) increased.

Note: Strength of internal validity (I) for each research article will be indicated on the table by an "S" (strong), "A" (acceptable), and "W" (weak). Generalizability ("E" for external Validity) is "R" (fairly representative), "L" (limited/less than an author's intended target audience, and "N" (not generalizable). For example IA, EL is Acceptable internal validity, Limited Generalizability (external validity). Studies are in alphabetical order.

socialization may have influenced responses toward the view that children should make their own decisions. This logic seems flawed. That is, not taking responsibility for the religious beliefs and practices to which their children are exposed on the grounds that they want to respect their children's freedom of choice is incongruent with daily, typical controls and guidance that parents exhibit with their children. For example, if a father feels that his child should choose his or her own faith, then why not allow the child to choose his or her own time to walk in the middle of the street or play near a cliff? Clearly, most of these same fathers would not allow those events to happen.

Brotherson, Dollahite, and Hawkins (2005) further researched generative fathering and the dynamics of connection between fathers and their children. Several important principles suggested by prior research drove their study. One, meaningful paternal relational influences on children are important in their healthy development, evidenced by reduced substance abuse and academic failure (Blankenhorn, 1995; Harper & McLanahan, 1998). Two, attention to the needs of children is a primary motivation for further understanding and encouraging good fathering (Doherty et al., 1998; Dollahite & Hawkins, 1998). Three, generative fathering is fathering that responds regularly and often to a child's developmental needs over time (Brotherson, Dollahite, & Hawkins, 2005). These pointed to the need for their study because only a minimal amount of qualitative in-depth research on caring behavior of fathers existed. That is, "scholars have realized that fathering must be understood in its own context and not simply as an adjunct to maternal care giving" (Brotherson et al., 2005, p. 2).

In addition to a limited research base in this area, Brotherson et al. (2005) noted a lack of paternal theory on the whole, though there had been several important

contributions: Lamb and Pleck (1987) influenced much of paternal thought on their four-factor model; responsible fathering (Doherty et al., 1998); and non-deficit perspective of generative fathering based on a father's ethical obligation to meet the needs of the next generation. In short, Brotherson et al. (2005) presented research that suggested the strong relationship work of fathering as opposed to deficit fathering (what fathers are lacking).

Several underlying assumptions of the study centered on the view that interdependence is fundamental in the father-child interaction (see Boyatzis & Kyczynski, 2003). Relationship work is a vital domain of the father-child relationship because human meaning and identity formation do not occur apart from a relational context. "A child is born into the world with many kinship connections . . . organized systems and subsystems of relationships" (Brotherson et al., 2005, p. 3; see also Brofenbrenner, 1979). Connecting with one's child in relationship takes intentional effort to create and maintain healthy bonds as suggested in attachment theory (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1985; Palkovitz & Palm, 1998). The goal of the qualitative study by Brotherson et al. (2005), therefore, was to "generate understanding of how fathers describe their efforts [intentionality] to connect with their children and the meanings that their stories contribute to the fathering experience" (p. 6).

The sample comprised 16 fathers derived via a purposeful and convenience sample. In-depth interviews were performed with these married fathers, who had at least one disabled child, lived in Central Utah, were Caucasian (except for 1 African American and 1 Chinese), were of low to moderate socioeconomic status, were 20 to 40 years old, and were almost all Latter Day Saints (LDS). The most significant pattern from narratives was that connecting with one's children focused on being personally involved in

activities with the child (such as recreation activity, play or learning, work, or attending important events). A common description or ethos was that time spent together was important, but it was a time of relaxing and having fun in that companionship. In short, Brotherson et al. (2005) found that “fathers may connect with children best in a semi-structured environment of shared activity that allows for physical interaction and sharing of mutual interests as well as personal conversation” (p. 19).

Despite the generative and relational findings (rather than a deficit orientation), there are some limitations to the study, some of which the authors noted. First, the findings are not generalizable and are very limited due to the highly homogeneous sample. However, it is not the methodological issue that is of importance currently, but rather an issue that surfaces in this and many other studies that points to the need for the current paper. Namely, the focus of this study and others usually seems to be on externalities or activities. While it is important to have time on task, the content, relationality, and intentionality are more important. Hence this current paper focuses on the spiritual formation of the child and the father’s intentional relational involvement to that end.

Finally, strengths of the study are its narrative depth and its assertion that “the meaning of life cannot be determined outside of the stories told about it” (Widdershoven, 1993, as cited in Brotherson et al., 2005, p. 6). They make good cases for connecting their findings with strong prior research as exemplified by Lamb and Pleck (1997), Bowlby (1982), Karen (1990) and others in stating the “relevance of connecting with one’s child as a primary feature of fathering receives support from other research studies and

[attachment] quality is dependent on how a parent responds to a child's needs for care, comfort, and security (Brotherson, et al., 2005, p. 18).

Latshaw (1998) studied the centrality of faith in fathers' role construction as influenced by the *axis mundi* theory of Mircea Eliade (1987) on the grounds that faith orientation of a father is profoundly meaningful. There had been previous research in religion and family, but very little was known about what part a central faith plays as a man constructs his fathering role (Latshaw, 1998, p. 54).

Latshaw's (1998) qualitative study interviewed four nondenominational Christian fathers (34-38 years old with a mean age of 41.5) in a grounded theory, structured open-ended interview format. His sample of fathers who said their faith was highly influential or defining in their lives admittedly is not representative of the adult male population, but Latshaw suggested that the sample was not only appropriate but necessary given the need to assess what might be a best-case scenario. The questions centered on frequency and type of interaction of fathers with their children, the reasons behind them, and the fathers' goals regarding this experience.

Latshaw (1998) found that these fathers had three major interdependent ideals in their fathering. The first ideal was perfect love of God: building relationships was paramount for these fathers. Quantity of time was seen as paramount in providing fathers the opportunity to relate at the child's developmental level. However important quantity was, an ever present issue with the fathers in the study was the lack of time for relationship. The second ideal was generativity of faith: fathers had a responsibility to pass on the faith so that it would truly become the child's faith. The third ideal was spiritual authority of the servant: This area was where most men got metaphysical or

spiritual about their fathering role (Latshaw, 1998, p. 61). Fathers saw themselves as the head of their families, with *head* not being a boss per se, but a fixed center (*axis mundi*), serving as a source of spiritual foundation and providing spiritual responsibility and unselfishness toward their children.

All three paternal sentiments were interrelated. The generativity of faith was fueled by the father's great love for his children: the

impartation of faith hinges upon the faithful father conforming himself to the ideal of love. Additionally, becoming the perfect love of God to their children is driven by generativity of faith. And faithful fathers demonstrate or possess *Axis Mundi*: faithful father places himself in a position of greater authority, influence, and stewardship over his children. (Latshaw, 1998, p. 54)

Might this resemble intentionality? Despite the effect of the small sample size on generalizability, this was a deep and revealing study. The fathers were transparent enough to suggest that each of them knew or envisioned what an uninvolved father was and that they did not aspire to be one (though Latshaw seemed to suggest that some of the fathers in a way wished they could be not responsible in that way). While open and honest, this wish is troubling to say the least.

Paternal skills perception. Not only does fathering itself generate or affect family orientation, but a father's perception of an increase in his skills increases his involvement in the lives of his children (Lamb, 1997; Pleck, 1997) as do ethnicity or family "requirements" (Sanderson & Thompson, 2002, p. 99) and the wife working outside the home (Sanderson & Thompson, 2002; see also Feldman, 1981). Sanderson and Thompson (2002) examined variables associated with perceived paternal involvement in the care of their children. Paternal involvement, they suggested, was akin to other studies focusing on generative fathering (Dollahite & Hawkins 1998),

responsible fathering (Doherty et al., 1998), and many other activities of fathers such as planning, providing financial support, and protecting (Palkovitz & Palm, 1997). Lamb (1997) divided involvement into engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. In short, much of paternal effort can be summed up as time and energy invested in direct and indirect care of children. Here, these issues can be summed up as intentionality in fathering.

For Sanderson and Thompson's study (2002), engagement was equivalent to time spent in direct, focused interaction with the child. Responsibility was defined by the concern for the child's well-being, even if there was no child contact (Lamb, 1997, and other researchers have consistently found that fathers have had relatively little responsibility for child care). Sanderson and Thompson's (2002) sample consisted of 137 fathers (90 European American, 47 African American) whose children were between the ages of 2 and 6. They used a hierarchical multiple regression and analysis of variance to analyze the following factors affecting paternal involvement: a father's perceived skill at child care (Crouter, 1987); a father's gender-role orientation (Bem, 1974); a father's marital satisfaction (Spanier, 1976); the salience of father identity (Thompson & Sanders, 1999); paternal involvement (Klein Frequency of Participation/Division of Responsibility Scale [KFPS], 1983); and demographics such as the father's age, education level, ethnicity, work status, number of years married, and the child's age and gender.

Sanderson and Thompson (2002) tested three hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 stated that salience of father identity would be predictive of perceived levels of participation in and responsibility for child care tasks. Hypothesis 2 proposed that paternal gender-role orientation and ethnicity would be predictive for perceived levels of participation.

Hypothesis 3 suggested that a father's perceived skill at child care and marital satisfaction would be predictive of higher levels of involvement.

A summary of the results revealed that fathers tended to rate themselves as often involved, but self-reported that they were less likely to take responsibility for child care (such as changing and feeding) than were mothers. Increased skill perception on the part of fathers ($r = .69, p < .05$), gender-role orientation ($r = .45$ to $.51, p < .05$), and ethnicity and family requirements ($r = -.32, p < .05$) were all predictive of increased paternal involvement, as was the wife working outside the home. Marital satisfaction ($r = .23, p < .05$) was not a predictor of increased involvement, though the authors suggested that finding was questionable, perhaps due to the cross sectional approach that selected parents of young children who, with all the changes at the time, did not have the marital satisfaction that they might later on in life. They suggested that perhaps "parenting alliance" (McBride & Rane, 1998) would better get at the concept. Perhaps this matches what others have called co-parenting or authoritative parenting with spousal support. Also, father identity salience was linked to a non-increase in involvement. None of the demographic variables explained a significant variance in frequency of paternal involvement.

Intentional parenting and non-parenting. Feldman (1981) provided a unique and rare study touching directly on the issue of intentionality from a parenting as well as non-parenting point of view, adding insight to this current paper. Feldman's hypothesis suggested that satisfaction in a particular life-style, be it parenting or an intentionally childless couple, is greatly due to or a function of choice.

The two sample groups consisted of 42 parenting couples and 44 childless couples, all of whom had purposely chosen their current life-style. The childless couples were procured from a membership list of the National Alliance of Optional Parenthood (NAOP). The number of years the parenting couples were married was not clear; however, the childless couples were married an average of 62 months. For the childless group, 37 of 44 questionnaires were returned (84%). Average years of education were similar for both groups: in the parent group, 16.00 for men and 14.80 for women; and in the childless group, 16.67 for men and 16.30 for women. Age and occupational status were similar as well, with the mean age for men at 29.34 years and 27.75 for women. The couples without children were less religiously inclined (49% had no religious affiliation versus 28% of parenting couples). Variables used in the study were *family orientation* (referring to the couple's own upbringing vis-à-vis marital satisfaction of parents, which parent was dominant in child rearing issue resolution, closeness to mother as a child, and parents' values); *self-concept* (self-esteem, possession of traditional sex-role attitudes), and *marriage quality* (rated by couple's own marriage, marital interaction, and locus of decision making).

Results suggested that there was no significant difference attributed to the respondents' gender. Clearly revealed, however, was that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups regarding family orientation. Regarding self-concept, parents were more likely than childless couples to have traditional attitudes toward women (*traditional* was not clearly defined in this study). The childless couples seemed to value masculine traits of achievement and independence. Regarding marital quality, there was no significant difference in marital satisfaction, but they did differ in

the extent of positive marital interactions—childless couples had greater positive marital interaction and fun away from home (Feldman, 1981, p. 597). While some might want clarity on the definition of *fun*, it is easy to have fun when a couple can be spontaneous and free in travel and activity and less limited by cost, many parents would suggest that being with their children, compared to when they did not have children, is the greatest fun and fortune they ever had. Also of interest is Feldman's suggestion that the group that deliberately (intentionally) chose parenthood may represent a new breed of parents. Despite the ability to withhold childbearing through whatever means, these parents eschewed many of the methods of doing so, decided to have children, and were accordingly highly motivated to be parents. In response to or developing this notion of intentional or highly motivated parenting, O'Leary and Warland (2012) found that, in parents of children born post perinatal loss, these parents were highly intentional, reducing spontaneity while valuing deliberation, intentionality, and planning. These parents valued their children's lives as a gift, taking nothing in their parenting responsibility lightly. During pregnancy they treasured time with the baby, had new awareness of fetal movement, and individualized the new baby (saw the baby as completely different than the lost baby). Subsequent to birth, being aware of vulnerability and not taking anything for granted, they saw themselves as significantly changed as persons and parents; they saw themselves as intentionally different from others; they knew they were overprotective and sought balance; they found themselves judging other parents as not understanding the preciousness of their own children; and they felt others should understand their history of loss and why they feel the way they do

presently (O'Leary & Warland, 2012, pp. 141-152). The point here is to exemplify highly intentional parenting in light of the discussion.

One issue of concern arising from Feldman's (1981) study was the suggestion that satisfaction is based on intentional choice (to become parents or remain childless) and that the level of satisfaction in intentional childlessness is no different than in intentional parenting. These same childless couples were members of NAOP, the purpose of which is to alleviate pressure on these couples. This seems oxymoronic. If they were satisfied and content in an intentional situation, why did they need counseling or support? Perhaps this was a sense of guilt that might skew the response.

Fathers and relationships. Though many of the studies reviewed here are paternal-child oriented on the whole, this in no way suggests that other relationships are not also effective. It has been a contention of this literature review chapter that many levels of systems and relationships affect this dyad. In a well-known study by Marsiglio (1991), the characteristics of a father's children (older, fewer, more boys than girls, and own biological) were greater predictors of paternal involvement (play, reading, talks) than many paternal variables or maternal influences on the father to be engaged. But clearly one of the relationships that affect paternal involvement is that of the father-mother dyad. Amato (1998) discussed social capital of fathers particularly with respect to co-parental relationships in addition to the parent-child relationship (pp. 244-245, 270). In short, his study found that fathers are "about as important as mothers in predicting children's long term outcomes" (Amato, 1998, p. 268) and that social capital (relationships) are a significant influence in children's development, along with financial capital and human capital such as parental skills and knowledge (Lamb & Pleck, 1997;

Sanderson & Thompson, 2002). This *social capital*, as Amato (1998) called it, reflects the relationships among family, relatives, and close friends that are in such a close system that a father would be at ease in discussing familial problems with them. That being said, Amato suggested that research was limited in this area, with particularly little on parent-community.

Some research suggests that inter-parental harmony in the case of separation is beneficial to the children's well-being or that inter-parental hostility affects child emotional wellbeing and academic performance, among other things, negatively (Baxter, Weston, Qu, 2011). Further research shows that harmonious relationships throughout the family system (with one's spouse and in-laws) are positively associated with paternal involvement (Ryan et al., 2008). Because paternal involvement is paramount in the development of a child's well-being, they researched this involvement particularly from the perspective of non-wed, non-residential fathers. Their research was based on family systems theory and mainstream developmental psychology literature wherein *involvement* is "the father's accessibility to, engagement with, and responsibility for his child" (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 963). Although this current review deals predominately with cohabitating residential fathers, the principle that harmonious relationships between biological fathers and mothers and extended family members increases the likelihood of paternal involvement suggests that marital satisfaction and system supports are important issues to consider when surveying or interviewing fathers.

From Ryan, Kalil, and Ziol-Guest's (2008) perspective, paternal involvement is related to, or in a sense a function of, parental relationship quality (a la Canfield's Personal Fathering Profile, 1990; see also Canfield on marital satisfaction, 2008),

extended family relationships, and the parents' romantic status. Their first hypothesis was that having greater economic resources and paying child support would be positively associated with involvement over time, because the ability to invest financially would motivate fathers to invest more time in children, and this investment would motivate mothers to facilitate fathers' time investment. Their second hypothesis was that, over and above paternal resources, harmonious relationships throughout the family system would be positively associated with father involvement over time, because these relationships could both encourage and sustain fathers' emotional commitment to their noncustodial children.

Ryan et al. (2008) drew a sample of 893 fathers from the Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study (FFCWS), a 5-year longitudinal birth cohort study begun in 1998 with 4,898 families. Unwed families were oversampled by design in order to examine nonresident father involvement following an unwed birth. The sample was also limited to couples who had access or regular contact with their parents (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 967).

Results of the study supported both hypotheses. Of all variables, mother-father relations were positive significant predictors in father involvement patterns. High consistent romantic relationship also saw a positive relationship to involvement with children, as did better paternal relationships with extended family members. The romantic factor seemed to have the highest covariance with changes in involvement over time. Although the pathways among their variables could have been paternally motivated or bi-directional, and the study relied on mothers' reports of paternal involvement, which could have negatively skewed the results, the study is helpful in identifying factors that could help fathers increase their involvement with their children.

In a recent study by Canfield, Hosley, O'Donnell, and Roid (2008), correlations were found between father closeness and married men's non-marital sexual behaviors, or sexual behaviors and fantasies (negative correlation), and marital and family satisfaction (positive correlations). These connections appeared to be important predictors in fathering for Canfield et al.: As marriage and family satisfaction were high and as non-marital sexual behaviors were low, so paternal involvement with children (father closeness) was increased. Though causal direction was not confirmed, a practical outcome from the study encourages fathers who wish to have better involvement with their kids to have better relationships with their spouses, and vice versa. This principle coincides with other studies suggesting the efficaciousness of spousal support as well as extended family relationships (Geisbrecht, 1995; Kim, 2008; Ryan et al., 2008).

Utilizing the National Survey of Men (Canfield, 1994), Canfield et al. (2008) procured a volunteer sample of 993 predominantly Protestant Christian men attending a large Protestant Christian men's conference in the United States in 1994-1995. Ages ranged from 21 to 62 ($M = 36.9$, $SD = 7.2$) and participants were predominately white (86.6%) with the remainder mixed among various ethnicities (5.1% African American, 4.5% Hispanic-American, 1.35% Asian-American). Education averaged 2 or more years of post-secondary schooling (22.5% had high school diplomas, 20.9% technical or associate degrees, 37.5% bachelors, and 20.9% higher degrees). Nearly half were from large metropolitan areas (49%), with the remainder coming from smaller towns of 50,000 or less in population (32.5%) or rural areas (18.2%). All respondents were self-selected, anonymous, and given a book worth 10 dollars as a gift for participating in the survey. Thirteen percent of the surveys were completed by ethnic minorities from intentional

over sampling (Canfield et al., 2008, p. 67). The National Survey of Men included 180 survey questions on 5- or 7-point Likert scales and 34 demographic questions.

Outcome variable factors had internal reliability of .75 for Sexual Behaviors and Fantasies, .93 for Marital Satisfaction, .87 for Family Satisfaction, and .68 for Father Closeness (Canfield et al., 2008, p. 68). Ethnicity, education, and place of residence had no significance on marital satisfaction, family satisfaction, or father closeness. Age did significantly influence sexual behaviors and fantasies, with younger men reporting more sexual behaviors and fantasies. Years married also significantly influenced family satisfaction, with older men having greater satisfaction. In answer to the question of whether father closeness affects men's non-marital sexual behavior, it was found that, as fathers' closeness to children increased, men's participation in non-marital sexual behavior decreased. In answer to the question of whether father closeness affects men's marital satisfaction, the answer was affirmative as well. With increasing levels of father closeness, men claimed to have greater marital satisfaction. And lastly, the answer to the question of whether father closeness affects men's family satisfaction was yes; with increases in levels of father closeness, men responded that they had greater family satisfaction.

Mindful parenting and fathers. As noted in the above theoretical discussions regarding this domain of paternal intentional involvement there has been an interest in a related notion to intentional parenting and that is of mindful parenting. Adapted from the general domain and practice of mindfulness, it bears similarities to intentionality in constructs such as awareness, purposeful, or paying attention on purpose. Several studies on mindful parenting will be noted below; however, a concern even in these resembles

one elucidated at the onset of this current study: namely a lack of study regarding father-child dyads in intentionality, and it is no different with respect to mindful parenting. Consistent with this paucity, two of three studies in this case, say mindful parenting but are really about mothers. From the outset they seem to equivocate. The studies equate mother-child dyads with parenting. This again is indicative, telling, or revealing of the “invisibility,” marginalization, and peripheral place fathers have in research and culture. With that said, these are recent important studies within mindful parenting so they are presented nonetheless. Perhaps some benefit toward fathers can be gleaned. The studies will be presented in chronological order due to the scaffolding nature of the content.

In a study by Duncan (2007), now a widely referenced authority on mindful parenting, which is a metaconstruct serving to integrate aspects of parental cognition, attitudes, and affective reactivity in parenting interactions (p. 15), Duncan aimed to assess a mindful parenting instrument (Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting, or IEM-P, scale). Duncan also looked at, among several relationships, the relation between intra-personal mindfulness, inter-personal mindfulness (i.e. mindfulness applied to parenting), and adolescent problem behavior and adaptive functioning (positive psychological well-being). Mindful parenting encompasses affective, cognitive and attitudinal aspect of parent-adolescent relations ... and extends the internal process of mindfulness to the interpersonal interactions taking place during parenting” (Duncan, 2007, p. iii).

In her study of 801 rural families ($N = 770$ mothers, 537 fathers) with adolescents, 375 mothers were randomly selected to take the IEM-P. Within a larger study (the PROSPER project involving 28 rural communities), Duncan’s study targeted Wave 3 (end of 7th grade) with mothers and fathers interviewed regarding their interpersonal

mindfulness in parenting (IEM-P) and their general intra-personal mindfulness. The seventh graders were interviewed regarding problem behavior and adaptive functioning.

Duncan found that validity in the construct of mindful parenting (MP), particularly with respect to four areas, were beneficial in mindful parenting. Duncan also found that mindful parenting was positively associated with, yet distinct from, mothers' intra-personal mindfulness. Secondly psychological functioning seemed to account for more of the variance in mothers' intra-personal mindfulness than of their mindful parenting. Thirdly, mothers' MP accounted greatly for the variance in parent-child affective quality and general child management (reasoning, monitoring, and discipline). Fourthly, mothers' mindful parenting seemed to be positively related to adolescent goal setting and negatively related to girl's externalizing behavior. In short, mindfulness has usefulness in the interpersonal domain, not just the intrapersonal cognitive domain and can inform or be employed in preventative interventions of familial tensions.

In a study by MacDonald and Hastings (2010), fathers (and parents on the whole) found to be more mindful in their parenting were more likely to be involved with their child-related parenting and socialization tasks (but not daily caregiving tasks; cf DeMaris, Mahoney, & Pargament, 2011). In their correlational study, their hypothesis was that fathers who reported more mindful "orientation to their parenting relationships with their children with intellectual disability would also report more involvement in the care and support of their child" (MacDonald & Hastings, 2010, p. 237). And if this is the case, then it would be important to design interventions to increase mindfulness to improve parent-child relationships to benefit child outcomes.

Using a sample of 105 fathers living in the East and Northeast of Ireland (response rate of 27% given 425 fathers were invited, 115 responded, with 105 meeting minimum criteria). Each father had to have a child receiving intellectual disability (ID) services from one of three recognized service providers and living in the same home as the child. Paternal ages ranged from 32 to 65 years ($M = 46.82$ years; $SD = 6.22$ years) with the majority ($n = 99$) being Irish and the rest being “other white,” African, etc. The majority were not educated past high school (only 29% had post high school education and nearly 25% tested early out of high school). The children, with ID, were 71 boys and 34 girls ranging from 6-18 years old ($M = 11$ years 8 months; $SD = 3.5$ years). The fathers completed a mindful parenting measure using two items from the Inter-Personal Mindfulness in Parenting scale (IPMP, Duncan, 2007; Duncan, et al., 2006) with an $r = .49$. The two items were “I find myself listening to my child with one ear, because I am busy doing or thinking about something else at the same time” and “I rush through activities with my child without being really attentive to him/her.” Fathers also responded to a 23-item measurement of Parental Involvement in Childcare (PIC, Roach et al., 1999) to measure parental involvement in three subscales: involvement in daily caregiving for their child ($\alpha = .80$), responsibilities for child related tasks ($\alpha = .85$), and responsibilities for child socialization ($\alpha = .79$).

They found that mindfulness in the parenting role may be an important predictor of parenting in families of children with intellectual disabilities. Fathers who did not work outside the home and those with younger children with ID were more involved in daily care tasks. Fathers were more involved in socialization of their ID child when their partner worked outside the home, the child was male, the child did not have Down

syndrome, and the child had autism. In short, they found that mindful parenting was a significant independent predictor of fathers' involvement in child-related parenting tasks and socialization tasks but not daily caregiving tasks.

The authors noted the low response rate weakens the representativeness of fathers with ID children. Their use of the mindfulness measurement (Duncan, 2007) was limited as well, and they felt it would have been more useful had the other parent also contributed to perception of father involvement aside from paternal responses alone.

Nonetheless, the study does suggest that fathers being more mindful of their parenting, particularly with ID children, is an important factor. And related to this current study of intentionality, being mindful or purposeful in parenting matters.

Lastly, Jones (2012) addressed the relationship between mindfulness (self-regulation of attention and the non-evaluative acceptance of immediate experiences), parental responsiveness (attunement and sensitive reaction to the child's needs), and parenting stress (stress experience related to specific demands of parenting and parent-child relationships). Jones' study included 128 adult parents recruited from an online networking forum for a study on parenting attitudes. They had to be at least 18 years old and have at least one child under 18 years old living at home at the time. Only one parent (if both were at home) was allowed to respond. The resultant sample yielded predominately maternal responses (91%) with a mean age of 31 (range 21-51), mostly Caucasian (82%), and mostly two-parent household (86.7%), with a majority of the respondents (again mostly women) employed (53.9%) and annual household income averaging \$90,000.

The respondents filled out several questionnaires via SurveyMonkey.com that measured trait mindfulness, parenting stress, and parental responsiveness. To measure trait mindfulness, Jones used the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006), a 39-item self-reported measure with 5 subscales (observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reacting to inner experience). Internal consistency reliability was .90 for her current sample. To measure parenting stress, Jones (2012) used the Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF; Abidin, 1995), consisting of 36 items with a test-retest and internal consistency reliability of the PSI (longer version) being .68 to .84. The PSI-SF consisted of three subscales measuring parenting stress (level of parenting related stress experienced; $a = .91$), difficult child (level of difficulty in the child's characteristics; $a = .87$), and parent-child dysfunctional interaction (level of negativity in the parent's view of the child and to what extent the child is meeting the parent's expectations; $a = .85$). Lastly parental responsiveness was measured by Child-Rearing Practice Report Questionnaire-Nurturance Scale (CRPR-NS; Block, 1965; Rickel & Biasatti, 1982), an 18-item subscale of Block's (1965) CRPR measuring parental responsiveness. Internal consistency of the CRPR-NS has been reported at $a = .82$ to $.84$.

Jones (2012) found that trait mindfulness was found to be positively correlated with parental responsiveness, and parenting stress was found to significantly mediate this relationship. That is, the more mindful parents (mostly mothers) are, the more attuned and responsive they are to their child's needs, and this phenomenon is explained by the lower levels of parenting stress associated with higher levels of trait mindfulness.

While the study is helpful in suggesting that mindfulness is helpful in reducing parenting stress, improving parent-child relationships, and demonstrating the need for increased mindfulness, several issues seem to diminish the study's meaningfulness. First the generalization of the study to parenting is highly misleading since 91% of the respondents were female. To suggest that maternal perceptions equate to parental responses is perhaps not only short sighted, but equivocating at best. Fathers may have a completely different sense of stress, mindfulness etc. It would have been more appropriate to do a study on maternal perceptions in this area but certainly not claim mothers represent parents. This oversight is actually part of the extensive literature review in this current study that demonstrates the general historical lack of father-child research that arises from a fundamental philosophical and perhaps societal bias marginalizing paternal significance or involvement. Again, like many studies (even noted in an earlier mindfulness study by MacDonald and Hastings, 2010, who Jones neglected to include in her literature review or paper entirely), fathers are a relatively neglected group in family research. Though MacDonald and Hastings were referring to fathers of children with intellectual disability, much of this current study literature review reveals a broader neglect as well. This leads to a second weakness. The literature review and research in general was extremely thin. Though Jones' study was a dissertation based on an emerging domain, it was only 50 pages (91 total pages including tables, appendixes, references, etc.). Accordingly the literature review was almost non-existent (19 pages including the introduction to the research). Lastly the skewed sample also is very upwardly mobile socio-economically and educationally. These people tend to be highly

motivated people and not very representative of average Americans of which Jones says the study “across the nation” represents.

In summarizing mindful parenting itself there are benefits to mentioning it in this current study. Generally, mindfulness, as it was noted earlier in the theoretical section, is a way of paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. Specifically with respect to mindful parenting Duncan (2009) suggests that mindful parenting has five dimensions: a) listening with full attention, b) nonjudgmental acceptance of self and the child, c) emotional awareness of the self and child, d) self-regulation in the parenting relationship, and e) compassion for one’s self and the child. The above mentioned mindfulness studies in aggregate support the notion that a parent being more mindful of their role, attitudes, or relationship with their child is beneficial and increases involvement, better relationships, etc. This is in line with the remainder of the extensive literature review in this study.

Instruments. Several instruments and methods used in the above domain of paternal involvement are summarized in Table 2.6. These instruments were either frequently used in the domain research or would be worth considering using in part, whole, or combination for related future research.

Table 2.6

Key Instruments Regarding Paternal Involvement

Instrument, author, date	Factors measured (number of items)	Internal consistency	Intended respondents
Personal Fathering Profile (PFP): Fathering Dimensions, Canfield, 1990, 1994.	Involvement (14) Consistency (11) Awareness (16) Nurturing (14)	.84 .79 .85 .76	Fathers
Personal Fathering Profile (PFP): Fathering Practices, Canfield, 1990, 1994.	Modeling (5) Dealing with difficulty (4) Financial provider (4) Time commitment to children (4) Showing affection (6) Allow freedom of expression (5) Spiritual development (5) Knowing my child (7) Involvement in education (8) Involvement in discipline (4) Marital interaction (4) Parental discussion of child (4)	.83 .90 .86 .84 .87 .82 .87 .85 .84 .85 .85 .87 .84 .85 .85 .87	Fathers
Personal Fathering Profile (PFP): Fathering Practices, Canfield, 1990, 1994.	Your childhood (4) Other's support (5) Verbal interaction w/ child (3) Leadership (3) Fathering role (3)	.76 .75 .85 .85 .80	Fathers
Child Care: modified, Crouter, 1987.	Child care for preschoolers (14)	.85	Fathers of preschoolers
Bem Sex-Role Inventory, Bem, 1974.	Father gender-role orientation (60)	.91 Masculine .82 Feminine	Fathers of preschoolers
Klein Frequency of Participation, Klein, 1983.	Involvement perception (22)	.91	Fathers of preschoolers
Dyadic Satisfaction, Spanier, 1976.	Fathers' marital satisfaction (10)	.82	Fathers with children
Cornell Parent Behavior Description (CPBD), Rodgers, 1996.	Nurturance, warmth, approval (12)	.88 Father .92 Mother	Parents
Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), Buri, 1991.	Authoritarian (10) Authoritative (10) Permissive (10)	.77-.90 Father .71-.86 Mother	Adolescents

Summary of Domain: Paternal Intentional Involvement

Framing the discussion for this domain were two related questions: To what degree are fathers involved in their children's spiritual formation? How do fathers influence the spiritual formation of their children? As in the previous domain, theory and empirical study have been reviewed. Fortunately, though for years social scientists doubted paternal influence was significant in children's development (Acock, 1987; Lamb, 1997)—and though still there is a deep-seated cultural bias against fathers as essential (Blankenhorn, 1995)—there now seems to be more empirical effort pertaining to fathers, but still little on theory (Doherty, 1998; Lamb, 1997).

Regarding theory pertaining to paternal intentionality and involvement, there are many positive contributions. Canfield (2002) noted dedication to or constraint from practices for the betterment of fathering. Fowler (2009) noted the lack of intentionality in parenting with respect to the spiritual development of children and the intentionality needed to plan for their spiritual development. Conservative Protestant fathers are more involved with their children than non-religious fathers on the whole, and this involvement incorporates various community dynamics (Doherty et al., 1998; Geisbrecht, 1995; Ruppell, 2004); that is, they are not alone (Canfield, 1992; Jones, 2008; Lamb & Pleck, 1997; Westerhoff, 2000), but in fact need the support of many others as they influence their children. Westerhoff (2000) called this a “community of faith-enculturation” (p. 45). Lamb and Pleck (1997) suggested that fathers' motivation, skill and self-confidence, social support and stresses, and institutional practices (e.g., working a job for the support of the family) are important in their involvement. Canfield (1992) proposed that marital and family satisfaction are positively related and influence a father's dedication to or

constraint from practices to help foster his involvement. Dollahite and Hawkins (1998) claimed that a father's sense of generativity positively influences his involvement with his children spiritually. Lastly, a father's core belief structure ultimately guides his actions in his intentionality and level of involvement with his children in their development (Kraft, 1989; Moreland, 1997; Willard, 1997). Yet despite these great contributions, some fortunately dealing directly with relationality, very few if any directly dealt with intentionality with respect to fathering or paternal involvement.

Regarding empirical evidence, far more literature now than in the past bolsters the notion that fathers have significant influence in their child's development, particularly spiritually. However, there is nothing that delves into paternal spiritual vitality and a father's intentional involvement with respect to his children's spiritual formation accordingly. Empirical evidence suggests several areas in which paternal involvement positively influences child development to such an extent that the lack of paternal involvement has been shown to have deleterious effects (Blankenhorn, 1995; McLanahan & Booth, 1989; Sanderson & Thompson, 2007; Sarkadi et al., 2007; Williams & Radin, 1999). But though these studies pertain to spiritual aspects of father involvement, it is to their religiosity, or external, activity oriented involvement; paternal intentionality, at best, can only be inferred. Despite that limitation, fathers' religiosity, their activity and focus on religious issues, has substantial influence on their children. Paternal religiosity influences children's religiosity and is related to higher quality father-child bonds (King, 2003; Lamport, 1990; Smith & Kim, 2003). Positive paternal influence on adolescent intrinsic religious commitment is enhanced by authoritative and supportive parenting styles with spousal support (Geisbrecht, 1995; Kim, 2008). Conservative Protestant

fathers are more likely to be involved, supervise, or affectively father their children than non-Evangelical fathers (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; Wilcox, 2002). Some fathers' involvement is increased due to a sense of generativity or family centeredness (Brotherson et al., 2005; Latshaw, 1998; Palkovitz & Palm, 1998). And paternal involvement increases with a father's perceived sense of skill (Feldman, 1981; Sanderson & Thompson, 2002), harmonious family system relationships, fathering satisfaction, and marital satisfaction (Canfield, 1994, 2002; Ryan et al., 2008). Hence it is clear that relationally fathers are highly influential in the development of their children, spiritually or otherwise. Lastly, several recent mindful parenting studies suggest the benefits for parent-child relationships with respect to increased parental involvement, stress management, parent-child intervention, etc. (Duncan, 2007; Jones, 2012; MacDonald & Hastings, 2010). What is missing is, in what way are fathers intentional in the spiritual formation of their children? In what way is a father's spiritual relationship with God related to this intentional involvement in the relational spirituality of his children?

Final Conclusions: Summary of Literature Review

Though the spiritual formation of children and the perceived level of paternal impact on children developmentally and spiritually were historically marginalized (Acock & Bengston, 1978; Bunge, 2001; Ratcliff, 2008), of late there has been a rise in studies and theories on these topics (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; Coles, 1990; Blankenhorn, 1995; Brotherson et al., 2005; Hay & Nye, 2006; Lamb, 1997; Lamb & Pleck, 1986; McLanahan & Booth, 1989; Roehlkepartain, King, Wagener, & Benson, 2006; Smith & Kim, 2003; Wilcox, 2002; King, 2003;). With this increase, it was the goal of this

chapter to provide a thorough review to understand what is known or familiar and what is less familiar or studied scarcely if at all in theory and research regarding two main domains: the relational spiritual formation of children and intentional paternal involvement in that spiritual formation. In doing this, three questions have been held in mind: How do parents influence the spiritual formation of their children? To what degree are fathers involved in their children's spiritual formation? How do fathers influence the spiritual formation of their children? This summary discusses these instructives and in particular to guide the current research as delineated in Chapter 4 and following.

Pertaining to the first question and its related domain, the relational spiritual formation of children, several points arising out of theory and research can be grouped together: (a) children are relational spiritual beings, and (b) fathers, parents generally, and significant others are involved in children's spiritual formation process.

Pertaining to the relational spiritual formation of children, firstly, children are deep, thoughtful, relational spiritual beings who may not be able to express what they believe as adults do but are nonetheless spiritually attuned (Berryman 1991; Coles, 1990; Hay & Nye, 2006). Secondly, children are co-pilgrims in a spiritual journey. That is, children have complex ideas about religion and are not passive recipients of parents' unilateral influence, but rather co-constructive or bi-lateral with significant others in their spiritual communication and development (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003). Children not only are influenced by their parents and others but contribute to the spiritual formation of others, including their parents (Boyatzis, 2004; Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003; Kuczynski, 2003). Thirdly, and not as widely acknowledged, a *preparedness* model suggests that children may be cognitively equipped or prepared to understand properties of God more

deeply and less anthropomorphically than is often thought, discriminating between what is of God and what is of man (Barrette & Richert, 2003). That is, “God concepts are easily accommodated because they play upon many of these default assumptions rather than violate them” (Barrette & Richert, 2003, p. 301). Children can be taught more sophisticated aspects of theological truths at a very young age than is assumed (Barrett & Richert, 2003). While some developmental phases are in play to a degree, they are by no means one-size-fits-all, and much of what adults teach or expect in conversation from children is not challenging enough, or in some cases adults miss the point more than children (Hay & Nye, 2006). What adults often describe as spiritual or how adults might express themselves is not necessarily nor probably the way children might, though they are spiritual nonetheless (Berryman, 1991; Coles, 1990; Hay & Nye, 2006). Also, children are highly sensitive, even at a very young age, to the intentionality of adults in their actions and their use of symbols with respect to referents (Sharon, 2005). Being aware of issues such as these, significant adults can be more open to experiences and conversations with children.

Next, theory and research speak to how fathers specifically, and parents and others generally, are integral in their children’s spiritual formation process: namely through attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988; Karen, 1989; Kirkpatrick, 1990), God concepts or images (Rizzuto, 1979; Hertel & Donahue, 1995), and ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). First, the family, parents, and particularly fathers (all part of a micro-system *qua* Bronfenbrenner) are the most influential figures in a child’s life, spiritual formation, and God concept. Accordingly, children need to see adults model lifelong learning and growing in their relationship with God in order for them to

understand and act out that knowing God is a lifelong journey (Bellous et al., 2004). Secondly, children develop their concept or image of God based on their parents' relation to each other and their God, particularly at an early age (Kirkpatrick, 1990; Rizzuto, 1979). From a secure base of family (Bowlby, 1988) children are able to come and go in the world with a safe haven of return. One can apply Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework to emphasize how children are influenced spiritually by not only the most influential micro-systems of the family but also other, larger systems of the faith family. Lastly, applying Vygotsky's (1978; see also Estep, 2008; Estep & Breckenridge, 2004) framework to spiritual development suggests that structuralism of earlier theorists (Fowler, 1981; Piaget, 1951) places unnecessary restrictions on spiritual formational views. Spiritual formation is not necessarily linear. While not eschewing structuralism altogether, it is wise to see the entire spiritual formation process as part of a greater social dynamic such that a child's faith is mediated between the community and individuals where more mature others deliberately [intentionally] instruct others in this zone of proximal development (Estep, 2003; Estep & Breckenridge, 2004). This means that the community of faith—from the father, parents, and family outward—is an essential and primary element for children's spiritual formation (Estep, 2003).

If children are highly relational in their spiritual formation, then this review's second domain, paternal involvement in their children's spiritual formation, is important to consider. The second and third questions—To what degree are fathers involved in their children's spiritual formation? How do fathers influence the spiritual formation of their children?—framed this domain. One thing is clear: lack of paternal involvement is detrimental to children's development (Blankenhorn, 1995; Doherty et al., 1998;

Dollahite & Hawkins, 1998; Lamb, 1987; McClanahan & Booth, 1989); and conversely, and specifically, paternal involvement is central to children's spiritual development.

Several theories characterize paternal involvement. Lamb and Pleck (1987) theorized that fathers' involvement with their children is influenced by motivation, skill and self-confidence, social support and stresses, and institutional factors and practices. Dollahite and Hawkins (1998) extended Erikson's (1950) idea of generativity to suggest that fathering is a generative work—as a father believes that his children are spiritual beings with divine purpose, he sees his role profoundly as caring for them as the next generation, despite challenges. Fathering is a multilateral relationship, in addition to one-to-one relationship (Doherty et al., 1998). Lastly, it is important for fathers to realize there is power in talking *with* and not *to* children and to understand that their development is affected by parental interactions with the faith community (Hood, 2004).

From a research perspective, several factors contribute to paternal involvement with their children spiritually. First a father's faith, religiosity, or spirituality has an influence on his children's religiosity and higher quality father-child bonds. For example, religious fathers are more involved with their children and have a more significant influence on their children spiritually than non-religious fathers (King 2003; Lamport, 2005; Smith & Kim, 2003). This is especially true of conservative Protestant fathers (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; Wilcox, 2002). Secondly, paternal involvement increases with a father's perception of his skill level in fathering duties (Sanderson & Thompson, 2002). Thirdly, fathers have a sense of purpose in fathering simply by being a father, which often elicits changes to child- and family-centeredness (Brotherson et al., 2005; Polkavitz & Palm, 1998). Canfield (1994, 2008) suggested that marriage satisfaction plays an important role in

father-child involvement. And lastly, several mindful parenting studies suggest the benefits for the parent-child relationships with respect to increased parental involvement, stress management, parent-child intervention, etc. (Duncan, 2007; Jones, 2012; MacDonald & Hastings, 2010).

However, there are several issues that are not known or in some sense not studied at all. These deficiencies, along with others, are also addressed in Chapter 4, guiding not only this research but future research interest. First, paternal-child spirituality dynamics and a father's intentionality in this area have not been addressed at all. Most often, parents are studied in a parent-child dyad or mothers are emphasized. Less frequently, fathers are studied solely and in terms of externalities, such as a father's religiosity—the frequency with which he goes to church or prays. But in no research is a father's involvement, intentionality, and relationship with his children, as well as his fathering and marital satisfaction (which relate to his father-child interaction), expressed in terms of his relationship with God or his spiritual maturity. Given the significant influence fathers have on their children's development, and given that relational spirituality is a core component of a child's spirituality, it seems it would be important to look into such matters. Considering everything from both domains discussed in this review, social science research seems to suggest that children's spirituality is formed in a highly relational way, and fathers have a significant influence in their child's development when they have greater involvement. Yet there are some unaddressed issues. What is the relationship between a father's spiritual relationship with God, a father's spiritual vitality with God, and that of his intentionality or involvement with his children, specifically their spiritual formation? In what way do fathers see themselves as the primary leaders

of the family spiritually? How is a father's satisfaction level (in marriage or fathering) related to his intentionality in the spiritual formation of his children? Ultimately, to what degree are fathers intentional in their involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children? This study explored this last question and related issues particularly with respect to Protestant Evangelical fathers. Chapter 3 presents biblical discussion on a key passage (Eph 6:1-4) to guide integration with current social science findings to gain further insight. Informed by these insights, Chapter 4 provides the study design used in order to explore the above questions with results in Chapter 5 and final conclusions and implications in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 3

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW INTEGRATION

This study was about the degree to which fathers can have a positive influence in the spiritual formation of their children. In the previous chapter, social science observations and theory provided insights into two main domains: the relational spiritual formation of children and paternal intentional involvement. The study's main research question was "To what degree are Protestant Evangelical fathers intentional in the relational spiritual formation of their children?" This chapter addresses the question "What guidance does the Bible give to fathers concerning the spiritual instruction and nurture of their children?" To that end, it provides an integration of the extensive review of theory and empirical research in Chapter 2 with a Christian worldview formed by biblical survey and exegesis, turning its attention particularly to Protestant Evangelical fathers. These integrated biblical and theological principles informed various aspects of the research described in Chapter 4 regarding questions in the survey itself and the research process.

This chapter, then, explores Biblical evidence for fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. First, we will examine the biblical and theological discussion available on the directives or evidences regarding fathers' responsibility in their children's spiritual formation and the warnings of over-delegating that

responsibility. Second, we will determine the light a key biblical passage sheds on the relationship of fathers to children.

Biblical and Theological Survey of Paternal Leadership in the Spiritual Formation of Their Children

The Bible addresses children's spiritual nature and purpose as well as fathers' role in their spiritual formation. This section addresses two main biblical claims: The instruction of children, ultimately spiritually, is rooted in their purpose and being in God's image; and fathers are the primary leaders within the family in the spiritual formation of their children. With respect to the first, it shows that children, like all of mankind, are made in the image of God, which directs their ultimate purpose of glorifying God. With respect to the second, it introduces from a cursory discussion of the Old and New Testaments that fathers are to be the primary (i.e., not to the exclusion of others) disciplinarians and trainers of their children such that children attain to their given purpose. This cursory survey is followed by a discussion of a key biblical passage (Eph 5:21-6:4) revealing God's ordained roles for fathers in that ordering of their families and the spiritual formation of their children.

Children: Their Purpose Rooted in the Image of God

The instruction of children is rooted in their purpose and derived from their being in God's image. All of mankind is made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26, 2:7, 9:6; James 3:9) and even in its fallen state still bears the image of God (Hoekema, 1986). Being God's image bearer is mankind's essential nature. Mankind's fallenness is an accidental property, not an essential one (Hoekema, 1986, p. 117; Russell, 1993, p. 207).

That is, while the image of God in man may be tarnished, it is not wholly gone (Gen 1:26, 5:1-3, 9:6; Eph 4:4; James 3:9; see also Grudem, 1994, pp. 444-445; Hoekema, 1986, p. 15). Being made in God's image minimally means that mankind shares some characteristics or aspects with God, such as having intellect, will and purpose, emotions, and moral inclinations (e.g., love, mercy, etc.), to name a few (Grudem, 1994). Even more basically, being in God's image means man is a relational, spiritual being (Moreland & Rae, 2000). Also being in God's image functionally means man is the representative of God's rule in the world; humankind's *telos* is in part then to represent the virtues, values, and aims of God's kingdom here in the world. Being made in the image of God thus has implications for the purpose or *telos* of mankind. Namely, the purpose of a human, as a relationally spiritual being, is, among other things, to relate to and love God as representatives of God's rule now. Because God is relational and loving, and we are made in his image, we are to be the same. To emulate God, to do what is in His character, is expected of us (Eph 5:1; 3 Jn 11; Mk 10:18; Lev 11:45; 1 Pe 1:16), so we are to love God (Deut 6:5; 1 Cor 16:22), relate to Him and represent Him on earth. Additionally, it is in and because of this relationship with God that mankind is to obey and serve God, and love others (Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37-38). Part of this obedience and loving God is displaying in one's life what is important to Him: all that one does is to glorify God (Isa 43:7; Eph 1:11-12, 1 Cor 10:31; Eccl 12:13). This type of life, obeying Him, loving others, representing God well, glorifies God (2 Cor 5:18-20; John 17:4).

Since children, like all mankind, are made in the image of God and are to love God and represent God's rule, parents are to nurture or disciple their children to assume

that purpose. And to this end, parents are to help shape their children (Eph 6:1; Prov 22:6), in community (Whilhoit, 2008) for children do not develop spiritually in a vacuum.

Fathers as Primary Leaders of Their Families

While Scripture references maternal, paternal, and familial responsibilities, fathers specifically are called by God to be the primary leaders within the faith family in the spiritual formation of their children. As a leader, the husband is clearly said to be the head of the wife (Eph 5:23; Num 5:19; 1Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:13-14), and by extension, of the family. This section addresses the claims that the father or husband is the head of the household and that one of the areas of the household under his leadership is the spiritual formation of his children.

Those involved in disciplining children. At the outset it needs to be said that fathers are not the only ones involved in training their children. This cannot be overstated, as the emphasis on fathers here may lead some to conclude that they alone are responsible. For example, mothers are clearly integral in this process, particularly as nurturers and respected authorities (Vos, 1986, p. 426; Prov 1:8, 6:20). The faith community to which the family belongs is also involved in the child's spiritual formation to a degree (Deut 6:1-15; Josh 7:22; 1 Tim 5:19-20)—Christian relatives, friends, and other adults are involved. This faith community also includes church leaders (implications for them are discussed in Chapter 4). And so, too, are children responsible in this faith community: though they are in need of discipline and shaping (2 Kgs 2:23-24; Isa 3:4; Prov 1:8, 22:6, 22:15), children also contribute to the Kingdom of God and to adults' faith formation as co-sojourners (Gen 1:27-28; Ps 127:3-5; Matt 18:1-14; Luke

1:7, 28). Still, children must respect their parents, desire to please and listen to them (Prov 3:11-12, 4:1, 4:20-24, 10:1), and be trained or disciplined to such ends.

Fathers as ordered leaders of the family. Though various parties bear some responsibility for spiritual training, fathers are nevertheless singled out in this faith community as the final authority and accountable for their children spiritually. This can be seen in the father's headship of the family. The Scriptural basis for the father's headship of the family, especially spiritually, is the model of the Triune Godhead and Adam's headship as ordained by God.

First, a husband and father's role as head is like that of the Father as head over the Son and the Holy Spirit. While the three Persons are equal in power and all other attributes, the Father's role is one of authority. The Father speaks and initiates; the creative work of the Son and sustaining presence of the Holy Spirit are subordinate roles (Gen 1:1-2; John 1:1-3; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:2; see also Grudem, 1994, pp. 459-466). Paul explicitly makes this connection in 1 Corinthians 11:3 when he writes, "at the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." Grudem (1994) notes of husband and wife that, while they are equal in value and personhood, their roles vary wherein the husband is like God the Father and the wife like God the Son (pp. 459-460).

Second, a father's headship is also modeled in the role for which God created Adam. Adam and all those that follow him, though marred in their image of God and their God-given roles, are inextricably related. As Adam was head over Eve, so a husband and father is head over his wife and the mother of his children. Paul makes this clear, expressing neither inequality nor unequal importance of fathers and mothers (nor

any other), but God's intended role for the husband and father in 1 Timothy 2:13-14 and 1 Corinthians 11:3. In 1 Timothy 2:13-14, Paul reminds his readers that women are not to exercise authority over men, for Adam was first. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul says that men are called to lead their wives, just as Christ leads the man, implying that the father has headship over the mother within the family setting as well. While opinions may vary on this view, and perhaps more with respect to the head coverings issue of the passage as a whole (1 Cor 11:2-16), Mare (1976) suggests that the overall principle of this passage reflected in Scripture is "the order of authority...in the divine structure of things. As every man is to be under Christ's authority and Christ is under God's authority, so the woman is under her husband's authority" (p. 255). Grudem (1994) summarizes the general principle that there is a close relationship between family and church with respect to leadership and order (1 Tim 3:5; 5:1-2). He concludes that "because of this connection, it is inevitable that leadership patterns in the family will reflect leadership patterns in the church and vice versa" (Grudem, 1994, p. 940). This will be fleshed out more throughout this chapter.

In relaying this New Testament instruction, Paul draws on Old Testament assumptions of patriarchal leadership wherein fathers are placed in charge of their families. This is seen in passages such as Genesis 5, Genesis 18, and Deuteronomy 6, wherein paternal leadership is modeled by Adam, Abraham, and Israel's kings and societal order.

First, God creates Adam in His likeness, and Adam in turn begets Seth in his likeness (Gen 5:1, 3). Scripture here says that "in the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God" (Gen 5:1), and "Adam . . . became the father of a son in

his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth” (Gen 5:3). In essence, this entails the fact that as God is over Adam, so Adam is over Seth, and commensurately all fathers are over their children (Hamilton, 2010). This is not to say that women or daughters were not created in God’s image as were men, they were. In fact, in Genesis 1:26-27 it is clear that God created male and female and instructed them among several things to subdue the earth and rule. God gave man and woman (human-kind) responsibility to be “vice-regent” of sort in ruling over and subduing the earth (Gen 2:15-19). However, the Bible does give primary responsibility to fathers, or one could say within this vice-regency of the man and woman over God’s creation, the man has primary responsibility. In Genesis 2:15-19 the woman had not yet existed when God commanded man on various points, including to cultivate and keep His creation and to name every creature. So Adam was given the directives and upon the woman being made (also in God’s image) she was to help Adam carry out these directives (Gen 2:18). The point here is that the heritage or the passing of leadership responsibility upon fathers is presented in Scripture.

Second, Abraham is specifically charged to command his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord. In Genesis 18:19 (NASB), God plainly states, “for I have chosen him [Abraham], so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice.” Through the father of countless descendants (Gen 15:5), God models that the father is to lead his family (wives, children, and other dependents) in their relationship with God, to glorify God by keeping His way. Abraham, like Adam, is to lead his family spiritually, each member being in the image of God, to glorify God.

Third, the patriarchal system was so encompassing that God used kings to provide the environment for fathers, who in turn provided the environment and training for their children who would become future kings honoring to God. Hamilton (2010) presents an excellent case from Deuteronomy 6 and 17, as well as Exodus 12 and 13, as to how God uses fathers in His economy to glorify His name and bless His people by their leading the spiritual training of their children. Exodus 12:26-27 and 13:14 instruct fathers to recount daily God's mercy and power, exemplified in His delivery of Israel, to their children. This instruction to fathers, found in Exodus 12 and 13, is repeated in Deuteronomy 6, which comes in the same section as Israel's instruction to keep the Torah (Deut 1-11) and children to honor their parents (Deut 5:16). This same emphasis to lead and keep Torah is given in instructions to kings (Deut 17:14-20). In short, Moses instructs kings and fathers in their relationships to God so that those under their leadership might obey and glorify God. Israel would, then, as a nation, be blessed as it came into the Promised Land.

Specifically, kings (exemplars for all of Israel's men) were accountable in their reading of Torah and relationship with God to focus the nation on God. Kings were to have their own personal copy of the Torah, have it with them all the time, read it daily, and in doing so provide a nation honoring to God that would foster an atmosphere for godly fathers (Deut 17:14-20; Hamilton, 2010, pp. 13-14).

This nation, focused on God, provided an atmosphere wherein fathers could train up their children (sons particularly) in Torah as future leaders and kings. These fathers, as well as those future leaders they were training, were to know the Torah and love God with all their heart, soul, and strength. In order for this order to work, fathers were to repeat the words to their sons all the day, just as kings were to "make a repeat" of the

Torah (Hamilton, 2010). Solomon is a prime example of Deuteronomical obedience. He constantly instructed his son(s) in Proverbs.

Lastly, Deuteronomy 6 places fathers in charge of their families, community, and nation, especially with respect to their relationship with God. As has been shown, God uses fathers to lead and train their children in remembering what God has done (Deut 6, 17; Exod 12, 13). Additionally, fathers are individually and specifically spoken to in leading their children. “You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deut 6:7, NASB). Hamilton (2010) makes a point to show that the “you” in Deuteronomy 6:7 is clearly a masculine singular form. The significance here is that Moses addresses the nation of Israel by directly talking to each father individually about his responsibility to teach his sons. “Moses is not giving this responsibility to some abstract group of fathers [or persons] in the community but to each individual father. It doesn’t take a village; it takes a father” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 12). Hoehner (2002) comments on the passage with respect to a father’s care:

In light of hierarchical structures, the father is responsible for his whole family ... In Israel it was understood that fathers had full authority over the family and the children (Dt 13:6-11; Ex 21:7; Dt 21:18-21). . .but the negative isn’t the focus here rather the positive Fathers were ultimately responsible for the education of his children (especially sons) with respect to the Lord. (pp. 794-795)

This paternal leadership is the background to exhortations in the New Testament. In the section that follows, a key New Testament passage sheds light on the goal of this chapter: to glean Scripture’s guidance for fathers concerning the spiritual instruction and nurture of their children. It should also be clear that daughters, as well as sons, are the focus here. As noted earlier in the chapter, mothers are highly significant in the raising their children

spiritually and in other areas, but the focus of this study is fathers. The relational spiritual formation of a father's daughter is equally significant as that of his sons throughout the Old Testament as noted in this chapter. It is clear in the Old Testament that wives and daughters have been instrumental spiritual figures in God's economy (e.g. Judges 4-5, Proverbs 31; Esther; Ruth).

Key Biblical Passage: Ephesians 5:21-6:4

Given the central importance of fathers in the discipline of their children, what light might a key biblical passage shed on the relationship of fathers on children? This section delves into Ephesians 5:21-6:4, which speaks directly to fathers about their leading the household and particularly the spiritual discipline of their children.

Historical-Literary Context of the Book and Passage

Though most scholars understand Ephesians to have been written to a general audience of Christians in the Roman province of Asia it was nevertheless probably first sent to Ephesus, a major metropolis and the capitol of the province (Wood, 1981, p. 16). Living in Ephesus would have been similar to what one might find in today's busy cultures. As such, one might get lost in busy city life, which fosters a drifting away from spiritual things or a compromising of personal relationships and unity within the church; it is probably to this kind of culture that Paul was addressing in the letter.

Overriding Theme

To understand the background of Ephesus and the church, the two main themes Paul addresses in Ephesians need to be kept in mind: (a) God reconciling Jew and Gentile

to himself in one body (Eph 1:1-3:21), and (b) instruction for practical unified Christian living in a hostile world (Eph 4:1-6:20; see also O'Brien 1999; Wood, 1981). Paul is trying to convey what God did in the historical work of Jesus Christ and is doing now (at the time of the letter) via the Spirit "in order to build his new society in the midst of the old" (Stott, 1979, p. 24). O'Brien (1999) suggests that the theme of Ephesians is "cosmic reconciliation, and unity in Christ" (p. 58); Paul is dealing with new relationships into which God is bringing His people—harmony in the church and in the home, and hostility to the devil. Placing the key passage for this study (Eph 5:21-6:4) in perspective, then, it falls into Paul's second theme particularly regarding Christian unified relationships lived out practically in a hostile world. Within the passage there are two main sections: Ephesians 5:21-33 deals with proper relationships between husband and wife; and Ephesians 6:1-4 deals with the proper relationships between parents and children, particularly the father.

Passage Commentary

Initially, it is helpful to keep in mind that Ephesians 5:21-6:4 can be summarized accordingly: fathers, as Christ-like leaders and in contrast to cultural expectations, are to take responsibility in leadership in the home by sacrificially loving their wives and nourishing their children spiritually. Ephesians 5:21-33 states

²¹...be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. ²²Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that he might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be

holy and blameless. ²⁸So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰because we are members of His body. ³¹For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³²This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

First, Ephesians 5:21-33 teaches that husbands and fathers are to lead in the home.

This can be seen in the husband-wife dynamic in the home: wives are to be subject (*hypotassomenoi*) to their husbands as to the Lord (Eph 5:21-24). The verb *to submit* (*hypotasso*) refers to subordination, not inferiority in any essential sense. This submission is one of recognizing the ordered structure (Eph 5:22; Bauer, Danker, Arndt, & Gingrich, 1979, p. 1042). The essence is this: In God's economy, society functions in an orderly way based on His ordained sanctions. Christians are mutually to recognize that order and be related to one another within that order out of reverence and love for Christ (Eph 5:21). Voluntarily yielding or submitting is said of wives toward husbands (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; Tit 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1), children to parents (Luke 2:51; cf. Eph 6:1), Christian slaves to masters (Tit 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18), Christians to church authorities (1 Pet 5:5), and Christians to God (James 4:7; Heb 12:9). But nowhere in Scripture are husbands to put themselves under the authority of their wives. Paul does, however, exhort Christians to be subject to one another (Eph 5:21), which would include husbands to wives. This is clarified in at least two areas. First, the second overriding theme of Ephesians, as noted above, is instruction for practical unified Christian living in a hostile world. The unity in the Christian community is a must and this requires being subject to each other accordingly (Eph 4:3, 13; John 17:20-24). In John 17:20-24 Christ states that the unity that exists

among His followers (husbands and wives, children and parents, all relationships) will be evident to others (non-Christians), ultimately proving His coming—“that the world may know that You sent me” (John 17:21). In Ephesians 4:3 Paul exhorts Christians to “preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Further, Paul, in Ephesians 5:1-20 exhorts fellow Christians to display unity by being imitators of God in all the good things (love, make most of time) and not doing the things that cause disruption (immorality, covetousness, filthy talk). Second, it is clear how husbands are to subject themselves to their wives specifically: in sacrificial love, as the head of the wife, as Christ, the head of the church was sacrificial in His love (Eph 5:22-29; Col 3:19). Simply put, within the context of the marriage contract as designed by God, a wife is to obey her husband as if he were the Lord, deferring to her husband as her authority or director (Rogers & Rogers, 1998, p. 445), as the church does to Christ. This may not be easy at all times, but it is much easier when husbands hold up their end of the mutually recognized order, loving their wives sacrificially.

Accordingly, husbands are to love (*agapate*) their wives sacrificially as Christ loved (*agapasen*) the church sacrificially (Eph 5:25-30). This was very different from the cultural norm in Ephesus. Husbands never had to reciprocate toward their wives in Greco-Roman culture (Wood, 1981). But here, Christian husbands are taught not only to love their wives, but to do so with the highest form of love, being willing to give their lives as Christ gave His for the church (Eph 5:25). This puts sacrificial love in a powerful light. The relationship between man and wife is compared to the love of Christ for the church. Particularly important is the Old Testament picture of marriage Paul is using, which refers to “fidelity and covenant love. . . .able to overcome every kind of difficulty

and infidelity” (Gunther & Link, 1986, p. 545). The husband is to give himself fully and sacrificially to his wife, regardless of how he is treated, just as Christ did to save His church.

With the husband/father leading with sacrificial love toward his wife, and the wife’s voluntary submission to her husband’s leadership, Christian unity is modeled in the home (Eph 5:31-33). Unity in the Christian relationship is powerful. While unity does not mean uniformity (no two persons can be the same in viewpoint, talents, preferences), unity does require effort, putting others first; and it glorifies God (Eph 4:1-13; Phil 2:1-12; Sande, 2004, pp. 17-40). In John 17, Christ repeatedly asks the Father that the church may be unified: “that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also be in You, so that the world may believe that You sent me” (John 17:21; see also John 17:22-26). Ideally, unity between husband and wife creates unity in the home, modeled to their children, which extends to the local and ultimately to the worldwide church. In conformity with the second theme of Ephesians, clearly unity has not been established as God intends (see Eph 4:1-13) and is something Christians should still strive for today. Ideally, though, to summarize the first point found in Ephesians 5:21-33, fathers, like Christ, are to lead the home by sacrificially loving their wives, who submit to their husbands’ leadership, and unity is produced.

Second, Ephesians 6:1-4 teaches that fathers, who are leaders of the home, are specifically singled out in the discipline and instruction of their children in the Lord.

¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

In verse 1, where children are directly exhorted to obey their parents, it is assumed that the local congregations that received the letter are churches made of all ages, sexes, and economic statuses. Paul's directly addressing children means that children were old enough or expected to partake actively and intentionally in congregational activities (Hoehner, 2002, p. 785; Stott, 1979, p. 237). Social distinctions once rigidly observed in Roman culture and Judaism (among fathers, wives, and children) are transformed in the gospel. The once dispossessed now acquire new rights (Wood, 1981). According to O'Brien (1999), this mindset was radically different from the Roman culture of the day, particularly in an exemplary Roman city such as Ephesus where, under *patria potestas* (unlimited power of fathers), it was not unheard of for fathers to kill unwanted babies. Even Hellenistic Jews were allowed to mete out severe punishment for disobedience (O'Brien, 1999, p. 445). Children are now to obey because it is honoring to God, not for fear of their lives.

A child's obedience has several distinctions. First, it is to be done in all things within the will of God (parallel Col 3:20). That is, while children are to obey their parents, it cannot be in any area that clearly is dishonoring to God (e.g., a parent asking a child to lie or steal). Hoehner (2002) notes that to obey "in the Lord" (Eph 6:1)—that is, in Christ—is irrespective of the parents themselves being believers because even children are to do all things unto the Lord and not man (pp. 785-786; see also Col 3:17; Exod 20:12; Deut 15:16).

Second, *obey* is understood in the sense that *to hear is to obey*. The verb *hypakouete* (from *hear* or *akouo*) suggests that a child, upon hearing, is to do. Mundle (1986) expresses the child's obedience to parents well in light of the proper familial

relationships theme of Ephesians: “From obedience to the Lord it follows that one must submit willingly to earthly authorities, parents, and masters; and these too must of course acknowledge the Lord Christ as the highest authority” (p. 180). Willingness is active and intentional.

Last, “for this is right” (Eph 6:1) speaks of two things. First, “for this is right” suggests a natural law that equals revealed law (the fifth of the Ten Commandments in Exod 20:12). Second, it was assumed by the culture that parents were to have authority and that children were to obey them (Stott, 1979, p. 240). Additionally, O’Brien (1999) notes the added promise for children’s obedience to their parents, “that it may go well with you” (Eph 6:3). This promise was not limited to the Jewish people, the original recipients of the Decalogue (O’Brien, 1999, p. 439). In essence, these instructions are for all people of all time and cultures in guiding their children and what they, as parents, should expect from their children.

Now that the children’s role has been discussed, what of the father? While parents are mentioned in Eph 6:2-3, without mothers being singled out, fathers are specifically singled out in Eph 6:4: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (NASB). Multiple truths are seen here. First, fathers are to nourish (*ektrephete*) their children. O’Brien (1999) suggests that by *nourish* Paul is referring not just to their physical development and care, but generally to their maturation as Christ nourishes the church (Eph 5:29). This training is education in a comprehensive sense (Acts 7:22, 22:3; 2 Tim 3:16). Discipline or chastisement (1 Cor 11:32; 2 Cor 6:9) by fathers—if done in the Lord—hopefully yields obedient children who

will someday come to obey Christ (O'Brien, 1999, p. 446). Regarding *nourish*, O'Brien adds that

learning Christ and being instructed in the truth that is in Jesus occurs not only within the Christian community as a whole, but also and particularly within the family, coming from fathers whose lives are being shaped by this Christ-centered apostolic tradition. (p. 447)

Second, as fathers are to nourish, in contrast to the norms of the day, Paul wants Christian fathers to be gentle, patient educators of their children; their chief “weapon” is Christian instruction focused on loyalty to Christ as Lord (O'Brien, 1999, p. 447). Again, this is in stark contrast to fathers of the time, who had full authority to do with their children as they pleased, including exposing infants to the elements or killing off daughters (Stott, 1979, p. 245).

Third, Ephesians 6:4 states that fathers are not to exasperate or provoke (*parorgizete*) their children to anger in their interactions. Insights from a parallel verse, Colossians 3:21, are instructive. Fathers in particular are exhorted to be instructive yet not exasperating or overly corrective with their children to the point of provocation (*erethizete*, BGAD) such that they might lose heart (*athymosin*). This losing heart would be a “listless, moody, sullen frame of mind” (Vaughn, 1981, p. 219). An all too common example might be a father harshly criticizing an inquisitive child for interrupting him because the father is too busy at the moment. Whether it is instruction or correction, invited or delivered, fathers are to do it in a non-exasperating way. So if a father is teaching his child how to do a school math problem or ride a bike, encouragement is the key, not impatient body language or commentary such that the child loses heart. If a

father needs to correct, warn, or admonish a child, this can be done more often than not in a positive and calm tone rather than a harsh imposing one.

Fourth, in their leadership, fathers are to be balanced in the discipline or training (*paideia*) in righteousness and verbal correction or warning (*nouthesia*) of their children. By *paideia* is meant more strict discipline or correction, making sure children are capable of responsible living (Bauer, et al., 1979, pp. 748-749). In the Old Testament in Proverbs 3:11, there is a warning “against despising God’s *paideia* (training, instruction, corrective discipline)” (Packer, 1986, p. 462). This same idea pertains to Hebrews 12:5-11, where God reminds His church that their discipline is for a purpose; that they respected their fathers for disciplining them, so how much more God; and that, though discipline does not seem pleasant at the moment, it “yields fruit of righteousness” (Heb 12:11). This same *paideia* is used in Ephesians 6:4. Additionally, Proverbs 3:11 and 13:24 speak of this discipline and of fathers, representing God, not sparing the rod or correction. This stricter discipline needs to be balanced, however, with proper warning or *nouthesia*. Rogers and Rogers (1998) note that *nouthesia* or admonition refers to “training by word—i.e., the word of encouragement, when this is sufficient, but also that of remonstrance, reproof, or blame, where these may be required” (p. 446). Bauer, Danker, Arndt and Gingrich (2000) suggest that in this passage *nouthesia* means the council to cease, or the warning of, an improper course of conduct (p. 679), or in the context of Ephesians 6:4, instruction of Christian conduct. Wood (1981) states that this correction by word of mouth implies remonstrance and reproof but also advice and encouragement (p. 82). So whether the warning is stern or giving in an encouraging way, its guiding direction is to Christian living even though its means are various (Selter, 1986, p. 569).

That is, while the guiding principle of the *nouthesia* is unto the Lord, there is no one way to do it.

Summary of Theological Survey and Key Passage Exegesis

In addressing the question of this chapter—What guidance does the Bible give fathers concerning the spiritual instruction and nurture of their children?—several points arise from biblical and theological survey, as well as from probing the key passage of Ephesians 5:21-6:4. From a cursory survey into a theological discussion, the Bible instructs that fathers, in understanding that their children are in the image of God, are singled out as the primary leaders in training their children to ultimately bring Him glory. This paternal leadership is seen in both New Testament teaching and Old Testament principles upon which the New Testament teachings are founded. It is exemplified in the designed father-son order and relationships within the Godhead itself, and in the first human father, Adam, down through Abraham, and ultimately to all fathers.

Delving into a key passage, Ephesians 5:21-6:4, it was learned that the Bible conveys the principle that fathers are to take the lead in exemplifying Christian unity as they discipline and instruct their children in the Lord. But here several characteristics of the ordered familial relationships were unearthed. First, the passage needs to be understood in light of an overall theme of Christian, unified relationships lived out practically. The passage itself deals with proper relationships within the family and particularly the husband and wife and father-child dyads. Second, fathers, mirroring Christ, are to take responsibility in leading the home by sacrificially loving their wives and nourishing their children spiritually. Central to this are several truths. Husbands who

lead with sacrificial love create an environment in which their wives are willing to be submissive to them, putting themselves under their leadership as the church is under Christ's. Also, fathers are singled out as the primary disciplinarians and trainers of their children in their spiritual lives. And lastly, though fathers are leaders who are charged with the discipline and correction of their children, for not only their life in Christ but for developing their skills for living responsibility in light of being under Christ, they are to instruct with compassion and not overbearing harshness.

Conclusion: Matching Praxis With Principle

As has been shown, according Scripture, fathers are singled out to be the intentional lead instructors in the faith community that helps train children. Through this leading, their children are expected to be actively involved, learning from parents as active participants from when they rise up to when they go to sleep at night (Deut 6), with the end goal being for them to glorify God in not only relating properly to God, loving and obeying him, but also in representing His rule, His virtues, values, and goals here on earth. But the research from Chapter 2 shows that fathers tend not only to be less involved than they could be, but that they are often derelict in duty. The Bible instructs that it should be otherwise. And while it is tremendous that mothers can influence their children for God (as is in fact praised in Proverbs 31), fathers' over-delegation of their responsibility to mothers (however extraordinarily capable they may be) and to churches or para-church organizations has created a situation where praxis is not matching biblical principle. Relegating or passing off leadership is not the fathers' option. Means must be devised to help fathers consider seriously their role in light of biblical revelation vis-à-vis

their personal lives. Practicality is needed to help the paternal praxis of family leadership match biblical principle. And because it has been noted both in research and Scripture that fathers have such a great influence on their children, it is important to incorporate these matters into the research discussed in Chapter 4 through 6.

Accordingly, seven questions or items informed by this current chapter were incorporated into the research survey discussed in Chapter 4. Each is seen in light of the overall question framing Chapter 3: What guidance does the Bible give to fathers concerning the spiritual instruction and nurture of their children? Principles of primary leadership, the spiritual nature of his children, and intentionality or deliberateness in his actions regarding these areas were assessed. Accordingly some questions addressed the level of importance a father sees as his role as a leader in the spiritual formation of his family. Others addressed what he considers to be the importance of his children's spiritual formation and the role of other significant people in the spiritual formation of his children. Still others addressed intentionality. In a Likert scale format (1-Not at all true, to 5-Very true) the items presented were

- 1) My child's education is the most important area of their life.
- 2) I routinely look for ways to interact spiritually with my children.
- 3) I understand the spiritual nature of my children as made in God's image.
- 4) I believe I have the primary responsibility in the spiritual development of my children.
- 5) Sunday school is the primary means for my child to learn spiritual things.
- 6) I prefer to let others primarily teach spiritual things to my child.

7) At times I have struggled with time demands of work not affording me adequate time with my children spiritually. (If they selected 2-5 from the Likert scale, not 1, then they were asked to respond to: If I selected 2-5 above, I took steps to make changes in my work demands in order to spend more time with my children. If they then selected 2-5 for that as well they were asked to volunteer information in an open ended format: If you selected 2-5 on 135a would you be willing to share what you did?)

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

This study was about exploring the intentional involvement of Protestant Evangelical fathers in the relational spiritual formation of their children. In Chapter 2 social science observations and theory provided insights into these two main domains: the relational spiritual formation of children and paternal intentional involvement. Chapter 3 provided an integration of a Christian Worldview, Biblical and theological principles, to better frame findings and questions to ask. This chapter presents the design and procedures used for exploring the relationships between several aspects of fathering and fathers' intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children.

Research Design

A quantitative exploratory design using a web-based as well as hard copy survey was used to better understand fathers' intentional involvement in their children's' spiritual formation. Variables such as a father's relationship with God (spiritual maturity and relational closeness to God), his intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of his children, a father's relationship with his wife, fathering satisfaction, and other variables were analyzed in order to suggest generalizations among fathers within Protestant Evangelicalism for current benefit and further research. The instrument used was compiled from established instruments, predominately interval in nature, and having

high reliability: The Personal Fathering Profile (Canfield, 1992, 2005, 2008; Canfield & Roid, 1994; National Center for Fathering, 1990) and The Spiritual Assessment Inventory (Hall & Edwards, 1996 & 2002).

Research Question

Chapter 2 suggested that fathers have a substantial positive influence on the development of their children and Chapter 3 suggested that fathers, from a Biblical perspective, are to take a leading role in their children's spiritual formation. And being that children are relationally spiritual beings and that fathers can have a major impact in that relationship there are several areas that need to be explored: namely, the main research question and corollary questions followed by hypotheses guiding this research.

The main research question was: To what degree are Protestant Evangelical fathers intentionally involved in the relational spiritual formation of their children?

Corollary questions are:

Question 1: What is the connection between a Protestant Evangelical (PE) father's relationship with God and his intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of his children?

Question 2: What is the connection between a PE father's relationship with his spouse and his intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of his children?

Question 3: How is a PE father's satisfaction in his fathering related to his involvement in the spiritual formation of his children?

Question 4: How do PE fathers view their part or responsibility in the spiritual formation of their children?

Operational Definitions

The key terms used in the questions and hypotheses noted in this study are discussed in this section as well as provided in detail with respective instrument numbers that address each construct in the study in a Table D.1 in Appendix D. The instrument used, comprised of the Personal Fathering Profile or PFP (Canfield, 1992) and the Spiritual Assessment Inventory or SAI (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002), is discussed in depth following this section. Several terms discussed below used in the current study and hypotheses replace or expand upon terms used in the original PFP and SAI instruments (cf. Table 4.2).

Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual Maturity referred to what degree a person was aware of God in his or her life and the quality of one's relationship with God (Hall & Edwards, 1996, p. 234). Spiritual Maturity was assessed by the entire Spiritual Assessment Inventory or SAI (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002) which was comprised of two subscales, Awareness of God and Relational Closeness to God (54 items in all). Items in this studies instrument were numbered 79-125.2.

Spiritual Intentionality

Spiritual intentionality referred to one's being aware of God's presence and communication in one's life, acting accordingly with either dedication to improving this awareness, or restraint from areas that hinder it. The 19 items that measured spiritual

intentionality were 79, 81, 84, 87, 89, 93, 95, 97, 99, 101, 103, 106, 108, 109, 112, 114, 118, 120, & 122.

Relational Closeness to God

Relational Closeness to God in the SAI was based on object relations (attachment theory, God representation/image theory), which indicated that “one’s relational/emotional development is mirrored in one’s relationship to the Divine, however that is perceived by the individual” (Hall & Edwards, 2002, p. 341). From a Christian perspective, Hall and Edwards (1996) posited that Mark 12:28-31 supports the contention that, if the essence of “human beings is relational, then spiritual maturity should be viewed in that light And as individuals grow in their spiritual maturity, they become more aware that life and religious experience are . . . woven together” (pp. 235, 237). This awareness is a capacity to develop an intentionality of sorts. Relational closeness was assessed via 34 items by various subscales in the SAI namely Disappointment with God (items 80.1, 86.1, 90.1, 96.1, 105.1, 111.1, 125.1), Realistic Acceptance of God (items 80.2, 86.2, 90.2, 96.2, 105.2, 111.2, 125.2), Grandiosity (items 83, 91, 98, 104, 107, 115, 123), Instability (items 82, 88, 94, 100, 113, 117, 119, 121, 124), and Impression Management (85, 92, 102, 110, 116).

Intentional Fathering

Intentional fathering was measured by six subscales of the Personal Fathering Profile or PFP (Canfield, 1992), which pertain to intentional or deliberate activity with respect to showing affection (items 20, 26, 30, 32, 42, 55), modeling (items 10, 22, 43, 50, 56), time commitment to children (5, 12, 34, 47), involvement in discipline (items 1,

6, 15, 27), involvement in education (items 16, 17, 29, 38, 48, 51, 58, 60), and knowing my child (items 2, 9, 24, 45, 53, 57, 59).

Involvement in Their Child's Spiritual Formation

Involvement in their child's spiritual formation referred to a father's level of engaging in spiritual conversation and reading the Bible with his children and gathering as a family as a whole around spiritual activity. This was assessed by a spiritual development subscale of 5 items from the PFP (items 3, 13, 14, 25, 46).

Spousal Oneness

Spousal oneness was the degree to which a father had a close or romantic relationship with his wife as well as open communication, particularly with respect to their children. It was measured by 4 items addressing parental discussion (18, 21, 36, & 39) and 4 items regarding marital interaction (4, 8, 28, & 37). Attachment theory suggests that the secure and caring relationship between the parents models or exemplifies parent-God and parent-child relationships and hence a child's God concept or child-God relationship.

Fathering Satisfaction

A father's satisfaction in various ways was assessed by subscales within the Father Satisfaction Scale in the PFP: satisfaction in their role as fathers (3 items), satisfaction from child parent recall (4 items), support from spouse and others (5 items), leadership ability (3 items), and verbal relationship with children (3 items). Satisfaction in their role as fathers (items 62, 67, & 72) referred to a father's view of himself as a

competent satisfied father. Satisfaction from child parent recall referred to a father's recollection as to what he and his father, mother, or both parents had in terms of a relationship (items 61, 66, 71, & 77). Satisfaction related to support from spouse and others (items 63, 68, 73, 76, & 78) referred to what degree a father perceives he gets support as a father from his spouse, friends, relatives, and his church family. Satisfaction in a father's leadership ability (items 64, 69, & 74) referred to his perception of himself as a leader within the family. Lastly, satisfaction in his verbal relationship with his children (items 65, 70, & 75) assessed fathers' perception of their communication with their children.

Research Hypotheses

Based on these questions, multiple hypotheses, noted below, were tested. Terms used in the hypotheses are discussed subsequently in a section on operational definitions. Because quantitative research data was actually collected and analyzed based on null-hypotheses, those are expressed in Chapter 5 where inferential statistics were used to suggest either accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses. The study was expressed in Research Hypotheses below.

RH1: There is a positive relationship between intentional fathering and fathers' relational closeness to God, involvement in their child's spiritual formation, and fathering satisfaction.

RH 1a: If so, then those in the upper and lower quartile for intentional fathering scores will differ in their scores on relational closeness to God, involvement in their child's spiritual formation, and fathering satisfaction.

RH 2: There is a positive relationship between fathers' spiritual maturity and intentional fathering, fathering satisfaction, and involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

RH 3: There is a positive relationship between father's relational closeness to God and their levels of intentional fathering and involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

RH 3a: If so, then those in the upper and lower quartiles for scores on relational closeness to God will differ in their scores on intentional fathering and involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

RH 3.1: There is a positive relationship between fathers with spiritual intentionality and involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

RH 4: There is a positive relationship between fathers' levels of spousal oneness and their levels of involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

RH 4a: If so, for those in the upper and lower quartiles for spousal oneness scores, there will be a significant difference in their scores for involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

RH 4.1: There is a positive relationship between fathers' level of support from spouses and others and their involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

RH 5: There is a positive relationship between a father's perception of the most important area of a child's life being his or her relationship with God and the father's perception of himself being primarily responsible for his children's spiritual formation.

RH 6: There is a negative relationship between fathers' number of hours weekly spent in hobbies away from their children and fathers' relational closeness to God, and a father seeing himself as primarily responsible for his children's spiritual formation.

RH 7: There is a negative relationship between number of hours worked weekly for a father with high spiritual intentionality and his level of fathering satisfaction.

RH 8: There is a positive relationship between how a father scores on intentional fathering and his time spent with his children.

During analysis several *t*-tests were run (to look at upper and lower quartiles) subsequent to correlations, though they were not noted in these hypotheses. As will be noticed in Chapter 5, when these *t*-test were run and discussed, the hypothesis was followed by an *a*. For example RH1 would have RH1*a*.

Instrument

The survey instrument consisted of three highly reliable instruments that included five sections (totaling 141 questions): father practices, father satisfaction, spiritual maturity, self-developed, and demographics (see Table 4.1). Permission was granted by the authors of these instruments for use in this research (see Appendix B): Personal Fathering Profile or PFP (Canfield, 1992, 2005, 2008; Canfield & Roid, 1990; National Center for Fathering, 1990) and Spiritual Assessment Inventory or SAI (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002).

Personal Fathering Profile

The Personal Fathering Profile (Canfield, 1992, 2005, 2008; Canfield & Roid, 1994; National Center for Fathering or NCF, 1990) is composed of three instruments

(fathering dimensions, practices, satisfaction) and demographics. The PFP is a 138 item, 5-point Likert-scale instrument with 20 demographic questions. The PFP has been substantiated via thousands of respondents over the years and birthed a shorter on-line version that has had thousands of fathers respond through www.fathers.com. The longer hard copy version of the PFP has been used in many research projects and is referenced here. One of the instruments in the PFP, the Fathering Dimensions, describes a model of the four dimensions effective fathering exhibits (what he is like): Involvement, Consistency, Awareness, and Nurturing. Per numerous communication with Dr. Canfield on using the PFP, it was agreed that the Fathering Dimensions could be left out of the current survey instrument to keep the current study's survey instrument shorter and considering that Fathering Practices scales (what a father does) were "tighter" in what they were ascertaining—high reliability and internal validity. The Fathering Practices

Table 4.1

List of Instruments and Subscales

Concept	Instrument name w/subscales	No. items	Type of data	Internal reliability for scale/subscale
Spiritual maturity	Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI)	54		
Spiritual intentionality	Awareness of God scale (AOG)	19	Interval	$\alpha = .95$
Relational closeness to God	Relational Maturity Scales	36	Interval	
	Disappointment with God (DIS)	7	Interval	$\alpha = .90$
	Realistic Acceptance of God (RA)	7	Interval	$\alpha = .83$
	Grandiosity (GRA)	7	Interval	$\alpha = .73$
	Instability (INS)	9	Interval	$\alpha = .84$
	Impression Management	5	Interval	$\alpha = .77$
	PFP Fathering Practices	60		

Table Continues

Table 4.1 *List of Instruments and Subscales, (continued)*

Intentional fathering	Showing Affection (Af)	6	Interval	$\alpha = .87$
	Modeling (Mo)	5	Interval	$\alpha = .83$
	Time Committed to Children (Time)	4	Interval	$\alpha = .84$
	Involvement in Discipline (Disc)	4	Interval	$\alpha = .85$
	Involvement in Education (Ed)	8	Interval	$\alpha = .84$
	Knowing my Child (Kno)	7	Interval	$\alpha = .85$
n/a	Dealing With Difficulties (Diff)	4	Interval	$\alpha = .90$
n/a	Financial Provider (Fin)	4	Interval	$\alpha = .86$
n/a	Allow Free Expression (Free)	5	Interval	$\alpha = .82$
Involvement in their child's spiritual formation	PFP Fathering Practices (Spiritual development subscale)	5	Interval	$\alpha = .87$
Spousal oneness	PFP Fathering Practices: Marital Interaction (MI)	4	Interval	$\alpha = .85$
	Parental Discussion (PD)	4	Interval	$\alpha = .87$
Fathering satisfaction	PFP Father Satisfaction Scale	18		
	Fathering Role (Role)	3	Interval	$\alpha = .85$
	Father's Childhood (Child)	4	Interval	$\alpha = .76$
	Support From Others (Sup)	5	Interval	$\alpha = .75$
	Leadership Abilities (Ldr)	3	Interval	$\alpha = .85$
	Verbal Relationship With Child (Verb)	3	Interval	$\alpha = .85$

instrument (what a father does or looks like) is highly reliable and operationalizes the Fathering Dimensions framework (what an effective father is like or would be described as generally).

Personal Fathering Profile: Practices. The Fathering Practices Instrument (Canfield & Roid, 1994; NCF, 1990) is a well-established means by which to measure many facets of effective fathering: fathering factors or practices. In 60 items, the instrument exhibits reliability among its subscales ranging from $\alpha = .83-.87$ (Canfield, 1994). It ascertains levels of dedication to or restraint from certain fathering actions which are broken up into 12 subscales: parental discussion, showing affection, modeling, time committed to children, involvement in discipline, education, knowing my child,

marital interaction, parental discussion, involvement in their child's spiritual formation. The instrument's theoretical foundation is supported by prior research in several areas, including attachment theory, marital relationships, father closeness and involvement, relational spirituality, God image, and paternal influence.

Personal Fathering Profile: Satisfaction. The Fathering Satisfaction instrument (Canfield & Roid, 1994; NCF, 1990) assesses a father's satisfaction with such things as his role as a father, communication with his children, his satisfaction of his relationship with his parents when he was a child, how he feels about himself as a leader, and the support he gets as a father from his spouse and others (see Table 4.1). Dr. Canfield noted that this instrument in part measures what might drive fathers' energy. That is, the degree of satisfaction motivates the father. This would be supported by theory and research in areas such as parental harmony and communication, marital satisfaction, and community or systems support. The subscales in Fathering Satisfaction have reliability ranging from $\alpha = .75$ to $.85$ in items and are listed 61-78 (Canfield, 1994).

Spiritual Assessment Inventory

While Personal Fathering Profile Practices and Satisfaction reveal the relationality between fathers and their children (and their spouse as an integral part of that relationship), the Spiritual Assessment Inventory or SAI (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002) assesses a more internal relational aspect of a person's life or the vertical relationship with God: in this case a father's spiritual maturity. As Chapter 2 noted, there are many studies pertaining to external religiosity, or activities. But unique to this current study's survey instrument is connecting a father's personal, internal, relationship with God and

his fathering. The SAI then pertains to spiritual maturity which Hall and Edwards (1996, 2002) suggest is revealed both as *awareness of God* (1 subscale) and *relationship quality* (5 subscales): these 6 subscales vary in reliability (see Table 4.1) ranging from $\alpha = .73-.95$ in items 79-125.2 (Hall & Edwards, 1996). Hall, Reise, and Haviland (2007) also found that “after multiple revisions and factor analyses of the SAI ... factor structure is very stable, and the scales are reliable in measuring the constructs they are intended to measure” (p. 159).

Spiritual Maturity (54 items) is being measured as expressed by Awareness of God and Relational Closeness to God which are both measured by subscales (see Table 4.1). Spiritual maturity seeks to assess to what degree a person is aware of God in his or her life and what is the quality of one’s relationship with God (Hall & Edwards, 1996, p. 234). If the essence of human beings is relational, as suggested in Chapter 2 and 3, then spiritual maturity should be viewed as such. Hence the theoretical foundation is supported by such theory and research as God image, related object relations theory, and relational spirituality.

Spiritual maturity: awareness of God. Awareness of God is to what degree a person is aware of and communicates with God in his or her life. For example, “I am frequently aware of God prompting me to do something.” While the relational aspect of the SAI is heavily object relations based, Hall and Edwards (1996) note that awareness of God is based not only on this relationship aspect but also New Testament teaching and contemplative spirituality principles as well (pp. 233-236). If we have a relationship with God and are aware of it, there should be communication.

Spiritual maturity: relational closeness to God. *Relational closeness to God* is expressed by five subscales. The first two, *disappointment with God* and *realistic acceptance of God* are related in pairs. That is, if one is disappointed with God, an occasionally normal emotion, yet unhealthy if deeply so, it is also realistic and healthy to still pursue a relationship with God. If one responds as “disappointed” often and does not express any desire to relate to God, that is seen as spiritually unhealthy or immature. But to have disappointment at times yet pursue God nonetheless is healthy: for example, agreeing with “There are times when I feel disappointed with God” yet also responding that “When this happens, I still want our relationship to continue.” Realistic acceptance items “were designed to assess a person’s capacity to work through difficult subjective spiritual experiences in a healthy manner; that is by maintaining one sense of connectedness with God during a working through process” (Hall & Edwards, 2002, p. 242).

Also measuring relational closeness to God are *grandiosity* and *instability*. Grandiosity items reveal narcissistic personalities (Hall & Edwards, 1996) which are not healthy or spiritually mature. Grandiose relationships are “associated with the maintenance of an inflated sense of importance and uniqueness in order to defend against the seemingly all-encompassing devalued aspect of self” (Hall & Edwards, 1996, p. 237). For example, one’s response to “I find my prayers to God are more effective than other peoples” suggest grandiosity the more they hold true to the statement. Instability in one’s relationship with God is noted in expressing greater acceptance of the statement “There are times when I feel God is punishing me.” One may feel this, and perhaps everyone has

to one degree felt so, but if this is a patterned response, it points to relational disconnect with God and spiritual immaturity.

Lastly, items that help sort out self-inflated responses or “lie detectors” of sorts are what Hall and Edwards (2002) called *impression management*. Items here will be used to note or mark completed surveys that might be outliers due to high self-impression or exaggeration. For example, selecting 5 (very true) on the Likert scale to “I am always in a worshipful mood when I go to church” or “My relationship with God is an extraordinary one that most people would not understand” would be cautionary. Respondents with these responses were removed prior to running analysis. Selecting 1 “not at all true” would be healthier for these items.

Researcher Designed Questions

These researcher designed items are found in numbers 126-132 (see Tables D1 & D2 in Appendix D). They are based on the same Likert scale of the instruments ranging from (1) “Not true at all” to (5) “Very true.” The response of fathers to items such as “I routinely look for ways to interact spiritually with my children,” “My child’s education is the most important area of their life,” and “I organize my time to allow for family worship time” attempt to assess if the spiritual formation of their children is essential or not. Responding to items such as “I believe I have the primary responsibility in the spiritual development of my child,” “Sunday school is the primary means for my child to learn spiritual things,” “I prefer to let others primarily teach spiritual things to my child,” and “At times I have struggled with the time demands of work not affording me adequate time with my children spiritually” attempt to assess the level of the father’s leadership

and responsibility in the spiritual formation of his children. The last item has a follow up response as well: “If I selected 2-5 above, I took steps to make changes in my work demands in order to spend more time with my children.” Theoretical foundation is supported by attachment theory, God images, social dynamic theory, and Biblical exegesis as presented in Chapter 3. During follow up commentary by respondents from a pilot study these questions were considered thought provoking and were well received.

Demographics

Demographics of the instrument are found in items 133 to 141 (see Table D.2 in Appendix D). Several items (133 to 137, 140-141) are common to multiple studies and the PFP (NCF, 1990). There are two self-designed demographics (items 138 & 139) that ascertain if a father spends large amounts of weekly time away from his children in hobbies and how much daily time he spends with his children in actual spiritual conversation or activity. While items 136 to 139 are used in testing hypotheses, not all demographics were directly involved in research hypothesis but were collected and analyzed when interesting relationships arose in the data analysis.

Changes in Terms for the Current Study

Several terms discussed above in Operational definitions, being used in this current study and hypotheses, replaced or expanded upon terms used in the original PFP and SAI instruments (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Terms Used in Current Study

Original instrument and concept term	Subscale(s)	Current study term
PFP Fathering Practices	Showing Affection Modeling Time Committed to Children Involvement in Discipline Involvement in Education Knowing My Child	Intentional Fathering
PFP Fathering Practices	Marital Interaction Parental Discussion	Spousal Oneness
PFP Fathering Practices	Spiritual Development	Father Involvement in their Child's Spiritual Formation
SAI	Awareness of God	Intentional Spirituality

Changes to fathering practices. A central theme to this study was intentionality with respect to a father's involvement in the spiritual formation of his child. The PFP on the whole and particularly in the Fathering Practices suggests what Canfield (1992) calls a "dedication to" or "restraint from" attitudes or actions that promote or hinder effective fathering (p.6). For this reason *intentional fathering* was used in this study in lieu of the term Fathering Practices to emphasize this deliberate dedication to or restraint effective fathers have. That is *intentional fathering* was measured by higher item responses that the fathers note they have parental discussion, show affection, model, take and make time to commit to their children, cancel other events purposefully to be with their kids, know their child's developmental uniqueness and involve themselves in the education and discipline of their children. Additionally, *spousal oneness* (in place of *parental discussion and marital interaction*) referred to how a father's degree of interaction and discussion

with his spouse is measured. Lastly, *father's involvement in his child's spiritual formation* was used (instead of *spiritual development*) to assess levels of interaction in engaging in spiritual conversation and reading the Bible with their children and gathering as a family as a whole around spiritual activities.

Changes to awareness of God. Hall and Edwards (1996) suggest that the awareness dimension of spiritual maturity, the awareness of God, is a capacity that needs to be developed (p. 237). To be aware of something and to develop it takes intentionality. Hence the term *Spiritual Intentionality* is used in this study in lieu of what Hall and Edwards call *spiritual awareness*. The nature of and the depth of awareness requires dedication to a relationship or restraint from things that hinder that relationship. Hence items in the subscale expressed intentionality: "Listening to God is an essential part of my life." If it is truly essential, then just like food, one intentionally seeks it.

Intentionality requires an awareness of other. Hence with high spiritual intentionality one's mind "points beyond itself" (Moreland, 1997) to God to a high degree. To be spiritually intentional implies that one, being aware of God's presence and communication in one's life, acts accordingly with either dedication to improving this awareness or restraint from areas that hinder it. Hall and Edwards (1996) suggest that spiritual maturity requires a developing of this awareness (p. 237). This takes effort, decisions, and means--in other words intention (Willard, 2002, pp. 86-91).

Target Population and Sample Selection Procedures

The target population consists of Protestant Evangelical (PE) fathers with children residing in their homes from ages 4-18 in the 241 Evangelical churches in the Greater

Spokane County area (GSAE, 2010; see Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, pp. 169ff). According to the GSAE, a comprehensive list of churches in the Greater Spokane Area adhering to National Association of Evangelicals' beliefs, this approximates 40,000 weekly attendees. If the average household for Spokane County is 2.46 persons (Spokane AreaConnect, 2010), that approximates 16,260 families. For simplicity and providing a buffer in the needed sample size it was assumed all these families are intact though it is probably not the case. This would imply 16,260 Protestant Evangelical fathers as the target population.

Accessible Population

According to the GSAE (2010), of the 241 NAE churches in the county, 64 of them have 200 or more weekly attendees or over 32,000 people (they range from 200 to 5,500). This leaves 177 smaller churches, ranging from 150 attendees to fewer than 50. Based on a national average of 60 attendees per church per week, that would total over 10,600 people, again confirming the yield of an overall total of close to 40,000 people. However the larger churches (200 or more attendees) were used in the study in order to access larger number of fathers that fit the study parameters, have a higher response rate, and reach a larger and more representative cross section of the community (father ages, education levels, income levels, etc.).

Sample Size

The sample was taken from 20 of these 64 larger churches. The majority of these churches from the GSAE list (sample frame) were alphabetized and every third church selected. Several larger churches were included based on the researcher's contacts and

the fact that these churches represented a range of denominational backgrounds (from non-denominational to several denominations such as Presbyterian, Four Square, Methodist, Southern Baptist, etc.) as well as had a range of socioeconomic attendees. Having established contacts with these churches helped insure a larger involvement and support for a higher response rate. Based on appropriate sample size to yield a $p < .05$ confidence level, a more than adequate sample size of 380 was aimed at per a target population of 40,000 (Isaac & Michaels, 1981, p. 193). And to assure a properly basic return rate (50-70%), a sample size of 760 was aspired to in order to have at least 380 respondents. In order to achieve this sample size, a goal of 19 fathers from each of the 20 churches was anticipated. This minimized the potential for a skewed result from responses from a few congregations over others.

Sample Selection

For the randomly selected churches, once they were selected, when the researcher did not have a key contact with that church's leaders (decision makers), then initial contact with them was via email or letter to present the study in general, its benefits to their ministry, and fathers at large. When the researcher had key leaders of the selected churches to help present the study to the decision makers, the researcher contacted them. For the churches with which the researcher already had significant contact, those contacts helped to meet with the decision makers. For all churches then, these initial contacts were followed up via phone call to set up meeting with church leaders. In this meeting, the researcher explained the fathering study and benefits to the specific and local church community. Upon acceptance and acquiring support from the church representatives, the

researcher procured a point man or two to assist in the study. This was a men's group leader, pastor on staff interested in the study, or a respected lay leader in the congregation. In some cases the pastor or elder initially contacted was one of those point men. While it would have been ideal if the church leaders (pastors or decision makers) authored a communication accompanying the researcher's communications to respondents for that church (or come directly from the church leader,) their assistance was more of moral support, providing continued support in communicating with the prospective respondents. Church leaders' names were added to the incentive drawing discussed below as well.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey instrument was presented to church leaders as available in several ways: website, group, and individually (however, no groups were used). After PHRRC for the study was procured, permission granted by church representatives, and fathers in those churches contacted via email lists or individual or group contacts, the survey was administered with the emphasis being on-line data collection (paper copies for individuals and groups were available). A discussion of follow up for all three avenues, as well as the incentive for participants, is also included. The survey, which took about 30 minutes to fill out, was voluntary, and the incentive discussed below did not require that the respondent fully complete the survey, though it was encouraged. Prior to filling out the survey, an Informed Consent form was read and signed for the hard copy version, and on the on-line version, a consent button was clicked to acknowledge consent. The Informed Consent Form informed them of the topic and benefits of the research, its

exploratory and voluntary nature, and an advisement that should they have any desire to stop, not answer some questions, or contact the researcher they were free to do so. Each survey method requested that fathers, should they have taken the survey already, not repeat in taking the survey in another form in order to avoid duplication. Respondents were also asked to provide personal information (not tied to the responses) in order to be entered into the incentive drawing as well as any follow up should they desire.

Administering the Survey

On-line. First, for the web-based survey through Survey Monkey, fathers were contacted via email or via groups at each of the 20 churches, to either inform them in person or invite them to visit the website, to read of their opportunity to contribute to such a needed study and the benefits of the study. The data accessed via the web-based survey was stored and accessed on-line through Survey Monkey then imported to SPSS. Paper survey copies were hand entered into SPSS.

Individual hard copies. Secondly, fathers were also able to participate in the study via hard copy individually if they preferred. Individuals taking the survey were provided with the participant letter and consent form to be signed prior to receiving instructions and the survey. The respondents could return each set of surveys (with instructions) to the researcher in a self-addressed stamped envelope, leave it with a church representative for later collection by the researcher, or hand deliver it to the researcher in the sealed envelope.

Group setting. As a third option to increase participation, fathers were invited to participate in a group setting (Bible study, men's group, etc.) by filling out the survey via

hard copy as a group. The researcher was to introduce the study and have the fathers fill out consent forms and collect them. Upon receiving the consent forms the researcher would hand out and read through the instructions and surveys and encourage fathers to complete them, though this was to be voluntary. Upon completing the survey or any portion thereof (since it was voluntary) the researcher was to collect them. If a church representative was running the session, the surveys were to be individually placed in a sealed envelope by each respondent for anonymity. However this option ended up not being an available means.

Survey Incentive

As an incentive, each participant, church representative, and point man had their name entered into a drawing to win a \$250 gift card from Cabelas, Post Falls, Idaho. This incentive was chosen in order to provide a way for a father to potentially spend the money on items that will provide an opportunity to do something with his family or children (go fishing, camping, buy boating or ski gear, or other sporting options). The card was mailed to the winner.

For the web-based survey, each participant's name and contact information was put into a drawing by following a link supplied at the end of the survey. No connection between their name and the survey response can be made. For the hard copy survey, administered individually, each name of the respondents from their consent form was added to the list for the incentive drawing. A thank you letter for participating and confirming their name in the drawing was sent out via email. Email addresses for hard copy respondents were procured from the church in order to contact them to give the hard

copy consent form and subsequent survey (No emails or consent was traced to their survey).

Survey Follow-up

For each method (email or individual hard copy) there were two follow-up procedures to encourage a high rate of return: an email, mailed letter where necessary, or even a phone call, when available, to each father initially contacted to thank them for contributing if they participated and encourage fathers who had not yet participated in the survey. This was done through the church representative or directly depending on the situation. For example, when a church representative was the point man, the researcher crafted a thank you letter or encouragement to respond to the letter that the point man sent out in his email.

Pilot Study Input

A pilot study was administered both via hard copy and on-line. After obtaining the PHRRC approval, the researcher contacted church leaders (via email, phone, and in person) to procure names and contact information of 10 fathers with children ages 4-18 residing at home. The researcher gave them the instructions, Informed Consent Forms to be signed (or button clicked for the on-line version), and survey with a self-addressed stamped envelope (for hard copy surveys). Respondents signed the Informed Consent Forms, filled out the surveys, and mailed them directly or returned them to the church for pickup by the researcher. Each respondent's name was added along with the others of the main study in the drawing for the incentive (the \$250 gift card for Cabela's). The small sample size prevented any significant statistical analysis; however, some feedback was

useful. Respondents made several comments about the survey such as, “it was easy to take,” “took only thirty minutes,” and “I can see how this might be useful.” One respondent said, “Only one question I didn't get and thus didn't answer ... some reason it just didn't connect with me—couldn't figure how to answer it.” This was question 124 in the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) which reads “When I feel God is not protecting me, I tend to feel worthless.” And yet another respondent noted “I mailed the survey this morning and I thought it was really good. Just filling it out showed me the areas of my fatherhood and husband duties that are lacking a bit. Thanks for taking that on.”

Data Analysis Procedures

Upon receiving the collected data via Survey Monkey it was imported into SPSS for analysis. The data was filtered to include only those respondents who fit the profile (e.g. fathers who are married, cohabitating, and have children living at home between 4-18 years of age) and to omit those who selected “5's” (very true) in the SAI impression management items, suggesting an over inflated view of themselves, or “6's” (not-applicable) in the PFP fathering practices items to avoid inflating those means. Each hypothesis and its related statistical procedures are provided in Table 4.3. In order to test the research hypotheses, null hypotheses were used in the analysis using inferential statistics in order to accept or reject the null hypotheses.

Table 4.3

Statistical Analysis of Research Hypotheses

RH	Key variable (Scale, subscale; concepts; type of data)	AND (scale, subscale; concept; type of data)	Test category: Relat./Dif.	Stat test	Effect size
1, 1a	Intentional fathering (and non); interval	Spiritual Maturity (SAI: all items), interval; Fathering Satisfaction, interval; Involvement in their child's spiritual formation, interval	Relationship & Difference	Pearson r , t -test for indep. sample	r^2 Cohen's d
2	Spiritual maturity; interval	Intentional fathering; interval	Relationship	Pearson r	r^2
		Fathering satisfaction; interval	Relationship	Pearson r	r^2
		Involvement in their child's spiritual formation; interval	Relationship	Pearson r	r^2
3, 3a	Relational closeness to God; interval	Involvement in their child's spiritual formation, interval: Intentional fathering; interval	Relationship & Difference	Pearson r , t -test for indep sample	r^2 Cohen's d
3.1	Involvement in their child's spiritual formation, interval	Spiritual intentionality; interval	Relationship	Pearson r	r^2
4		Spousal oneness; interval	Relationship	Pearson r	r^2
4.1, 4.1a		Support from spouse & others; interval	Relationship & Difference	Pearson r t -test for indep. sample	r^2 Cohen's d
Demographic and RDQ					
5	Most important area; interval (RDQ)	Primarily responsible; interval (RDQ)	Relationship	Pearson r	r^2
6	Hours spent weekly in hobbies away from children; ratio	Relational closeness to God; interval	Relationship	Pearson r	r^2
		Primarily Responsible; interval (RDQ)	Relationship	Person r	r^2
7, 7a	Hours worked weekly (w/ high intentional spirituality); ratio	Fathering satisfaction; interval	Relationship & Difference	Pearson r , t -test for indep. sample	r^2 Cohen's d
8, 8a	Intentional fathering; interval	Hours of weekly direct interaction; ratio	Relationship	Pearson r	r^2
		Per diem time of spiritual interaction; ratio (RDQ)	Relationship & Difference	Pearson r	r^2 Cohen's d

Hypotheses 1a, 2a, 3a, 3.1, 4a, 4.1, 5a, 7a, and 8a were analyzed for significant differences with *t*-tests for independent samples. Listed below are the standard effect sizes for *t*-tests.

Table 4.4

Determination of Effect Size, Cohen's d

Strength of effect size	<i>d</i>
Small	0-.2
Medium	.2-.5
Large	.5>

(Salkind, 2004, p. 180)

Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 3.1, 4, and 4.1 were analyzed for directional relationships (correlation) using a product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson *r*).

Table 4.5

Strength of Correlation r

Strength of correlation	<i>r</i>
Very weak or no relationship	0-.2
Weak	.2-.4
Moderate	.4-.6
Strong	.6-.8
Very strong	.8-.10

(Salkind, 2004, p. 85)

Hypotheses 5 through 8 (regarding demographics or self-developed items), were similarly analyzed for directional relationships.

Summary of Research Design and Procedures

A quantitative research design was used to statistically explore correlations among fathers' spiritual maturity, their intentional fathering, satisfaction, and intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. The main question in the research was to what degree are Protestant Evangelical fathers intentionally involved in the relational spiritual formation of their children? Research hypotheses were analyzed by correlations and *t*-tests where significant differences appear.

The survey implemented was composed of reliable instruments that have been used extensively in national settings and shown construct validity (Personal Fathering Profile—Canfield, 1992, 2005, 2008; Canfield & Roid, 1994; National Center for Fathering, 1990; Spiritual Assessment Inventory—Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). There were also several researcher developed questions informed by Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this study as well as some demographic questions at the end of the survey. The use of multiple means to administer the surveys (on-line and individual hard copies) enhanced the ability to procure a larger response rate, and reduce bias and researcher error.

A target population in some 241 churches that adhered to the National Association of Evangelicals was 16,260 Protestant Evangelical fathers, married, with children 4-18 years of age living in the home. Based on this target population and an accessible population of 19 of those 241 churches, the optimal sample size was to be 380 respondents to yield a $p < .05$ confidence level and a 50-70% return rate from 760 respondents in order to be reasonably generalized to the target population in the Spokane County area. A usable sample size of 249 was attained. The results discussed in Chapter 5 will hopefully prove useful in other medium metropolitan and county areas similar to

Spokane as well as smaller cities. Ideally it was hoped that what holds true in many areas for Protestant Evangelical fathers and their intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of their children in Spokane County will hold true for others trans-demographically. That is, the analysis in Chapter 5 will hope to provide not only significant results but also very meaningful ones for corporate and individual fathering with respect to their intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. Equally optimistic, as noted in Chapter 6, perhaps The Spokane Study will be used for further research in other Protestant Evangelical father settings.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

This study was about exploring the intentional involvement of Protestant Evangelical fathers in the relational spiritual formation of their children. In Chapter 2 social science observations and theory provided insights into these two main domains: the relational spiritual formation of children and paternal intentional involvement. Chapter 3 provided an integration of a Christian Worldview, Biblical and theological principles, to inform or better clarify research questions and discuss findings. Chapter 4 presented the design and procedures for exploring the relationships between several aspects of fathering and fathers' intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children. The purpose of this chapter is to present and describe the results of inferential statistical analysis based on the survey administered to a sample of Protestant Evangelical fathers in the greater Spokane, Washington area. The survey, titled SpokaneDads (see Chapter 4), was composed of Canfield's (1990) Personal Fathering Profile practices and satisfaction scales, Hall and Edwards' (2002) Spiritual Assessment Inventory, and researcher designed items.

Description and Display of Data

Prior to delving into analysis of the outcomes it is important to look at the characteristics of the respondents in the study. For this, I will first highlight some key

demographics. Following demographics will be an analysis of the null hypothesis followed by some concluding comments.

Description and Demographics

The survey was administered via Survey Monkey to Protestant Evangelical fathers belonging to churches in the greater Spokane area that as a congregation adhere to beliefs, or are members, of the National Evangelical Association. Of the original 21 churches approached, two ended up not inviting any fathers nor contributed at all and were dropped from the study; four churches had 100% response rates with smaller numbers invited and returned, and the remaining 15 churches varied individually from 33 to 70% response rates. The overall response rate, averaging out each church's response rate, was 68%, considering church leaders emailed or contacted 419 fathers that matched the demographic and 246 filled out the survey on line. Additionally 10 hardcopy surveys were filled out and then entered into their appropriate church links by the researcher for a total of 256. Prior to doing analysis, seven cases were deleted due to the respondents not filling out the majority of the survey (They stopped at ends of various sections and did not fill out anything else. This yielded 249 usable surveys for the analysis.

Demographic Characteristics

The characteristics of respondents were collected in the following categories: age, level of education, number of children between 4 to 18 years old living with you, hours per week directly interacting with your children, hours per week at work, hour per week spent in hobbies not involving their children, minutes per day spent with their children in

spiritual activity and conversation, religious orientation, religious affiliation, and type and frequency of activities through their church or ministry.

With respect to their age, fathers in the survey were as young as 26 years old and as old as 62, with nine not responding. The mean age was 44 as well as the median age ($Mdn = 44$, $SD = 8$). Of the fathers responding 25% were older than 50 years old, 25% were younger than 38, with the remainder between 38 and 50 years old.

For education, numbers were assigned on Survey Monkey per level of education (Table 5.1). These numbers were used to express the levels of education statistically. The fathers' education consisted of 33% having less than a four-year degree, but all at least had high school diplomas or equivalencies. The bulk of the fathers had a Bachelor's degree (39.2%) with an additional high percentage having advanced degrees (Master's, 20.4%; Doctor or doctorate, 7.5%).

Table 5.1

Highest Level of Education Attained (N = 249)

Highest level of education	<i>n</i>	%
High School	45	18.1
Technical	9	3.6
AA Degree	25	10.0
Bachelor's	94	37.8
Master's	49	19.7
Doctor (MD., PhD, etc.)	18	17.2
Missing	9	3.6
Total	249	100

These fathers predominately had two or three children in the home with them (see Table 5.3). Fathers not responding could have been for similar reasons other fathers did not respond in the "About You" section—it was too personal. Of these, and the below

demographics (time with children, time in hobbies, etc.), many fathers that did not respond in those also did not leave any contact information compared to the others that did respond and left contact information.

Table 5.2

Number of Children Between 4 and 18 Years Old Living at Home (N = 249)

Number of children at home	<i>n</i>	%
1 Child	39	15.7
2 Children	76	30.6
3 Children	65	26.2
4 Children	34	13.7
5 Children	12	4.8
6 Children	5	2.0
7 Children	0	0
8 Children	0	0
Fathers not responding	18	6.9
Total	249	100.0

With respect to how these fathers spend their time in some key areas (Table 5.3), they were asked; On average how many hours per week do you spend directly interacting with your children? On average how many hours per week do you spend at work? On average how many hours per week do you spend in hobbies not involving your child? And lastly, on average how many minutes per day do you spend with your child in spiritual activity and conversation. Fathers that responded to this survey averaged 21 hours per week in direct contact with their children, work an average of 42 hours a week with some up as high as 70 hours, and spend on average 3 hours per week on hobbies without their children (that is with other men, alone, with their spouse, etc.). Lastly, on average fathers self-reported that they spend 17 minutes a day with their children in

spiritual activity or conversation. The intent here was all varieties of interaction (this is discussed further in Chapter 6). In Table 5.3 there are given percentiles or references to quartiles. Throughout the study several hypotheses will be tested according to upper and lower quartile scores of one variable as compared to scores on another. For example, for “minutes per day spent with children in spiritual activity or conversation,” the lower 25th quartile responses were 5 or fewer minutes and the upper quartile (75th) responses were 20 minutes and above.

Table 5.3

Hours Interacting, Working, Hobbies, and Minutes With Children Spiritually (N = 249)

	Hours per week directly interacting with children (n = 245)	Hours per week working (n = 242)	Hours per week spent in hobbies not involving children (n = 228)	Minutes per day spent with children in spiritual activity or conversation (n = 219)
<i>M</i>	21.03	42.47	4.55	17.37
<i>Mdn</i>	20.00	45.00	3.00	15.00
Mode	20.00	40.00	.00	15.00
<i>SD</i>	14.26	13.87	5.36	16.75
Minimum	1.00	.00	.00	.00
Maximum	100.00	70.00	40.00	120.00
25 th	12.00	40.00	1.00	5.00
Percentile 50 th	20.00	45.00	3.00	15.00
75 th	25.50	50.00	5.00	20.00
No response	4	7	21	30

Respondents were also asked about their religious orientation (see Table 5.4). The clear majority were Evangelical Protestant Christian in orientation at 134 or 53.8 % of the sample in line with the target group and sample focusing on churches that adhered to NAE principles as noted earlier. This did not guarantee that members or attendees saw

themselves as such. Several respondents from these churches even saw themselves as “liberal” or “none” in their religious orientation. It is also possible that regardless of their labeling themselves, they held the same views held by the church. Many people are not familiar with what label the church has or what they might label themselves as for that matter. Labels do have limitations in that sense.

When it came to respondents identifying their religious affiliation (see Table 5.5), the majority by far (123) selected Non-denominational at 49.4%. The second largest number of respondents (36) identified themselves as Baptist in affiliation (14.5%). Two

Table 5.4

Religious Orientation (N = 249)

	<i>n</i>	%
Evangelical	134	53.8
Fundamental	41	16.5
Mainline Protestant	25	10.0
Other	23	9.2
Charismatic	9	3.6
Liberal	3	1.2
None	3	1.2
Missing	11	4.4
Total	249	100

Note: Fathers in the survey were asked to respond to “Which of these describes your religious orientation?”

of the largest churches in the area are mega-churches from the Foursquare denomination but as is often the case, one’s attendance does not imply affiliation with the denomination.

Table 5.5

Religious Affiliation by Description, (N = 249)

	<i>n</i>	%
Non-denominational	123	49.4
Baptist	36	14.5
Presbyterian	31	12.4
Other	27	10.8
Foursquare Gospel	10	4.0
Evangelical Free	5	2.0
Nazarene	3	1.2
Calvary Chapel	2	.8
Vineyard	1	.4
Missing	9	3.4
Total	249	100.0

Note: Fathers in the survey were asked to respond to “Which of these describes your religious affiliation?”

To find out how involved the respondents were they were asked what type of activities they were involved in and how often. Was the sample a highly involved group of fathers already? If so does this mean they would tend to be more involved with their children than other fathers because they tend to be involved people as it is? Or if they are highly involved in church activity and yet they respond that they have low involvement with their children, might this be a benchmark, suggesting that even the most involved fathers at church are not involved with their children and implications from that?

In Table 5.6 fathers were asked to respond to various church activities and the frequency with which they attended them using 1 = never/rarely, 2 = few times a year, 3 = once a month, 4 = few times a month, and 5 = weekly. Attending adult Bible study was very common with 103 fathers (41.3%) saying they did so weekly. This number, combined with those that participate several times a month ($n = 32$ fathers, 12.9%),

yielded 135 fathers who attend adult Bible study on Sunday accounting for 54.2% of the sample. Of the fathers that responded, 82 (32.9%) said they attend weekly small groups and that combined with those that attend several times a month that is 127 fathers (51%). Some fathers responded that they attended men's group several times a month or weekly (a combined $n = 73$, 29.3%), but the majority did not do so ever or if so rarely ($n = 81$, 32.5%). Retreats seemed to be a rare occurrence (132 fathers, 53%, never or rarely attend them and 91 fathers, 36.5% attend a few times a year). This however is the nature of retreats: they are usually annual or semi-annual events as they are time intensive.

Table 5.6

Type and Frequency of Church Activities Attended (N = 249)

Activity Attended	Frequency of Attending				
	1	2	3	4	5
Adult Bible study (n)	51	31	11	32	103
%	20.5	12.4	4.4	12.9	41.4
Small group (n)	62	26	10	45	82
%	24.9	10.4	4.0	18.1	32.9
Men's group (n)	81	48	19	20	53
%	32.5	19.3	7.6	8.0	21.3
Retreats (n)	132	91	1	1	1
%	53.0	36.5	.4	.4	.4
Other	51	8	3	5	13
Percent	20.5	3.2	1.2	2.0	5.2

Note. 1 = never/rarely, 2 = few times a year, 3 = once a month, 4 = few times a month, 5 = weekly.

In that same section fathers were asked to respond to how frequently they volunteered or were involved in ministry within the church or outside the church each week (Table 5.7). Fathers responded that 70 of them (28.1% of the sample) did some kind

of ministry volunteering weekly. This combined with 45 fathers (18.1%) for a total of 115 fathers (46.2%) of the sample did so several times a month or weekly. Far fewer volunteered outside the church (never or rarely—104 at 41.8%; few times a year—62 at 24.9%). In short, for both attending and volunteering, the fathers tended to be regularly involved in Sunday Bible study or small groups during the week but not outside the church with respect to ministry.

Table 5.7

Type and Frequency of Voluntary Church Ministry Involvement (N = 249)

Ministry Involvement	Frequency Involvement				
	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteer in church	49	32	29	45	70
%	19.7	12.9	11.6	18.1	28.1
Volunteer outside church	104	62	20	17	17
%	41.8	24.9	8.0	6.8	6.8

Note. 1 = never/rarely, 2 = few times a year, 3 = once a month, 4 = few times a month, 5 = weekly.

Analysis and Discussion of Null Hypotheses

Each null hypothesis will be presented below, followed by display of relevant statistical analysis and a brief discussion. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, sample sizes, correlations, and *t*-tests of independent samples where upper and lower quartiles were considered (*M*, *SD*, *t*, *df*) will be presented. Effect sizes will also be noted with Cohen's *d* for *t*-tests of independent samples and for correlations (yielding *r* or Pearson-product moment correlation), the effect size r^2 , or the coefficient of determination, will be given. Causality is not determined in these hypotheses even when positive significant results are obtained.

On the outset, the variables discussed below have different scales or measures for the respondent. This was displayed in Table D.1 in Appendix D but it would help the reader to mention them here. Spiritual Maturity, Spiritual Intentionality, and relational Closeness to God are based on interval 5-point Likert scales. Intentional fathering, involvement in their child's spiritual formation, and spousal oneness are interval 6-point Likert scales. Fathering satisfaction and support from spouse and others are interval 7-point Likert scales. The researcher designed questions regarding "the most important area" and "primary responsibility" were interval 5-point Likert scales. As was noted in Chapter 4, prior to analyzing the data, the data was filtered to include only those respondents who fit the profile (e.g. fathers who are married, cohabitating, and have children living at home between 4-18 years of age) and to omit those who selected "5's" (very true) in the SAI impression management items suggesting an over-inflated view of themselves or "6's" (not-applicable) in the PFP fathering practices items to avoid inflating those means.

Testing H₁₀

Below is the output regarding the first null hypothesis, H₁₀: There will be no significant relationship between fathers' scores on intentional fathering and fathers' spiritual maturity in relationship with God, involvement in their child's spiritual formation, and fathering satisfaction.

Table 5.8

Means and Standard Deviations for H1₀.

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
1. Intentional Fathering	3.97	.40	245
2. Relational Closeness to God	2.34	.34	245
3. Involvement in Their Child's Spiritual formation	3.47	.76	242
4. Fathering Satisfaction	5.11	.73	245

Table 5.9

Correlations for Intentional Fathering, Relational Closeness to God, Involvement in Child's Spiritual Formation, and Fathering Satisfaction (H1₀)

Measure	1	2	3	4
1. Intentional Fathering	--			
2. Relational Closeness to God	.13*	--		
3. Involvement in Child's Spiritual Formation	.51**	.30**	--	
4. Fathering Satisfaction	.53**	.08	.40**	--

Note. **Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at $p < .05$ (2-tailed).

After running correlations it was found the H1₀ is to be rejected in favor of the research hypothesis in all relationships but one. That is there are significant, positive relationships between intentional fathering and fathers' relational closeness to God ($r = .13$, $r^2 = .02$), involvement in their child's spiritual formation ($r = .51$, $r^2 = .26$) and fathering satisfaction ($r = .53$, $r^2 = .28$). There is also a positive significant relationship between relational closeness to God and involvement in their child's spiritual formation ($r = .30$, $r^2 = .09$). The only exception was the correlation between fathering satisfaction and relational closeness to God which was not significant ($r = .08$) at either $p < .05$ or $p < .01$. Perhaps this suggests that a father's relationship with God may be important to him but unlike other areas is not a significant determiner in his satisfaction of his fathering. Or

conversely, fathers' satisfaction of fathering does not affect their relational closeness to God (causality is not determined in any of these cases). The effect size (r^2), or coefficient of determination, for example $r^2 = .28$, suggests that 28% of change in one variable relates to a change in the other variant, and this change is not attributed to chance.

Particularly notable is the positive or direct relationship of all the variables and moderate strength of the correlation between involvement in their child's spiritual formation and intentional fathering ($r = .51$) and fathering satisfaction and intentional fathering ($r = .53$). Weaker correlations appear between involvement in their child's spiritual formation and relational closeness to God ($r = .30$), fathering satisfaction and a father's involvement in their child's spiritual formation ($r = .40$), and relational closeness to God and intentional fathering ($r = .13$).

To further flush this out and determine what strengths there might be between means of these variables a *t*-test of independent means was run looking at the upper and lower quartile of Intentional Fathering with respect to the other variables (see Table 5.10). Research hypothesis RH1a suggested that if so (RH1 is the case, H_{10} is rejected), then those in the upper and lower quartile for intentional fathering scores will differ significantly in their scores on spiritual maturity with God, involvement in their child's spiritual formation, and fathering satisfaction. To do this, through SPSS upper and lower quartiles (4.25 and 3.73 respectively) were determined for intentional fathering. Specifically, the scores in the upper 75th percentile were compared to those in the lower 25th percentile in one variable compared to a second variable. That is to say, what do fathers that scored high on intentional fathering look like with respect to their scores on

relational closeness to God, fathering satisfaction, and involvement in their children's spiritual formation compared to fathers that score lower on intentional fathering?

Table 5.10

Independent Samples t-test for Upper and Lower Quartile Scores on Intentional Fathering (RH1a)

Intentional Fathering	Upper Quartile		Lower Quartile		<i>t</i> (125)	Effect Size Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Relational Closeness With God	2.39	.33	2.31	.36	1.28	n/a
Fathering Satisfaction	5.53	.69	4.64	.73	6.98**	1.24
Involvement in Child's Spiritual Formation	3.92	.70	2.99	.70	7.48**	1.34

Note. ** $p < .01$.

Firstly, as shown in the correlations there was a statistically significant, positive, relationship between intentional fathering and relational closeness with God; however, it was very weak at $r = .13$ (Table 5.9). The *t*-test showed, however, that the obtained value 1.28 was lesser than the critical value of 1.96, meaning the null hypothesis cannot be rejected; hence, an effect size is irrelevant and is not listed. The other variables showed to be significant with very large effect sizes at $d = 1.24$ for fathering satisfaction and intentional fathering and $d = 1.34$ for intentional fathering and a fathers involvement in their child's spiritual formation. The effect size referred to in this study for *t*-tests is Cohen's *d*, and its strength levels were noted in Table 4.4. In short, while several relationships were significant, fathers that scored high on intentional fathering were those that scored high on involvement in the spiritual formation of their children and fathering satisfaction.

Testing H₂₀

Below is the output regarding the second null hypothesis, H₂₀: There will be no significant relationship between scores on fathers' spiritual maturity and those of their intentional fathering, fathering satisfaction, and involvement in their child's spiritual formation. Analysis descriptors are noted in Tables 5.11 and 5.12.

Table 5.11

Means and Standard Deviations for H₂₀ (N = 245)

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Spiritual maturity	2.69	.41
2. Intentional fathering	3.97	.40
3. Fathering satisfaction	5.11	.73
4. Involvement in their child's spiritual formation	3.47	.76

Table 5.12

Correlations for Spiritual Maturity, Intentional Fathering, Fathering Satisfaction, and Involvement in Child's Spiritual Formation (H₂₀)

Measure	1	2	3	4
1. Spiritual maturity	--			
2. Intentional fathering	.23**	--		
3. Fathering satisfaction	.14*	.53**	--	
4. Involvement in child's spiritual formation	.44**	.51**	.40**	--

Note. *Correlation is significant at $p < .05$ (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Each of the relationships is statistically significant and positive minimally at the .05 level. The null hypothesis can be rejected and the hypothesis, RH2 can be held to be significant. That is, there is a positive relationship between fathers' spiritual maturity and intentional fathering, fathering satisfaction, and involvement in their child's spiritual formation. Though no causality is proven it is interesting to note that fathers' spiritual

maturity is positively related to his intentional fathering ($r = .23$, $r^2 = .05$), father satisfaction ($r = .14$, $r^2 = .02$), and most significantly with his involvement in the spiritual formation of his children ($r = .44$, $r^2 = .19$). One line of reasoning could be that as fathers are more mature spiritually they desire to be more intentional and involved in their children's lives and are more satisfied as fathers. Equally interesting is that fathers' involvement in their child's spiritual formation is significantly positively related to father satisfaction ($r = .40$, $r^2 = .16$). This would make sense in that a father being involved in his child's spiritual formation would also be satisfied. Such an involvement is an important and meaningful undertaking. It would be rather odd that someone would be involved with their children but not enjoy it or be satisfied as a parent in doing so. Hence it would make more sense that a father being satisfied is so because he is involved, which begets satisfaction, which begets more involvement etc. The reverse seems not as plausible. Some fathers could be satisfied with their fathering and not be involved at all; they are just happy doing their own thing and are satisfied with that. But would a father in that situation say he is satisfied with his fathering? It would seem unlikely but this is not ascertainable from the analysis. Regardless, the strongest correlation and largest effect size of all the variables is between intentional fathering and fathering satisfaction ($r = .53$, $r^2 = .28$).

To further assess these relationships, a *t*-test for independent means was run using upper and lower quartile scores of Spiritual Maturity as the grouping variable and the others as the testing variables, particularly with involvement in their child's spiritual formation in mind (see Table 5.13). To do this, through SPSS upper and lower quartiles (2.96 and 2.44 respectively) were determined for Spiritual Maturity and compared to the

remaining variables. Spiritual maturity and fathering satisfaction were shown to be significant $t(126) = 4.42$, with a moderate effect size ($d = .46$), and spiritual maturity

Table 5.13

Independent Samples t-test for Upper and Lower Quartile Scores on Spiritual Maturity (RH2a)

Spiritual maturity	Upper quartile		Lower quartile		$t(126)$	Effect size Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		
Involvement in child's spiritual formation	3.89	.63	3.04	.74	7.04**	1.25
Intentional fathering	4.14	.40	3.86	.36	4.42**	.76
Fathering satisfaction	5.23	.77	4.87	.70	2.63**	.46

Note. ** $p < .01$.

had a significant difference with intentional fathering with a large effect size ($d = .76$).

Most apparent, spiritual maturity showed significant differences between upper and lower quartile scores on involvement in their child's spiritual formation with the obtained score 7.04 being much greater than the needed critical value at $p < .01$, and the effect size was very large at $d = 1.25$.

In sum, fathers' spiritual maturity is greatly related to their involvement in the spiritual formation of their children as well as positively related to intentional fathering and fathering satisfaction, though to a lesser degree. Among the four variables, the strongest relationship was between intentional fathering and fathering satisfaction ($r = .53$, $r^2 = .28$). Both had significant differences in light of upper and lower quartile scores of spiritual maturity as noted in the t -test but not as strongly as was involvement in their child's spiritual formation compared to spiritual maturity's upper and lower quartiles.

Testing H3₀

Below is the output regarding the third null hypothesis, H3₀: There will be no significant relationship between fathers' relational closeness to God scores and their levels of intentional fathering and involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

Table 5.14

Means and Standard Deviations for Relational Closeness to God, Involvement in Their Child's Spiritual Formation, and Intentional Fathering (H3₀)

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
2. Relational closeness to God	2.34	.34	245
3. Involvement in their child's spiritual formation	3.47	.76	242
4. Intentional fathering	3.97	.40	245

Table 5.15

Correlations for Relational Closeness, Involvement in Their Child's Spiritual Formation, and Intentional Fathering (H3₀)

Measure	1	2	3
1. Relational closeness to God	--		
2. Involvement in their child's spiritual formation	.30**	--	
3. Intentional fathering	.13*	.51**	--

Note. *Correlation is significant at $p < .05$ (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

After running correlations, it was found the H3₀ is to be rejected in favor of the research hypothesis, RH 3: There is a positive relationship between father's relational closeness to God and their levels of intentional fathering and involvement in their child's spiritual formation. That is, there are significant, positive relationships between relational closeness to God, a father's involvement in their child's spiritual formation, and intentional fathering.

Moderate correlation was found between intentional fathering and involvement in their child's spiritual formation (.51), with a medium effect size ($r^2 = .26$). Though significant and positive, a weaker correlation (.30) and effect size ($r^2 = .09$) were found between involvement in their child's spiritual formation and a father's relational closeness to God, as well as between intentional fathering and a father's relational closeness to God ($r = .13$, $r^2 = .02$).

To further investigate a *t*-test of independent means was run looking at the upper and lower quartile of relational closeness to God with respect to the other variables (see Table 5.16). Research hypothesis RH3a suggested that if so (RH3 is the case, H_{30} is rejected), then those in the upper and lower quartiles for scores on relational closeness to God (2.53 & 2.12 respectively) will differ significantly in their scores on intentional fathering and involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

Table 5.16

Independent Samples t-test for Upper and Lower Quartile Scores on Relational Closeness to God (RH3a)

Relational closeness to God	Upper quartile		Lower quartile		<i>t</i> (125)	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Intentional fathering	4.03	.44	3.85	.40	2.33*	.43
Involvement in child's spiritual formation	3.71	.71	3.10	.78	4.61*	.82

Note. * $p < .05$.

Firstly, as shown in the correlations there was a statistically significant, positive, yet weaker relationship between intentional fathering and relational closeness to God ($r = .13$). The *t*-test showed, however, that the obtained value 2.38 was more extreme than the critical value of 1.96 (at $p < .05$), meaning the null hypothesis can be rejected with

relative comfort that a type-1 error is not being made: i.e. H_{3_0} being rejected when it should not be. The accompanying effect size is medium in strength at $d = .43$. Another weak correlation, though significant and positive, was between relational closeness to God and involvement in their child's spiritual formation ($r = .30$). The t -test comparing the upper and lower quartiles of relational closeness to God on involvement in their child's spiritual formation showed a very large effect size of $d = .82$. There is a larger effect size derived from the t -test between relational closeness to God and involvement in the spiritual formation of their children than between relational closeness to God and intentional fathering. This confirms the strength of the relationships found in the correlations.

Testing H3.1₀

The null hypothesis H3.1₀, addressed next, states that there will be no significant relationship between fathers' spiritual intentionality scores and involvement in their child's spiritual formation. Spiritual intentionality ($M = 3.42$, $SD = .78$, $N = 245$) and involvement in their child's spiritual formation ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .76$) had a moderate positive significant correlation ($r = .468$, $p < .01$). Accordingly, the null hypothesis was to be rejected and the research hypothesis, RH3.1, accepted. That is, there was a positive relationship between fathers' spiritual intentionality and involvement in their child's spiritual formation. The relationship was moderately significant at $r = .468$ and the effect size suggests a 22% change in one variable is attributed to a change in the other variable ($r^2 = .22$). With r and r^2 being what they were, this at first glance stood out as something that was significant and a reasonable cause to reject the null hypothesis.

Doing a further test for significance by *t*-test for independent means sheds further light on the relationship (see Table 5.17). Here the upper (4.056) and lower quartile (2.917) scores of fathers' spiritual intentionality are compared to responses in involvement in their children's spiritual formation.

Table 5.17

Independent Samples t-test for Upper and Lower Quartile Scores on Spiritual Intentionality (RH3.1)

Spiritual intentionality	Upper quartile		Lower quartile		<i>t</i> (129)	Effect size Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Involvement in child's spiritual formation	3.91	.60	3.12	.79	6.12**	1.12

Note. ** $p < .01$.

The results of the *t*-test show that indeed there was a significant difference here. The obtained value *t* (6.12) was considerably larger than the critical value (2.58) at a $p < .01$ level of significance. Additionally, the effect size, Cohen's *d*, was very large at 1.12. The null hypothesis could be rejected with confidence that it was very unlikely a type-I error occurred. This is to say that there is a significant difference between fathers' level of spiritual intentionality and their involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

Testing H₄₀

Below is the output regarding the null hypothesis, H₄₀: There will be no significant relationship between fathers' levels of spousal oneness and their levels of involvement in their child's spiritual formation. A correlation test between spousal oneness ($M = 3.81$, $SD = .66$, $N = 245$) and involvement in their child's spiritual formation ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .76$, $N = 242$) yielded a weaker but direct relationship

significant at the $p < .01$ level (2-tailed test). Accordingly, the H_{40} was rejected in favor of the research hypothesis: there was a moderately significant, positive correlation (Pearson's $r = .39$, $r^2 = .16$) between spousal oneness and fathers' involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

A t -test for independent means was run to further substantiate rejecting the null hypothesis. The upper and lower quartile scores of spousal oneness with respect to scores on involvement in their child's spiritual formation are presented in Table 5.18. Research hypothesis RH4a suggested that if RH4 is the case (H_{40} is rejected), then those fathers who responded in the upper and lower quartile for spousal oneness will differ significantly in their scores on their responses to their involvement in their child's spiritual formation. Accordingly upper and lower quartiles (4.25 & 3.37 respectively) were determined for spousal oneness.

Table 5.18

Independent Samples t-test for Upper and Lower Quartile Scores on Spousal Oneness (RH4a)

Spouse oneness	Upper quartile		Lower quartile		$t(140)$	Effect size Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		
Involvement in child's spiritual formation	3.82	.71	3.04	.68	6.63**	1.11

Note. ** $p < .01$.

Firstly, as shown in the correlations there was a statistically significant, positive, relationship between spousal oneness and involvement in their child's spiritual formation, albeit close to moderate but still toward the weak level at $r = .39$. The t -test suggested that indeed the null hypothesis could be rejected as the obtained value ($t = 6.63$) was

substantially larger than the critical value needed to do so. The effect size also was quite large with Cohen's $d = 1.11$ further giving support to the strength of the relationship. There was a significant difference between upper and lower quartile scores of fathers' sense of spousal oneness on their involvement in their child's spiritual formation.

Testing H4.1₀

Along similar lines with respect to fathers feeling supported or unified and how that relates to their involvement in the spiritual formation of their children, below is the output regarding the null hypothesis H4.1₀. Namely, there will be no significant relationship between fathers' level of support from spouses and others and their involvement in their child's spiritual formation. After running the correlation it was found the H4.1₀ was to be rejected in favor of the research hypothesis, being that there is a significant, positive correlation between fathers' level of support from spouses and others ($M = 5.16$, $SD = .77$, $N = 245$) and their involvement in their child's spiritual formation ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .76$). Though significant at the $p < .01$ level, the Pearson-product moment correlation was weak ($r = .39$). The effect size ($r^2 = .15$) showed only a 15% variance of one variable on the other.

As with other tests it was instructive to run a t -test for independent means between upper and lower quartile scores of support from spouse and others and fathers' compared to scores on involvement in their children's spiritual formation (Table 5.19). Results showed that difference of upper (5.7) and lower (4.7) quartile scores for support from spouses was significant compared to fathers' involvement in their child's spiritual formation with a large effect size ($d = .89$). That is, it was significant at the $p < .01$ level

Table 5.19

Independent Samples t-test for Upper and Lower Quartile Scores on Support From Spouse and Others (RH4.1a)

Support from spouse and others	Upper quartile		Lower quartile		<i>t</i> (134)	Effect size Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Involvement in child's spiritual formation	3.89	.70	3.26	.72	4.99**	.89

Note. ** $p < .01$.

with $t = 4.99$ well above the critical value of 2.576, and $d = .89$. The null hypothesis was to be rejected.

Testing H5₀

Below is the output regarding the hypothesis, H5₀: There will be no significant relationship between fathers' perception of the most important area of a child's life being their relationship with God and fathers' perception of themselves as being primarily responsible for their children's spiritual formation. Subsequent to running a correlation, rejecting the H5₀ in favor of the research hypothesis is appropriate. That is, there is a positive relationship between a father's perception of the most important area of a child's life being his or her relationship with God ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .74$, $N = 245$) and the father's perception of himself as being primarily responsible for his children's spiritual formation ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .61$). Like several other factors in this study, the correlation is moderate ($r = .46$) and significant at the $p < .05$ level. The effect size, $r^2 = .21$, suggests that 21% of change in one variable is directly (positive correlation) related (positively correlated) to a

change by the other or vice versa since: if one increases or decreases, so does the other respectively.

Testing H₆₀

Next is null hypothesis H₆₀: There will be no significant relationship between fathers' number of hours weekly spent in hobbies away from their children and fathers' relational closeness to God, and a father seeing himself as primarily responsible for his children's spiritual formation. The only correlation suggesting the null hypothesis H₆₀ be

Table 5.20

Means and Standard Deviations for H₆₀.

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
1. Number of hours weekly spent in hobbies away from children	4.55	5.36	228
2. Relational closeness to God	2.34	.34	245
3. Primary responsible	3.91	.61	245

Table 5.21

Correlations for Weekly Hours in Hobbies, Relational Closeness, and Primary Responsible (H₆₀)

Measure	1	2	3
1. Number of hours weekly spent in hobbies away from children	--		
2. Relational closeness to God	.07	--	
3. Primary responsible	-.12	.17**	--

Note. **Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

rejected is between relational closeness to God and primary responsible ($r = .17$), yet this is a very weak correlation with a very small effect size ($r^2 = .03$). The other factors correlated were not significant. In Chapter 4, research hypothesis RH6 stated there will be a negative relationship between fathers' number of hours weekly spent in hobbies

away from their children and fathers' relational closeness to God, and a negative relationship between hours weekly spent in hobbies away from their children and a father seeing himself as primarily responsible for his children's spiritual formation. The only negative correlation that resulted was between primary responsible and hours weekly spent in hobbies away from children, but it was not statistically significant ($r = -.12$). A negative or indirect relationship means that as one variable changes upward the other variable with which it is being compared or related changes downward without stating causal direction or worth (i.e. negative does not mean worthless). Given the weakness of the correlations, and that only one was significant, it would be a risk to reject the null hypothesis without committing a type-I error. Hence the null hypothesis should not be rejected suggesting that there is no significant relationship between fathers' number of hours weekly spent in hobbies away from their children and fathers' relational closeness to God, and a father seeing himself as primarily responsible for his children's spiritual formation.

Testing H7₀

The null hypothesis H7₀ states that there will be no significant relationship between number of hours worked weekly for a father with high spiritual intentionality and his level of fathering satisfaction. Upon running correlations H7₀ is to be rejected in favor of the research hypothesis in two of the relationships only—fathering satisfaction and hours per week worked ($r = -.15$, $r^2 = .02$) and fathering satisfaction and spiritual intentionality ($r = .20$, $r^2 = .04$). However there is not a significant correlation between

hours per week worked and spiritual intentionality ($r = -.02$). All correlations were very weak.

Table 5.22

Means and Standard Deviations for H7₀.

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
1. Hours per week worked	42.47	13.86	242
2. Spiritual intentionality	3.42	.78	245
3. Fathering satisfaction	5.11	.73	245

Table 5.23

Correlations for Hours Worked, Spiritual Intentionality, and Father Satisfaction (H7₀)

Measure	1	2	3
1. Hours per week worked	--		
2. Spiritual intentionality	-.02	--	
3. Fathering satisfaction	-.15*	.20**	--

Note. *Correlation is significant at $p < .05$ (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

The correlations show that an indirect or negative correlation exists between hours per week worked and spiritual intentionality as well as between hours per week worked and fathering satisfaction. In the research hypothesis RH7 from Chapter 4 it was anticipated that there would be a negative relationship between number of hours worked weekly for a father with high spiritual intentionality and his level of fathering satisfaction. That is, as scores in one variable increase, hours per week worked for example, scores on a related variable, spiritual intentionality, decrease or vice versa. However, this relationship was considered very weak and having no statistical relationship ($r = -.02$, see Table 4.5). A negative or indirect relationship was also found to be statistically significant albeit very weak ($r = -.15$) between hours per week worked

and fathering satisfaction. That means as hours per week worked increases, scores in fathering satisfaction decreased.

With spiritual intentionality having the anticipated negative relationship with hours worked per week (albeit not statistically significant) and fathering satisfaction significantly correlated to both variables (and negatively toward hours worked per week as anticipated), it was instructive to run a *t*-test of independent samples regarding upper and lower quartiles of hours weekly worked to see how those means related to father satisfaction. To do this, *t*-test was run from the perspective of the research hypothesis: there is a negative relationship between number of hours worked weekly for a father with high spiritual intentionality and his level of fathering satisfaction. So to achieve the first portion, “number of hours worked weekly for a father with high spiritual intentionality,” first the upper quartile of spiritual intentionality needed to be sorted out (4.05 and above, $M = 3.42$ and lower quartile was 2.92, $SD = .78$). Of those upper quartile scores in spiritual intentionality, they were further sorted out in terms of upper and lower quartile of hours worked per week (upper quartile began at 50 hours per week, lower quartile was 40 hours or less, $M = 42.29$, $SD = 11.01$). With this, fathers that scored high on spiritual intentionality, if they had high work hours, would be predicted to be less satisfied in their fathering as they desired to be home with their children, knowing that their input into their lives spiritually was important. Long work hours would frustrate that value.

The obtained value of .34 is not above the critical value 2.001 (at .05) and hence cannot substantiate rejecting the null hypothesis in this relationship or affirming the research hypothesis. Since it is not significant, no effect size is necessary. What can be

noted, however, are the significant relationships stated earlier and more informatively the negative or indirect relationships.

Testing H8₀

Lastly, below is the output regarding null hypothesis, H8₀: There will be no significant relationship between how fathers score on intentional fathering and their time spent with their children as reflected in minutes per day with their children in spiritual activity or conversation. The null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the research hypothesis RH8: there is a positive or direct, significant correlation ($r = .16, p < .05$) between intentional fathering ($M = 3.97, SD = .40, N = 245$) and minutes per day spent with their children in spiritual activity or conversation ($M = 17.37, SD = 16.75, N = 219$). Though significant, the correlation is very weak ($r = .16$) and the effect size very small ($r^2 = .03$). That is to say the percentage of variance in one variable that is accounted for by the variance in the other variable is only 3%. However there is a positive relationship between how a father scores on intentional fathering and his time spent with his children, and it is significant, so looking more closely at the relationship via t -test might help assure a type-I error is not being committed: denying H8₀ when it should be accepted.

A t -test for independent means was run to compare the upper and lower quartiles of intentional fathering against how many minutes per day fathers spent with their children in spiritual activity or conversation. The upper quartile score for intentional fathering began at 4.25 and for the lower quartile began at 3.73. A significant relationship was found between the variables as the obtained value ($t = 2.64$) was greater

Table 5.24

Independent Samples t-test for Upper and Lower Quartile Scores on Intentional Fathering (RH8a)

Intentional fathering	Upper quartile		Lower quartile		<i>t</i> (112)	Effect size Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Minutes per day spent with child spiritually	21.15	19.57	13.39	11.36	2.64**	.49

Note. **significant at $p < .01$

than the critical value of 2.58 (at $p < .01$). The effect size was medium-to-large at ($d = .49$). Hence there does seem to be a significant difference between the level of intentional fathering and the daily time spent with his children on spiritual conversation or activities. The null hypothesis may be rejected and the research hypothesis RH8 may be accepted, namely, that there is a positive relationship between how a father scores on intentional fathering and his time spent with his children on spiritual conversation or activities.

Summary of Inferential Statistical Analysis

This chapter presented and described the results of inferential statistical analysis based on the SpokaneDads Survey administered to 249 Protestant Evangelical fathers in the greater Spokane, Washington area. The research question shaping the study, guiding the design, results, and the ensuing Chapter 6 is “to what degree are Protestant Evangelical fathers intentionally involved in the relational spiritual formation of their children?” Several corollary questions were restated to help keep that focus in mind. Demographics of the study can be generalized by the following. The fathers were on average 44 years old, mostly having four-year college degrees, and had predominately 2

to 3 children at home with them currently. With respect to how they spent their time, on average they responded that they worked 42 hours per week, interacted directly with their children 21 hours per week, spent 3 hours per week in hobbies not involving their children, and spent 17 minutes a day engaging in spiritual conversation or activity with their children. Respondents predominately said they were Evangelical in their religious orientation and non-denominational in their religious affiliation. Activity wise, the fathers attended Sunday school Bible studies and small groups on a regular basis (once a week or few times a month). And while many regularly attended men's groups, most did not. The majority also regularly spent time in voluntary ministry within the church. Interestingly, in all these areas, responses were polarized. That is, the middle ground was far less frequent; fathers were either involved or rarely if at all. Regarding volunteering outside church, attending retreats, or other involvements, by far the responses were never or rarely.

Results of the study were analyzed using bivariate correlations and *t*-tests for independent means when needed. Null hypotheses $H1_0$ through $H8_0$ were either rejected or accepted based upon these results being statistically significant. They were further assessed based on effect sizes.

Null hypotheses that were rejected in full and the research hypothesis accepted were $H1_0$, $H2_0$, $H3_0$, $H3.1_0$, $H4_0$, $H4.1_0$, $H5_0$, and $H8_0$. There was a significant, moderate positive relationship, with a very large *t*-test Cohen's *d*, between fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of his children and intentional fathering. Also there was a significant, albeit very weak, relationship between intentional fathering and fathers' relational closeness to God. And lastly, there was a moderate correlation and medium *t*-

test Cohen's d between fathering satisfaction and intentional fathering (H1₀, RH1). There was a positive, significant relationship between relational closeness with God and involvement in their child's spiritual formation (moderate correlation and large Cohen's d). Between relational closeness with God and intentional fathering there was a very weak correlation and a medium Cohen's d from the t -test run (H3₀, RH3).

Further analysis showed that there was a positive, significant relationship between fathers' spiritual maturity and intentional fathering. Results from a t -test found a large effect size. There was a positive, significant relationship between spiritual maturity and fathering satisfaction. A medium effect size resulted from a t -test there. A stronger, significant relationship emerged between spiritual maturity and involvement in their child's spiritual formation. Another large effect size was determined from a t -test on these variables. Fathering satisfaction and intentional fathering had the strongest among the correlations (H2₀, RH2). Further substantiated was a moderate correlation between fathers' spiritual intentionality and involvement in their child's spiritual formation (H3.1₀, RH3.1). This too was supported by a very large Cohen's d .

Also, a moderate, positive, significant correlation was found between spousal oneness and fathers' involvement in their child's spiritual formation. This was supported by a very large Cohen's d (H4₀, RH4). A positive, significant relationship (weak r) was also found between fathers' reported level of support from their spouse and others and involvement in their child's spiritual formation. This relationship was supported by a large Cohen's d effect size (H4.1₀, RH4.1). Furthermore, there was a positive, significant correlation (moderate) regarding fathers' perception of the most important area of their

child's life being their relationship with God and fathers' perception of themselves as being primarily responsible for their child's spiritual formation (H5₀, RH5).

Finally, there was found to be a direct, significant relationship (albeit very weak) between intentional fathering and minutes per day spent with their children in spiritual activity or conversation (H8₀, RH8). A *t*-test yielded significance as well as a medium *d*.

Null hypotheses that were rejected in part (with some variables correlating significantly and others not) were H6₀ and H7₀. With respect to number of hours weekly spent in hobbies away from children, a father's relational closeness to God, and his view of himself as being primary responsible for his children's spiritual formation, the correlations were insignificant. One correlation that was significant, relational closeness to God and primary responsible, was very weak (H6₀, RH6).

Lastly hours per week worked, spiritual intentionality, and fathering satisfaction were correlated significantly in only two of the three variables and all were very weak at that: fathering satisfaction correlated indirectly with hours per week worked and fathering satisfaction correlated positively and weakly with spiritual intentionality. But upon further evaluation by *t*-test there was no significant difference between hours worked and fathering satisfaction. The correlation between hours per week worked and spiritual intentionality was not statistically significant (H7₀, RH7).

Table 5.25 summarizes the variables involved, their associated research hypotheses, statistical tests run, significance level, and effect sizes and strengths. The relationships among these variables, their significance, directionality, and meaningfulness will be further explored in the next chapter as Chapter 6 will review the study in general, with the bulk of the chapter presenting implications and meaningfulness of the findings

Table 5.25

Summary of Important Findings of Statistical Analysis

Hypothesis	Variable 1	Variable 1	Correlation/Signif	ES r^2	t -test/Signif	ES d	
RH1	Intentional Fathering	Involved in SF	.51**	.26	$t(125) = 7.48^{**}$	large/1.34	
		Relational close/God	.13*	.02	$t(125) = 1.28$	n/a	
		Fathering satisfaction	.53**	.28	$t(125) = 6.98^{**}$	large/1.24	
RH2	Spiritual Maturity	Involved in SF	.44**	.19	$t(126) = 7.04^{**}$	large/1.25	
		Intentional Fathering	.23**	.05	$t(126) = 4.42^{**}$	large/.76	
		Fathering Satisfaction	.14**	.02	$t(126) = 2.63^{**}$	medium/.46	
		Fathering Satisfaction	Involved SF	.40**	.16	$t(122) = 6.00^*$	large/1.41
		Fathering Satisfaction	Intentional Fathering	.53**	.28	$t(125) = 6.98^{**}$	large/1.24
RH3	Relational Closeness/God	Involved in SF	.30**	.08	$t(125) = 4.61^*$	large/.82	
		Intentional Fathering	.13*	.02	$t(125) = 2.33^*$	medium/.43	
RH3.1	Spiritual Intentionality	Involved in SF	.47**	.22	$t(129) = 6.12^{**}$	large/1.24	
RH4	Spousal Oneness	Involved in SF	.39**	.15	$t(140) = 6.63^{**}$	large/1.12	
RH4.1	Support of Spouse/others	Involved in SF	.39**	.15	$t(125) = 4.99^{**}$	large/.89	
RH5	Most Important Area	Primary Responsible	.46**	.21	$t(160) = 6.11^{**}$	large/.69	
RH6	Hours in Hobbies	Primary Responsible	-.12	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Relational Closeness	.06	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Relational Closeness	Primary Responsible	.17**	.03	$t(171) = .45$	small/.08
RH7	Hours work	Spiritual Intentionality	-.02	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Fathering Satisfaction	-.15*	.02	$t(59) = .34$	n/a	
		Spiritual Intentionality	Fathering Satisfaction	.20**	.04	$t(125) = 2.32^*$	medium/.41
RH8	Intentional Fathering	Minutes per day	.16*	.03	$t(112) = 2.64^{**}$	medium/.49	

Note. Not all relationships are discussed here. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

from the analysis in light of the research questions. Limitations of the study and comments on future research will also be presented.

Survey Open Ended Responses

Open Ended Responses for 132b

The following are open ended responses from Item 132 and 132a and 132b. Item 132 asked fathers to respond on the Likert Scale 1 to 5 (1 = not at all true, to 5 = Very true) regarding: At times I have struggled with time demands of work not affording me adequate time with my children spiritually. Following that up was 132a asking them again to use the Likert Scale for “If I selected 2-5 above, I took steps to make changes in my work demands in order to spend more time with my children.” Finally item 132b asked that if they selected 2-5 on item 132a would they be willing to share what they did. These responses are based on that question.

After doing a short thematic clustering of the responses, as this is not a mixed method study or qualitative, several responses stood out. These are very transparent and in some cases difficult for the fathers to express as one can tell from the statements. Those themes are work hours/schedule change, changed jobs/careers, less income, flexibility, self-employed/had control to make time, make do/wife support, late after bed/sleeping, earlier-in/earlier-home, boundaries, and changed/current habits. For each area there will be a brief discussion of some representative comments followed by a raw data listing of their responses.

Table 5.26

Categorical Breakdown of Comments by Fathers for Question 132b

Category	Frequency fathers commented	%
Work hours/schedule change	26	21
Late after bed, sleeping	16	13
Change jobs/careers	15	12
Earlier-in, earlier home	15	12
Boundaries	12	10
Change/current habits	12	10
Make do, wife support	11	9
Flexibility, self-employed	7	6
Less income	7	6

Note. The frequency or % does not reflect the length or depth of the discussion.

Changed Jobs/Careers

Fathers expressed that they realized they simply needed to change jobs and had the ability to do so. In some cases it was a major life change and for all they never looked back or regretted it. For example one father said, “the biggest step I took was to leave the industry that I wanted to be in to allow me to be closer to my wife and kids.” Another said, “Changed jobs praying for God's hand in providing for time and resources for our family to spend more time together.” Showing the sacrificial nature of the job changes this father responded, “When opportunities came open for different positions with better or more consistent days off/ schedules, I applied for and took positions that were more family friendly, even when the work was not my favorite.” Others noted the following:

Got a new job that allows me to work four 10 hour days, with three times the paid time off. But for less overall money.

Changed jobs to a less demanding (time wise) job.

Changed jobs, moving to another state for less money and fewer hours.

Changed to a job that required less travel.

I can't say it was driven by a need for more spiritual time with them, but for more quality time overall. I changed jobs for that specific reason.

Changed career that required 50-60 hours a workweek to one that is 35-40 hours a workweek. Financially it was a tough decision but one I am glad we made. Applied for job elsewhere (same profession) and moved to a different location. Same profession, much less time commitments than before.
 Job change.
 Got a different job that was not shift work.
 Left a job, started my business from home.
 New job now has me off on Sundays, now I usually attend Sunday service.

Work Hours/Schedule Change

These fathers did not need to change jobs or career but were able to make adjustments within their current positions. Nonetheless several experienced hardship and backlash while others found it relatively easy. In both cases, again, they intimate they would have it no other way. For example, one father expressed the backlash from work “I requested the weekend off, even when threatened with a layoff. I was working 7 days a week for a month straight,” but he felt the need to do it. This father similarly noted a lack of job-place concern for family, “I keep trying to adjust my schedule to spend time with my family. The work place is rarely concerned with family time over their own needs.” And this one was very transparent in expressing why whatever changes his work would allow would be worth it, “I have put in to have my schedule changed to better impact my children's lives that they may have the father I never did.” Other comments fathers made are:

Changed my work hours to enable me to be home more.
 Work less hours.
 Asked my wife to work less to spend more time as a family doing things together.
 I have changed my schedule to work different hours to be with my family.
 Cut back work hours.
 Set a limit for the hours I work each week. Set a time for family devotions, although still inconsistent.

Except for required working hours I always try to put my children ahead of work concerns.

Worked fewer hours even though it meant less opportunity for advancement.

I would rather not work on the weekends after working a full M-F work week so I can spend them with my family.

I have always made it a priority to have a job that allows me to work Monday through Friday and in my profession that is very hard to come by. I am also looking to work some shifts early in the morning and get off at 3:00 when my wife's work schedule allows.

I took the shift of working 4/10's so that I could spend an extra day with the family.

I work 12 hour shifts but only 3 days a week, so I have more of an opportunity to spend time with the children and I am very involved in their lives.

I was working side jobs and stopped doing them as they were more favors to friends than for money.

Selecting work hours around children's activities in order to allow additional time. Also, removing non-work personal activities in order to allow both more work and more time with children.

Work less, and take afternoons off more.

Change schedule to give me more rest.

Try to work hours when my kids aren't awake yet to maximize time with them when we are all free.

Work a day, afternoon, or night shift.

Altered my work hours for activities that were important. Not continuous but on an event by event basis. Example; go into work early to get off early to get junior to his baseball game.

Reduced travel.

I spoke with my boss to adjust my work hours in order to allow me to take my son to school myself so we could use that time in prayer and talking to one another.

Quit working Saturdays and Sundays.

Specifically ask for a certain schedule so that I would have the best opportunities to be with my children.

Less Income

Most of the changes in these fathers' job or work schedules resulted in lower incomes. But some explicitly said it was well worth it. For example, this father revealed his growth in his spiritual life and as a father,

there has been a season in my life that #132 would have been a 5. After much prayer God gave an opportunity to change my life, although it was very hard and humbling, I had to move my family and take a huge pay cut.....end result.....never been happier and God continues to bless our family.

Others expressed the same notion that they were glad they did it even though it was costly, "I travel less than I used to. I allow 'opportunities' to pass more often. However, I find that God still provides for our needs plus a lot more," and "Started making my family my priority over work and other things in life, knowing that God will provide for us." Again, others noted similar responses:

Give up money and work opportunities to spend more time at home.
Spent less time at work, intentionally tried to reconnect with my family.
Took a foreman job making less money but more time at home and not on the road so much.
I was working Sundays but knew in my heart that I needed to be there (at church) for my spiritual growth, and especially my family. I made it known at work that Sunday was a day to spend with my family and be at church.
They respect that. Thank God.

Flexibility, Self-employed, Had Control to Make Time

Some fathers were self-employed and or had the flexibility with their careers to make the changes they wanted either in time off, downsizing, working from home, or hours. One father expressed the tensions of owning a business and making the changes,

My work can be very demanding and I struggle with not feeling responsible for the success of the company. I tend to want to work extra time to get ahead. After doing this for a while it was clear that it was having a negative impact on my

family. I decided that it was time to start using some vacation time and to work harder at time management so I wouldn't feel I needed to work so much. So far it has really helped everyone out, including me.

Others noted the following:

I took time off.

I frequently work from home.

Three day work week.

Pursued bringing on another doctor to lighten the patient load.

Trained subordinates to handle tasks and or put work off 'til later.

I have my own business. I downsized and moved my business into my home to be more available to my children

Make Do, Wife Support

Here the fathers expressed limited ability to make changes either due to inflexible employers, any changes were just unaffordable, or given their responsibility at work. Given these and other restrictions they did feel they could make changes where possible and expressed their wives' willingness and ability to help assuage the situation and find creative ways to have more family time or dad time with the kids. For example, "Because of my work, wild land firefighting, I often times travelled to assignments for 2-3 weeks at a time. During those times I defaulted to my wife for my children's spiritual development." Or this comment,

There are times when it cannot be avoided at work is over the top [sic]. I have done things to stay in touch like Face-Time. During those times, my wife has also brought the kids down to work so I can have lunch or dinner with them even if I'm working late.

One spoke of the pressure of meeting needs at work that seemed to make any change improbable, "I felt that I had to work even overtime to give them what they needed."

Others make similar statements:

I make a strong effort to come home on time, and not work late. When school is on break, I make a pointed effort to have lunch with my son. I schedule out-of-town travel to minimize nights away, and call every night, even for a brief "Hi." I also leave a note on a little white-board in my son's room any morning I have to leave early before he wakes.

Volunteer in their Sunday school class.

Got my days off together rather than two separate days during the week to spend longer with them.

Worked toward quality time when I was available. Would prefer quantity, but not always able to do so.

I frequently and respectfully let my employer know that my children are more important than my job and reminded them that very few people get to the end of their lives and wish they had spent more time at work. When asked to travel or work more I decline and remind them of my priorities.

Incorporated an a.m. study time together with whoever's up. Discuss Awana verses and application or reason for memorization. Identify biblical truth or anti-truth in media.

I am on call 24-7. So I try to take extra time off of work or try to make the best of the time that I have at home as short or long as it may be. I also try to use the daily experiences to express to my children the world views and the spiritual view.

I can't possibly be there all of the time for my kids, so we supplement this with church, Awana and Christian friends.

Late After Bed, Sleeping

These fathers noted that a practical way to spend more time with their children was just to extend the day or work around family time, meal time, and bed time. This way they maximized time with their children and then finished up work at home or back at the office. One said,

As a grade school teacher I often bring work home, like correcting papers. At times when I have realized I am not spending enough time interacting with my daughters and checking the state of their heart, I have on some occasions put off my work until they were in bed, and then I stayed up late to finish what I had to do.

Another father said he “came home from work to be with them from dinner to bed, then went back to work until midnight, 2am, or whatever was required.” Also these fathers noted, “I curtailed my side business work to certain periods of the week and after children are at bed so as to not impair ‘core family’ time,” and “I shifted my schedule to go to bed later so that I could spend more time with the children; and then dealt with the work demands after they had gone to bed.” And here again is a very transparent father:

I need to place first things first. I need not only to know that my relationship Jesus is number 1...I need to put it to action. By doing so everything else is an overflow (i.e; discipling my children). I tend to get busy with things at the moment seem so important while my kids are growing so fast. I need to always know that my first mission field is in my home. I only can pour into them what in me....and if I am not connected with Jesus the way I should be then I am leading my family...just in failure...ughh. Discipleship....It takes one to make one.

The rest of the dads related similar strategies:

Let work pile up and just leave work.

Whenever I have to work late, I still make time to Bible with kids before bed. My wife is really good about making sure kids get time to read scripture.

I try to get as much done as I can at night while they are sleeping.

Removed distractions; worked after they went to bed.

I work more after the kids are sleeping.

I have made conscience decisions with my work schedule to keep me in town, and working at night while.

Changed work hours, so I'm "off work" later in the afternoon, through dinner, and early evening... then back to work to make up the rest of the day after my wife and kids are asleep.

I adjusted my amount of hours at work so I could be home more when they were awake.

Go back to work after they go to bed.

Postponed my work till after the kids went to bed.

Dropped what I thought was so important at work to respond to a need in the family.

Not work demands so much, but time demands in general...sat down with my wife and worked a plan to have her assist me in planning/scheduling times with

each child, focused on specific lengths of time for work at home, with specific lengths of time for family time.

Earlier-In, Earlier-Home

Some respondents noted that a way to spend more time with their children was to get out the door more efficiently to work and get home sooner to the kids without wasting time or getting waylaid. A couple of fathers simply expressed the conscious effort and intentionality of the change, “More sensitivity to protect time from demands of work and other things. Be more intentional about and efficient with the time I spend with my children,” and “Mostly a mental shift in changing priorities. I chose to begin leaving work at an earlier time so that I could consistently be home in time for dinner.” Others said:

Adhere more closely to normal working hours, engage in the activities of my kids.
 Go to work earlier to be home in the evenings.
 Go to work earlier in order to be home for dinner.
 Went in earlier and came home on time.
 Get out of work earlier.
 Go to work earlier in the morning in order to leave work earlier in the evening.
 Worked smarter and faster so I never had to work overtime! Be home on time.
 Tried to leave work earlier and quit working on weekends.
 Came home early. Backpacking trips with intentional spiritual input. Memorized verses together as family.
 I try to get home earlier.
 With very few exceptions, I would be home for dinner; then return to the office if necessary.
 Not rush off to work in the morning or take my time coming home.
 Intentionally come home sooner, look for opportunities outside of books to discuss God and his creation, play games that require spiritual discussions.

Boundaries

Fathers also expressed their conscious or intentional realization to just say no or limit activities or even job upgrades to be able to spend more time with their children. Statements such as “Created boundaries based on priority by which to make decisions,” and “I said ‘No’ and put boundaries to the amount of work. Also having a vision for my family put things into perspective of what was important or the ‘bigger Yes’ for my family and I.” One response needs comment, as often business for good causes still need to be paired back and family put first according to this father, “I Stepped down as a deacon at my church.” This father spent some time thinking on the matter and was equally transparent as many were:

If I wait for a "good" or convenient time to leave work for the day or part of a given day, I would never leave. I have made interaction with kids a priority and I make the time available, whether it be via scheduled vacation or leaving a bit early, to be with them. If I don't, their life, achievements and moments of happiness would pass me by...I can't let that happen. You never get these moments & opportunities back if you miss them the first time and bottom line, children, by nature, WANT to share their key life experiences with their parents & family.

Similar comments expand on these thoughts:

Placed boundaries on the amount of communication that occurred after work hours were completed. Took cell phone use out of the picture to give more, unoccupied attention to family.

Said no to some commitments or potential commitments,

Didn't take a job when available so as to spend time at home with the kids.

I do not choose to work OT when it is voluntary because my family takes priority over our monetary comfort.

Just conscious choices of when to leave work to allow more time with the Kids.

Scaled back evening commitments and committed to one entire day a week just for family.

I have not seeked [sic] advanced degrees. I have cut back on duties. I have included kids in work when possible.

Changed, Current Habits

Here fathers mainly expressed some habits that they do or have changed recently within the family structure, work, or in miscellaneous ways. For example, one father said he “used new techniques from family devotions to improve impact, got up earlier and spent time preparing for morning devotions and memory verses.” Another said “Purposefully concentrate on one on one time. Work on my listening.” One father said “My line of work allows me to spend a lot of time with my kids, but I do not put a lot of time into spiritual interaction with them.” And another revealed his transformative thinking by stating he

Realized that my priority's [sic] were not Gods. I learned that I was in a ME relationship, and not Gods. Turning it all over to God was the best thing I have ever done. Made it clear as to what I was to do in my family as a father.

The rest of the fathers offered these comments:

Sure - Cleared morning meetings so I could take kids out.
 I block time out to camp with my family.
 Became more efficient at work and less social.
 Specific "appointments" with kids. Seeking teaching opportunities with regard to spiritual issues.
 Share what God is doing in my life at dinner.
 Changed worship times
 Re-built a car together...try to do yard chores & building projects together as much as possible.
 Divorced parent not in custody. Try to spend more time one on one.. encouraging him to come to church or go to one close to where he lives challenging him to read the bible more.

End of Survey Open Ended Responses

At the end of the survey, fathers were given the option to make any comments.

The responses below are clustered into three areas: encouragement, difficult times, and

survey particulars. The number of comments was quite large so this is a detailed representation clustered by these three general topics. With the exception of some capitalization, comments are left intact as written.

Table 5.27

End of Survey Comments by Fathers

Category	Frequency fathers commented	%
Encouragement	37	56
Survey	21	32
Difficult Times	8	12

Note. The frequency or % does not reflect the length or depth of the discussion.

Encouragement

For the encouragement responses, these communicate how “blessed” the father was or how the survey itself was an encouragement or eye-opener to them. Many also expressed how such an important topic needs to be approached more and that fathers need leading and encouragement in this area. These fathers express what many wrote: “Very good survey lately fathering has been on my heart,” “Great survey brother! Good luck,” “It was a good reminder that I let church do most of my kids religious education,” and “Thanks for embarking on this journey to help us fathers grow to be more like Christ in how we lead our homes!” Several had very extensive comments:

Wow, what great questions.....God has really worked on me in this area, He has changed my life almost completely and he has blessed our family so much. I would love to help other dads and/or share my story. Not much room to write.. Accepting Christ into my life and continuing to stay focused on Him...is the simplest way to put it. As a father, i hope my children see Him in me, and when they don't its ok to talk about our failures with our children. We must as men put aside OUR desires and goals and focus on what God has planned for us. Too often we (from experience) get caught up in careers and hobbies or our children's

sports only to realize (sometimes too late) that we just forgot our most important roles in being fathers and spiritual leaders. There are too many justifications for our actions that the world offers up. I feel many problems in today's society are directly linked to poor fathers or non-present fathers. God is big enough to change us all, He even brought this dead beat out of a huge pit.

Another wrote:

This was a very good survey to make me reflect how I am now, versus how I was as a new dad, over a decade ago. I can without doubt state that I cannot imagine that I would be able to handle the pressures and pitfalls of fatherhood without the foundation of Jesus Christ as the center of my life. I know I have a long way to grow spiritually, but each day that I grow closer to Him, I am being better equipped to be a better parent, husband and individual, and to make decisions that are honoring to God.

Others chimed in with how the survey encouraged them as well. "Thank you for providing this opportunity. It would be encouraging to find out the results and be provided information on how to prayerfully move towards being a more Christ centered father to the blessings He has shared with us."

This is a fantastic idea. I am sure it is not the first, but it is for me. I have to say parenting a teenager is probably the hardest part of parenting thus far. Hoping that you are instilling God's virtues in my children. Thank you.

"Encouraging. I often wish I had more time or drive to interact spiritually with my kids, but it was eye-opening to have to quantify just how much/little time I was really spending." Another weighty reply was this father's:

Thank you for respecting my time and making the survey relatively painless. I believe being a father is the most important role in my life. Yes I work hard in my career, but preparing my children to be Godly in their behavior, capable of making decisions for themselves, preparing them for independence from me, is #1. I am blessed to be married to someone who shares this view of our joint responsibility as parents, and humbled that I am seen as worthy enough by the Lord and my wife to be given this responsibility. I wish I could have been more of the spiritual leader of my family, but my wife was the one that kept that alive.

After seeing a change in my eldest son, I have come back to the Lord and see that I have missed some of what should have been my responsibility. Until now, I looked at my responsibility as the sole provider for my family, which meant being sure I had employment, and doing what it takes to keep or advance in that. It is never too late to start being a great Father. My Father proved that to me.

For brevity's sake not all the responses will be listed. However the remainder of the excerpts, similar in thought, are very insightful as well. A few more demonstrate this:

Good questions. Seeing myself through the lens of what the standards seem to be, helped me put my own role into better perspective.

Being a father is a full time job and it takes a full time commitment and its one that I have made many mistakes. My wife is an incredible support and helper. Her help and support and correction at times has made a huge difference in our family.

It's easy to be a Dad...It's incredibly hard to be a good Dad....Willingness to sacrifice is a stumbling block for some of my friends.

Kids grow fast, spend time with them. Be an example to them. Make sure they know that God comes first in all things.

Made me really evaluate my current relationship spiritually and parentally with my children. Thanks.

Love God.

I would be very interested in hear about the results of the survey. Thanks

Our time with our kids while they are really moldable is so short. We all need to be intentional now and not leave their spiritual development to chance.

Made me think about reading the bible with them daily.

Even if spiritual fathering was not modeled to you, you can still be the spiritual leader in your home. The survey was convicting in many areas and made me evaluate how I make choices and the way I relate and interact with God.

Difficult Times

The survey also elicited some comments from fathers that revealed they were going through some difficult times, or they discussed very transparent issues pertaining to relationships within the family, wishing the church would provide more help or

expressing a desire for relationships with other men for encouragement, ideas, etc. As there were not as many of these, all are being listed for they certainly are important to note:

My job is demanding. Work reduction is not financially feasible at this time. My boys, 4 and 8, both are developmentally delayed...one severely so. Sports, talk of a spiritual nature...I keep it very simple. Mostly I hug them and wrestle with them.

There were a few questions I answered the best I knew how to as I am only a few months into knowing God. My wife and I are bringing the Christian faith into our home more and more as we progress.

I struggle with making true friends with other men. I have many acquaintances but have been unsuccessful in finding a true friend. It's something that distresses me greatly.

Being a good husband and father is never easy. I would really appreciate a chance to have ongoing, regular and continued focus and learning from a biblical perspective on these topics with others who have a similar situation, desire, and need. I wished my church would develop a structure where this learning could occur as well as how to be a better partner with my wife.

It's a struggle being a divorced and remarried parent with the child not in the home...especially when they are teenagers

It was hard to do the survey because I am going through challenging times with my kids. I want to do the right things and I am working hard but the teenage years are a challenge for me and my family

Struggle with spiritual leadership in the family. No problems relating to my daughters (2 of them) but difficulty with my son.

Some questions were tough to answer in light of my responsibility to God in fatherhood. I know I do a better job than many dads, however, my responsibility to God is not graded on a curve. In the Presbyterian Church I did not grow. I had no love or understanding of God's Word. With a church change, I now consider myself a student of God's Word and His Word is changing how I live. I only wish I had begun following Him much sooner in my life. I realized just recently that I really did not grow up in a Christian home (even though we went to church probably every other week), I grew up in a moral home

Survey

Lastly there were several comments about the survey itself. Some comments were about the nature of the items presented. For example, responding to the SAI's two-part questions, one father commented, "How many ways/times do you need to ask whether I'm mad at God?" (This was the only comment with such a tone which seemed interesting). Some responded how questions might have been worded differently. Another example refers to the SAI and its two-part questions, "The third page about spirituality some of the questions were worded in a way that might be misleading; maybe some false positives / negatives from these questions." These comments are interesting in light of the established nature of the SAI. These comments might be relayed back to the authors of the survey in order to perhaps adjust the questions or the instructions. One father felt that options should have been available that were not. For example, this respondent commented "Some questions don't really fit for retired dads with adopted children."

These open-ended comments provide depth to the discussion though the study is a quantitative study. Accordingly Chapter 6 now will review the study in general with the bulk of the chapter presenting implications and meaningfulness of the findings from the quantitative analysis in light of the research questions. Limitations of the study and comments on future research will also be presented.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

This study was about exploring the intentional involvement of Protestant Evangelical fathers in the relational spiritual formation of their children. Review of the social science research and theory in Chapter 2 provided insights into two main domains: the relational spiritual formation of children and paternal intentional involvement. It suggested that children are essentially relational in their spirituality, parents are the most influential figures in their child's spiritual formation, and that paternal involvement is central in their children's spiritual formation, and conversely the lack of paternal involvement is detrimental to many areas of their children's development. Chapter 3, via biblical and theological survey as well as biblical exegesis of key passages, provided an integration of a Christian Worldview, biblical and theological principles, to inform the study and the questions to ask, as well as to frame findings better. There it was suggested that given that people are made in the image of God, relational and spiritual in their essential nature, and that God has ordained certain leadership roles to the father, fathers are to be primarily responsible in their children's spiritual formation and not abdicate this responsibility. Yet given the importance of paternal involvement in the spiritual formation of their children, there has not been previous study into fathers' relationship with God, paternal satisfaction, intentionality, paternal practices, and the resultant

intentional involvement fathers have in the spiritual formation of their children. The study then, as was explicated in Chapter 4, presented the design and procedures for exploring the relationships between several aspects of fathering and fathers' intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children. Chapter 5 presented results from the data collected using various descriptive and inferential analytical statistics exploring the relationships among several aspects of fathering and a father's intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children. More specifically, the focus was on exploring the relationships among paternal intentionality, fathering practices and satisfaction, and paternal spiritual maturity with respect to father's involvement in his child's spiritual formation.

In capping this study, this chapter will summarize major findings in light of the research question, corollary questions, agreement with or difference from past theory or empirical studies, and theological integration with the intent to outline practical implications for paternal intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. Also discussed will be limitations or qualifications of the study and suggestions for improvements for future research. Lastly, there will be an overview of the study spotlighting key insights and findings. Ultimately a goal of this chapter will be to show that this research project supports the conclusions provided albeit given certain limitations.

Review and Discussion of Major Findings

In light of this research question research corollary questions will be discussed by presenting the strongest, most significant relationships first, followed by any moderate

and weak or insignificant relationships that might shed light on the discussion nonetheless. To review strength of correlations see Table 4.5. Correlations also have direction that will be noted. For example, a negative or indirect relationship means as one variable increases the other variables in question decrease or vice versa. And in reviewing stronger correlations first this also may include relationships supported by group comparison *t*-tests and the accompanying significance levels and effect sizes. A *t*-test explores if there was a difference in the average scores of one (or more) variable(s) between two groups (upper and lower quartiles of a variable) that were independent of one another (Salkind, 2008, p. 172). And the effect size tells us just how different two groups are from one another. That is, in some cases the correlation might be moderate or even weak, but after running a *t*-test it is found that between two groups in one variable (grouping variable) there is a significant difference between the two variables and a large effect size. These stronger correlations will be followed by more moderate ones in the discussion. Weaker relationships will be discussed when either the correlation was moderate and yet a weak *t*-test or small effect size was found. Short of that, weaker relationships will be excluded in this discussion.

Research Question

The research question framing this study was, as noted in Chapter 4, to what degree are Protestant Evangelical fathers intentionally involved in the relational spiritual formation of their children? As a brief review, in Chapter 2 it was suggested that fathers have a substantial positive influence on the development of their children, children are relationally spiritual beings and fathers can have a major impact in that relationship. And

in Chapter 3 it was suggested that fathers, from a biblical perspective, are to take a leading role in their children's spiritual formation. To set the context for the conclusive comments regarding relationships among many variables revealed in the corollary questions, and their implications, some descriptive results will be presented first, in order to address the overarching research question.

Fathers in the study self-reported that they spend an average of 21 hours per week directly interacting with their children in general. While the examples are given as to what they do, this would exclude things like mowing the lawn while the children play outside and could include things like talking at the dinner table or helping with homework or even watching a TV program that leads to discussion during or afterward. Fathers said that they spent on average 17.5 minutes each day with their children in spiritually related activity or conversation. On average they also self-reported that they spent 4.55 hours per week in hobbies not involved with their children and 42 hours per week at work.

Regarding the multiple factors considered in the study, fathers self-reported the following (see Chapter 4 for definitions and examples). On a Likert scale ranging from 1 = very poor to 5 = very good (6 = not applicable) fathers described themselves on average as "fair-good" (3.97) regarding their intentional fathering, fair in their involvement in their children's spiritual formation, and fair in spousal oneness. With respect to their spiritual maturity, spiritual intentionality, and relational closeness to God (using a Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all true to 5 = very true, fathers on average responded in the slightly true ranges (e.g. 2.34). Lastly, with respect to fathering satisfaction and support from their spouse and others, fathers self-reported they were

somewhat satisfied (e.g. 5.16) in these areas on a possible Likert scale of 1 = extremely dissatisfied to 7 = extremely satisfied.

Also, revisiting some open-ended response issues pertaining to question 132b (see Chapter 5, Table 5.26) offers some context. Of the 121 fathers that offered comments to this item inquiring as to what changes they made, if any, in their work demands to spend more time with their children, 21% said they reduced their work hours or made schedule changes. Others (13%) said they shifted their work schedule around their children's sleeping patterns to increase time with their children, 13% changed jobs or careers, and others with fewer options had to work with their wives to make adjustments, change habits, etc. In short, these responses as well as the remaining, suggest that these fathers were intentional in adapting their work or life situations in some way to gain more time with their children and wives as well.

Corollary Question 1: Relationship With God and Fathers' Involvement

To explore the relational, intentional and spiritual formative aspects of the research question, the first corollary question posed asked, what is the connection between a Protestant Evangelical father's relationship with God and his intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of his children? Research hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 3.1 dealt with these to a large degree. That is, constructs such as intentional fathering, relational closeness to God, paternal involvement in the spiritual formation of their children, spiritual maturity, fathering satisfaction, and spiritual intentionality were assessed.

Moderate correlations, significant differences and large effect sizes.

Intentional fathering and involvement in spiritual formation (H1). Intentional fathering was fathers' intentional or deliberate activity with respect to showing affection, time commitment to children, involvement in discipline, involvement in education, and knowing their child as measured by six subscales of the Personal Fathering Profile or PFP (Canfield, 1992). Examples of items in the 6-point Likert scale were "Having a specific plan to assist in my children's growth" and "Sacrificing some of my activities to spend time with my children." Involvement in the spiritual formation of their children was the fathers' level of engaging in spiritual conversation, reading the Bible with their children, and gathering as a family as a whole around spiritual activity. It was measured by a subscale from the PFP as well. An example of an item response was "Reading the Bible with my children often." Here the analysis found a moderate correlation ($r = .51$, $r^2 = .26$; Table 5.9).

In further assessing this, a difference of means was sought using upper and lower quartiles of intentional fathering on fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. A positive significant relationship ($t = 7.48$) resulted as well as a very large effect size ($d = 1.34$) when the t -test was run (Table 5.10). That is, fathers that scored high on intentional fathering were highly involved in the spiritual formation of their children, and fathers that rated themselves with lower scores in intentional fathering were less involved in the spiritual formation of their children. Intentionality is an action done out of design or purpose. Protestant Evangelical fathers that are intentional as fathers in general are intentional in the involvement of their child's spiritual formation. Howard (2008) was referenced at the beginning of this study in saying that in spiritual

formation, human effort is needed though it is guided by and empowered by the Holy Spirit (p. 270). He also penned that spiritual formation is the “intentional and Godward reorientation and rehabilitation of human experience ... harmony with Christ ... in the concrete realities of everyday life” (Howard, 2008, p. 269). Willard (2002) magnified this thought by saying that “one intends to live in the Kingdom of God by intending to obey the precise example and teaching of Jesus ... not merely believing things about him” (p. 88). Protestant Evangelical fathers who see themselves as intentional in their fathering act out of purpose, aided by the Holy Spirit, to be involved in their children’s spiritual formation.

Theologically, as presented in Chapter 3, the instruction of children is rooted in their being made in God’s image, ultimately spiritually relational beings. Fathers specifically are called by God to be the primary leaders within their immediate families in the spiritual formation of their children.

Prior studies have dealt with intentionality though none in paternal intentionality with respect to involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children. Nonetheless Canfield (1992) suggested intentionality in terms of dedication and constraint. There is a dedicated effort to do or plan something (e.g., have family devotions or schedule a date night with one’s child) and a constraint at times to not do one thing in order to do another (e.g., give up a favorite activity that occupies time or money in order to spend that time or money on the children). The general notion of mindfulness in some recent research (Duncan, 2007, 2009; MacDonald & Hastings, 2010) sheds light into intentionality in general and parenting specifically (Jones, 2012), albeit not pertaining to spiritual formation nor fathers in particular. Mindfulness is a way

of paying attention on “purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). Intentional fathers are very mindful in purpose each moment to be involved their children’s spiritual formation.

Fathering satisfaction and intentional fathering (H2, H1). These two variables had the highest correlation of all those tested ($r = .53$), which was moderate, and the highest coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .28$; Tables 5.9). Fathering satisfaction was measured by responses regarding fathers’ responses to various satisfaction in their role as fathers, child-parent recall (when they were children), competency as a father, leadership ability, and verbal relationship with their children. Examples were “How satisfied are you with the way your children are growing up?” and “How satisfied are you with the amount of respect you receive from your family members?” Upon running a t -test to compare upper and lower quartiles of intentional fathering scores on their fathering satisfaction scores there was a significant difference ($t = 6.98$) with a very large effect size ($d = 1.24$; Table 5.10).

Prior studies suggest that as fathers’ satisfaction in several areas increases, the likelihood of their involvement with their children increases. Lamb & Pleck (1997) found that paternal involvement (though again not specifically regarding spiritual formation) is influenced by these factors: motivation, skills and self-confidence, social support and stress, and institutional factors. Canfield (1994) found that fathering satisfaction among other areas are keys to effective, involved fathering.

Spiritual maturity and involvement in spiritual formation (H2). Spiritual maturity was to what degree fathers were aware of God in their life and the quality of their relationship with God as measured by the Spiritual Assessment Inventory or SAI (Hall & Edwards, 1996). Spiritual maturity positively correlated with fathers' involvement in their child's spiritual formation moderately ($r = .44$; Table 5.12). And though the corresponding coefficient of determination (effect size of the correlation or r^2) was .19, further investigation of the test of independent means—comparing upper and lower ranges of spiritual maturity with fathers' involvement in their child's spiritual formation—yielded a significant difference ($t = 6.98$) and very large effect size ($d = 1.25$; Table 5.13). This suggests that there is indeed a meaningful connection between fathers' spiritual maturity and their involvement in their children's spiritual formation. That is, fathers who report higher spiritual maturity have higher involvement in their child's spiritual formation and those with lower spiritual maturity scores are less likely to be involved.

A t -test was run for research Hypotheses 2 using fathers' responses to spiritual maturity items (upper and lower quartiles) against all the variables in research Hypothesis 2 (involved in their child's spiritual formation, intentional fathering, and father satisfaction) and a few more. As suspected (Table 5.13), spiritual maturity was significant at the $p < .01$ and $d = 1.25$ (very large). Intentional fathering also was significant at $p < .01$ and had a large effect size ($d = .76$).

Prior studies agree with this finding, albeit there are no prior studies dealing with father-child/parent-child dyads involving paternal spiritual maturity and their involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. This is new research. Be that as it

may, Geisbrecht (1995) found that religious fathers are more involved with their children than nonreligious counterparts and have been found to influence adolescent religiosity more than nonreligious counterparts. King's study (2003) is also consistent with this. King found that religious fathers are more involved with their children than are less religious fathers and report stronger relationships with their children. Smith and Kim (2003) also found that religious fathers are more involved with their children than are less or non-religious fathers and have stronger relationships with their children. Wilcox (2002), Bartkowski and Xu (2000), and Bollinger and Palkovitz (2003) are among others as well that had similar findings.

Scripture supports such a correlation between fathers' spiritual maturity and involvement in their children's spiritual formation. From a theological perspective, as presented in Chapter 3, fathers are called by God to be the primary leaders within the family in the spiritual formation their children. Specifically, according to Ephesians 5:21-6:4, fathers, as Christ-like leaders in contrast to cultural expectations, are to take responsibility in leadership in the home by sacrificially loving their wives and nourishing their children spiritually. Christ-likeness is the pinnacle of spiritual maturity. And in this leadership, nourishing their children spiritually would minimally be involved in the process.

Spiritual maturity and intentional fathering (H2). Though not as high on all counts as spiritual maturity and involvement in their child's spiritual formation—spiritual maturity and intentional fathering correlated weakly ($r = .23$, $r^2 = .05$)—spiritual maturity nonetheless was positively correlated to intentional fathering. It also showed a significant difference between spiritual maturity upper and lower quartile scores on

intentional fathering ($t = 4.42$), and a large effect size ($d = .76$). This suggests that as these fathers were more spiritually mature—aware of God and enjoying a relationship with God—they were more intentional in their fathering. Part of their mature relationship with God encompasses intentionality and this characteristic transfers to their fathering as well. However without assuming causality, it is also possible that fathers intentional in their fathering might realize they need to be closer to God for the benefit of their children as well as their own relationship with God.

Spiritual intentionality and involvement in spiritual formation (H3.1). Fathers' spiritual intentionality and involvement in their child's spiritual formation had a positive, moderate correlation ($r = .47, p < .01, r^2 = .22$). In a t -test comparing the means of upper and lower quartiles of spiritual intentionality with respect to involvement in their child's spiritual formation (Table 5.17), a significant difference ($t = 6.12$) and very large effect size ($d = 1.24$) resulted. Spiritual intentionality referred to fathers being aware of God's presence and communication in one's life, acting accordingly with either dedication to improving this awareness or restraint from areas that hinder it. Items in the SAI that measured this were exemplified by "I have a sense of how God is working in my life" or "I am aware of God prompting me to do things." Having therefore a significant difference of the upper and lower quartiles of spiritual intentionality on involvement in their child's spiritual formation means that, like spiritual maturity and intentional fathering, perhaps the more fathers are spiritually intentional, relationships and intentional interaction of sorts is valued with God and others, namely their children.

In prior research and theory, intentionality is seen in one's being aware of God's presence and communication in one's life, acting accordingly with either dedication to

improving this awareness or restraint from areas that hinder it (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). In another domain of intentionality, mindfulness suggests that indeed intentionality correlates positively to involvement. Though the issue is not spiritual formation, MacDonald and Hastings (2010) found that mindful parenting was a significant independent predictor of fathers' involvement in child-related parenting tasks and socialization tasks but not daily caregiving tasks (cf. DeMaris, Mahoney, Pargament, 2011 with respect to fathers particularly).

Theologically, spiritual intentionality at its core is relational. In Chapter 3 the case was made that humankind is fundamentally made in the image of God (Gen 1:26, 2:7, 9:6; James 3:9). As such two of many characteristics we share with God are relationality and volition. Humankind's purpose is to relate to and love God (Deut 6:5; 1 Cor 16:22). Parents, and fathers in particular as leaders in the process, are called to nurture children to assume that purpose (Eph 5:21-6:4; cf. 6:1; Prov 22:6). To nurture their children in a relationship with God, fathers, with a personal, intentional spirituality (active, intentional, dedication-to and restraint-from focus) are to nurture their children in what God has made them to be, relational with Him.

Relational closeness to God and involvement in spiritual formation (H3).

Lastly, fathers' relational closeness to God positively but weakly correlated ($r = .30, p < .01$) with involvement in their child's spiritual formation (Table 5.15). A t -test (Table 5.16) also showed a significant difference between the upper and lower quartiles of relational closeness to God on fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children ($t = 4.61, p < .05$) and a large effect size ($d = .82$). Relational closeness to God, a subscale of the SAI, is an awareness and capacity to develop an intentionality of sorts in

that relationship. Items that assessed this for example were “There are times when I feel frustrated with God” and “when this happens, I still want our relationship to continue” or “My emotional connection with God is unstable.”

Previous research and theory based on object relations theory (attachment theory) and God representation/image theory, which indicate that “one’s relational/emotional development is mirrored in one’s relationship to the Divine” (Hall & Edwards, 2002, p. 341) would support these findings. Additionally, we construct concepts of God which correspond to our experience with our parents and our views of God (Rizzuto, 1979). Furthermore, much of parent-child dynamics point to a deep, cooperative, and relational spiritual nature of children (Boyatzis, 2003; Hood, 2004; Kuczynski, 2003). Hay and Nye’s landmark study (2006) suggested that children have spirituality that is at its core relational consciousness pertaining to self and God, self and others, self and world, and self and self. In short, fathers’ relational closeness to God correlates to his involvement with his children, who by God’s design need others to model relationship to God, and his ability to help them in their relational spirituality with God as well.

Also from previous research or theory, relational spiritual formation is greatly explained to some degree by ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and social dynamic (Vygotsky, 1978) concepts. That is, fathers’ relational closeness to God is important for their personal needs. Additionally, this relational spiritual formation is a characteristic in, or is congruent with how, fathers’ (and others in concert with fathers—mothers, relatives, friends, etc.) are involved in the spiritual formation of their children. This has been explained earlier from an ecological perspective (family systems) and social dynamic perspective (zone of proximal development or ZPD).

Theologically, as noted similarly with respect to spiritual maturity, we all are fundamentally made in the image of God (Gen 1:26, 2:7, 9:6; James 3:9), and accordingly are in part relational spiritual beings. God desires that we relate closely to and love God (Deut 6:5; 1 Cor 16:22). To emulate God, to do what is in His character, is expected of us. Hence we are to love God and relate to Him. This relationship implies that we are to obey and serve God. And this obedience to God, being displayed in our lives, is glorifying to Him (Ps 67; John 17:4). Some fathers then, who have a greater relational closeness to God, would want their children to experience such and be involved in their children's lives spiritually. This is in line with a biblical mandate that parents, and fathers in particular as leaders in the process, are called to nurture their children in this relationship (Eph 5:21-6:4; cf. 6:1; Prov 22:6).

Weaker correlations and effect sizes.

Spiritual maturity and fathering satisfaction (H2). A positive and significant but very weak correlation existed between spiritual maturity and fathering satisfaction ($r = .14, p < .01$; Table 5.12). On a stronger note though, examining the difference of independent means between upper and lower quartiles of spiritual maturity and fathering satisfaction (Table 5.13) yielded a significant relationship ($t = 2.63, p < .01$) and a medium effect size ($d = .46$). The positive nature of the correlations suggests that as fathers' level of spiritual maturity rises so does their fathering satisfaction, or as it falls so does the other. The medium effect size from the t -test suggests that although the correlation is weak, we do see a significant difference when we compare fathers who score high on spiritual maturity and those who score low on it.

Intentional fathering and relational closeness to God (H1). Here one sees an example of a very weak correlation ($r = .13$, $r^2 = .02$, $p < .01$; Table 5.9) and the test of independent means did not support anything stronger and in fact was insignificant ($t = 1.28$) and hence the effect size is not applicable (Table 5.10).

Summary of corollary question 1. What was revealed regarding the connection between a Protestant Evangelical father's relationship with God and his intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of his children? Though moderate, the strongest correlation of all tests run in the study was between intentional fathering and fathering satisfaction which also had a very large effect size. Intentional fathering also had a moderate correlation with intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. Spiritual maturity had significant relationships (albeit moderate or weak respectively) with fathers' involvement in their children's spiritual formation as well as intentional fathering. And lastly, fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children correlated weakly to moderately with relational closeness to God and spiritual intentionality.

Corollary Question 2: Relationship With Spouse/others and Involvement

For further relational and intentional exploration, the second corollary question was asked, what is the connection between Protestant Evangelical fathers' relationship with their spouses and their intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of their children? Research hypotheses 4 and 4.1 dealt with these aspects: spousal oneness, support from spouse and others, and involvement in their children's spiritual formation.

Moderate correlations, strong differences, and large effect sizes.***Support from spouse and others and involvement in spiritual formation (H4.1).***

These factors had a significant but weak to moderate correlation ($r = .39$, $r^2 = .15$, $p < .01$). Additionally, a t -test was run for research hypothesis 4.1 and 4.1a referring to fathers' perception of support from spouses and others as the grouping variable (upper and lower quartiles scores) and fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation as the dependent variable. As anticipated, support from spouse and others had a significant difference on involvement (Table 5.19) and had a large effect size ($t = 4.99$, $p < .01$, $d = .89$). Relatedly, correlations and a t -test run for research hypotheses 3.1 and 3.1a revealed a result worth noting vis-à-vis fathers' perception of support from spouse and others, as well as fathers' self-reported involvement in their children's spiritual formation. Correlations run for hypothesis 3.1 showed moderately significant correlations between spiritual intentionality and involvement in their child's spiritual formation ($r = .47$, $p < .01$). There was also a very large effect size, $t = 6.12$ ($d = 1.12$; Table 5.17), when comparing upper and lower quartile scores of spiritual intentionality on involvement in their child's spiritual formation. While some implications of this are noted later, here is the issue. Some studies have suggested support from others is important in a father's involvement with his children (Amato, 1998; Baxter, Weston, & Qu, 2011; Canfield, 2008; Ryan, Kalil, & Ziolk-Guest, 2008) and this would have implications for intergenerational spiritual formation too. This relationship would also suggest that fathers' spiritual intentionality is key in his involvement in the spiritual formation of his children over support from spouse and others. That is if a father is aware of God, intentional in his relationship with God, he will transfer or project that relationship

intentionality into his relationship with his children irrespective of the support. (This is not to say that support does not help but it is not the strongest influence). So fathers scoring high or in the upper quartile of spiritual intentionality were more involved with their children in their spiritual formation, and fathers who scored in the lower quartile (less spiritually intentional) were less involved.

Doherty, Kouneski and Erickson (1998) suggested that fathering was a multilateral relationship in addition to a one-on-one relationship. That is, they may be intentional and involved but they are in community so much so that harmonious relationships throughout the family system (spouse, in-laws, et al.) were found to be positively associated with paternal involvement with children (Canfield, 2008; Ryan, Kalil, Ziolo-Guest, 2008; Sanderson & Thompson, 2002). Furthermore, Lamb & Pleck (1985) found that paternal involvement is influenced by social support and stresses among other variables. Bronfenbrenner (1979), from a family systems ecological perspective, emphasized both the individual and the environment, particularly multiple systems-within-systems and the relationships within those systems that contribute to development. Westerhoff (2000, 2008) proposed a relational model of equals where every activity and every aspect of individual and corporate life within the church (created for developing others spiritually) should be intentional and oriented as a faith-community.

From a theological perspective this correlation makes sense. While fathers have the lead responsibility, it has been repeated throughout this study that this in no way suggests he is solely responsible; quite the contrary. Parents, in unison, are to nurture their children to assume the purpose of glorifying God by obeying and serving Him. Yet,

the Bible repeatedly suggests that fathers are to take leadership of their families in community with others. Ephesians 5:21-6:4 was summarized as saying fathers are to take responsibility in leadership in the home by sacrificially loving their wives and nourishing their children spiritually. In doing so, unified Christian living in a hostile world was achieved. That is, the healthy environment created by support and unity was there for fathers to lead, mothers to come along side fathers in nurturing their children, and children to obey their parents.

Spousal oneness and involvement in spiritual formation (H4). Along similar lines as support from spouse and others, fathers' sense of spousal oneness and their involvement in the spiritual formation of their children were significantly positively correlated, though moderate/weak ($r = .39, p < .01, r^2 = .15$). Spousal oneness was the degree to which fathers expressed a close or romantic relationship with their wife, as well as open communication with their spouse, particularly with respect to their children. Also, there was a significant difference between those who scored in the upper and lower quartile on spousal oneness in their ratings for involvement in spiritual formation of their children ($t = 6.63, p < .01$) and a very large effect size ($d = 1.11$; Table 5.18).

This supports prior studies that suggested spousal oneness is a factor in paternal involvement, albeit no prior studies focused on spiritual formation per se. Canfield (1992; Canfield, Hosley, O'Donnell, & Roid, 2008) found that marital satisfaction was positively related to fathers' dedication to or constraint from practices that help foster his involvement. Sanderson and Thompson (2002) confirmed this relationship as well. A fathers' relationship with his child's mother is likely to influence his level of child involvement. Ryan, Kalil, and Ziol-Guest (2008) found that harmonious relationships

throughout the family system was positively associated with paternal involvement—these relationships both encourage and sustain paternal emotional commitment to even their noncustodial children. Lastly, Geisbrecht (1995) found that authoritative and supportive parenting with spousal agreement on parenting style appears to be instrumental in fostering intrinsic religious commitment by their children. Parents are the most influential in this area, particularly when there is authoritative (not authoritarian) parenting with spousal support. Conversely, Harris and Furstenberg (1998) found that marital conflict relates to increased paternal detachment.

A possible dynamic here is also that as children sense spousal oneness or parental harmony they are open to more advances from the father (and mother). Not surprisingly, children derive a sense of emotional security from the quality of their parents' marital relationship as well as from the quality of parent-child relationships. "Children enjoy watching affectionate exchanges between their parents" (Cummings & O'Reilly, 1997, p. 57).

Integrating biblical principles here is very straightforward. In God's economy, unity in effort, vision, or purpose is a major principle throughout Scripture that forms the basis for proper functioning of the family or the church at large. A most notable section is John 17. In John 17:21 it is clear that God desires all Christians be unified, one in purpose, not necessarily agreeing on everything. Jesus prayed that we "all be one; even as You Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in us so that the world may believe that You sent me." So too parents are to be unified so even their children will see that Christ came for them. And a key passage related to this particular correlation of spousal oneness and fathers' involvement in their children's spiritual formation is

Ephesians 5:21-6:4. In this passage, one of the major overarching themes discussed in Chapter 3 was that Paul provided practical advice for unified Christian living in a hostile world. Within that theme, a theological principle was that fathers, as Christ-like leaders, in contrast to the cultural expectations, were to take responsibility in leadership in the home by sacrificially loving their wives and nourishing their children spiritually. That is, husbands in spousal oneness with their wives were to be involved, as leaders, in the spiritual formation of their children.

Summary of corollary question 2. What is the connection between Protestant Evangelical fathers' relationship with his spouse and his intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of his children? Positive, moderate, correlations exist between fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children and support from their spouses and others as well as spousal oneness.

Corollary Question 3: Fathering Satisfaction and Involvement

Interest in the role of fathers' satisfaction in this process leads to the third corollary question: How is a Protestant Evangelical father's satisfaction in his fathering related to his involvement in the spiritual formation of his children? Research hypotheses 1, 2, 7, and 8 touched on these issues.

Moderate correlations, strong differences, and large effect sizes.

Fathering satisfaction and intentional fathering (H1). Though this relationship was discussed prior in the first corollary question it is one of the strongest relationships among the variables and also relates to this question. That is, fathers' satisfaction in their fathering is significantly related to their intentional fathering, and part of intentional

fathering is their being intentional in the spiritual formation of their children, discussed next.

Fathering satisfaction and involvement in spiritual formation (H2). Fathering satisfaction had a moderate positive correlation with fathers' involvement in their children's spiritual formation ($r = .40, p < .01$) corresponding to a coefficient of determination (r^2) of .16 (Table 5.12). This means there was a 16% shared variance between the variables. A test of the difference of the means (t -test) revealed a significant relationship ($t = 6.0, p < .05$) with a very large effect size (Cohen's d) of 1.41. This comparison of upper and lower quartiles of fathering satisfaction showed a significant difference in levels of fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children.

These findings coincide with earlier studies that suggest paternal satisfaction is positively related to involvement. For example, paternal involvement increases with a father's perceived sense of skill (Feldman, 1981; Sanderson & Thompson, 2002), harmonious family system relationships, fathering satisfaction, and marital satisfaction (Canfield, 1994, 2002; Ryan et al., 2008).

Theologically, satisfaction in any of these relationships, (spousal, fathering, etc.) falls under the notion that one's spiritual maturity and one's relational closeness to God would determine one's contentment or satisfaction in a sense. Fathering satisfaction again was fathers' perceived satisfaction in their role as fathers, their sense of competency as fathers, leadership ability, verbal relationship with their children, and their child-parent recall (when they were children). Satisfaction in this sense is conditional, that is, fathers seem to connect their satisfaction and related involvement to their feeling of how things are going. But scripturally our contentment is to be in God Himself for who He is, an

omni-sufficient God. For example Psalm 23 expressed contentment in God's provision and Paul's admonition from prison to the Christians in Philippi told of his contentment in whatever situation he was in (Phil 4:11-13). Relatedly, fathers' satisfaction may not be overtly expressed biblically but contentment is. Ultimately, considering we were made to function in relationship, this implies trust or confidence, and trust is based on experience. So the authors of Psalm 23 and Philippians had a God-confidence based on God's character and His past, proven intervention. Accordingly, fathers' satisfaction should not be tied to their performance per se but who they are in relationship to God. Commensurately, their confidence in God—that they are doing all that they can to obey God in their fathering—would yield a healthy satisfaction. This satisfaction does not imply complacency in the least but rather an emotional, spiritual, and relational contentment that fathers are acting within God's plan as fathers by being involved as much as they are.

Weak relationships.

Spiritual intentionality and fathering satisfaction (H7). A weak correlation ($r = .20$) emerged between spiritual intentionality and fathering satisfaction, yielding a coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .04$) which, though statistically significant at $p < .01$, in effect communicates that spiritual intentionality and fathering satisfaction have only a 4% shared variance.

Intentional fathering and minutes per day (H8). As noted in Chapter 5, there was a positive significant correlation between these two variables; however, it was very weak ($r = .16$, $p < .05$) with a coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .03$). Minutes per day was the time per day fathers spent with their children in spiritual conversation or activity.

Also, as noted prior, this was intended to be all inclusive: meal time prayer, bedtime prayer, and any conversation or activity fathers themselves were involved in with their children. The null hypothesis was rejected, however, even though it was very weak. A *t*-test, comparing the differences in means of upper and lower quartile scores of intentional fathering on how many minutes per day fathers spend with their children in spiritual activity or conversation (Table 5.24), was significant at $p < .01$ level ($t = 2.64$) and had a medium effect size ($d = .49$).

Summary of corollary question 3. How are Protestant Evangelical fathers' satisfaction in his fathering related to his involvement in the spiritual formation of his children? Moderate correlations were associated with fathering satisfaction and intentional fathering as well as fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. Also discussed was the very weak relationship between spiritual intentionality and fathering satisfaction, as well as a very weak correlation between intentional fathering and fathers' minutes per day spent in spiritual conversation or activity with their children.

Corollary Question 4: Primary Responsibility

Additionally, how do Protestant Evangelical fathers view their part or responsibility in the spiritual formation of their children? Research hypotheses 5, 6, and 8 addressed these issues.

Moderate correlations, significant differences, and large effect sizes.

Most important area and primarily responsible (H5). Fathers' view that the most important area in their children's development is their children's relationship with God

(spiritual formation) correlated moderately, positively, and significantly ($r = .46, p < .01, r^2 = 21$) with fathers' seeing themselves as primarily responsible in the spiritual formation of their children. There is a meaningful enough correlation between the two variables to suggest that 21% of one variable relates to the same direction of change in the other. That is, to some degree fathers who do not see the most important area in their child's life as spiritual are not as likely to see themselves as primarily responsible in the spiritual formation of their children. A t -test performed, confirmed this finding, revealing a significant difference between the means of the upper and lower quartile of fathers' seeing the most important area of their child's life being their spiritual formation and fathers' view that they are primarily responsible in the leadership of their children's spiritual formation— $t(160) = 7.11, p < .05$. The effect size was large as well ($d = .69$). Perhaps for these fathers personally, spiritual matters are not as important either.

Prior studies suggest a similar relationship. For example, a motivational aspect to consider is that, according to Dollahite (1998), if fathers see marriage as sacred, if family relationships are seen as a divine plan, then fathers will be committed to these relationships despite the cost and inconvenience. That is, if fathers really do see their children's spirituality as the most significant area of their life, then that needs to be attended to despite the cost. This was seen in many of the open-ended comments from this study's survey listed at the end of Chapter 5. For example one father who expressed similar thoughts of others said,

After much prayer God gave an opportunity to change my life, although it was very hard and humbling, I had to move my family and take a huge pay cut.....end result.....never been happier and God continues to bless our family.

Another said he needed to be more sensitive “to protect time from demands of work and other things. Be more intentional about and efficient with the time I spend with my children.” Lastly, a father commented,

I was working Sundays but knew in my heart that I needed to be there (at church) for my spiritual growth, and especially my family. I made it known at work that Sunday was a day to spend with my family and be at church. They respect that. Thank God.

Prior to noting theological input, which confirms this finding, it is instructive to consider the relationship between deep-seated core beliefs and actions once again. Our deep-seated core beliefs, both true-stable and false-stable beliefs, are not necessarily our professed beliefs but are usually acted upon. That is, we almost always live according to our deep core beliefs (Moreland, 1997; Willard, 1997). In this case then, what fathers deeply believe about the importance of their children’s spiritual formation correlates to what they personally are going to invest in it—their being primarily responsible. Now it could be the case that a father feels his child’s spiritual formation is the most important area but then also feels that delegating that area off to someone else is the best means to develop that. Therein rests a focus of this study. Protestant Evangelical fathers, as instructed by scripture, should see the nature of the children as relational spiritual beings and that they as fathers are called to lead in their children’s development (not solely but as the primary leaders). Hence Protestant Evangelical fathers seeing the most important area of their child’s life as their spiritual formation should correlate to their response that they are primarily responsible.

Theologically this result should have a strong correlation. That is, biblically speaking Protestant Evangelicals should hold to the view scripture is clear about and

developed in Chapter 3 in its entirety, namely, that fathers should see their children as spiritually relational beings, that their spiritual formation is paramount, and that fathers are primarily responsible in that arena. The fact that the correlation is not strong (only moderate) is of importance and discussed later in *Implications*.

Intentional fathering and minutes per day (H8). Though the relationship of these variables was addressed in corollary question 3 they are noted here again because fathers seeing themselves as primarily responsible for the spiritual formation of their children, it seems, would do something about it. That is, they would invest some time, thought, or activity. So if fathers are intentional about their fathering, how much time, in this case minutes per day, do they spend with their children in spiritual activity or conversation? Though significant, the correlation was very weak ($r = .16$). A t -test (Table 5.24) showed a significant difference ($t = 2.64$) and medium effect size ($d = .49$) when comparing means of upper and lower quartile scores of intentional fathering on minutes per day. However, as noted above intentional fathers do spend more time with their children. Hence, these fathers view their part as active and intentional.

Weak, no relationship, small effect size.

Hours in hobbies away from children, and primary responsible (H6). In answering how fathers view their part or responsibility in the spiritual formation of their children, finding out what they believed directly (primarily responsible), relationally (relational closeness to God), and in action (hobbies away from children) would contribute to the answer. That is, did fathers see themselves as primarily responsible? If so, or not, how much time did they spend away from their children in hobbies? The

anticipated response was that those who viewed themselves as primarily responsible would spend more time with their kids and less away when they had a choice (i.e. not work related). Though as anticipated the relationship was negative or indirect, it turned out the correlations did not show a significant relationship. It was also shown that the number of hours spent in hobbies away from children did not have a significant relationship with fathers' relational closeness to God. These findings not meeting anticipated results might be explained by the fact that there is only so much time in a day to work, have hobbies, and spend time with a family. And perhaps it is completely compatible for a father to be very intentional and cognizant of his primary responsibility in the spiritual formation of his children and at the same time have a substantial amount of time in hobbies away from his children. This could even be time to golf with his wife which is part of relationship building on that front.

Relational closeness and primary responsible (H6). A significant and positive but very weak correlation ($r = .16$) was also found between fathers' relational closeness to God and fathers' sense of having primary responsibility for the spiritual formation of their children (Table 5.21). A t -test comparing the upper and lower quartiles of fathers' relational closeness to God on their sense of being primarily responsible for the spiritual formation of their children confirmed the weakness. It was not significant ($t = .45, d = .079$).

Summary of corollary question 4. How do Protestant Evangelical fathers view their part or responsibility in the spiritual formation of their children? Fathers' sense of being primarily responsible for the spiritual formation of their children was positively and moderately correlated to the most important area of their child's life being their spiritual

formation. These also yielded a large effect size. Weak to no relationships, or insignificant relationships, were found between intentional fathering and minutes per day fathers' spent with their children in spiritual activity or conversation, hours in hobbies spent away from children, and fathers' sense of being primarily responsible for the spiritual formation of their children and in fathers' relational closeness to God and their sense of being primarily responsible for the spiritual formation of their children.

A curious discrepancy. As noted and discussed at the beginning of this section there was a less than expected level of correlation between fathers seeing themselves as primarily responsible in the spiritual formation of their children and viewing spiritual formation as the most important area of their life (as opposed to academics, sports, etc.); they were only moderately correlated. A related curious discrepancy, noted earlier in the chapter in the Corollary Question 4 discussion, pertained to analysis yielding a weak correlation between fathers' relational closeness to God and seeing themselves as primarily responsible in their children's spiritual formation. Though weak it does deserve comment. Fathers' relational closeness to God would express their attachment to God, their dependency upon a relationship with God, not just mere cognitive ascent to His existence. This awareness of relationship is also an intentionality of sorts. As one has a relationship (with God), an awareness of that relationship, this quality of relationship permeates or bleeds into other relationships, i.e. fathering. So as fathers report greater relational closeness to God, it would be expected that they also desire and are comfortable with relational closeness to their children, and that their children experience the relational closeness they, the fathers, have with God. Hence, as fathers have greater or lesser relational closeness to God, so will their seeing themselves as primarily responsible

for the spiritual formation of their children (relational closeness to God) increase or decrease directly. However the analysis did not support this. The relationship was weak, perhaps weak enough to not be meaningful, yet a curious result nonetheless.

Implications

Now that the major findings have been discussed, some implications will be presented from the relationships among the factors revealed in the above analysis. These implications aim to provide encouraging practical applications for fathers themselves—to hone their current involvement with their children spiritually, along with church leaders, para-church organizations, and others to encourage fathers in developing greater involvement.

Simplicity and the Theology of the Mundane

An important place to start with respect to practical implications is that fathers need to take comfort in a proper perspective on what many within Christendom often see as the undoable or *for others* task of spiritual formation. Willard (2002) suggests that spiritual formation is not complex, but rather simple: It may not be easy, but it is not complex. Willard (2002) says,

it is important that we not lose sight of the *simplicity* of spiritual formation in Christ. Otherwise its practical implementation, by individuals in their own life or by leaders for their groups, will falsely appear to be extremely difficult or even impossible. (p. 93)

So, to the fathers, church leaders, and others reading this, while there may be opposition, inconvenience, and hard times in life seemingly dissuading implementation, it is doable,

and God intends it to be so. God's yoke is easy and His load light (Matt 11:28-30); He does not ask of anyone what He will not empower one to do (1 Cor 10:13; Phil 4:13). Also important to note is that each implication is built upon theoretical, empirical, and/or theological considerations. This is based on the assumption, noted at the outset of this study, that there is no separation between sacred and secular. I call this principle the *theology of the mundane*. That is, everything that fathers—and people in general—do has a sacred or spiritual foundation, and nothing one does is secular. This has major implications for all that fathers do and how they apply the following implications. For example, mowing the lawn, perceived in this light, though oft considered a mundane activity, can be highly spiritual: In mowing his lawn, a father is being a good steward of God's provision of a home for his family. It is in this spirit that the implications of empirical and theological research in this study converge in practical suggestions.

Fathers' Relationship With God and Involvement in Their Child's Spiritual Formation

As summarized earlier, several key relationships that point to this are noteworthy here: relational closeness with God and fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children; fathers' intentional fathering and their involvement in the spiritual formation of their children; fathering satisfaction and intentional fathering; spiritual maturity and their involvement in their child's spiritual formation; spiritual maturity and intentional fathering; and fathers' spiritual intentionality and their involvement in their child's spiritual formation. Several implications can be drawn from these relationships.

Encouraging relational closeness to God and intentionality among fathers.

Since fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children is positively correlated to the above-mentioned factors then it would be wise to ensure those factors are maximized: spiritual maturity, spiritual intentionality, intentional fathering, and relational closeness with God.

First, it is clear that fathers' relationship with God is paramount. This study has provided ample evidence of the relationships that suggest fathers lacking strong relational closeness to God, spiritual maturity etc., are less likely to be involved in the spiritual formation of their children or exhibit intentional fathering. So as fathers engage in the spiritual formation of their children (who by nature are relationally spiritual, made in the image of God) fathers themselves would need to nurture their relational closeness to God. Hence an initial implication and task is for church leaders to continue reaching the leaders of families in close, accountable, transparent relational spiritual discussion in order to mentor them so they in turn can nurture their children.

What might this look like? Many Protestant Evangelical fathers, as evidenced by those included in this study, do attend church, Bible studies and weekly men's groups. So attendance is not the issue and should be encouraged. But minimally fathers can be encouraged in their relational closeness to God by other mentor fathers, other leaders of the church, helping them develop their fully orbed relationship with God: emotionally, physically, and intellectually. As Issler (2012) states, we need to "form our hearts not just our behavior" (p. 15) or not just our minds and actions as is so often the case. For example, in addition to having one-on-one or small group relationships where fathers can spend earnest time going through Scripture on the very topic of what is it to be a child of

God or God as father, fathers can be encouraged to spend time seeking what it means to be loved by God and discuss uncomfortable barriers, misconceptions, or even the trouble grasping this because it was never modeled to them. To assist in this, perhaps along with Scripture, the fathers can read *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (Nouwen, 1992), and *Surrender to Love* (Benner, 2003). Nouwen (1992) brings the reader into a deep encounter with not just the prodigal son but the other brother and ultimately the prodigal's father. Fathers can dwell on how are they like the prodigal father? Benner (2003) suggests that having people dwell on the question "Imagine God thinking about you. What do you assume God feels when you come to mind?" is revealing.

Other examples might be for fathers to spend a significant time of just praying, with other men with whom they feel comfortable and learning to accompany prayer with *lectio divina* (a rich reading, commenting, meditating practice on biblical truths) or incorporating music at various times. Even altering postures when meeting with God is formative: lying prostrate on a floor when listening or talking with God has a way of connecting our physical (behavioral), emotional (affective), intellectual (cognitive), and spiritual self in a very different way than does sitting in a chair or pew. Additionally, spending a partial or full day at a spiritual retreat center in solitude is highly beneficial to listening to God and reflecting. Furthermore, a practice that can be very formative is *practicing prompt prayer*: being intentional in actually praying for others, with them, out loud, at the time of need. So often Christians are asked to pray for someone they are speaking with, or hear of a prayer need, or perhaps see an unspoken need and say "I will pray for you." It is powerful and very relational to pray for that person or need on the spot. It takes intentionality, transparency, and even emotional risk for some, but one's

prayer life and dependence upon God will change as one develops this practice. Lastly, perhaps if a father is inclined to just want something to challenge him individually excellent Christian authors have addressed spiritual formation and relational issues with God: *Christianity with Power* (Kraft, 1989), *Love God With All Your Mind* (Moreland, 1997), *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship With God* (Willard, 1999), *In Search of a Confident Faith: Overcoming Barriers to Trusting in God* (Moreland & Issler, 2008), and *Living Into the Life of Jesus* (Issler, 2012).

Secondly, it takes effort for fathers to nurture their own relationship with God or with their children; it takes intentionality. Intentionality has been expressed as a dedication to certain practices, thoughts, etc. or restraint from certain practices, thoughts, etc. in order to attain a desired goal: in this case fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. Mindfulness has also been presented as a way to express intentionality in fathers' relationship with God or how they relate to their children spiritually.

How might this intentionality look? Fathers could be dedicated to being home earlier from work in order to spend more time with their children. Perhaps that extra 30 minutes of discussion might birth some spiritual conversation. Quantity time is needed for quality time. At the same time, that father might restrain himself from going to the driving range to hit golf balls (or whatever the activity is) for an hour not because that is wrong in itself but because he values time with his children and will wait for some other time to practice his swing when it does not interfere with family time.

A safe place. Fathers building their own relationships with God is critical as is building respectful, nurturing relationships with their children by being intentional or

mindful in one's fathering. Accordingly, fathers can make tremendous gains in their involvement in the spiritual formation of their children by intentionally providing a safe place in which their children can feel free to come and go on *sorties* (Bowlby, 1988) of play, exploration, and spirituality. Their children will feel free to ask questions or explore God among other areas without fear of criticism or censure.

From a theological perspective, Ephesians 5:22-6:4 calls fathers to not only lead but to do so in a nurturing way. The balance of authority and compassionate, non-provoking, relationship with their children is important. From an empirical perspective, a safe place is understood via attachment theory and God concepts. As children see their fathers related to their mothers, to God, and to the children themselves, this affects the way they develop their concept and relationship with God.

In creating a safe place environment, it is important for fathers to connect with their children in areas of their interest, to deepen their own relational closeness. For example coloring a book with one child or playing catch with another or whatever is the child's favorite activity. Another example would be providing a team-building activity for fathers and their children such as dads and their kids, or the entire family, joining in on helping less fortunate or elderly people in their yard chores—shoveling snow off their driveway, raking leaves, or taking out unwanted items that others cannot manage to move.

Involvement in children's formal education. Fathers' intentionality is also positively related to his involvement in the spiritual formation of his children and fathering satisfaction. Another means for fathers to be intentional in their fathering, and be satisfied as a father, is by their knowing as much as they can about their children, like

knowing their friends, their aspirations, etc. This was a focus of several survey items. Accordingly, one way for fathers to get to know their children and develop further relationships with their children is being involved in their formal education, be it public, private or religious, or homeschool. This provides substantial involvement with and influence on his children not only spiritually but in all phases of development. Hence by being involved in their child's formal education, fathers can actually help them develop spiritually by building relational bridges and intentionally connecting spiritual matters to their child's education.

Fathers' Relationship With Spouse and Others and Involvement in Their Child's Spiritual Formation

This study also revealed significant and meaningful relationships among spousal oneness and fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children; support from spouse and others and fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. That is, fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children is highly related to support from their spouses and others as well as spousal oneness.

Encouraging involvement through spousal oneness, marriage institution. To begin with, spousal oneness is positively related to fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. It is also critical for the health of the Church. And because a father's relationship with his wife is vital to not only their own relationship but also their children's spiritual formation, leaders in the church must address the reality that the institution of marriage as God intended it is in jeopardy if not all but collapsed. Unfortunately, as Willard (2002) puts it, when the marriage is malfunctioning, "these

little people [children] become big people and move on with their malfunctioning souls into the workplace, [and] citizenship” (p. 192). Church leadership, therefore, is essential in helping stabilize and build marriages which are the strongest witness and benefit to its future generations. Spousal oneness is strongly tied to fathers’ involvement in the spiritual formation of their children.

Stoking the flame/rekindling the relationship between spouses. Fathers and mothers are busy in child rearing. It is helpful then to provide fathers the opportunity to stoke or rekindle their relationship with their wives, precisely because this relationship is instrumental for not only their marriage strength but it correlates positively to paternal involvement in their children’s spiritual development. Crabb (1982) provides one of the best perspectives on building and strengthening a marriage.

One practical means is for a father to make time to have a date night with his wife out of the home, or even in the home (without the kids), while doing something they both enjoy or that she thoroughly enjoys. When it is an activity or place that the wife really enjoys but the husband is not so thrilled about, this is where being sacrificial takes root. Here a husband and father can show his love for his wife if he not only goes along with it but intentionally goes out of his way to make sure his wife feels he is giving her his full attention.

Another example would be for a husband and father taking his wife to a marriage retreat. It is a great way not only to take a mini-vacation but also to spend quantity and quality time together. Some husbands may feel threatened by a marriage retreat (especially if it is called a marriage encounter), as if they are going to get ambushed. But this need not be the case. Many churches have retreats in relaxing settings where there are

plenty of things to do outdoors and with private places to sit and talk, in addition to corporate time with all the other couples as well as segregated times of teaching for husbands and wives.

Lastly, a father and mother can write down their top 10 ways that they feel loved and share that with each other. The goal here would be for each spouse to do those things that make the other person feel loved. It could be the wife feels loved when the husband does the dishes or brings her flowers for no specific occasion. Or it could be the husband feels loved and closer to his wife when she holds his hand a certain way or compliments him in front of others.

Encouraging involvement through support of spouse and others. Not only is spousal oneness correlated positively to fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children but so is support from one's spouse and others. This not only includes immediate family, relatives, and friends but others in the faith family such as church leaders. Therefore, church leaders can help fathers develop a sense of competence and the related increased motivation to be involved in their families' spirituality by promoting an ongoing fathering mentoring group for fathers by fathers. It would also be helpful at special times to offer fathers a convenient gathering after church to learn a fun, meaningful activity to engage the family around a given holiday. For example, in one short setting, approaching a holiday such as Thanksgiving, fathers could meet together over coffee and a brief discussion on how to practically lead their families in a reading of Abraham Lincoln's *Thanksgiving Declaration* and having each family member tell what they are thankful for. Opening up dialogue with fathers and their children, especially

those that can lead to spiritual conversation, are extremely practical and welcoming to most. It makes every day talk, God talk.

Intergenerational spiritual formation. Correlations among the variables currently being discussed—support from spouses and others, spousal oneness, and fathers’ involvement in the spiritual formation of their children—suggest that there are many others, often multiple generations, joining fathers in the spiritual formation of children. This is in effect intergenerational spiritual formation. That is, past research, discussed in Chapter 2, and biblical and historical Christian practice has supported the notion that Christian formation does not occur in isolation (e.g. Bunge 2004; Westerhoff, 2008; Wilhoit, 2008) but in intergenerational spiritual formation. For this discussion intergenerational implies “bringing the generations together in mutual serving, sharing or learning within the core activities of the church in order to live out being the body of Christ to each other and the greater community” (Allen & Ross, 2012, p. 19). In short, to help fathers be more involved in the spiritual formation of their children, they can be equipped with activities that promote intergenerationality because, as this study has shown, support from spouses and others, e.g. from various generations involved in the process, is not only biblical but has been shown to help increase father’s involvement. Additionally, this type of activity helps the father and others of various ages and relationships model their faith to the children.

An example of intergenerational activity could be as simple as a potluck where two different generations (teens and middle adults) set up for the potluck dinner. Then have two further different generations clean up (emerging adults, and active older adults) (Allen & Ross, 2012, p. 274). One could even further augment this as well by having yet

two more generations (young children and retired adults) provide service during the potluck and others play music. This will create a way for all to work together, serve together, communicate, and learn about each other. Then on Sunday sharing the worship service together will reinforce relationships, story sharing, etc.

Metanarrative fathering. Another implication derived from the relationship of support from spouse and others and increased paternal involvement in the spiritual formation of their children is fathers' intentionally creating metanarrative awareness. Related to engaging all those in the faith family to come alongside their children in the children's spiritual formation via intergenerational focus, fathers in these relationships ultimately are teaching their children metanarrative, their role in God's story, of which the universal church, the local church, and the individual child are all a part. Fathers' many relationships are key: their relationships with God; their relationships with their wives; as couples, their relationship to God; and all the other supporting figures' relationships to God (grandparents, siblings, friends in the faith, etc.). Being intentional in pointing out these relationships and their interconnectedness in this metanarrative will be powerful in helping children develop relationally to God as well.

So how might this metanarrative look? Adapting a concept from Allen and Ross (2012), nuclear and extended family member can engage children in a role playing story. Key biblical people or events are written on pieces of paper and then the papers are taped to a wall where everyone can see them. The events or names are written sequentially with a gap in the story shown by a “//” representing the silence of biblical revelation from the last prophets to the time of John the Baptist ushering in Christ. A “***” symbols represent pre-creation or eternity past.

***God created all things, Adam/Eve fell, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Prophets//

//John the Baptist, JESUS life-Crucifixion-burial-resurrection-ascension,

Early Church, Paul, Augustine, Luther, Billy Graham

These pieces of paper represent the creation, fall, redemption, and some of the many people that God used to bring this about as well as those who, after Christ's life and work to save us, have been actively used by God in His Kingdom since then. There is room to include or substitute persons or events based on one's tradition. But the most important part is yet to come. After any current figure one chooses to use (Billy Graham in this example), have all those present find their place in line and have them hold a piece of paper saying their name and what role they have in God's kingdom. Children will stand in the line according to where they fall chronologically holding pieces of paper suggesting how they contribute: for example, "I read my Bible," or "I pray for others." The last person stands next to a piece of paper taped on the wall that has "*** Eternity Future" written on it.

The father explains that God's story includes not just all those people that we hear about in the Bible or Sunday school but those present in the timeline are part of God's story and need to be just as active and relational with God as were the "famous" people whose names are taped on the wall.

Fathers' Satisfaction in Fathering and Their Involvement in Their Child's Spiritual Formation

Other study implications arose from these factors: fathering satisfaction, intentional fathering, and fathers' involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. The strongest relationships and differences between factors involved fathering satisfaction and fathers' involvement in their child's spiritual formation as well as fathering satisfaction and intentional fathering.

The positive, significant correlations between fathering satisfaction and intentional fathering suggest that intentional fathers are satisfied in their fathering or satisfied fathers are also intentional in their fathering. Helping fathers be intentional in their general fathering practices, or involvement in their children's spiritual formation specifically, may then lead to greater father satisfaction. Or mentoring fathers to be satisfied in Christ and their fathering may lead to greater intentionality in their fathering practices. Regardless, of the causal direction, fathers need to be encouraged, increasing their fathering satisfaction, and need mentor fathers to model intentionality in their own relationships with God, as well as being involved in the spiritual formation of their children.

An example of how mentor fathers, leaders, or significant others might come alongside fathers to increase their intentionality is by modeling it explicitly. Mentor fathers, as they meet with fathers weekly, at church, or in other activities, can invite fathers and their children or families to spend time with them, perhaps on a camping trip. As they begin travel, the mentor father might open up in prayer, or depending on the mentee father's level of comfort, he is asked to pray for the weekend. As they set up

camp there might be a gathering of everyone to ask a blessing over the conversation, food, and safety. Then the conversation around the fire, family worship time modeled, and quiet Bible reading or devotion in the morning might be exemplified as well. The main issue is inviting the family to join in each activity at their comfort level and provide first hand exposure to an intentional incorporating of spiritual activities and conversation throughout the day.

Regarding fathering satisfaction and involvement in the spiritual formation of their children, it is clear that as one increases so does the other: Fathers are satisfied in their fathering and hence are more involved, or they are involved which makes them more satisfied. And since the goal is to increase involvement in the spiritual formation of their children and not simply to increase paternal satisfaction, anything that enhances their involvement, i.e. satisfaction in this case, is to be maximized.

For example, encouraging fathers in their efforts, pointing out times when their children are honoring to God, will help fathers build a sense of satisfaction and motivate them to be more involved and intentional. Another example could be as simple as fathers meeting monthly specifically for sharing ideas for practical involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. This could include ideas of how they and their wives incorporate spiritual traditions, exercises, games, study, or conversation in the family patterns. A lead mentor father could then follow up weekly via email or whichever way is easiest to see how the group is doing in trying out new ideas or engaging in current ones. Fathers would be more inclined to do more when they have positive feedback that their skill set is working or that they can do something well. Feeling competent,

supported, satisfied in relationships, successful in communication and other aspects of fathering are associated with greater involvement as was confirmed in this study.

Practical talk: dialoguing with the kids. Another means to encourage fathers' sense of skills or competency and sense of satisfaction to improve their involvement with their children spiritually, is helping fathers be more engaged in dialogue with their children on spiritual issues. Fathers' having a satisfaction in verbal communication with their children is related to their overall satisfaction and hence their involvement in their children's spirituality. An implication of this is that fathers (and others as well) need to be more aware of their children's spirituality and how to engage in it conversationally. Increased practical involvement should follow.

First then, fathers need to be instructed more effectively (e.g. in mentoring relationships or from the pulpit) that their children are spiritual beings, made in the image of God, and develop relationally. Also, their children are more spiritually sensitive than most people think or treat them: ordinary children talk about their spirituality; children have complex spiritual ideas, though they may not be able to express them like adults do. This implies fathers should be cautious not to overly impose adult issues and thinking, but actually learn from and with their children and look for their children's wonder about spiritual issues. This also suggests that fathers should avoid dismissing children's ideas as simple or immature, but rather listen with anticipation. Children have something meaningful and personal to share. That is, dads can and should intentionally expect to be taught something from their interaction with their children.

A final point to consider is that when communicating with children on spiritual issues, a father's intentional involvement in spiritual conversation with his child is one

where learning leads or draws out development (Estep, 2003; Estep & Breckenridge, 2004; Vygotsky, 1979); that is, fathers, in many cases, do not need to shy away from conversation because they think their child is not ready for it. From this point of view, development, and particularly spiritual formation, is not so linear. Consider the concept of trust, and specifically trust in God. Aside from the fact that many adults have difficulty trusting God, such an abstract principle can be taught to and caught by children. A father's intentional dialogue with his 5-year-old child might start at the poolside with him asking his child to jump into his arms. By doing such trust jumps and talking to the child about how he or she is trusting the father—knowing he will not drop him—the child understands trust in relation to the dad. This is a concrete level of development (zone of actual development). The father then can explain that God is his own heavenly Father and he, too, needs to trust Him, or in a way “jump in His arms.” In doing so, the father, in community or proximity to his child, is taking him from where his actual development is through a zone of proximal development toward his potential development (trusting, a concept he cannot touch, in a God he cannot see). Then the father can connect trust with God by dialoguing with his children like this: *Joey, just like you trust me to catch you and I trust God to take care of me, you can trust God to take care of you when you think you are seeing monsters in your room at night. Remember, God cares for you and wants the best for you.* Talking about it most likely will not be sufficient to bring about change, but through routinely having conversations and exemplifying such trust-oriented occasions in daily life, the child will soon connect trust with God: The child will be better able to understand and act upon a concept that at their age is usually not expected to be operationalized.

Here is another example of simple dialogue with children that fathers can practice thereby increasing their fathering satisfaction and involvement with their children spiritually. Children love to hear what their fathers did when they were kids: *Dad, can you tell us a story of when you were our age?* A great way to end a day and open up conversation to spiritual things is for fathers to sing a spiritual song (hymn or contemporary favorite), tell stories of their childhood, and read while putting the children down to sleep. While this may seem like an obvious and simple activity, it is powerful and meaningful. It is good to tell a story of how Jesus did amazing things in the Bible (Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead or Jesus feeding the five thousand), but it is important also for fathers to tell stories of God's involvement in their lives, last year, last week, or even today. This helps children see that God is alive and well, and conversations will flow.

Lastly, another simple activity might help. Fathers taking their children in a group or individually on date nights can provide not only enjoyment but an empowering time of being together. This could be as inexpensive as taking the child for a donut or on an errand, or sharing a burger and fries and coloring with dad at Jack in the Box. Coloring anything with biblical themes is an easy way to stir up spiritual conversation: *So Grace, I wonder what David is doing to Goliath? . . . Why do you think he is doing that? . . . I wonder how, like David, we honor God or tell Him that He is important in our life?*

All the above issues would be instrumental in helping fathers feel a sense of satisfaction in their fathering efforts and leadership skills by fostering dialogue, which in turn increases paternal satisfaction and greater involvement.

Fathers' Primary Responsibility in Their Child's Spiritual Formation

Lastly, a positive, significant relationship exists between fathers seeing themselves as primarily responsible for the spiritual formation of their children and that the most important area of their child's life is their spiritual formation. Yet the correlation was only moderate, not strong. What does this mean practically? Implications from this finding are important because the relationship between these two factors are based on fathers' deep-seated core beliefs about the spiritual nature of their children and their role in the formation of that spirituality (This was pointed out in the previous implication section). That is, what is their biblical view of the spiritual nature and ability of their children?

With respect to the final question, do these two deep-seated core beliefs (about the spiritual nature of their children and their role as fathers in formation of their spirituality) coincide with their actions? And if not, why? The crux of the matter is that “we always live up to our beliefs—or down to them, as the case may be” (Willard, 1997, p. 307). There are several options pertaining to this. One, we believe something and act upon it in the most natural or reactionary way and hence are congruent or consistent. Two, we believe something and do not act upon it because (a) we are not equipped enough nor feel confident enough to do so, (b) we are hypocritical and need to address the belief or action, (c) we do not really believe it but would like to increase our belief and understanding in that area—matching the action or addressing the belief at its core—which is addressing the belief or action, or (d) we do not believe it, know we don't believe it, and are just living a counterfeit life. The issue is, regardless of the scenario one finds oneself in, do we intentionally, vigilantly purge false settled beliefs or purge actions

that don't match true settled beliefs? As noted at the beginning of this chapter, and worth repeating in essence here, is that fathers need to be encouraged to raise the level of their involvement, be involved with mentoring fathers, and surrounded by people who can help equip them to be intentionally involved in the spiritual formation of their children. God does not ask people to do what cannot be done with His strength. So regardless of why a father does not see himself as primarily responsible for the spiritual formation of his children, or why a father may not see the most important area of his child's life being their spiritual formation, what is important is encouraging those fathers that are doing well currently and assisting these fathers who need confidence and practical assistance in various competencies.

Having said that, within Protestant Evangelicalism, fathers, according to Scripture, should align their views and actions with what Scripture says about the spiritual nature and formation of our children and the primary leadership role of fathers in that formation. Hence having a moderate correlation only seems to point to an inconsistency. Should not the correlations be minimally strong and perhaps even very strong? Instead, Protestant Evangelical fathers in this study (who on average considered themselves spiritually mature or to be relationally close to God) did not respond that they are to be primarily responsible for their child's spiritual formation and the most important area of their child's life being their spiritual formation such that a strong correlation resulted.

In short, perhaps the apparent discrepancy arises between the core beliefs of the nature of children spiritually and fathers' view of their role as primary in their child's spiritual formation. Or perhaps, as noted above, there is a lack of practical mentoring toward the application of those core beliefs. Hence to increase fathers involvement in the

spiritual formation of their children they need to be instructed and mentored in both the essential spiritual nature of their children and their primary role as leaders in the formation of their children spiritually. An implication of this is that although Church leaders and exemplary fathers are significant mentoring figures in encouraging other fathers in their involvement in the spiritual formation of their children, a greater intentional focus in disciplining fathers theologically and practically is needed.

Church leadership and mentor fathers. Church leadership and mentor fathers, for example, need to intentionally and clearly teach and dialogically engage with parents, father groups, etc., on the relational spiritual nature of children and a father's primary leadership role and intentional involvement in his child's spiritual formation. This can be done from the pulpit, mentoring groups, social media, etc. Through theological and empirical inquiry, fathers might be motivated if they were to more clearly understand the spiritual nature of their children and their God-ordained role in their children's spiritual formation.

While having knowledge does not always mean one acts upon it, a father who knows more clearly who his children are spiritually and what they are capable of spiritually is far more likely to be motivated to strategize and act to benefit his children. Knowing his role and the expectations associated with it also influences his actions.

It is therefore imperative that church leaders teach such fundamental theological truths of human nature and mankind's relationship with God so that fathers rightly understand their children's spiritual nature and their role in their children's spiritual formation. Then leaders can model practical, doable scenarios that can motivate other fathers to greater involvement via a greater sense of self-perceived skills, self-confidence,

and satisfaction in their fathering, marriage, verbal communication with their children, and the like. Ultimately fathers will not catch this unless the leaders believe, live, and communicate it, while conveying encouragement and not pressure or condemnation if fathers have fallen short.

Church leaders need to help today's fathers reorient their priorities from a sense of entitlement with toys, hobbies, and personal happiness, to a sense of generativity wherein they are leaders of a generation of followers of Christ. In this vein, church leadership can provide a hands-on mentoring program designed to challenge core beliefs, pray for one another, equip each other, and practice skills toward better fathering, particularly in leading their children spiritually. Church leaders are critical in providing vision and focus to turn the current culture of peripheral fathering into one where fathers are intentionally involved in positively influencing their children spiritually. This is precisely because these fathers believe deeply that their children are spiritual beings that engage at a significant level, are greatly influenced by the many factors addressed in this study, and that the fathers themselves are primarily responsible for leadership in the spiritual formation of their children.

Lastly, even those in church leadership and those training for church leadership need to be intentional, persistently so, in attending to their own relational closeness to God. Leaders often are so busy they do not nurture themselves or do not develop spiritual rhythms to attend to their own souls. This has deleterious effects on not only their own spiritual growth but that of their children as well. Fathers in leadership are not exempt from these findings, and those they lead should hold them up in prayer, encouraging them like-wise to be involved in the spiritual formation of their children.

Fathers' response to the fatherless and single mothers. Another implication of fathers viewing their role as primarily responsible in the most important area of children's lives (their spiritual formation) is awareness and reaching out to the fatherless. Mentoring the fatherless is important since they may have never had a father figure to compare to God the Father revealed in Scripture. Mothers, whether married with absent husbands, single, divorced, or widowed need help in providing paternal modeling for their children. Despite exemplary efforts by these moms, theirs is a tough road and some consider it to be the hardest job in the world. From a biblical perspective, Christians are called to take care of those who are less fortunate, widows, and orphans, for this is real religion (James 1:27). Though a single mother may not be a widower and her children not fully orphans, the principle is clear: Those in distress or hard times need others to come alongside. Perhaps the father is serving the country in the military overseas, or perhaps the father is in prison; the mother still needs support and the children paternal role models. God has ordained fathers to lead, so when there is no father, the children need to have God's preferred order in their lives as much as possible. Children were not intended to be fatherless.

Examples of helping mothers have a positive influence. Countless examples of how fathers can reach out to the fatherless and their single mothers can be given, but here are a few. Fathers and their families could welcome children into their family activities, modeling what a biblical father looks like. They could help with car-pooling the children to sporting activities, church activities, or school, or just providing a safe haven for them to be kids is invaluable. Fathers and their families could open up their homes to single mothers for special occasions like Christmas and Thanksgiving, or even just casual

dinners or play dates with their children can provide important father-child and father-mother modeling. Finally, fathering the fatherless as a means for fathers to be primary leaders in the spiritual formation of children could be done via supporting a prison ministry such as Malachi Dads (<http://awanalifeline.org/#/programs/malachi-dads>) which is focused on ministering to children with fathers in prison and to those fathers in prison desiring to change and be involved in the lives of their children, especially spiritually.

Additionally church leaders have an opportunity for their faith community to serve single mothers in need. Both from the pulpit and in church wide-activities, an atmosphere of acceptance and welcome can make single mothers and their children part of a family that models proper relationships, unity, and the Christian life. Strong (2012) suggests a practical ministry guide for church leaders and others by creating awareness of fatherlessness, and then meeting the need. Getting the word out to meet the need can be done via the pulpit (e.g. a seven-week sermon series), personal conversations, personal testimonies, projects, and publications.

Lastly, church-wide activities would make a world of difference for single mothers. For example, there could be car fixing days when single moms could have their cars worked on while they browse donated clothing selections for their children, get hair grooming services, learn job hunting skills, or get financial advice. Single moms may need free labor around the home, which would be a perfect time for fathers and their children, if not the entire family, to connect in providing such needed help.

Limitations

Given that humankind is just that, human, idiosyncratic, and that social science research is assessing this human behavior, there were several limitations to the study. First, the nature of self-assessment or self-report surveys, particularly those of deeply personal topics, can lead to halo effect or people representing themselves in a better light than normal. This seems, however, mitigated by the anonymity of the survey, and several comments fathers left in the open-ended responses, such that they either felt it was a very valuable study and appreciated it, felt it was very thought provoking and challenging, or that they had hoped the results would be understood with grace. These seem to suggest that they were being transparent. Nonetheless, the nature of such instruments does run that risk.

Secondly, as a study among Protestant Evangelical fathers, no matter how generalizable it is in that target area, generalizability to a different group of fathers would be unwarranted. Further research is left for that.

Thirdly, the number of cases in the sample did not reach the desired size to assure greater generalizability. Two church leaders had expressed strong interest in having their churches participate but oddly had to be dropped. One simply did not reply to numerous calls and emails, after their last email saying they were eager to participate. Another had a key leader resign which then led to their time being occupied in finding a replacement. Many other churches were contacted to replace these via telephone calls, emails, and letters in some cases but none were able to. Also, a few of the surveys were unfinished as explained in Chapter 5. It seems that several fathers stopped at the end of a section, apparently thinking it was the end of the survey. This was unexpected since by far the

majority finished the survey, and the messages provided at the end of each section clearly thanked them for their help and continuing on and showed a progress bar to show them how close they were to finishing.

Fourthly, retired dads with foster kids was an option that was not considered initially but certainly would be a viable demographic to note in future research. One respondent, who did complete the survey, suggested that this be considered.

Fifthly, as briefly noted in Chapter 5, fathers self-reported how many minutes per day they spent with their children on spiritual activity or conversation. This open-ended question was phrased “On average, how many minutes per day do you spend with your children in spiritual activity or conversation?” Future clarification in asking this question might be helpful. For example, do fathers responding to this think the question is asking about all activity or that outside “normal” Judeo-Christian activity such as praying at meals, going to church, or praying with children at bedtime? The intent of the question was all inclusive but it would be helpful to perhaps ask it with the following clarification: “Aside from prayers at meals, church attendance, or bedtime prayer on average, how many minutes per day do you spend with your children in spiritual activity or conversation?” The response in this study was intended to be open such that whatever the father viewed as spiritual conversation or activity was acceptable. For example, perhaps watching “Little House on the Prairie” which contains a high percentage of spiritual content for discussion might be an activity and conversation. Some fathers might view that as “non-spiritual” while others might see it as spiritual—i.e. no separation between sacred and secular. Nonetheless, clarifying the question for measuring purposes would be helpful.

Lastly, in the survey, item 126 assessed to what degree fathers felt that “My child’s education is the most important area of their life.” While this was intended to mean “formal” education, it is possible that a father might see their child’s formal education as very integrated if not equated with their spiritual formation and hence homeschool for that very reason or choose other means. So perhaps providing response options as a demographic as to whether the child is homeschooled, attends public, private or Christian school would have been helpful.

Recommendations for Future Research

Empirical research, theory, and biblical and theological findings provided in this study have provided substantive insights pertaining to children’s spiritual nature and its formation as well as parental, particularly intentional paternal, involvement in that formation. Further, this study has provided background to numerous implications for fathers and their positive influence in the relational spiritual formation of their children. Lastly, this study also suggests several research interests, questions, and methods that may help further explore various aspects of fathers’ involvement in the spiritual formation of their children.

1. The literature review, biblical and theological findings, and empirical findings from this study will hopefully not only yield insights and implications pertaining to children’s spiritual formation and paternal intentional involvement in their children’s spiritual formation but also provide impetus for further research (in questions and methodology) exploring various aspects of fathers’ involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. For example, it would be very helpful to have an in-depth, rich

qualitative study using this survey, interview, and focus-group mixed method. For instance, it would be enlightening to understand why some fathers may not see themselves as primarily responsible in the spiritual formation of their children? It would be instructive to get fathers' explanations as to why they do or do not see the most important area of their children's lives as being their spiritual formation. Lastly, in-depth interview or focus group research could have fathers explain in their own words why they are not as involved as they would like to be, think they should be, or perhaps why they do not think they need to be, delegating that responsibility to others.

2. Related to the above suggestion is one that was born out of the statistical analysis of this current study and discussed at the end of the implications section. Why is it that fathers' relational closeness to God did not correlate moderately or higher with their view as being primarily responsible in the spiritual formation of their children? As discussed, one would think the more fathers experience relational closeness to God the more they would want to model and ensure their children are afforded that same relationship with God. And what better way to ensure that but to be intentional and take responsibility in that endeavor. It does not have to be sole responsibility, but having such a weak correlation in this matter seems to suggest fathers do not make the connection, statistically speaking. Further research could build on this.

3. Assessing where a father's relationship with God is and how that relationship might be modeled to their children is important. This could be done in studying attachment theory, God images, and particularly the influence fathers have on their children's relationship with God. For example, what does a father think about how God thinks of that same father? Benner (2003) asks, "Imagine God thinking about you. What

do you assume God feels when you come to mind?" (p. 16). It would be instructive in a mixed method study to have a Likert scale or open-ended questions assessing how a father answers this question and why. This would have importance in exploring how a father's children might view their ability to approach their fathers, because, minimally, research has shown that as fathers model their relationship with God or how they view God is the image that children gain of God as well (Hertel & Donahue, 1995; Hood, 2004; Rizzuto, 1979).

4. Perhaps a similar study to this one could be performed on a national scale, even more comprehensively exploring various religious groups such as Judaism, Islam, etc. and compare those with Protestant Evangelical fathering.

5. Perhaps on a smaller more practical scale, church and denominational leaders could use the *SpokaneDads* survey to identify fathers in their congregations or denominations who could be key leaders in mentoring other fathers. Men's groups are in abundance but rarely do fathers regularly meet with the express interest in growing in the various factors noted in this study, ultimately improving their relationship with God and their spouses, improving their involvement in their child's spiritual formation, helping them bringing significant others into the faith formation process, and being intentional in all these areas, to name a few.

6. As noted in the limitations, it would be instructive in a future research, be it replication of this study or not, to include a demographic detailing the type of education referred to in question 126: homeschool, public, private, Christian etc. Even in this, the term *homeschool* may need to be delineated because many homeschoolers co-mingle state public education with their homeschooling and by some standards and national

homeschool organizations are not considered homeschooling. So, even a further delineation might be needed: pure homeschool, homeschool with use of public education funds and courses, etc.

Final Summary

This quantitative study explored paternal intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children. The main research question was to what degree are Protestant Evangelical fathers intentionally involved in the relational spiritual formation of their children? The research was based on two domains: relational spiritual formation of children and paternal intentional involvement. Theological principles gleaned from exegesis of biblical passages pertaining to paternal leadership were considered. The target population consisted of Protestant Evangelical Christian fathers, married, with children 4-18 years old living at home, in some 241 churches that adhered to the National Association of Evangelicals in the Greater Spokane, Washington area (GSAE). An accessible population of 64 of those 241 churches yielded a usable sample of 19 churches and 249 respondents.

The survey instrument implemented via SurveyMonkey was composed of reliable Likert scale oriented instruments (the Personal Fathering Profile and the Spiritual Assessment Inventory) that show construct validity and have been used extensively nationally. Researcher designed Likert scale questions and open-ended responses based on past research and biblical principles were used as well. Data was downloaded from SurveyMonkey to SPSS for statistical analysis.

It was found that multiple positive, significant relationships exist around intentional fathering, spiritual maturity, spiritual intentionality, fathering satisfaction, involvement in the spiritual formation of their children, support from spouse and others, spousal oneness, primary reasonability, and spirituality as the most important areas. With respect to involvement in their children's spiritual formation, these factors were positively and significantly related: intentional fathering, fathering satisfaction, spousal oneness, support from spouse and others, spiritual intentionality, spiritual maturity, and relational closeness to God. With respect to fathers seeing the most important area of their child's life as being their spiritual formation and seeing themselves as being primarily responsible in this formation, there was a moderate correlation between these two factors.

Multiple practical implications based on the empirical results and theological input were given in order to encourage and equip Protestant Evangelical fathers in their intentional involvement in the relational spiritual formation of their children as well as assisting fatherless families. Limitations of the study were noted as well as recommendations for future research.

Authors Personal Call

This research has been a deep and thought-provoking study for me as a father, Christian educator, mentor, and example to other fathers and fathers-to-be. There is a clear and clarion call among Church leaders and fathers for help in the area of paternal leadership in the spiritual formation of their children. The spiritual formation of adult leaders and of children in the church is an essential component of Christians' living and

needs to be recaptured intentionally as such in Christians' efforts and allocations of time, relationships, and resources.

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APPENDIX A

MATERIALS OF THE STUDY: LETTERS, CONSENT FORMS, & INSTRUCTIONS

Fathering Survey Verbatim Instructions Group Participation

(To be read by a church representative to the participants if the researcher is not available)

Thank you for taking time out of your day to contribute your experience to the study of fathering. Your willingness and generous time in answering these survey questions is important for this study in fathering. I trust you will be encouraged. The survey should take about thirty minutes and all answers are confidential. You are not obligated to do this, it is completely voluntary, and you may opt out at any time.

Please find in the next pages an informed consent form for you to read and sign prior to continuing if you are willing to do so. Please sign the consent form and turn it in to the researcher or church representative who will then give you the survey. From the consent form your name and contact information will be used to enter you into the incentive drawing for a Cabela's gift card worth \$250. Your participation is voluntary yet I am hoping you can finish the survey to help with this study. All the survey data, completed or not, will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

For the survey itself, after reading the instructions for each area, please fill out the information and answer how you see yourself or the situation. In general, respond to each item with the phrase, and its corresponding number, that best represents how you feel. That is, please do not answer what you think others might say, what answer you think the survey might be after, or what you would like to be in your own eyes or others'. After filling out the survey return it to the researcher or church representative in the envelope provided for your privacy.

Thank you again.

Dr. Steve Clark
drsteveclark@gmail.com
(509) 844-1643

Fathering Survey Informed Consent Form Group Participation

Participant's name: _____

I authorize Dr. Steve Clark of Talbot PhD Educational Studies, Biola University, La Mirada, California, and/or any designated research assistants to gather information from me on the topic of fathers' intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of their children.

I understand that the general purposes of the research are exploratory, and that I will be asked to respond to a survey and that the approximate total time of my involvement will be about thirty minutes.

The potential benefits of the study are helping fathers in their parenting and helping church leaders in assisting fathers in that process.

I am aware that I may choose not to answer any questions that I find embarrassing or offensive.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or discontinue my participation at any time.

I understand that if, after my participation, I experience any undue anxiety or stress or have questions about the research or my rights as a participant, that may have been provoked by the experience, Steve Clark will be available for consultation or point me to someone who might be able to assist.

Confidentiality of research results will be maintained by the researcher. My individual results will not be released without my written consent. **[For Pilot Study Only:** I also know I have the option to provide my email and/or telephone number to be contacted by the researcher post survey in order to assist the researcher in assessing the study and make needed improvements.]

Signature

Date

In order for you to be contacted should you be drawn to win the Cabela's \$250 Gift Card, we need either a telephone number and or email. This information will be destroyed after the drawing, and will not be used for any other purpose.

Telephone number : _____ and/or Email: _____

There are two copies of this consent form included. Please sign one and return it to the researcher with your responses. The other copy you may keep for your records.

Questions and comments may be address to Steve Clark, at drsteveclark@gmail.com, (509) 844-1643.

Father Survey Participant Instructions Group Participation

Dear Participant,

Thank you so much for taking time out of your day to assist me with a very important topic: dads and their children. For your benefit and protection please read the information below and sign the informed consent form.

1. Upon signing the consent form and turning it in to the researcher or church representative you will receive a copy of the survey. From the consent form, and not associated with your survey in anyway, your name will be entered into a drawing to win a Cabela's gift card worth \$250.
2. Follow the brief instructions and respond to the survey, which takes about 30 minutes. In general, respond to each item with the phrase, and its corresponding number, that best represents how you feel (i.e. please do not answer what you think others might say, what answer that you think the survey might be after, or what you would like to be in your own eyes or others').
3. After filling out the survey, return it to the researcher or church representative in the envelope provided for your privacy. Once all surveys are in and the study data has been finalized any information will be destroyed for anonymity purposes.

Thank you again!

Dr. Steve Clark,
drsteveclark@gmail.com
(509) 844-1643

Fathering Survey Verbatim Instructions Individual Participants

(To be read by a church representative to the participants if the researcher is not available)

Thank you for taking time out of your day to contribute your experience to the study of fathering. Your willingness and generous time in answering these survey questions is important for this study in fathering. I trust you will be encouraged. The survey should take about thirty minutes and all answers are confidential. You are not obligated to do this, it is completely voluntary, and you may opt out at any time.

Please find in the next pages an informed consent form for you to read and sign prior to continuing if you are willing to do so. Please sign the consent form and turn it in to the researcher or church representative who will then give you the survey. From the consent form your name and contact information will be used to enter you into the incentive drawing for a Cabela's gift card worth \$250. Your participation is voluntary yet I am hoping you can finish the survey to help with this study. All the survey data, completed or not, will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

For the survey itself, after reading the instructions for each area, please fill out the information and answer how you see yourself or the situation. In general, respond to each item with the phrase, and its corresponding number, that best represents how you feel. That is, please do not answer what you think others might say, what answer you think the survey might be after, or what you would like to be in your own eyes or others'. After filling out the survey please place and seal it in the provided self-addressed envelope and mail it to Steve Clark 415 E. Rhea Rd, Colbert, WA 99005. Please try and return the survey to me within five days.

Thank you again.

Dr. Steve Clark
drsteveclark@gmail.com
(509) 844-1643

Fathering Survey Informed Consent Form Individual Participants

Participant's name: _____

I authorize Dr. Steve Clark of Talbot PhD Educational Studies, Biola University, La Mirada, California, and/or any designated research assistants to gather information from me on the topic of fathers' intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of their children.

I understand that the general purposes of the research are exploratory, and that I will be asked to respond to a survey and that the approximate total time of my involvement will be about thirty minutes.

The potential benefits of the study are helping fathers in their parenting and helping church leaders in assisting fathers in that process.

I am aware that I may choose not to answer any questions that I find embarrassing or offensive.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or discontinue my participation at any time.

I understand that if, after my participation, I experience any undue anxiety or stress or have questions about the research or my rights as a participant, that may have been provoked by the experience, Steve Clark will be available for consultation or point me to someone who might be able to assist.

Confidentiality of research results will be maintained by the researcher. My individual results will not be released without my written consent. **[For Pilot Study Only:** I also know I have the option to provide my email and/or telephone number to be contacted by the researcher post survey in order to assist the researcher in assessing the study and make needed improvements.]

Signature

Date

In order for you to be contacted should you be drawn to win the Cabela's \$250 Gift Card, we need either a telephone number and or email. This information will be destroyed after the drawing, and will not be used for any other purpose.

Telephone number : _____ and/or Email: _____

There are two copies of this consent form included. Please sign one and return it to the researcher with your responses. The other copy you may keep for your records.

Questions and comments may be address to Steve Clark, at drsteveclark@gmail.com (509) 844-1643.

Fathering Survey Participant Instructions Individual Participants

Dear Participant,

Thank you so much for taking time out of your day to assist me with a very important topic: dads and their children. For your benefit and protection please read the information below and sign the informed consent form.

1. Upon signing the consent form and turning it in to the researcher or church representative you will receive a copy of the survey. From the consent form, and not associated with your survey in anyway, your name will be entered into a drawing to win a Cabela's gift card worth \$250.
2. Follow the brief instructions and respond to the survey, which takes about 30 minutes. In general, respond to each item with the phrase, and its corresponding number, that best represents how you feel (i.e. please do not answer what you think others might say, what answer that you think the survey might be after, or what you would like to be in your own eyes or others').
3. Upon completion of the survey, please place it in the self-addressed envelope and mail it directly to me within five days of initially receiving it. This will help assure that the surveys will be back within ten days from start to finish. Once all surveys are in and the study data has been finalized any information will be destroyed for anonymity purposes.

Thank you again,
Sincerely,

Dr. Steve Clark

drsteveclark@gmail.com

(509) 844-1643

Please feel free to contact me for any questions.

Fathering Survey Verbatim Instructions Website Participants

Thank you for taking time out of your day to contribute your experience to the study of fathering. The survey should take about thirty minutes and all answers are confidential. You are not obligated to do this; it is completely voluntary; your time is greatly appreciated, and you may opt out at any time. Your willingness and generous time in answering survey questions is important for this study in fathering. I trust you will be encouraged and your name (put on a separate link at the end of the survey for anonymity) will be placed in a drawing for a Cabela's gift card worth \$250.

In the next few pages there is an informed consent form for you to read and sign (click on the consent button) prior to continuing if you are willing to do so. Once you have clicked on it you will be able to fill out the survey and at the end of the survey is the link for the incentive. But again, I am hoping you can finish the survey to help with this study but you are not obligated to do so. That is if after reading the instructions and beginning the survey you do not wish to continue you are free to do so or you do not finish the survey, none of the data will be used in the study.

For the survey, after reading the instructions for each area, please fill out the information in its entirety and answer how you see yourself or the situation. In general, respond to each item with the phrase, and its corresponding number, that best represents how you feel. That is, please do not answer what you think others might say, what answer that you think the survey might be after, or what you would like to be in your own eyes or others'.

Thank you again.

Dr. Steve Clark
drsteveclark@gmail.com
(509) 844-1643

Fathering Survey Informed Consent Form Website Participants

I authorize Dr. Steve Clark of Talbot PhD Educational Studies, Biola University, La Mirada, California, and/or any designated research assistants to gather information from me on the topic of fathers' intentional involvement in the spiritual formation of their children.

I understand that the general purposes of the research are exploratory, and that I will be asked to respond to a survey and that the approximate total time of my involvement will be about thirty minutes.

The potential benefits of the study are helping fathers in their parenting and helping church leaders in assisting fathers in that process.

I am aware that I may choose not to answer any questions that I find embarrassing or offensive.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or discontinue my participation at any time.

I understand that if, after my participation, I experience any undue anxiety or stress or have questions about the research or my rights as a participant, that may have been provoked by the experience, Steve Clark will be available for consultation or point me to someone who might be able to assist.

Confidentiality of research results will be maintained by the researcher. My individual results will not be released without my written consent. **[For Pilot Study Only:** I also know I have the option to provide my email and/or telephone number to be contacted by the researcher post survey in order to assist the researcher in assessing the study and make needed improvements.]

CLICK HERE if you agree.

Questions and comments may be addressed to Steve Clark at drsteveclark@gmail.com, (509) 844-1643.

Dear Church Leader,

My name is Steve Clark and I was given your name through a mutual friend, (NAME). Thank you for taking time to read this and allowing me to share about what I think you will agree is an important Church study I am doing this winter/spring: fathers and their father-child relationships especially pertaining to spiritual formation.

Yours and others significant contribution to what will be known as the Spokane Intentional Fathering Study (and shaping the church far beyond hopefully) is about Protestant Evangelical fathers and their involvement in the spiritual formation of their children. More specifically I hope to uncover a more accurate assessment in what way Protestant Evangelical fathers are intentionally involved in the spiritual formation of their children and what factors might be related to intentional involvement. Spiritual maturity, relational spirituality of fathers and their children as well as paternal involvement and satisfaction are among the domains dealt with in the survey. In the end, the study is intended not for head knowledge but to effect change, to practically inform and equip church leaders as well as fathers in their involvement with their children spiritually.

I am hoping to involve not only churches (various denominations) but also para-church groups via web, group and individual survey. I am gratefully asking that you, along with other churches in Spokane might be able to assist me motivating fathers to contribute to this important study.

I would be more than happy to discuss details with you about the process and the survey and I respect your time. In short, the survey is comprised mainly of two well established instruments: Personal Fathering Profile (Canfield, 1990) and Spiritual Assessment Inventory (Hall & Edwards, 1996). It takes about thirty minutes to complete the survey once appropriate instructions and consent forms are signed to inform and protect the participants.

Thank you for your time and I would like to follow up this communication further with a phone call if you please. Please feel free to email or call me at the information given below.

Dr. Steve Clark

drsteveclark@gmail.com, (509) 844-1643

APPENDIX B

PERMISSIONS

Hi Steve,

This e-mail indicates that I am granting you permission to use the SAI in your dissertation research. I hope it goes well.

Take care,

Todd

On May 1, 2010, at 1:28 PM, Steve Clark wrote:

Dr. Hall,

I am attaching a formal letter requesting permission to use your SAI. I am looking forward to seeing how things come out in my study. However serves your time best you can reply: I noticed other dissertations even had the permission granted from as simply a response at the bottom of the letter or if you prefer you can send a letter head via email.

Thanks so much.

Steve Clark

Fides Quaerens Intellectum

<SAI Permission request.doc>

Todd W. Hall, Ph.D.
Director, Institute for Research on Psychology & Spirituality
Associate Professor of Psychology
Editor, Journal of Psychology & Theology
Biola University
todd.hall@biola.edu
(562) 944-0351 X 5779

From: "Canfield, Ken R" <Ken.R.Canfield@Pepperdine.edu>
To: Steve Clark <icthus6@yahoo.com>
Sent: Fri, June 4, 2010 1:58:50 PM
Subject: RE: formal letter

Steve,

You may have my permission to use the Personal Fathering Profile as an instrument of assessment in your doctoral dissertation. .

Best wishes in your study. I look forward to reading the results.

Ken

Ken Canfield, Ph. D.

Executive Director
Boone Center for the Family
Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
(310) 506-8558
ken.canfield@pepperdine.edu

APPENDIX C

INSTRUMENT

Fathering

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Part I

Directions: Decide how successful you are in each of the following tasks of your fathering practices. Select the appropriate level by circling the corresponding number.

Example:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Not Applicable

A. Being a good example to my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
B. Knowing my children's heroes.	1 2 3 4 5 6
C. Providing for the basic needs of my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
D. Scheduling time to spend with my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6

1. Being involved in the discipline of my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Knowing my children's gifts and talents.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Reading the Bible with my children often.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Having a sexually fulfilling relationship with my wife.	1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Spending a lot of time with my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6. Being responsible for disciplining my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
7. Handling crises in a mature manner.	1 2 3 4 5 6
8. Being romantic with my wife.	1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Knowing my children's plans and dreams.	1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Demonstrating emotional maturity to my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Being able to respond calmly when my children say hurtful things to me	1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Sacrificing some of my activities to spend time with my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Praying with my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Stressing the importance of Christian values to my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
15. Setting limits for my children's behavior.	1 2 3 4 5 6
16. Having a specific plan to assist in my children's growth.	1 2 3 4 5 6
17. Helping my children develop their strengths and talents.	1 2 3 4 5 6
18. Discussing my children's development with my wife.	1 2 3 4 5 6
19. Knowing what to do in a family crisis.	1 2 3 4 5 6
20. Touching or hugging my child often.	1 2 3 4 5 6
21. Discussing with my wife my children's problems.	1 2 3 4 5 6
22. Being a mature role model to my children	1 2 3 4 5 6
23. Allowing my children to disagree with me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
24. Knowing who my children's friends are.	1 2 3 4 5 6
25. Talking about spiritual things with my children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
26. Sincerely thanking my children when they do something to help me or their mother.	1 2 3 4 5 6

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Not Applicable
27. Correcting my children when they do something wrong.	1	2	3	4	5 6
28. Spending time with my wife away from the children.	1	2	3	4	5 6
29. Helping my children understand what they are learning at school.	1	2	3	4	5 6
30. Showing affection to my children.	1	2	3	4	5 6
31. Being able to deal with crisis in a positive manner.	1	2	3	4	5 6
32. Telling my children they have done a "good job" when they complete a task.	1	2	3	4	5 6
33. Providing the majority of the family income.	1	2	3	4	5 6
34. Giving individual attention to each child every day.	1	2	3	4	5 6
35. Being patient with my children when they make mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5 6
36. Discussing goals for each child with my wife.	1	2	3	4	5 6
37. Having a good relationship with my wife.	1	2	3	4	5 6
38. Taking an active role in my child's education.	1	2	3	4	5 6
39. Discussing my frustrations as a parent with my wife.	1	2	3	4	5 6
40. Having a steady income.	1	2	3	4	5 6
41. Having a job that provides adequate income for my family.	1	2	3	4	5 6
42. Having a close, intimate bond with my children.	1	2	3	4	5 6
43. Being a good example to my children.	1	2	3	4	5 6
44. Being "level-headed" during a crisis.	1	2	3	4	5 6
45. Knowing my children's weekly schedule.	1	2	3	4	5 6
46. Having a family worship time in the home.	1	2	3	4	5 6
47. Scheduling time to spend with my children.	1	2	3	4	5 6
48. Talking with my children's teachers about their progress.	1	2	3	4	5 6
49. Providing for the basic needs of my family.	1	2	3	4	5 6
50. Modeling behavior that I want my children to perform.	1	2	3	4	5 6
51. Teaching my child a skill.	1	2	3	4	5 6
52. Responding calmly when my children do something with which I do not agree.	1	2	3	4	5 6
53. Knowing the issues with which my children are dealing.	1	2	3	4	5 6
54. Not losing my temper with my children.	1	2	3	4	5 6
55. Telling my children that I am proud of them.	1	2	3	4	5 6
56. Avoiding habits or actions that I do not want my children doing.	1	2	3	4	5 6
57. Knowing my children's heroes.	1	2	3	4	5 6
58. Helping my children develop athletic skills.	1	2	3	4	5 6
59. Knowing what my children are able to do for their age.	1	2	3	4	5 6
60. Helping my children complete their homework.	1	2	3	4	5 6

Part II

Decide how satisfied you are for each area stated below. Choose the corresponding number.

Example:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied

A. Being a good example to my children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B. Knowing my children's heroes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C. How satisfied are you with the amount of support you receive from your wife to be a good father?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

61. How satisfied were you with your childhood?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
62. How satisfied are you with yourself as a father?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
63. How satisfied are you with the amount of support you receive from your wife to be a good father?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
64. How satisfied are you with the amount of respect you receive from your family members?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
65. How satisfied are you with your ability to talk with your children?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
66. How satisfied were you with your relationship to your father while growing up?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
67. How satisfied are you with the way your children are growing up?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
68. How satisfied are you with the amount of support you receive from friends to be a good father?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
69. How satisfied are you with your ability to be the family leader?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
70. How satisfied are you with your ability to express yourself to your children?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
71. How satisfied were you with your relationship to your mother while growing up?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
72. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your children?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
73. How satisfied are you with the amount of support you receive from your closest living relatives to be a good father?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

74. How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive from your family as the family leader? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Extremely Very Somewhat Mixed Somewhat Very Extremely
 Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Satisfied Satisfied Satisfied
75. How satisfied are you with how much your children talk to you? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
76. How satisfied are you with the support you receive from other men to be a good father? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
-
77. How satisfied are you with the guidance you received from your parents while growing up? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
78. How satisfied are you with the support you receive through the church to be a good father? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Part III

Instructions:

1. Please respond to each statement below by selecting the number that best represents your experience to the right of the statement.
2. It is best to answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be.
3. Give the answer that comes to mind first. Don't spend too much time thinking about an item.
4. Give the best possible response to each statement even if it does not provide all the information you would like.
5. Try your best to respond to all statements. Your answers will be completely confidential.
6. Some of the statements consist of two parts as shown here.

2.1	There are times when I feel disappointed with God.	
2.2.	When this happens, I still want our relationship to continue.	

Your responses to the second statement (2.2) tells how true this second statement (2.2) is for you when you have experience (e.g. feeling disappointed with God) described in the first statement (2.1).

- 1 2 3 4 5
 Not at all true Slightly true Moderately true Substantially true Very true
79. I have a sense of how God is working in my life. 1 2 3 4 5
- 80.1 *There are times when I feel disappointed with God.* 1 2 3 4 5
- 80.2 *When this happens, I still want our relationship to continue.* 1 2 3 4 5

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true	Slightly true	Moderately true	Substantially true	Very true
81.	God's presence feels very real to me.			1 2 3 4 5
82.	I am afraid that God will give up on me.			1 2 3 4 5
83.	I seem to have a unique ability to influence God through my prayers.			1 2 3 4 5
84.	Listening to God is an essential part of my life.			1 2 3 4 5
85.	I am always in a worshipful mood when I go to church.			1 2 3 4 5
86.1	<i>There are times when I feel frustrated with God.</i>			1 2 3 4 5
86.2	<i>When I feel this way, I still desire to put effort into our relationship.</i>			1 2 3 4 5
87.	I am aware of God prompting me to do things.			1 2 3 4 5
88.	My emotional connection with God is unstable.			1 2 3 4 5
89.	My experience of God's responses to me impact me greatly.			1 2 3 4 5
90.1	<i>There are times when I feel irritated at God.</i>			1 2 3 4 5
90.2	<i>When I feel this way, I am able to come to some sense of resolution in our relationship.</i>			1 2 3 4 5
91.	God recognizes that I am more spiritual than most people.			1 2 3 4 5
92.	I always seek God's guidance for every decision I make.			1 2 3 4 5
93.	I am aware of God's presence in my interactions with other people.			1 2 3 4 5
94.	There are times when I feel that God is punishing me.			1 2 3 4 5
95.	I am aware of God responding to me in a variety of ways.			1 2 3 4 5
96.1	<i>There are times when I feel angry at God.</i>			1 2 3 4 5
96.2	<i>When this happens, I still have the sense that God will always be with me.</i>			1 2 3 4 5
97.	I am aware of God attending to me in times of need.			1 2 3 4 5
98.	God understands that my needs are more important than most people's.			1 2 3 4 5
99.	I am aware of God telling me to do something.			1 2 3 4 5
100.	I worry that I will be left out of God's plans.			1 2 3 4 5
101.	My experiences of God's presence impact me greatly.			1 2 3 4 5
102.	I am always as kind at home as I am at church.			1 2 3 4 5
103.	I have a sense of the direction in which God is guiding me.			1 2 3 4 5
104.	My relationship with God is an extraordinary one that most people would not understand.			1 2 3 4 5
105.1	<i>There are times when I feel betrayed by God.</i>			1 2 3 4 5
105.2	<i>When I feel this way, I put effort into restoring our relationship.</i>			1 2 3 4 5
106.	I am aware of God communicating to me in a variety of ways.			1 2 3 4 5
107.	Manipulating God seems to be the best way to get what I want.			1 2 3 4 5
108.	I am aware of God's presence in times of need.			1 2 3 4 5
109.	From day to day, I sense God being with me.			1 2 3 4 5

110.	I pray for all my friends and relatives every day.	1	2	3	4	5
1		2		3		4
	Not at all true		Slightly true		Moderately true	
					Substantially true	Very true
111.1	<i>There are times when I feel frustrated by God for not responding to my prayers.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
111.2	<i>When I feel this way, I am able to talk it through with God.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
112.	I have a sense of God communicating guidance to me.	1	2	3	4	5
113.	When I sin, I tend to withdraw from God.	1	2	3	4	5
114.	I experience an awareness of God speaking to me personally.	1	2	3	4	5
115.	I find my prayers to God are more effective than other people's.	1	2	3	4	5
116.	I am always in the mood to pray.	1	2	3	4	5
117.	I feel I have to please God or he might reject me.	1	2	3	4	5
118.	I have a strong impression of God's presence.	1	2	3	4	5
119.	There are times when I feel that God is angry at me.	1	2	3	4	5
120.	I am aware of God being very near to me.	1	2	3	4	5
121.	When I sin, I am afraid of what God will do to me.	1	2	3	4	5
122.	When I consult God about decisions in my life, I am aware of His direction and help.	1	2	3	4	5
123.	I seem to be more gifted than most people in discerning God's will.	1	2	3	4	5
124.	When I feel God is not protecting me, I tend to feel worthless.	1	2	3	4	5
125.1	<i>There are times when I feel like God has let me down.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
125.2	<i>When this happens, my trust in God is not completely broken.</i>	1	2	3	4	5

Almost Finished

1. Please respond to each statement below by selecting the number that best represents your response.
 2. It is best to answer according to what really reflects your response rather than what you think your response should be.
 3. Give the answer that comes to mind first. Don't spend too much time thinking about an item.
- On the few remaining questions

1		2		3		4		5
	Not at all true		Slightly true		Moderately true		Substantially true	Very true
126.	My child's education is the most important area of their life.	1	2	3	4	5		
127.	I routinely look for ways to interact spiritually with my children.	1	2	3	4	5		
128.	I organize my time to allow for family worship time.	1	2	3	4	5		

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

	Not at all true	Slightly true	Moderately true	Substantially true	Very true
129.				1	2 3 4 5
					I believe I have the primary responsibility in the spiritual development of my child.
130.				1	2 3 4 5
					Sunday school is the primary means for my child to learn spiritual things.
131.				1	2 3 4 5
					I prefer to let others primarily teach spiritual things to my children.
132.				1	2 3 4 5
					At times I have struggled with time demands of work not affording me adequate time with my children spiritually.
132a.				1	2 3 4 5
					If I selected 2-5 above, I took steps to make changes in my work demands in order to spend more time with my children.
132b.					If you selected 2-5 on 132a would you be willing to share what you did? Respond here:

About You.

These are completely confidential questions. Thank you for responding to each item. Please select the appropriate answer.

133. Your birth year _____
134. Your level of education (circle one): Grade School, High School, Technical Degree, Associate Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, Doctorate Degree
135. Number of children between 4 and 18 years old living with you _____.
Child #/age: 1/age__, 2/age__, 3/age__, 4/age__, 5/age __, 6/age__7/age__, 8/age__
136. On average, how many hours per week do you spend directly interacting with your children? ____hrs/week
137. On average, how many hours per week do you work? ____hrs/week
138. On average, how many hours per week do you spend in hobbies that do not involve your children? ____hrs/week
139. On average, how many minutes per day do you spend with your children in spiritual activity or conversation? ___minutes/day
140. Which of these describes your religious orientation? Circle one:
Fundamental, Evangelical, Charismatic, Mainline Protestant, Liberal, none, other.
141. Which of these describes your religious affiliation? Circle one:
Assembly of God, Baptist, Calvary Chapel, Foursquare Gospel, Evangelical Free, Church of Christ, Free Methodist, Nazarene, Non-denominational, Presbyterian, Vineyard Christian Fellowship, other.

APPENDIX D

INSTRUMENT CHARTS

Table D.1

Operation Definitions of Research Hypothesis Concepts

RH #	RH Concept/term	Operational definition	Data type	Item # in my study
2	Spirituality maturity	SAI: Spiritual Assessment Inventory	Int	79-125.2
3.1(new)7, 7a	Spiritual intentionality	SAI: AOG=Awareness of God	Int	79, 81, 84, 87, 89, 93, 95, 97, 99, 101, 103, 106, 108, 109, 112, 114, 118, 120, 122
1,1a,3,3a, 6	Relational closeness to God.	SAI: DIS = Disappointment With God	Int	80.1, 86.1, 90.1, 96.1, 105.1, 111.1, 125.1
		SAI: RA = Realistic Acceptance of God	Int	80.2, 86.2, 90.2, 96.2, 105.2, 111.2, 125.2
		SAI: GRA = Grandiosity	Int	83, 91, 98, 104, 107, 115, 123
		SAI: INS = Instability	Int	82, 88, 94, 100, 113, 117, 119, 121, 124
		SAI: IM = Impression Management	Int	85, 92, 102, 110, 116
1,1a 2, 3, 3a 8,8a,	Intentional fathering	INT = 6 of 12 subscales of PFP or Personal Fathering Profile		
		Aff = Showing Affection	Int	20, 26, 30, 32, 42, 55
		Mo = Modeling	Int	10, 22, 43, 50, 56
		Time = Time Committed to Children	Int	5, 12, 34, 47
		Disc = Involvement in Discipline	Int	1, 6, 15, 27
		Ed = Involvement in Education	Int	16, 17, 29, 38, 48, 51, 58, 60
		Kno = Knowing My Child	Int	2, 9, 24, 45, 53, 57, 59
2,3,3a, 3.1new 4,4a, 4.1, 4.1a	Involvement in their child's spiritual formation	PFP: SD = Spiritual Development Subscale	Int	3, 13, 14, 25, 46
4, 4a	Spousal oneness	PFP: Parental Discussion	Int	18, 21, 36, 39
		PFP: Marital Interaction	Int	4, 8, 28, 37

Table Continues

Table D.1 *Operation Definitions of Research Hypothesis Concepts*, (continued)

RH #	RH Concept/term	Operational definition	Data type	Item # in my study
2,7	Fathering satisfaction	PFP, Fathering Satisfaction Scale	Int	61-78
		PFP, Father Satisfaction Scale in role as father	Int	62, 67,72
		PFP, Father Satisfaction Scale father's childhood recall	Int	61, 66, 71, 77
4.1,4.1a	Support from spouse & others	PFP, Father SatisfactionScale support from spouse and others	Int	63, 68, 73, 76, 78
		PFP, Father Satisfaction Scale leadership ability	Int	64, 69, 74
		PFP, Father Satisfaction Scale verbal relationship with child	Int	65, 70,75
	Demographic questions	Age	Rat	133
		Level of education	Cat	134
		No. children ages 4-18 at home	Rat	135
8, 8a		Hours of weekly direct interaction	Rat	136
7, 7a		Hours weekly worked	Rat	137
6		Hours spent weekly in hobbies away from children	Rat	138
8, 8a		Per diem time of spiritual interaction	Rat	139
		Religious orientation	Cat	140
		Religious affiliation	Cat	141

Table Continues

Table D.1 *Operation Definitions of Research Hypothesis Concepts, (continued)*

RH #	RH Concept/term	Operational definition	Data type	Item # in my study
		Researcher developed questions		
5	Most important area	My child's education is the most important area of his or her life.	Int	126
		I routinely look for ways to interact spiritually with my children.	Int	127
		I organize my time to allow for family worship time.	Int	128
5, 6	Primarily responsible	I believe I have the primary responsibility in the spiritual development of my child.	Int	129
		Sunday school is the primary means for my child to learn spiritual things.	Int	130
		I prefer to let others primarily teach spiritual things to my children.	Int	131
		If I could alter my employment solely to be more involved with my children's spiritual development I would.	Int	132

Table D. 2

Demographic and Researcher Developed Questions

Concept	Instrument name w/subscales	No. items	Type of data	Reliability for scale/subscale
Demographics	Age	1	Int	n/a
	Level of education	1	Cat	n/a
	Number of children between 4-18 living with you at home	1	Ratio	n/a
	Hours of weekly direct interaction	1	Ratio	n/a
	Hours weekly worked	1	Ratio	n/a
	Hours spent weekly in hobbies away from children	1	Ratio	n/a
	Per diem time of spiritual interaction	1	Ratio	n/a
	Religious orientation	1	Cat	n/a
	Religious affiliation	1	Cat	n/a
	Researcher developed questions (RDQ)			
Most important area	My child's education is the most important area of their life.	1	Int	n/a
	I routinely look for ways to interact spiritually with my children.	1	Int	n/a
	I organize my time to allow for family worship time.	1	Int	n/a
Primarily responsible	I believe I have the primary responsibility in the spiritual development of my child.	1	Int	n/a
	Sunday school is the primary means for my child to learn spiritual things.	1	Int	n/a
	I prefer to let others primarily teach spiritual things to my child.	1	Int	n/a
	At times I have struggled with demands of work not affording me adequate time with my children spiritually.	1	Int	n/a

APPENDIX E

**ADDITIONAL STUDIES FOR RELATIONAL SPIRITUAL
FORMATION OF CHILDREN**

Additional Studies for Relational Spiritual Formation of Children

Author, date, strength.	Subjects	Instrument/Method	Results
Broberg, A., Wessels, H., Lamb, M., & Hwang, C. (1997). IA, EL/N.	<i>N</i> = 146 children (72 girls, 74 boys) in Gottenberg, Sweden; begun at <i>M</i> = 16 months; 54 in center care at 19 months, 33 in family day care. Assessed again at 8 years old.	Longitudinal study from 16 months (<i>M</i> age). At 8 years old, cognitive tests given to 123 children (65 girls, 58 boys) still in the study.	Early measures of cognitive ability are best predictors of cognitive performance at 8 years old, but type of early child care experience is positively predictive as well. Multiple limitations or contravening variables admitted.
De Roos, S., Iedema, J., & Miedema, S. (2003). IA, ER.	<i>N</i> = 198 Dutch preschoolers (<i>M</i> = 68 months) of mothers belonging to 6 different denominations: non-affiliated, Pentecostal, Catholic, Dutch Reformed, Orthodox Reformed, Strict Orthodox Reformed.	Children's God concepts measured by structured 45-minute interviews to assess God concepts, concepts of self and others, and attachment representations.	Mothers' or schools' religious denomination have independent effects on children's God concept, which generally correspond to theology description of religious belief. Older preschoolers see God less like parents than younger. Children not taught religion by parents at home as much as school.

Table Continues

Table E.1 *Additional Studies for Relational Spiritual Formation of Children*, (continued)

Dickie, J., Eshleman, A., Merasco, D., Shepard, A., Vander Wilt, M., & Johnson, M. (1997). IA, ER/L.	Study 1 <i>N</i> = 49 children 4-10 years old; Study 2 <i>N</i> = 94 children 4-11 years old. Children recruited from Head Start program, nursery school, and two central city elementary schools, randomly selected from those with parent permission. Study 3 <i>N</i> = 132 (41 from Study 1; 91 from Study 2).	Study 1: 25- to 30-minute interviews at school on Nurture/Power God, Bem Sex Role Inventory (1974) illustrations. Study 2: 25-minute interview on views of dad/mom (nurturing or powerful); parental discipline doll exercise. Study 3: child's own self-perception using Bem Sex Role Inventory (1974).	Children who perceive parents as nurturing and powerful (especially mom as powerful and dad as nurturing) perceive God as both nurturing and powerful; more like father in early childhood and more like mother or both later. Substitution attachment as children separate from parents as they age or in father's absence. Parents influence children's God images directly via nurture/power issues and indirectly via paternal involvement.
Kazura, K. (2000). IA, EL/N.	<i>N</i> = 27 families (27 fathers, 27 mothers, and their child): 14 with children 14-16 months; 13 with children 22-26 months.	In-home visit structured interview using PCCQ (Parent-Child Caregiving Quest). Play laboratory using Strange Situation and three play scenarios (child-toy, father-child, mother-child).	Father-child relationships need assessment—not usually level of involvement (quantity) but quality of relationship: e.g. attachment behavior, play interaction, social interaction. Play important for father-child, social for mother-child. Children securely attached to father have significantly higher play levels than insecurely attached. Children securely attached mother have significantly higher social levels.

Table Continues

Table E.1 *Additional Studies for Relational Spiritual Formation of Children*, (continued)

McDonald, A., Beck, R., Allison, S., & Norsworthy, L. (2005). IS, ER.	<i>N</i> = 101 undergraduates at Abilene Christian University; age 18-27 years (<i>M</i> = 19.92).	Correlational. Attachment to God Inventory (AGI, Beck & McDonald, 2004); Religious Emphasis Scale (RES, Altemeyer, 1998); Parental Spirituality Scale (PSS, McDonald et al., 2005); Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI; Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979); Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES; Olson, 1986); Parental Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ; Kenny, 1987).	Supports correspondence view of parents and God. Parents' spirituality and bonding are associated with attachment to God dimensions among college students. Respondents from cold or unspiritual homes exhibit higher levels of avoidance of intimacy with God (dismissing attachment). Overprotective/rigid, authoritarian homes associated with higher levels of avoidance of intimacy and anxiety over relationship with God (fearful attachment).
Miner, M. (2009). IA, ER.	<i>N</i> = 116 adults in Australia.	Correlational: State-Trait Anxiety Quest (Spielbergers, 1983); Existential Well Being (EWB) subscale (Bufford, Paloutzian, & Ellison, 1991); Revised Intrinsic-Extrinsic Scale (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989); Parent Attachment Measure (Proctor, 1998); God Attachment Measure (Proctor, 1998)	Effects of religious orientation, retroactive accounts of child-parent attachment, and current God attachment. EWB subscale secure attachment predicts lower anxiety, higher EWB; attachment to God predicts level of anxiety and EWB more than parental attachment. But secure parent attachment predicts secure God attachment, which predicts less anxiety and greater EWB.

Note: Strength of internal validity (I) for each research article will be indicated on the table by an "S" (strong), "A" (acceptable), and "W" (weak). Generalizability (E) for external Validity will be indicated by on the table by an "R" (fairly representative), "L" (limited/less than an author's intended target audience, and "N" (not generalizable). For example IA, EL is Acceptable internal validity, Limited Generalizability (external validity). Studies are in alphabetical order.

APPENDIX F

ADDITIONAL STUDIES FOR PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT

Table F.1

Additional Studies for Paternal Involvement

Author, date, strength	Subjects	Instrument/Method	Results
Acock, & Bengston, (1978). IA, ER/L.	Subsample of 653 parent-youth triads (2,044 respondents, 70% response rate) from metro Los Angeles. Examine degree of similarity between parents & young adults (16-26 years old).	Correlational. 87 items on 11 variables	Parent (religious/political bent) predictive of children's responses: mothers higher levels of prediction than fathers on most variables—fathers higher in religious behavior, religiosity, tolerance for deviance, traditional sexual norms. Supports socialization theory of parental influence (especially mother).
Amato, (1998). IS, EL.	<i>N</i> = 384 of those living with 1980 study biological parents, 7-19 years old.	Longitudinal.	Fathers influence children's wellbeing via combination of human, financial, and social capital. High level of paternal education and income benefits children's education, which in turn has positive outcomes. Fathers' effect on children's self-esteem, education, psychological distress is greater than mothers'.

Table Continues

Table F.1 *Additional Studies for Paternal Involvement*, (continued)

Barna, (2003). IA, ER.	Nationwide random sample of 907 teenagers, 154 of them 13 years old. This study and book focus on the 13-year-olds.	Survey.	Most adolescents are involved in or desire religious activity of some type (4 of 5 young people want close relationship with God as cornerstone of their lives). Only 3% of nation's 13-year-olds have biblical worldview; 4 of 5 parents say spiritual life of children is important, but 2 of 3 parents delegate the responsibility and typically drop off kids; 1 of 20 have any type of family worship; only 24% of churches consider youth ministry a top priority.
Bartkowski, & Wilcox. (2000). IA, ER.	National Survey of Family and Households (NSFH): Subsample 1 $N = 1,051$ intact parents with 1 or more child under 5 years old; Subsample 2 $N = 3,199$ intact parents with 1 or more child 5-18 years old.	In-person interview and self-administered survey in the NSFH.	Protestant parents of pre-school children are significantly less likely to report yelling at their children. Conservative Protestant theology and belief in corporal punishment (spanking) are not authoritarian but actually correspond with reporting less yelling and more controlled affirmative parenting.
Belsky, (1998). IA, ER.	$N = 123$ intact couples, white, middle class, semi-rural with first-born sons.	Empirical, longitudinal. At age 10 months, 12-13 months, 2 years, and 3 years, Child Behavior Checklist parent report, home- and laboratory-based observation of child temperament.	Positive fathering correlates to children's decreased external behavioral problems. Positive fathering correlates to greater inhibited behavior more than early signs of children's temperament (which does not correlate to decreases in external behavior problems but does to inhibition).

Table Continues

Table F.1 *Additional Studies for Paternal Involvement*, (continued)

Bollinger & Palkovitz, (2003). IA, ER/L.	<i>N</i> = 65 fathers, age 26-68 years (<i>M</i> = 44); average 3 children; 20 Evangelical Christian, 20 Latter-Day Saint (LDS), 25 non-religious (FFNC). Convenience sample to churches, day care, and East Coast university. 440 surveys sent, 65 returned (15% return rate).	Investigate correlations between father's faith (participation in religious activity) and involvement in raising his children among 3 groups—Evangelical Christian, LDS, and FFNC—on Generative Involved Fatherwork Scale (GIFS), Religious Behavior Survey (RBS).	Evangelical Christians are more involved than LDS but not significantly; being active in faith community does not imply high levels of involvement, but being married (never divorced) does express high involvement. Church membership seems to relate to involvement. Issues with study, group assignments, definitions, etc.
Canfield & Roid, (1994). IS, ER.	1,650 fathers (age 20-82 years, <i>M</i> = 39.6, <i>SD</i> = 9.6) general sample throughout United States; and 42 effective fathers.	Personal Fathering Profile (PFP): 138 items on Likert scale.	Found significant differences between effective and general fathers. Supports PFP Instrument basis, 7 internally consistent fathering dimensions: committed, knowing child, consistent, providing, love of spouse, active listening, and spiritual equipping.
Culp, Schadle, Robinson, & Culp, (2000). IA, ER.	<i>N</i> = 25 kindergartners (<i>M</i> = 6.2 years old, <i>SD</i> = .8; 15 boys, 10 girls); fathers <i>M</i> = 37.4 years old, mothers <i>M</i> = 35.6 years old. Examined relationship of fathers' involvement to young children's perceived self-competence and mothers' perception of children's internal/external behavior problems.	Fathers and mothers independently complete Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL, 112 items) and Paternal Involvement Child Care Index (PICCI). Children with trained tester complete Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance for Young Children (PCSA).	High father involvement is associated with increased children's feelings of paternal acceptance, a fact that plays a role in the development of self-concept and self-esteem. Mothers in families with higher paternal involvement have more positive outlook on children's behavior.

Table Continues

Table F.1 *Additional Studies for Paternal Involvement*, (continued)

Francis & Gibson (1993). IS, ER/L.	<i>N</i> = 3,414 youths 11-12 years old and 15-16 years old) in Scotland: <i>n</i> = 932 girls 11-12 years old <i>n</i> = 815 boys 11-12 years old <i>n</i> = 820 girls 15-16 years old <i>n</i> = 847 boys 15-16 years old	Gibson (1989) survey and Francis Scale of Attitude Toward Christianity (FSATC, Francis, 1989) on personal religious practices and attitudes and parental religious practices. Comparing mothers'/fathers' influence on male/female adolescents.	Parental influence is important for both boys and girls with little difference in influence on son or daughter (but difference increases with age)—parental modeling is important as children age; mothers' practice more powerful predictor than fathers' practice; comparative father influence on sons greater than on daughters; comparative mother influence greater on daughters than on sons; influence of parents' external religious practices is greater than that of parents' private religious attitudes.
Harris & Marmer, (1996). IS, EL.	<i>N</i> = 784 children who lived continuously with 2-parent family in all 3 waves of the National Survey of Children (NSC, 1976, 1981, 1987).	Semi-structured in-person interviews. National Survey of Children (NSC, 1976, 1981, 1987)	Poverty and welfare influence levels of father's involvement with child: in persistent poverty father tends to be less emotionally and behaviorally involved. But the greater the father involvement the less the child's behavioral issues. Mothers tend to be more involved in poor families and protect children from adverse outcomes (in non-poor families mothers and fathers are more involved).
Harris, Furstenberg, & Marmer (1998). IS, EL.	<i>N</i> = 584 children of intact biological-parent families found in 3 waves of the National Survey of Children (NSC, 1976, 1981, 1987), mostly Hispanic (<i>n</i> = 519).	In-person interviews.	Fathers more involved with sons than daughters. At-risk family (poor) seems to marginalize paternal involvement more than maternal. Marital conflict relates to increased paternal detachment. Involved fathers have positive influence on education and self-perception, and decreased delinquent behavior.

Table Continues

Table F.1 *Additional Studies for Paternal Involvement*, (continued)

Hawkins, Bradford, Palkovitz, Christiansen, Day, & Vaughn (2002). IS, ER.	$N = 723$ fathers; analysis limited to those 22-29 years old (723 of 739 returned surveys).	2,200 surveys mailed in national survey (739 replies for 34%), Inventory of Faith Involvement (IFI): 100 items, factor analysis yields 25-item IFI.	Developed an instrument with 1 global score, 25 items (9 factors of first order) with good construct validity ($\alpha = .69-.87$).
Marsiglio (1991). IA, ER.	$N = 1,465$ married fathers: 394 with children under 5 years old; 1,071 with children 5-18 years old.	National Survey of Family & Households (NSFH, 1998)	Children's characteristics are a greater predictor of fathers' involvement than fathers' or mothers' characteristics (all boys, own biological, fewer, etc.). Father's education level corresponds to increased reading with child; mother's activity corresponds to father's involvement by following (not compensating).
Morman & Floyd (2002). IA, ER/L.	$N = 278$ father-son dyads Fathers 30-74 years old ($M = 50.07$, $SD = 6.72$). Sons 12-48 years old ($M = 21.94$, $SD = 5.83$). Convenience, snowball sampling.	Survey (father and son did not confer). Affectionate Communication Index (ACI: verbal, non-verbal, supportive); Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS, Closeness); Relational Satisfaction scale.	Fathers reported better father-son relationships than their father-father relationship. Sons reported better relationship with their father than father-father relationships. Sons more satisfied with dads than dads with sons. Fathers closer, more satisfied with, and expressed more affective communication with sons than they did with own fathers.

Note: Strength of internal validity (I) for each research article will be indicated on the table by an "S" (strong), "A" (acceptable), and "W" (weak). Generalizability (E) for external Validity will be indicated by on the table by an "R" (fairly representative), "L" (limited/less than an author's intended target audience, and "N" (not generalizable). For example IA, EL is Acceptable internal validity, Limited Generalizability (external validity). Studies are in alphabetical order.

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Chapman University, Orange, CA Emphasis: Education, Curriculum, & Instruction	M.A.	1991
University of California at Davis, Davis, CA Emphasis: Philosophy	B.A.	1985
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PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Impact of Legal Issues on Homeschooling in Christian Education. In
Encyclopedia of Christian Education (forthcoming)
- Theology of Fathering. In *Encyclopedia of Christian Education* (forthcoming)
- Book Review: *Christian Education Journal*, Vol 10, Issue 1(forthcoming) 2013
- Research Brief: *The Journal of Family Ministry*, Vol 2, Issue 1 2011
- Book Review: *The Journal of Family Ministry*, Vol 2, Issue 1 2011
- Professional Research Mall: North American Professors of Christian
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- Book Review: *American Theological Inquiry*, Vol 2, No. 2, 2009 2009
- Tennis Article: *Tennis Magazine*, Sept 2005 2005