

ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES AMONG  
SELECTED MEGA CHURCHES IN MANILA, PHILIPPINES

A Thesis Presented to

The Faculty of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Religious Education

Holistic Child Development

BY

VIKTORIIA KHEN

TAYTAY, RIZAL

NOVEMBER, 2013

ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WE HEREBY APPROVE THE THESIS  
SUBMITTED BY

VIKTORIIA KHEN

ENTITLED

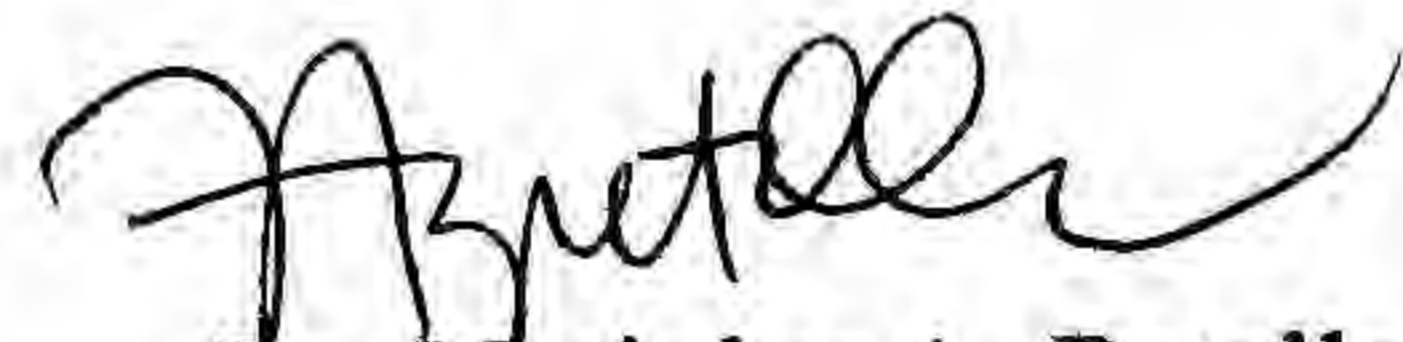
PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES AMONG SELECTED  
MEGA CHURCHES IN MANILA, PHILIPPINES

AS PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
(HOLISTIC CHILD DEVELOPMENT)



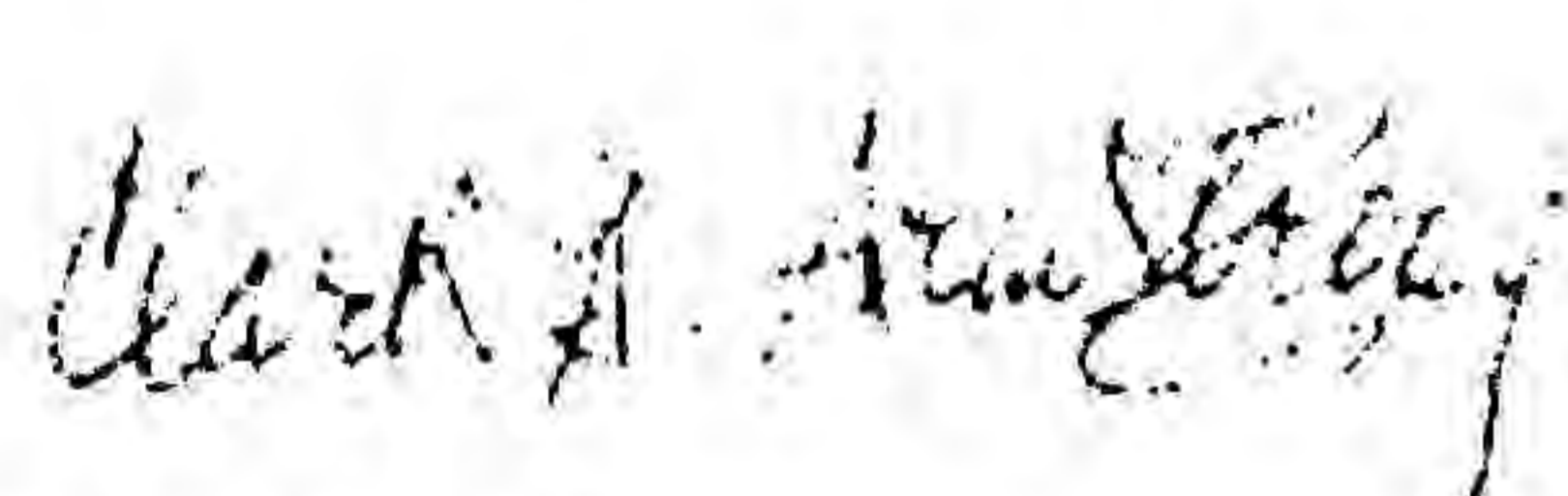
Dr. Catherine Stonehouse  
Thesis Advisor

November 7, 2013  
Date



Dr. Nativity A. Petallar  
Program Director

November 7, 2013  
Date



Dr. Clark Armstrong  
Faculty Reader

November 7, 2013  
Date



Dr. Irene S. Yang  
External Reader

November 7, 2013  
Date



Dr. Floyd T. Cunningham  
Acad. Dean/Acting Pres.

November 7, 2013  
Date

## ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify the principles and practices of children's ministries in the selected mega churches of Manila and suggest recommendations that can be drawn from them for other children's ministries. The selected mega churches were Christ's Commission Fellowship (CCF), Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF), and Victory Christian Fellowship (VCF). Based on long-term experience of ministering with children, fourteen respondents of this study shared their views of children's nurture in the church.

The researcher employed a semi-structured interview conversation approach, observations, and materials' analysis to gather sufficient information about the principles and practices of children's ministries in CCF, GCF, and VCF. Data collection and analysis were guided according to five distinctive categories of activity which are inherent in intentional children's ministries: perspectives of the church on ministry with children, investment in ministry with children, methods and techniques used in ministry with children, content provided through ministry with children, and workers of children's ministry (Barna, 2003, 97-118).

Based on the findings, this study concluded: CCF, GCF, and VCF value children, understand the importance of their spiritual growth, and so invest in them to "start children off on the way they should go" (Proverbs 22:6, NIV). In spite of some weaknesses of ministry, NxtGen (children's ministry of CCF), Sunday School (children's ministry of GCF), and Victory Kids (children's ministry of VCF) have strong principles and practices which can be applied to churches of various sizes and in different cultural contexts.

Thereby this research proposes recommendations for smaller churches in other contexts, for CCF, GCF, and VCF, and for further study.

## DEDICATION

To all people who care about children in the church

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God for giving me strength to accomplish this research! He is indeed omniscient God! He knew when I was weak and so blessed me with the people for whom I am greatly thankful to Him:

Thank you, Dr. Nativity Petallarand Dr. Cathy Stonehouse, for being wise advisors for me all throughout my *Master thesis challenge!*

Thank you, Dr. John Bondy, for helping me to enrich this thesis through the authors you introduced to me!

Thank you, Professor Linda Bondy, for practical advice and excellent editing that you have done!

Thank you, Dr. Floyd Cunningham, Dr. Clark Armstrong, and Dr. Irene Yang for your insights and reflections to help to perfect this thesis even more!

Thank you, my family, for the encouragement and the support to finish my studies at APNTS! Thank you, my friends, for being my loving family during all these semesters of writing! And thank you, my fiancé Dmitry Sim, for being there for me in the times of joy and tears!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE.....	i
SIGNATURE PAGE .....	ii
ABSTRACT .....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Theoretical Framework.....	6
Conceptual Framework.....	7
Statement of the Problem and Subproblems.....	8
Significance of the Study.....	10
Assumptions .....	11
Definitions of Terms.....	11
Scope and Limitations of the Study.....	11
CHAPTER 2:REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE, STUDIES, AND WORKS .....	13
Biblical Insights on Ministries with Children.....	14
Theological Insights on Ministries with Children .....	15
Why Mega Churches?.....	17
Children’s Spirituality .....	20

Intentional Children’s Ministry .....	23
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES .....	50
Method of the Study .....	50
Sources of Data.....	51
Research-Gathering Procedure .....	52
Data-Gathering Instruments.....	53
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA .....	55
Perspective of the Church on Ministry with Children .....	55
Investment of the Church in Ministry with Children.....	72
Methods and Techniques of the Ministry with Children .....	82
Content Provided through the Ministry with Children .....	100
Equipping Workers of Children’s Ministry and Child Protection.....	109
Other Findings .....	117
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	123
Summary of Findings .....	124
Conclusions.....	129
Recommendations.....	133
APPENDICES .....	135
A. Letter of Request to the Senior Pastor of CCF .....	135
B. Letter of Request to the Senior Pastor of GCF .....	136
C. Letter of Request to the Senior Pastor of VCF .....	137
D. Letter of Request to the Children’s Ministry Directors of CCF, GCF, and VCF .....	138
E. Letter of Request to the Selected Teachers of CCF, GCF, and VCF .....	139

F. George Barna’s Permission to Use His Study ( <i>Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions</i> ) for the Purposes of This Research .....	140
G. Interview Protocol .....	141
H. Observation Protocol .....	144
I. Materials’ Analysis Protocol .....	146
J. CCF NxtGen Ministry Structure.....	147
K. GCF Sunday School Ministry Structure .....	148
L. VCF Victory Kids Ministry Structure .....	149
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>CURRICULUM VITA .....</b>	<b>160</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: View of Children's Spirituality .....	65
Table 2. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Family and Its role for the Spiritual Nurture of Children.....	70
Table 3. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Investment of the Church in Children's Ministry through the Prayer for Children .....	77
Table 4. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Intentionality of Church's Leaders and Their Involvement with Children's Ministry .....	81
Table 5. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Specific Goals of Children's Ministry.....	83
Table 6. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Methods of Teaching Children .....	90
Table 7. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Ministerial Teaching Focus.....	92
Table 8. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Principles of Teaching Children .....	94
Table 9. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Children's Involvement in Ministry.....	105
Table 10. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Parents' Involvement in Ministry .....	107
Table 11. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Recommendations of Respondents to Smaller Children's Ministries .....	120
Table 12. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Summary of Major Findings.....	121

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Contours of Effective Children's Ministries adapted from the research of George Barna and published in <i>Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions</i> ..6	
Figure 2. Conceptual Framework .....	8
Figure 3. The Model of Larry Fowler: Church, Parent, and Child .....	31

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background of the Problem**

Children are precious in the eyes of God! He loves and cares for children; therefore He calls adults to do the same. The ministry of Jesus was the ministry to all humankind which includes “the little ones.” In fact, Jesus had emphasized the role of children by taking them into His own arms, putting them among the twelve disciples, blessing them, and saying: “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me” (Mark 9:36-37, NIV). The ministry with children is the ministry for God, obedience to His word, and a blessing.

As a little child, I attended Sunday School in Surajevka Village, Russia. It was fun and children enjoyed being there. The chance to earn *talents* (Sunday School token money of that church) there made it even more attractive. Later on those *talents* could be exchanged during frequently occurring Sunday School Trade Fairs where the tables were always full of breathtaking goodies for kids. We met in a small classroom and children were always noisy trying to be the first to answer the questions from the teacher to get the talent. I attended that Sunday School for around two years. Sadly, I remember only the fairs and shouting-the-answers-children.

The next time I went to a Sunday School was many years later in a new city. That Sunday School was different and yet, something was missing. The program was well organized and a sequence of activities was well developed. It was a place with a smiling teacher and pictures all over the room. Every Sunday hour was engaging; however, there were no avenues for children, teachers, and parents to interact with each other; relationships were not nurtured there through intergenerational ministries.

These were the only two experiences of the church for me at that time. Each one of them, regardless of their flaws, has taught me great things about God and, as I reflect now, showed me the value of children's spiritual education. In his studies, George Barna has emphasized that "every church can develop a great ministry to children"; however, as he insists "such a result must be intentional."<sup>1</sup> I cannot say that my Sunday Schools were not intentional about their ministries with children; they were probably just too focused on the things they had gotten used to doing. My experience might have been better if the churches would have sharpened their ministries with children in terms of the principles and practices they used.

My passion as the researcher and a minister is children. Involvement in children's ministries in Russia and in the Philippines has kindled my love toward children and the desire to have a better ministry with them. My experience as a participant of a Sunday School has become one of the most crucial and motivating reasons for this research. Attendance at children's ministry's activities provided an understanding of the importance of the church's participation in the little ones' lives. I am strongly assured that children are capable of doing great things today; yet they need help from the family,

---

<sup>1</sup> George Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions: Why Children Should Be Your Church's #1 Priority* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books from Gospel Light, 2003), 120.

church, and school. The findings of this study identified the principles and practices of children's ministries of the three mega churches of Metro Manila, Philippines who have paid "premium on children's ministries."<sup>2</sup> My sincere intention was that those findings would help others to learn and make their ministry with children even better for the glory of God.

Childhood is not a long period in a life-span but it has great value in itself. As German theologian, Karl Rahner expounds, "childhood does not constitute past time, time that has eroded away, but rather that which remains, that which is coming to meet us. Childhood is valuable in itself... it is to be discovered anew in the ineffable future which is coming to us."<sup>3</sup> The future lies in the hands of children.<sup>4</sup> Thus, holistic education for them has to begin from the early age, because as Catherine Stonehouse explicates it, children "are laying the foundations on which to build life and faith. They are being formed through what they experience in their homes, schools, and the faith community."<sup>5</sup>

The church's ministry with children should never be overlooked. Dan Brewster has discussed the responsibility of the church for children and emphasized that "only the church (Christians!) can respond to the needs of the whole person."<sup>6</sup> Brewster then

---

<sup>2</sup>Nativity Petallar, Maureen Okundi and Victoria Khen, "The Missiological Presuppositions, Motives, Structures, and Methods Specific to the 4/14 Window" (unpublished article, 2013). This paper was later presented in 4/14 Window Missiological Conference, Seoul, Korea (Feb. 26-28, 2013), 7.

<sup>3</sup>Karl Rahner, *Further Theology of the Spiritual Life 2*, trans. David Bourke, vol. 8 of *Theological Investigations* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), 35f, 37.

<sup>4</sup>Amardeep Singh Rehal, "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow/the Future Lies in the Hands of Children," sikhcess.org change the world, <http://www.sikhcess.org/here-today-gone-tomorrow-the-future-lies-in-the-hands-of-children/> (accessed July 24, 2013).

<sup>5</sup>Catherine Stonehouse, *Joining Children on Their Spiritual Journey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Family Christian Press, 1998), 62-63.

<sup>6</sup>Dan Brewster, *Child, Church, and Mission*, revised ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: Compassion International, 2011), 93.

clarified that only Christians have the “mind of Christ” so they should carry the responsibility given by God and use the power to turn a “curse into a blessing.”<sup>7</sup>

The church is a special place where children can be participants of the community. In fact, the church is one of the main components of holistic development of a child.<sup>8</sup> If the ministry is properly organized and children are taken care of, children’s ministry has the capacity to shape lives. Karyn Henley has expounded:

Children are full of potential and carried by the winds that influence their life, can be rooted and grounded in the soil of love, dig deeply and steadily toward what enlightens them, can be tenacious, holding onto life with all they have got, can wither if they are uprooted or if the soil does not provide nutrients, can be resilient, bouncing back from hardship, can grow to spread seeds of themselves, their ideas, near and far, must bloom to become all they have meant to be, and sometimes look like a weed, but are really flowers.<sup>9</sup>

This research concentrated on the children’s ministries of the three faith communities of Metro Manila, Philippines, in particular, Christ’s Commission Fellowship (hereafter referred to as CCF), Greenhills Christian Fellowship (hereafter referred to as GCF), and Victory Christian Fellowship (hereafter referred to as VCF) and identified the principles and practices of their ministries with children.

CCF is an evangelical church started by Peter Tan-Chi in the early 1980s. Its philosophy is “to see the movement of millions of committed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ”<sup>10</sup> whose lives are being transformed and thus, transforming others. The church

---

<sup>7</sup> Brewster, *Child, Church, and Mission*, revised ed., 93-102.

<sup>8</sup> Dan Brewster, *Child, Church and Mission: A Resource Book for Christian Child Development Workers* (Makati City, Philippines: Church Strengthening Ministry, 2005), 84.

<sup>9</sup> Karyn Henley, *Child-Sensitive Teaching: Helping Children Grow a Living Faith in a Loving God*, 4th ed. (Nashville, TN: Child Sensitive Communication, Limited Liability Company, 2008), 1.

<sup>10</sup> “About CCF,” in *Christ's Commission Fellowship*, <http://www.ccf.org.ph/about-us/> [accessed 16 February 2013].

has different locations in the main cities of the Philippines with the approximate congregational size of 25,000 believers.<sup>11</sup>

GCF was started by Rev. David and Patty Jo Yount of the Conservative Baptist Mission. Its philosophy is to make disciples and see the transformation of lives and communities through Christ.<sup>12</sup> Currently the church has “an over-all constituency of more than 7,000 worshippers”<sup>13</sup> and has several locations in the Philippines.

VCF exists to “simply honor God and make disciples.”<sup>14</sup> The church was started in 1984 by Al Manamtam and Steve and Deborah Murrell. At the present time the church meets in various locations across the Philippines and has more than 60,000 members.<sup>15</sup>

Mega churches have often raised the debates about the way they “market their religious product.”<sup>16</sup> There must be something different in the approach that mega churches use as it draws adults and children. Probably, it is the difference in expectations, in performance, in staffing, and in use of lay volunteers, as Lyle E. Schaller explains in his research on the success of large congregations.<sup>17</sup> Another factor is that it might be the skillful usage of media, audio, and video as John Dart has pointed out. What other significant practices can be learned from these three mega churches? The most important factor to remember is that large churches, the same with smaller ones, represent the character of God, who “is much bigger than denominational emphases or national

---

<sup>11</sup> “About CCF,” in *Christ's Commission Fellowship*, <http://www.ccf.org.ph/about-us/> [accessed 16 February 2013].

<sup>12</sup> “About GCF,” in *Greenhills Christian Fellowship: Know Christ and Make Him Known*, <http://www.gcf.org.ph/pages/about/#top> [accessed 16 February 2013].

<sup>13</sup> “About GCF,” in *Greenhills Christian Fellowship: Know Christ and Make Him Known*, <http://www.gcf.org.ph/pages/about/#top> [accessed 16 February 2013].

<sup>14</sup> “Victory,” in *Victory*, <http://victory.org.ph/> [accessed 22 February 2013].

<sup>15</sup> “About Us,” in *Victory*, <http://victory.org.ph/about> [accessed 16 February 2013].

<sup>16</sup> John Dart, “Going Mega: The Trend toward Bigger Churches,” *Christian Century* 127 (2010): 22-23, 26-27.

<sup>17</sup> Lyle E. Schaller, *The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1980).

boundaries.”<sup>18</sup> So this study aimed to identify what principles and practices of children’s ministries exist at the mega churches in the Philippines.

### Theoretical Framework

The following framework based on the elements of successful children’s ministries became the theoretical framework for this research (See Figure 1).

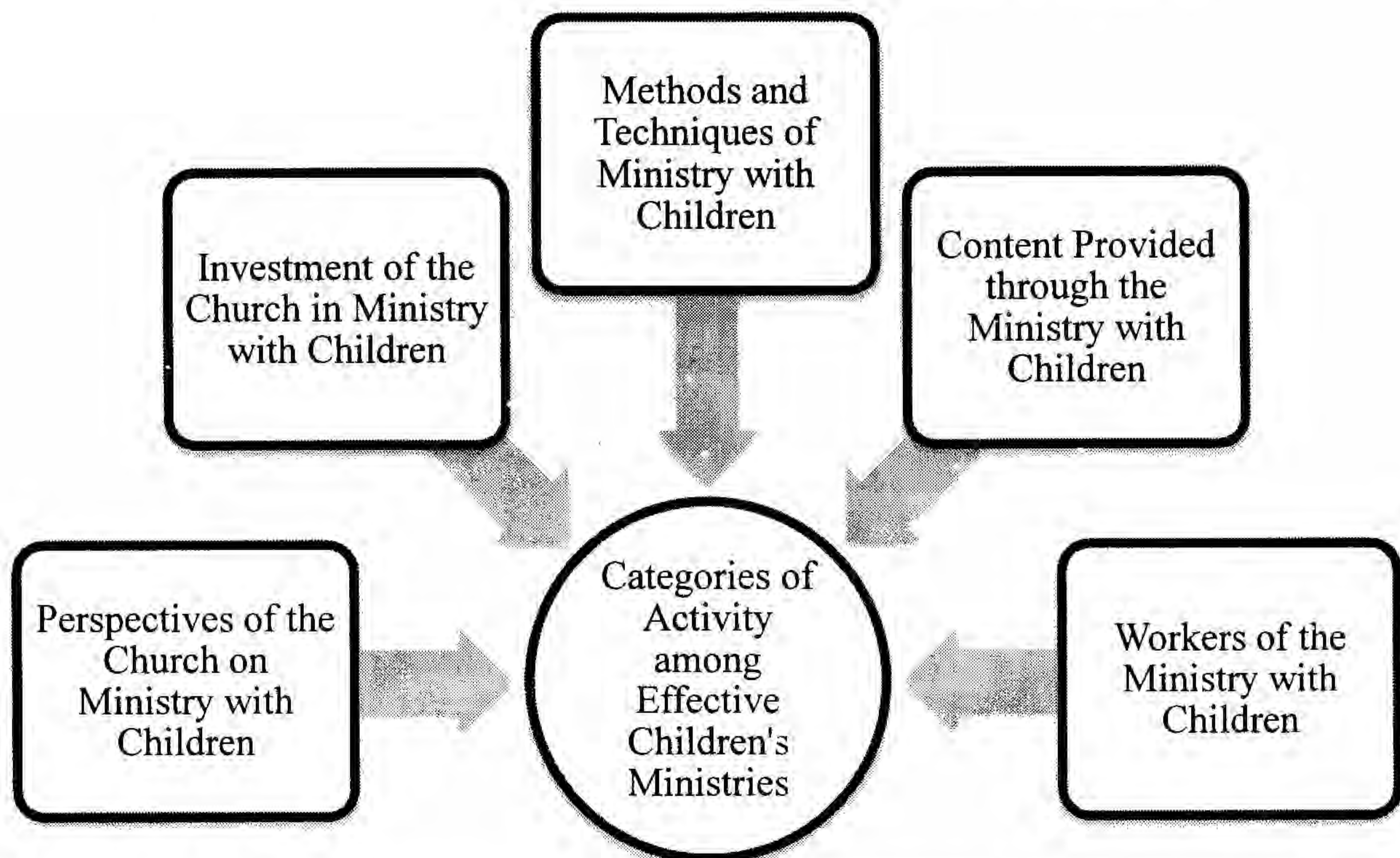


Figure 1. Contours of Effective Children’s Ministries adapted from the research of George Barna and published in *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*.<sup>19</sup>

George Barna’s criterion for successful ministries with children is based on his three years research regarding children’s ministries in North America.<sup>20</sup> Barna explains that “a half-dozen surveys among adults and parents, a couple among teenagers and

<sup>18</sup>John N. Vaughan, *The World's 20 Largest Churches: Church Growth Principles in Action* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 12.

<sup>19</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 97-118. Permission to use this framework in this study was given by George Barna. Please see Appendix F.

<sup>20</sup>Barna Group, “Research Shows That Spiritual Maturity Process Should Start at a Young Age.” in *Barna Group: Examine. Illuminate. Transform*, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/130-research-shows-that-spiritual-maturity-process-should-start-at-a-young-age?q=transforming+children+spiritual+champions> [accessed 23 January 2012 ].



adolescents, four surveys among Protestant pastors and one project with church-based youth workers” were conducted in order to draw a coherent perspective of children’s ministries which was later explored through in-depth studies of “children’s ministries in several dozen churches from across the nation.”<sup>21</sup> Thus, the findings of this three-year effort represent the following “contours of an effective ministry”: perspectives of the church on ministry with children, investment in ministry with children, methods and techniques used in ministry with children, content provided through ministry with children, and workers of children’s ministry.<sup>22</sup> Based on this theoretical framework the conceptual framework was developed.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The faith community is to be intentional about the ministry with children.<sup>23</sup> It is crucial to authentically address the precious time of childhood. Fortunately, many churches launch some kind of children’s ministries. The three selected mega churches of this research are indeed profound in that children’s ministry teams recognize “the importance of childhood.”<sup>24</sup> This lays foundation for quality ministry with children.<sup>25</sup>

Each church is unique in its ministry with children. Intentionality of the church in this ministry plays an important role. The church’s consciousness about the five core areas of children’s ministry is crucial for delivering quality ministry with children. Principles and practices under each of these categories may differ and be unique for various churches.

---

<sup>21</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 13.

<sup>22</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 96.

<sup>23</sup> Stonehouse, *Joining Children on Their Spiritual Journey*, 63.

<sup>24</sup>Stonehouse, *Joining Children on Their Spiritual Journey*, 62.

<sup>25</sup>Petallar, Okundi, and Khen, “The Missiological Presuppositions, Motives, Structures, and Methods Specific to the 4/14 Window.”

The five squares signify the distinctive categories of activity of intentional children's ministries. Interviewing respondent churches about each of them helped to identify the principles and practices of their children's ministries. Lastly, this study attempted to make recommendations for other children's ministries based on the findings. Thus, the conceptual framework presented below guided the present research (See Figure 2).

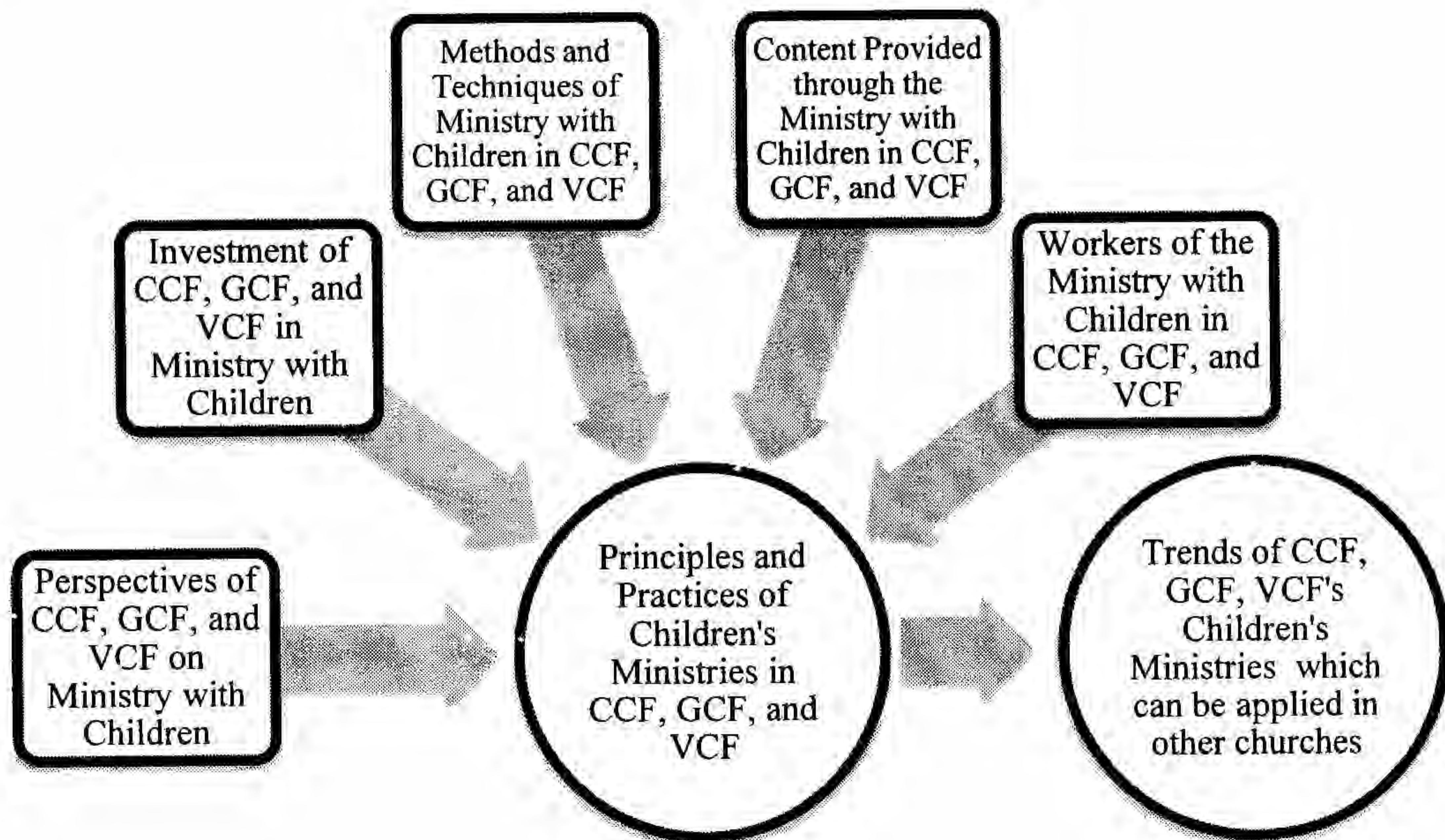


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework.

### Statement of the Problem

The main question for the study was, “What were the principles and practices of children's ministries in the selected mega churches of Manila?” and what recommendations can be drawn from them for other children's ministries. Five distinctive categories of activity which are inherent in the intentional children's ministries guided this investigation. The following sub-problems directed the collection and analysis of data:

**Sub-Problems:**

1. According to the respondents, what are the perspectives of the church on ministry with children in terms of the following:
  - a. The philosophy of children's ministry?
  - b. Integration of the philosophy of children's ministry into the activities of the church?
  - c. View of children's spirituality?
  - d. Family and its role for the spiritual nurture of children?
  - e. Other perspectives?
  
2. According to the respondents, what is the investment of the church in ministry with children in terms of the following:
  - a. Ministry structure to serve children?
  - b. Prayer for children?
  - c. Intentionality of the church's leaders and their involvement with children's ministry?
  - d. Other perspectives?
  
3. According to the respondents, what are the methods and techniques of the ministry with children in terms of the following:
  - a. Specific goals of the children's ministry?
  - b. Methods of teaching children?
  - c. Ministerial teaching focus?
  - d. Relationship between children and children's ministry workers?
  - e. Other perspectives?

4. According to the respondents, what is the content provided through the ministry with children in terms of the following:
  - a. Usage of curriculum in children's ministry?
  - b. Children's participation in ministry?
  - c. Parents' involvement in ministry?
  - d. Other perspectives?
  
5. According to the respondents, what are the principles of recruitment for children's ministry workers in terms of:
  - a. Procedure and requirements?
  - b. Training of workers?
  - c. Child protection?
  - d. Other principles?

### **Significance of the Study**

It was the aim of this study to identify the principles and practices of children's ministries of the three selected mega churches in Metro Manila. The results of this research may become a training resource for other churches of the Philippines who are intentional about their ministry with children. I believe that the findings of this research might be noteworthy for the growing churches and would help their ministries with children.

This research was also significant for the participating churches by producing an objective assessment to learn from one another and improve their weak points of ministry. The implication of this study for me as the researcher was significant; therefore the results can be a great help for my present and future church ministry.

## **Assumptions**

This present study assumed that:

1. The respondents, namely children's ministry directors and selected teachers of each church, who will have perspectives concerning the ministry with children, will be honest and open during the interviews.
2. All the respondents will be ministering with children in one way or another in their churches.

## **Definitions of Terms**

*Intentional Children's Ministry* – ministry which helps “build a better, more God-honoring world by investing in the moral and spiritual character” of children.<sup>26</sup>

## **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited to the selected ministries with children of three (3) mega churches in the area of Metro Manila District: Christ's Commission Fellowship (CCF), Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF), and Victory Christian Fellowship (VCF). All of them are located in the same geographic area and are English speaking congregations.

The study was conducted with the Children's Church ministers. More accurately, the respondents of the research were the children's ministry director and at least one (1) teacher from each age group. The teachers from each age group had at least three years of experience of currently teaching a specific age group and both men and women teachers participated in the interviews. The schedule of interviews depended on the availability of ministry staff in each mega church.

---

<sup>26</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 47.

All the respondents were interviewed individually. The interviews took no longer than one hour each. The answers were treated with confidentiality and respect. Analysis of data and findings of this study may serve as one of the resources for other churches and further studies.

The sub-problems of this research were limited to the following five categories of activity which distinguish an effective ministry (churches that help to produce spiritually mature children):<sup>27</sup> first, the perspectives of the church on ministry with children; second, the investment of the church in ministry with children; third, the methods and techniques of the ministry with children; fourth, the content provided through the ministry with children; and fifth, the recruitment and retention policies for workers in the children's ministries of each church.<sup>28</sup> Other influential factors of children's ministries in the selected mega churches which I discovered when analyzing the data were reported.

Since the research was conducted in three mega churches in Manila, the findings of this study may not be applicable to some other settings. The research interviews were conducted in August and September 2013 in the Ortigas area of Metro Manila, Philippines. The final thesis was presented in November 2013.

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study are the basis and the guide for this research.

---

<sup>27</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 96.

<sup>28</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 95-118.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE, STUDIES, AND WORKS

This chapter discussed the following main themes: biblical and theological insights about children's ministries, definition of a mega church, spirituality of children, and some elements of intentional ministries with children. The interest toward children's development has grown vastly. "In the last hundred years or more, a huge amount of material has been written about childhood. Literally hundreds of different theories have analyzed the factors that influence and define childhood."<sup>29</sup> Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May wrote an urging statement:

Children's ministry leaders are very aware of the major changes in our culture and many are trying to address the challenges created by those changes. But which of the methods and resources created in response to the societal shifts provide children with the nurture for which they hunger? Are these principles, values, and methods from the past that, if abandoned, will leave children spiritually undernourished? What can we do with these questions? Wait ten or fifteen years and see how the children now in our churches turn out? The stakes are too high to risk providing a generation of children with spiritual food that is low in nutrition or even toxic. Research is needed to assess the effectiveness of current ministries and to keep ourselves spiritually fit for service and leadership.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, I delved into the scholastic and practical knowledge available in the field of child development and children's ministry. The section Definition of a Mega Church was added with a view to clarify the research topic more in the field of study. I, as the

---

<sup>29</sup>Rebecca Nye, *Children's Spirituality: What It is and Why It Matters* (London: Church House Publishing, 2009), 71.

<sup>30</sup>Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May, "The Story and the Spiritual Formation of Children in the Church and in the Home" in *Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, Holly Catterton Allen, ed. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008), 371.

researcher, believe that it is important to present the characteristics of mega churches here.

### **Biblical Insights on the Ministry with Children**

What nonsense to hear that children are a burden! Yet, some societies view them exactly that way. Originally children were not made to be a problem. Instead, God created them as a blessing. It was a command from God to Adam and Eve to “be fruitful and increase in number” (Gen. 1:28). In Bible times, children were wanted and considered as “joy to a family because parents knew youngsters were God’s special gifts to them.”<sup>31</sup> The Scriptures portray several of these beautiful stories where parents rejoice and praise the Lord for granting them offspring (Gen. 30:11-13; Jer. 20:15; Luke 1:14; 1:58).

Indeed, children are precious in God’s sight: He creates their “inmost being” and knits them together in their mother’s womb (Ps. 139:13 NIV); He is the only one who knows them perfectly as they are “fearfully and wonderfully made” only by Him (Ps. 139:14 NIV); and finally He forms their spirit (Zech. 12:1 NIV). But God’s amazing work does not end on it as He continues to care about His children as they grow physically and mature spiritually: He hears their cry and lifts them (Gen. 21:17-20 NIV); He saves them in the times of murder and provides the best for them (Exod. 2:4-9 NIV); and He leads them through dangers and makes them great men (1 Sam. 19-21 NIV). All of these stories express God’s love and His holistic care about the little ones.

Although the Bible does not provide the specific chronologically organized list of guidelines how to effectively nurture children or have successful children’s ministry, it

---

<sup>31</sup>Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight. Childhood and Children in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 45.



definitely teaches parents and leaders how children should be valued, what they should know, what role they play in faith community of Christians, and how influential they are in the lives of their children. It is clear from the actions and words of Jesus in Mark 9:36-37 that He had high regard for little kids and even instructed his disciples saying, “whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:4 NIV). Children are greatly treasured by God and so everyone who participates in their rearing in one way or another should also value them.

### **Theological Insights on the Ministry with Children**

The views people have of children influence how children are treated, how they are educated, and how they are perceived in everyday life. Theologians long ago started the discussion about the place of children in theology. The Bible tells that children are a gift from God and that “God addresses human beings as complete and whole individuals from their birth and throughout their lives.”<sup>32</sup> However, over time, societies have put different labels on children. The attitudes toward children and perceptions of them have been different and have changed a lot over time. The way people perceive children is the way they minister with them.

Theologians of the first period of the church such as the apostle Paul, Irenaeus, Origen, John Chrysostom, Pelagius, and Augustine have shared slightly different but yet very similar views on children. Just a little part of their works was devoted to children

---

<sup>32</sup> Anne Richards and Peter Privett, ed., *Through the Eyes of a Child: New Insights in Theology from a Child's Perspective* (London: Church House Publishing, 2009), 7.

and from what can be found, their views on children were indifferent.<sup>33</sup> The status of children at that time was low.

During the Middle Ages the image of child was often portrayed to people only through the church windows, carvings, or when children were referred to in the sermons. The usual image of the child of that time was the portrayal of Christ as a child. So children were strictly considered as sinful or as saints.<sup>34</sup> In comparison, during the sixteenth century the views on children slightly changed. Children came into view. Luther and Calvin are the bright representatives of that time. Jerome Berryman explained that both theologians faithfully followed Augustine's doctrine of grace that children had sinful natures.<sup>35</sup> They enjoyed being with children. Luther learned from them and Calvin cared for them and saw their promise.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the views on children enormously changed. Theologians "began to live with children in their own homes."<sup>36</sup> Berryman narrated that some started to pay more attention to them, but they were still indifferent about them in their ministries and writings. John Wesley is another representative theologian of eighteenth century whose views also differed as he believed and emphasized the children's ability to be trained for salvation.<sup>37</sup> The opinions about childhood started moving to a more optimistic side which obviously influenced the development of ministries with children at that time.

---

<sup>33</sup>Jerome W. Berryman, *Children and the Theologians: Clearing the Way for Grace* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2009), 40-60.

<sup>34</sup>Berryman, *Children and the Theologians*, 62-86.

<sup>35</sup>Berryman, *Children and the Theologians*, 62-86.

<sup>36</sup>Berryman, *Children and the Theologians*, 140.

<sup>37</sup>Berryman, *Children and the Theologians*, 141.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the view of children became even more positive. Schleiermacher and Bushnell “made children an explicit part of their theological reflection.”<sup>38</sup> Rahner and Barth did not include much about children in their writings but had high views of them and some important insights.<sup>39</sup> As for the theologians’ views of the twenty-first century, “they share a high view of children and see both story and play as vital connections between children and the theologians.”<sup>40</sup> There is a huge gap between the perceptions of child theology of early years and today.

Children were always one of the topics in the discussions of theologians, but the attention and importance given to them at different times varied. As the recognition of the importance of children and childhood mainly prevails among the opinions of 21<sup>st</sup> century theologians, there is a call for more intentional and effective ministry with children. Praise to the Lord that, finally, children are appreciated as Jesus did in Matthew 19:13-15 and Mark 9:36-37.

### **Why Mega Churches?**

This part of the literature review described general characteristics of mega churches which, according to the definition in the article of John Dart, have approximately 2000 people on a usual Sunday.<sup>41</sup>

According to the research conducted in the Philippines by Discipling A Whole Nation (DAWN) in cooperation with the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC), there are 51,555 Evangelical/Protestant churches in the Philippines, almost all of which were planted during the last three decades. A minority of these churches have

---

<sup>38</sup>Berryman, *Children and the Theologians*, 166.

<sup>39</sup>Berryman, *Children and the Theologians*, 166.

<sup>40</sup>Berryman, *Children and the Theologians*, 190.

<sup>41</sup>Dart, “Going Mega,” 22-23, 26-27.

more than a thousand attendees.<sup>42</sup> The respondent churches of this research have 2000 and even more people every Sunday.

Analysis of the church growth raises an important question, particularly, what distinctive characteristics do these churches have that make them grow? Mega churches' dynamic growth and the way they "market their religious product" often become the topic of the debates.<sup>43</sup> The large churches are frequently misunderstood. However, various things may be learned from the differences they portray. For example, Lyle E. Schaller remarks that large churches have unique perceptions about expectations, performance, staffing, and use of lay volunteers;<sup>44</sup> further, Michael Werner points that they "address people's real emotional needs and fears head-on;"<sup>45</sup> Anastacio Jr. Escosar adds in his doctoral dissertation that the pursuit of finding the right principles and values might be one of the keys for churches to experience unprecedented growth.<sup>46</sup>

Continuing to describe the point of mega churches' unique characteristics, Dart writes that large churches are usually skillful in the usage of media, audio, and video.<sup>47</sup> As for the community's fellowship in such churches, it is common that people in mega churches might not know the person sitting next to them, but along with it, big churches offer a lot of other opportunities for people to be and study together such as "small groups, classes or ministries to join for service and spiritual growth."<sup>48</sup> The fact that

---

<sup>42</sup>Manfred Waldemar Kohl, *The Church in the Philippines: A Research Project with Special Emphasis on Theological Education* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: OMF Literature Inc., 2005), 12.

<sup>43</sup>Dart, "Going Mega." 22-23, 26-27.

<sup>44</sup> Schaller, *The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church*.

<sup>45</sup>Michael Werner, "Why Half the People Joining Churches Choose the Mega Variety," *Humanist*, 71 (2011): 38.

<sup>46</sup>Anastacio Jr. Escosar, "Corporate Culture in the Church Setting: Assessing Victory Christian Fellowship's Culture of Discipleship and Its Relationship to Church Growth" (Doctoral Dissertation, Asia Graduate School of Theology, Philippines, Doctor of Missiology, 2008), 2.

<sup>47</sup>Dart, "Going Mega" 22-23, 26-27.

<sup>48</sup> Dart, "Going Mega." 22-23, 26-27.

“there is no dogma that you have to abide by”<sup>49</sup> might also be one of the contributing factors in the growth of mega churches.

A lot of theories try to explain the dynamic growth of mega churches. It produces illusions “in the eye of the observer from a smaller church”<sup>50</sup> about the leadership in mega churches, the reputations of the leaders, the spirituality of the whole congregation, and others. Yet, each church is unique and has its own principles it uses. However, according to John Vaughan there is one general characteristic inherent to large churches. This feature is that they “refuse to set limits on God.”<sup>51</sup> They are the majesty of God because “God is much bigger than denominational emphases or national boundaries.”<sup>52</sup>

Together with a big population of adults, mega churches have significant numbers of children. Children are amazingly created by God and are full of love, hope, and awe.<sup>53</sup> They are created in His image; they hold the future of the world in their hands, and yet, the Bible strictly instructs that they need to be trained in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6, TNIV). This training should be in any church – small or big. The shared responsibility to do so was given to the family, school, and the faith community.<sup>54</sup> I believe that the study of CCF, GCF, and VCF children’s ministries gave some valuable information about the principles and practices of their ministries with children.

---

<sup>49</sup> *Mega Church Growth Follows National Trend*, [http://www.gracecentered.com/christian\\_forums/churches-of-christ-forum/megachurch-growth-follows-national-trend/msg1054620172/?topicseen](http://www.gracecentered.com/christian_forums/churches-of-christ-forum/megachurch-growth-follows-national-trend/msg1054620172/?topicseen) [accessed 19 September 2011].

<sup>50</sup> Schaller, *The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church*.

<sup>51</sup> Vaughan, *The World’s 20 Largest Churches*, 12.

<sup>52</sup> Vaughan, *The World’s 20 Largest Churches*, 12.

<sup>53</sup> Sofia Cavalletti, *The Religious Potential of the Child: Experiencing Scripture and Liturgy with Young Children*, trans. Patricia M. Coulter and Julie M. Coulter (Chicago, IL: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Publications, 1992), 30-45.

<sup>54</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Children’s Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 181-363.

## Children's Spirituality

During the past 20 years various scholars have emphasized the importance of nurturing children's spirituality from the earliest years of children's lives. Among them are Jerome Berryman, Sofia Cavaletti, Robert Coles, Cathy Stonehouse, Scottie May, John Westerhoff, and Karen Marie Yust. A significant point of their works accentuates the child's spiritual ability to feel and be in the awe of God and have genuine faith. It has been repeated multiple times that in order to win the souls for Christ, spiritual formation should start when a person is a child. Excellent research studies which support this are: first, a significant study by Bryant Myers, the findings of which first appeared in a 1996 publication of Dan Brewster and showed that 85% of those who become Christians do so between the ages of 4 and 14 years old.<sup>55</sup> Secondly, the findings of several studies by Barna published in *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* have also showed that

. . . the probability of someone embracing Jesus as his or her Savior was 32 percent for those between the ages of 5 and 12; 4 percent for those in the 13-18 range; and 6 percent for people 19 or older. In other words, if people do not embrace Jesus Christ as their Savior before they reach their teenage years, the chance of their doing so at all is slim.<sup>56</sup>

All of these findings point to the conclusion that childhood is the time when people are the most receptive of the Gospel. Presence or absence of spiritual maturity affects all developmental areas of a person: our spirituality is evidenced in our body, thinking, our identity, relationships, morality, and purpose of life.<sup>57</sup> But also vice versa, according to

---

<sup>55</sup>"Children's Movements," in *Stand4kids*, <http://www.stand4kids.org/get-involved/childrens-movements> [accessed 12 February 2013].

<sup>56</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 34.

<sup>57</sup>Tony Eade, *Children's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development: Primary and Early Years (achieving Qts: Cross-Curricular Strand)*, 2 ed. (Exeter, UK: Learning Matters Ltd., 2008), 3-12, also cited in class by Nativity Petallar, "Holistic Nurture of Children" (Class Lecture, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Holistic Child Development Class, 12 January 2012).

the words of Dr. Howard Hendricks, a professor and chairman of the Center for Christian Leadership at Dallas Theological Seminary, a person cannot fully develop spiritually unless there is development in life's other areas—intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. None of these areas can be neglected without endangering the growth in all of them. Likewise, growth in any one of these areas is impossible without also having an effect on all the others.<sup>58</sup> Spiritual development is a process which influences and is also influenced; it should be nurtured through “the teaching and example of parents, teachers and other adults.”<sup>59</sup>

Childhood is the time of active learning not only cognitively, but also spiritually if a child has avenues for it. It is the stage when children “grow in their understanding of God as Creator, lawgiver and friend. . . . By the end of elementary school years children who have received religious instruction will be able to articulate their faith, and may even begin to question the validity of what they have been taught.”<sup>60</sup> Shelley notes that what a child learns about the Bible during these years undergirds an ongoing relationship with God. And, according to Richards’ significant reflection on the assumptions of Plato, Aristotle, and St. Jerome about developmental processes of children, “a desirable person could be shaped if one could only control what a child might learn. And if one could only manage the information fed to the mind.”<sup>61</sup> Therefore, according to Bartholomew and Goheen, Christian educators and ministers should do their best in communicating the

---

<sup>58</sup>Howard Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 1987), 24.

<sup>59</sup> Judith Allen Shelley, *The Spiritual Needs of Children: A Guide for Nurses, Parents and Teachers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 46.

<sup>60</sup> Shelley, *The Spiritual Needs of Children*, 46.

<sup>61</sup> Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 89.

Bible truth to children through “The Bible as a Grand Story”<sup>62</sup> approach so that they grow in the understanding of and relationship with God.

Although comparing to adults and adolescence’ spirituality, the topic of children’s spirituality is not studied well enough yet in relationship to education, social life, and some other variables, present studies make it clear that children “at an early age have clear ideas about the nature of the divine, the concept of faith, and the meaning of prayer.”<sup>63</sup> Acknowledging it and ministering with children accordingly may become a good weapon in winning the souls for God.

The same idea has prevailed in John Wesley’s teaching. His thoughts on education of children became one of those outstanding ideas which transformed and brought changes into a society. Wesley was brought up in the home where a great emphasis was given to spiritual nurture of children and their education. It became the source of his assurance that children should receive Christian education as early as possible in order for them to obtain salvation.<sup>64</sup>

Wesley was a practical theologian. He observed children, spent time with them, and thus could see their “deeply felt experiences of God.” So he preached to them, “challenged both parents with responsibility for the instruction of children,”<sup>65</sup> and confronted his fellow ministers to also include children in their range of ministry. The main goal of Wesley in religion and education was “to achieve ‘perfection,’ the complete

---

<sup>62</sup>Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 15-27.

<sup>63</sup>Kelsey Moore et al., “Diverse Voices: Children’s Perceptions of Spirituality,” *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 57 (2011): 107-10.

<sup>64</sup>Dean G. Blevins and Mark A. Maddix, *Discovering Discipleship: Dynamics of Christian Education* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2010), 22.

<sup>65</sup> Catherine Stonehouse, “Children in Wesleyan Thought” in *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research and Applications*, Donald Ratcliff, ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf& Stock Pub, 2004), 140.



love of God and neighbor.”<sup>66</sup> Children, if given proper education at home and in church, are maturing spiritually. This is lifelong process. Churches should remember that in the pursuit of results, spirituality cannot be hurried as “there are diverse models, personalities, and propensities.”<sup>67</sup> Spirituality of children can be encouraged through the intentional ministry churches provide for them, but most of all, the praise should always be given to God as it is His heart and work for children to know Him even in infancy.

### **Intentional Children’s Ministry**

The significance of some elements of intentional children’s ministries such as ministry philosophy, church leaders intention about children’s ministry, family ministry, prayer, wisely planned activities for and with children, teacher-children’s relationships, curriculum, children’s involvement in ministry, wise workers’ recruitment, teamwork, and children’s protection in the church are covered in this part of chapter two. Carrie Lou Goddard wrote an astonishing statement about the mystery of children’s nature. She expounds:

A glance at the healthy, happy children of today, dressed quite comfortably for whatever may be the occasion and relating themselves with a considerable amount of ease to adults, makes one aware of how far we have come in this century in an understanding of children and how they live, learn, and grow. [But] if we are around children for a little while we quickly become aware that there is still much about them and their behavior that is yet to be discovered, learned, and put into practice.<sup>68</sup>

How can children’s ministers comprehend it? It is ironic that every adult was once a child and yet it is challenging to understand children entirely.<sup>69</sup> Probably, children’s ministry

---

<sup>66</sup>Berryman, *Children and the Theologians*, 136.

<sup>67</sup>Lee C. Wanak, “Rethinking Spirituality: Do Our Schools and Churches Need to Expand Their Paradigms?” *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 29-36.

<sup>68</sup>Carrie Lou Goddard, *The Child and His Nurture* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 10-11.

<sup>69</sup>Richards and Privett, ed., *Through the Eyes of a Child*, 1-2.

workers will never obtain all of the how-to-train-up-children-in-the-way-they-should-go<sup>70</sup> knowledge, but they can always find answers in God through prayer asking Him for “leading and for discernment in making decisions” that will guide their ministry toward Christ.<sup>71</sup> It takes a lot to make children’s ministry truly effective. Beckwith writes that to capture children’s imaginations and then souls, it takes “moms, dads, Sunday School teachers, pastors, children’s directors” and moreover, it requires children’s ministries to be “intentional with story, ritual, and relationships at home, in the faith community, and in worship with children.”<sup>72</sup>

### Significance of Ministry Philosophy

Sunday School might be the only opportunity where a child can be around Christians and the Bible. Even more, Barbara Younger and Lisa Flinn underline that Sunday School is the heart of children’s ministry and may be the primary corporate teaching opportunity among the variety of other ministries.<sup>73</sup> Children’s ministries have high significance and thus, should be intentional about the activities with and for children. People’s perspectives influence their actions. So it is crucial for churches to have right understanding of children and express it properly through their philosophies as it consequently reflects on their activities for and with children.

Having a clearly stated philosophy of ministry draws people together, sets a vision of the ministry, and makes the responsibilities of those who make the children’s

---

<sup>70</sup>Proverbs 22:6a, NIV.

<sup>71</sup>Rick Chromey, *Children's Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches: Your Step-by-Step Guide for Making a Big Impact on a Little-Bitty Budget!* (Makati City, Philippines: Church Strengthening Ministry, 1995), 29.

<sup>72</sup>Ivy Beckwith, *Formational Children's Ministry: Shaping Children Using Story, Ritual, and Relationship (emersion: Emergent Village Resources for Communities of Faith)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), 15.

<sup>73</sup>Barbara Younger and Lisa Flinn, “Sunday School from Start to Finish,” in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer (Loveland, CO: Group, 2002), 187-200.

ministry happen well-shaped. The Bible says, “Where there is no vision, people perish...” (Proverbs 29:18, KJV). Effective ministries have “clear conceptual foundation—a philosophy that permeates every department, program and policy.”<sup>74</sup> Barna notes that these ministries have clear basics of what they stand for and what they exist to produce.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, people with one philosophy are capable of doing many more things than those who are diverse.

Some authors such as Randy Christensen, Craig Jutila, Jim Wideman, Chris Yount, Larry Fowler, and others highlight the importance of having a comprehensive philosophy of ministry. Several common ideas are shared among their works which are significant for this study. The first and the main point is that the ministry’s philosophy gives precision and direction to the ministry. Secondly, the vision of the ministry should be individual for each church, organization, or ministry. Finally, the philosophy of ministry must be communicated to other members of the ministry team and the whole congregation of the church.<sup>76</sup> The philosophy might be exhaustive or brief. And, as one of the guiding principles of GCF states, it should be revised regularly as the church grows and the needs of congregation might change.<sup>77</sup>

Common ideas are communicated through the articles. A recent article by David P. Setran and Nathan Ramler acknowledge the articulation of a rigorous and vibrant ministry philosophy as a critical task for any leadership team.<sup>78</sup> If all these statements are

---

<sup>74</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 97.

<sup>75</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 97.

<sup>76</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 98.

<sup>77</sup>Production Team of Greenhills Christian Fellowship, *We are One: Knowing Christ and Making Him Known. Through the Years. The 25th Anniversary Publication Greenhills Christian Fellowship* (Manila, Philippines: Greenhills Christian Fellowship, 2003), 3.

<sup>78</sup>David P. Setran and Nathan Ramler, “Reimagining Frankena: Toward a Holistic Model for Philosophy of Ministry,” *Christian Education Journal*, 9 (2012): 7-26.

right, then the study of philosophy of children's ministry of CCF, GCF, and VCF may give precious information about their ministries.

### Significance of the Intention of Church Leaders about the Ministry with Children

A pastor is a leader. The priorities of the pastor usually become the priorities of the whole church. Any kind of leadership, as Benjamin P. de Jesus views it, is “the process of influencing the activities of an individual or group of people in efforts towards goal achievement.”<sup>79</sup> Thus, the emphasis of pastor's leadership defines the direction of church's ministries.

Prioritizing children in the church might be a new paradigm for many pastors;<sup>80</sup> however, without it children's ministry is rarely successful. Churches lose much if they do not prioritize children as adults. They are losing the growing congregation and future Christian leaders.<sup>81</sup> Unfortunately, the research of Judy A. Solito conducted among the Nazarene churches of the Philippines has showed that pastors were very seldom the ones who invited children to come to Sunday School.<sup>82</sup> Solito's research does not explain the reason for it, but the finding might serve as an alarming statement for pastors to expand their focus on the little ones. John Wesley was a great propagandist of catechizing and preaching to children, spending time with them, giving to them, visiting them, and

---

<sup>79</sup>Benjamin P. de Jesus, *Leadership That is Christian: A Study of Leadership Theories and Principles, Practice and Examples* (Zamboanga City, Philippines: The Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines, Inc., 1984), 11.

<sup>80</sup>Dale Galloway and Beeson Institute Colleagues, *Making Church Relevant* (Makati City, Philippines: Church Strengthening Ministry, 1999), 209.

<sup>81</sup>Ivy Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry. Ministry to Children in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 81.

<sup>82</sup>Judy A. Solito, “Perceptions of Intermediate Children toward Sunday School in Selected Churches of the Nazarene in the Metro Manila District” (Master's Thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Master of Arts in Religious Education, 1994), 30.

corresponding with them.<sup>83</sup> He required his preachers “to preach to and instruct children, whether or not they felt gifted to do so.”<sup>84</sup> Probably preachers today should return to those basics started by Wesley and his fellow pastors.

Andrew D. Lester highlights that among the various reasons why pastors do not give personal attention to the children’s ministries are fear, sense of inadequacy, push of time, and most importantly ignorance and lack of awareness about importance of childhood.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, according to Catherine Stonehouse, the truth is that church leaders suffer from similar blindness. Although we claim to value children and give lip service to the importance of their Christian education, reference to their spiritual formation seldom becomes a significant theme in major strategies for the church. Often senior pastors leave the care of children to support staff and volunteers without having integrated the nurturing of children into the big picture.<sup>86</sup>

This perception of children as “consumers of church services”<sup>87</sup> obviously has negative effects on any church’s ministry with children.<sup>88</sup> In comparison, if children are appreciated in the faith community, they have the feeling of belonging in the church. And then, Beckwith writes, “they will open themselves up not only to accept all the good things the community has to offer them, but also to share all the good things they have to offer.”<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Stonehouse, “Children in Wesleyan Thought,” 134.

<sup>84</sup> Stonehouse, “Children in Wesleyan Thought,” 134.

<sup>85</sup> Andrew D. Lester, *Pastoral Care with Children in Crisis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985), 25.

<sup>86</sup> Stonehouse, *Joining Children on Their Spiritual Journey*, 62.

<sup>87</sup> Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry. Ministry to Children in the 21st Century*, 82-83.

<sup>88</sup> Elmer L. Towns, John N. Vaughan and David J. Seifert, *The Complete Book of Church Growth: 100 Largest Churches, 100 Largest Sunday Schools, Profiles of the World's Most Dynamic Churches, Methods of Church Growth, What the Bible Says about Church Growth* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1981), 295-302.

<sup>89</sup> Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry. Ministry to Children in the 21st Century*, 83.

Iris V. Cully describes a child as a unique person who “must be seen personally, looked at directly, and addressed in terms of his own unique personhood.”<sup>90</sup> Such view of children in the church influences positively on the ministry with them, the attitudes, and the lessons they still have to learn. In other words, when children are put as high priority by church leaders, it expands the soul, saves children, wins families, changes the world, and grows the church.<sup>91</sup>

Concern and intention of a senior pastor about children’s ministry is an important contributing factor. It is often a challenge for senior pastors to support children’s ministry due to variety of other ministries. However, there are several ways pastors can take care of children’s ministry: represent its best interests in strategic meetings, teach the congregation about the importance of children and motivate parents to take their responsibilities seriously; keep an eye on the quality of the church activities offered for the spiritual nourishment of children; celebrate the victories and progress achieved by the children’s ministry; encourage adults to get involved by working with the kids, using their talents and spiritual gifts in ways that advance the development of the young people.<sup>92</sup> This list does not present all the activities pastors may do with and for children. May God lead senior pastors as they creatively include children in their communities. This is a challenge but at the same time an opportunity.

### Significance of Family for Children’s Development

Scripture gives a clear message that God created the family and gave each member of the family special responsibilities. Various authors, especially John

---

<sup>90</sup> Iris V. Cully, *Children in the Church: The Dynamics of Christian Education* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1952), 13-14.

<sup>91</sup> Galloway and Beeson Institute Colleagues, *Making Church Relevant*, 229.

<sup>92</sup> Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 104-05.

Wesley, highlight family as one of the most influential factors in the lives of children.

Wesley was an advocate of family education. He constantly and persuasively encouraged “parents to set an example of godly living for children to follow.”<sup>93</sup> He was challenging parents. His sermon “On Family Religion” calls on parental responsibilities in terms of reconsidering the instruction parents give to their children.<sup>94</sup> Wesley writes that children are only entrusted into parents’ care for a time that they “may train them up in all holiness, and fit them for the enjoyment of God in eternity,” so that when they “are called to give an account of each to the Father of Spirits, [they] may give [their] accounts with joy and not with grief.”<sup>95</sup> Wesley’s perspectives are strongly affirmed in the statements of Joiner that parents are the best people to “influence” and “monitor” a child’s relationships with God.<sup>96</sup>

The training of children is not long, but has great impact. Therefore, it should be prioritized in churches and families. According to Mike Sciarra, one of the advocates for partnering with parents, “parents are meant to have the primary role in teaching and disciplining their children.”<sup>97</sup> How can they do it? The best answer is to look to “God’s directives for parents given in the Bible.”<sup>98</sup> Zuck mentions that the Bible simply tells the stories of parents and their children, but those examples demonstrate the tasks every parent should follow: to lead, pray, dedicate, provide, love, enjoy, model, worship, discipline, encourage, and teach.

---

<sup>93</sup> Stonehouse, “Children in Wesleyan Thought,” 141.

<sup>94</sup> John Wesley, *On Family Religion* invol. 7 of *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed. (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1979), 76-86.

<sup>95</sup> Wesley, *On Family Religion*, 79.

<sup>96</sup> Reggie Joiner, *Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 84-85.

<sup>97</sup> Mike Sciarra, “Partnering with Parents: Developing a Successful Connection between the Church and Home,” in *Children’s Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer (Loveland, CO: Group, 2002), 60.

<sup>98</sup> Zuck, *Precious in His Sight. Childhood and Children in the Bible*, 107.

The time of childhood is foundational as it reflects on the future of every person.<sup>99</sup>

The significance of childhood is well emphasized by Stonehouse who reminds us that “children are now becoming the persons they will be and are laying the foundations on which to build life and faith.”<sup>100</sup> The collaboration between church, family, and school is required in order for a child to be well shaped physically, emotionally, and spiritually.<sup>101</sup> Family is especially important in laying the foundations for the future of children. According to Joy Raquel R. Tadeo, family affects children in the areas of building relationships and discipline.<sup>102</sup>

The research of Myra Trinidad T. Tantengco also supports the importance of family.<sup>103</sup> In her study, the researcher has interviewed “fifteen distinguished Filipino women from the fields of entrepreneurship, government and media”<sup>104</sup> and found that the significant individuals in their lives were their parents. Parents were the main investors. Fathers and mothers were the ones who, in spite of their educational attainments, saw potential in their children and put every effort in raising them. The parents’ roles in the lives of children cannot be underestimated.

---

<sup>99</sup>Rahner, *Further Theology of the Spiritual Life* 2, 35f, 37.

<sup>100</sup>Stonehouse, *Joining Children on Their Spiritual Journey*, 62-63.

<sup>101</sup> Mike Shipman, “Collaboration” in *What Matters Now in Children’s Ministry: 33 Perspectives on How to Influence Children’s Faith Now*, [http://corycenter.org/uploads/what\\_matters\\_now.pdf](http://corycenter.org/uploads/what_matters_now.pdf) [accessed 3 July 2012], 5.

<sup>102</sup>Joy Raquel R. Tadeo, “Book Review: *Maalwang Buhay: Family, Overseas Migration, and Cultures of Relatedness in Barangay Paraiso*,” Filomeno Aguilar (2009), *Social Science Diliman*, 6 (2010): 90-3.

<sup>103</sup>Myra Trinidad T. Tantengco, “Family and Home Factors that Facilitate Talent Development and Achievement among Distinguished Filipino Women,” *Alipato: A Journal of Basic Education*, 5 (2011): 73-88.

<sup>104</sup>Tantengco, “Family and Home Factors that Facilitate Talent Development and Achievement among Distinguished Filipino Women,” 73.



The model of Larry Fowler in *Rock-Solid Kids* embraces the concept of the family ministry in the church and demonstrates the relationship between church, parent, and child conceptually (See Figure 3).<sup>105</sup>

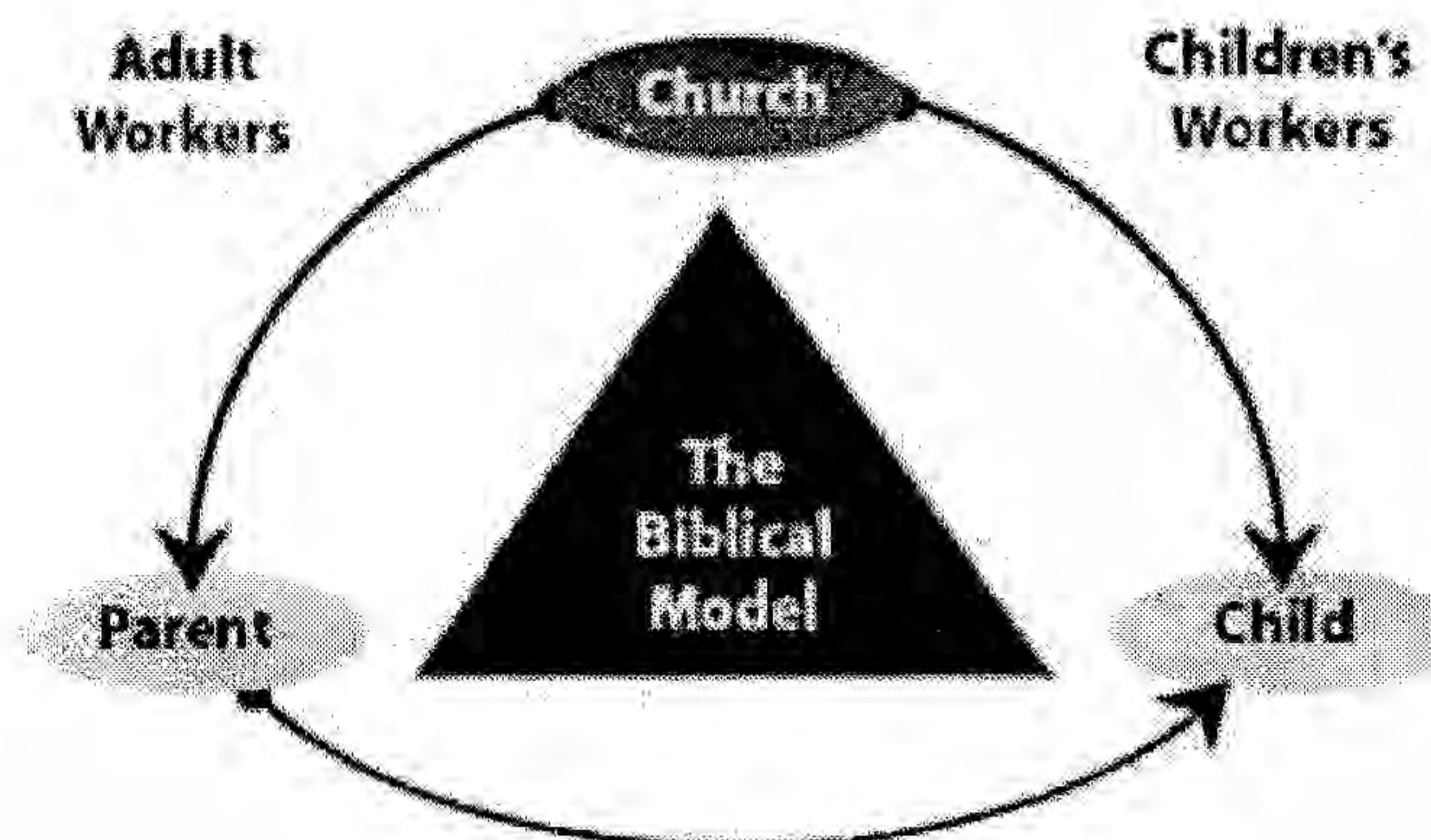


Figure 3. The Model of Larry Fowler: Church, Parent, and Child.

Ultimately, the result of such cooperation is expanded by Barna: “The beauty of this process is that when it is working well you cannot tell who is really leading – the church or the parents. There is such symbiotic relationship between the two that their progress seems carefully coordinated – which, of course, it often is. The result is a powerful two-fisted punch that has synergic impact on the children.”<sup>106</sup> This ministry model is called an integrated approach according to Reggie Joiner who also adds that no matter how big or small church is, it is important to develop a family ministry team concept.<sup>107</sup> This conclusion should urge the church to be intentional about the ministry with children through their families.

Children’s experiences within their families are important for both children and their parents. Beckwith writes that children have an innate ability to know, love God, and

<sup>105</sup>Larry Fowler, *Rock-Solid Kids: Giving Children a Biblical Foundation for Life* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2004), 34-35.

<sup>106</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 99.

<sup>107</sup>Joiner, *Think Orange*, 237.

are strongly attracted to Him from birth.<sup>108</sup> However, such relationships with God do not develop on its own. Very often there should be someone to help a child build their relationship with God. According to Chapman, this assignment is the highest calling of a parent, grandparent, or teacher;<sup>109</sup> and moreover, according to William Booth, this is the primary responsibility of the parents.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, this is a great opportunity for the church to use various family experiences as the tool to strengthen families, evangelize, and use those involvements as examples for children's lessons.

Daniel H. Grossoehme said that children are very different from adults in a way that "they use a different vocabulary to describe their experiences. They feel emotions as readily as adults but do not know the same words to describe what is going on inside them."<sup>111</sup> So, the church should help parents and children to understand each other better, learn to cooperate as a team, and produce healthy parent-child relationships.

In fact, parents often know about their responsibilities of being spiritual instructors, but fail to do so due to their feeling of inadequacy or lack of knowledge of how to do it. Douglas Schoelles' research presents crucial findings that parents' education in the church is indeed beneficial for raising the confidence level of parents in their ability to be spiritual leaders for their children, equipping them with the practical tools to be used at home, strengthening them, and consequently, influencing families.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry: Ministry to Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 63.

<sup>109</sup> Kathleen Chapman, *Teaching Kids Authentic Worship: How to Keep Them Close for God for Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 181.

<sup>110</sup> William Booth, *The Training of Children* (Salem, OH: Schmuel Publishers Rare Reprint Specialists, 1976), 69.

<sup>111</sup> Daniel H. Grossoehme, *The Pastoral Care of Children* (Oxford: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 1999), 8.

<sup>112</sup> Douglas J. Schoelles, "Equipping Parents to Be Spiritual Leaders in the Home" (DMin diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2009), 152.

One of the most significant ways to develop harmony between parents and children, as Ting Pantoja-Manalac writes, is to listen to children, let them express themselves, and be ready to accept the challenge.<sup>113</sup> Stonehouse and May showed that listening to children is indeed a crucial part of child-adult relationships because it brings pleasure, helps to know what children need, and teaches valuable lessons.<sup>114</sup> Thus, family projects might provide this space where families learn to listen to each other. A variety of activities might be planned for families, but the true value is in assisting parents and children in deeper bonding.

This is a precious lifelong experience which requires prayer, commitment, and efforts. Such an investment will have a lasting effect, because it is an investment in young people.

### Significance of Prayer

People brought little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them (Matthew 19:13, NIV). As Jesus prayed for children, so it is expected from parents, teachers, and ministers. Teaching, discipling, mentoring, and nurturing children are inefficient without God's blessing and the guidance of Holy Spirit.

Christians have a wonderful privilege to talk to God and be heard by Him. Prayer is "the most ancient, most universal, most intense expression of the religious instinct" which "touches infinite extremes, for it is at once the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try and the sublimest strains that reach the Majesty in high."<sup>115</sup> Prayer is for

---

<sup>113</sup>Ting Pantoja-Manalac, *Parent University's The Pinoy Parent: Practical Lessons for Filipino Parents* (Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2000), 2-3.

<sup>114</sup>Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May, *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey: Guidance for Those Who Teach and Nurture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 66.

<sup>115</sup>J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1967), 75.

everyone from the youngest to the oldest. It is an experience worth to be lived for as it brings fulfillment and true satisfaction to the one who does it sincerely. In fact, it should be done by everyone because, as John H. Westerhoff III states, it is at the center of Christian life, a communion with God, and a personal response to His presence.<sup>116</sup>

Moreover, prayer changes the world and the lives of people. John Maxwell marvels about the power of prayer and so writes that “God’s hand moves when people and pastors pray together. Through prayer, God makes the impossible, possible.”<sup>117</sup> The Bible and scholars urge that prayer is essential in any ministry of the church.

Children’s ministry is not an exception. Both leaders and children need spiritual support from prayer. Children need it because they are “busy creatures, working every day to find their place in the world,” as they discover who they are, establish their individual identity, and work at growing physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.<sup>118</sup> This is a journey where nothing more powerful than a prayer can help them to thrive for God. As for those who work with children, much prayer is needed to encourage them as they sometimes might go through loneliness, stress, feelings of inadequacy, depression, or spiritual warfare.<sup>119</sup>

The power of prayer is undeniable and is strongly testified through the lives of such Bible characters as Moses, Paul, and Jesus. They prayed for others, they begged God to bless their work, and most importantly they did not undertake prayer “as a dry routine.”<sup>120</sup> Prayer greatly impacts the lives of those who pray and those who are prayed

---

<sup>116</sup>John H. Westerhoff III, *Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1980), 44.

<sup>117</sup>John Maxwell, *Partners in Prayer: Support and Strengthen Your Pastor and Church Leaders* (Manila, Philippines: OMF Literature, 1999), 7.

<sup>118</sup>Henley, *Child-Sensitive Teaching*, 1.

<sup>119</sup>Maxwell, *Partners in Prayer*, 80-84.

<sup>120</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 104.

for. Children's ministries today become more structured and organized. Blevins and Maddix give very descriptive overview of the effective church programs for children, youth, adults, and families which would transform the lives.<sup>121</sup> However, will those well-established ministries bear fruits if there is no will of God in them? Therefore, churches should pray for the discernment from God to invest in those activities which God wants them to do.

Barna categorized five streams of prayer in children's ministries: the individual prayers of teachers for children, the team prayers of teachers and church leaders for children and the ministry, the intercessors' prayers who are often volunteers for children's workers, the whole congregational prayers for children's ministry, and lastly, parents' prayers for children and teachers.<sup>122</sup> With this wide range of prayer, the researcher believes, any ministry may bloom. It is one of the distinct reasons why children's ministries become so fruitful. Prayer is the most urgent need.<sup>123</sup>

### Significance of Wisely Planned Activities

Time has changed and so have children's ministries. Chromey writes that the influence of postmodernism on the ministries with children is inevitable. So the children's ministries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must "reinvent themselves around relationships, images, and experiences that are 24/7/365, where faith is a personal, dynamic

---

<sup>121</sup>Blevins and Maddix, *Discovering Discipleship*, 250-315.

<sup>122</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 102-04.

<sup>123</sup>Ros Besford and Paul Stephenson, "The Church's Ministry to Children and Their Families," in *Celebrating Children: Equipping People Working with Children and Young People Living in Difficult Circumstances Around the World*, ed. Glenn Miles and Josephine-Joy Wright (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster: Thinking Faith, 2003), 154.

journey.”<sup>124</sup> Children’s ministers are always in the search for new ideas. However, there are several points which always prevail.

Long-term and short-term goals are inherent to the majority of active organizations. Churches usually set plans for five years, one year, or monthly. Short-term goals are crucial for accomplishing bigger ones. Short-term specific goals orient the ministry toward its vision and, as Tomas Andres views it, might even serve as motivation for the workers.<sup>125</sup> Barna states that there are three categories through which effective children’s ministries set their goals: goals which aim at intellectual, emotional, and spiritual outcomes.<sup>126</sup>

Intellectual goals imply that churches seek age-appropriate approaches for Bible teaching, faith strengthening activities, and other means of faith articulation. The emotional outcomes include the ability to express compassion, stewardship, genuine love for God, gratitude for His grace, and awe at His majestic nature. Some of the spiritual outcomes are prayer, heartfelt worship, self-initiated evangelism, acts of service to the poor and disadvantaged, and voluntary accountability. Such precise goal setting, as observed by Barna, benefits both children and teachers. It requires from the church, though, knowing its children and general children’s characteristics well.

---

<sup>124</sup>Craig Jutila, Jim Wideman, and Pat Verbal, *Children's Ministry in the 21st Century: the Encyclopedia of Practical Ideas* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2006), 12.

<sup>125</sup>Tomas Q. Andres, *Developing Positive Behavior by Filipino Values* (Manila, Philippines: Divine World Publications, 1991), 24.

<sup>126</sup>William Michael Belk Jr., “A Study of Children's Ministries in Baptist Church Plants in the Three Major Urbanized Regions of North Carolina” (diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 12, in Google Books, [http://books.google.com.ph/books?id=x1G0jxnUOGMC&pg=PA3&lpg=PA3&dq=patterns+of+ministry+with+children+-+barne&source=bl&ots=9fz4KUyoyH&sig=W7rMgdSdH4\\_ss3rXQxdpOQ07sHs&hl=fil&sa=X&ei=nW0fUbvIGarkmAWq24D4Aw&ved=0CGUQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=patterns%20of%20minist](http://books.google.com.ph/books?id=x1G0jxnUOGMC&pg=PA3&lpg=PA3&dq=patterns+of+ministry+with+children+-+barne&source=bl&ots=9fz4KUyoyH&sig=W7rMgdSdH4_ss3rXQxdpOQ07sHs&hl=fil&sa=X&ei=nW0fUbvIGarkmAWq24D4Aw&ved=0CGUQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=patterns%20of%20minist) (accessed December 11, 2012).

Thus, children's ministry staff and volunteers' awareness of developmental theories and its application should affect the planning of activities playing an important role in decisions that are made. Everyone was once a child and yet, Anne Richards and Peter Privett say, the experience of being a child is "fraught with difficulty."<sup>127</sup> Hence, teachers, exploring the area of child development and refining their knowledge they already have, begin to understand children more and provide better service.

Such organized and thorough planning which is considerate about the three outcomes may indeed help the ministry to bear better fruit. On the other hand, it might often be observed that without planning, there are just too many things to do and it makes children and volunteers be confused and uncertain.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, setting smaller goals is as necessary as determining long-range and intermediate goals.<sup>129</sup> George Edgerly and Harold Crosby put the necessity of goals as one of the growth strategies of Sunday Schools. They explicate that only after teachers clearly define the goals, can they move to a next level which is how to achieve these goals; ultimately, they design the procedures to reach children.<sup>130</sup>

Sound research of the Search Institute,<sup>131</sup> which was conducted during the decade of 1989-1999 and involved around 400,000 American young people, ages 8 through 12, has shown that "the presence or absence of a set of forty 'developmental assets' in adolescents' lives is the key to predicting whether these young people will engage in unhealthy behaviors (drug and alcohol use, early sexual activity, violence, suicide

---

<sup>127</sup> Richards and Privett, ed., *Through the Eyes of a Child*, 1.

<sup>128</sup> Sue Miller, "How to Make Changes in Your Children's Ministry," in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer (Loveland, CO: Group, 2002), 72.

<sup>129</sup> George A. Edgerly and Harold E. Crosby, *Strategies for Sunday School Growth: Why Assemblies of God Sunday Schools are Growing* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1983), 64.

<sup>130</sup> Edgerly and Crosby, *Strategies for Sunday School Growth*, 67-68.

<sup>131</sup> "40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood," in *Search Institute*, <http://www.search-institute.org/40-developmental-asset-middle-childhood-8-12> [accessed 9 January 2012]

attempts, and so on)” or avoid them.<sup>132</sup> An interesting outcome presented in this study is asset number 19 – Religious Community – which is defined by the researchers as the child’s attendance at religious programs or services once or more times per week.<sup>133</sup> Attendance of Sunday School or other children’s ministry programs, as it could be assumed from the research, benefits the development of the child. Such a conclusion urges children’s ministry workers to reevaluate their ministerial activities in order to provide true spiritual nurture of children. In fact, Karen Marie Yust emphasizes childhood practices and attitudes of faithfulness, because, as she says, “they not only nurture spiritually but contribute to the well-being of children and thus to the well-being of society.”<sup>134</sup>

The findings of the previously described Search Institute’s research and statement of Yust lead to a critical closing that the lessons children learn during children’s programs hours should be wisely planned and provide quality Bible teaching.<sup>135</sup> They should be easy-to-understand and give children life principles which can be applied to their lives.<sup>136</sup> Teaching is more than just hearing a lesson. Another important aspect of intentional spiritual nurture of children in the church is the variability of approaches teachers use. Theories of learning are diverse.<sup>137</sup> As children have different learning

---

<sup>132</sup> Karen Marie Yust, *Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children’s Spiritual Lives* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004), 1.

<sup>133</sup> “40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood,” in *Search Institute*, <http://www.search-institute.org/40-developmental-asset-middle-childhood-8-12> [accessed 9 January 2012]

<sup>134</sup> Yust, *Real Kids, Real Faith*, 1-2.

<sup>135</sup> Talmadge Johnson and Stan Toler, *Rediscovering the Sunday School* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2000), 27-33.

<sup>136</sup> Amy Dolan et al., *What Matters Now in Children’s Ministry Early Childhood Edition: 21 Perspectives on Influencing Faith from Birth to Age 4* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011), 5.

<sup>137</sup> Lee Dunn, “Theories of Learning,” Oxford Brookes University, <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocslid/resources/theories.html> (accessed September 14, 2013).



styles, so shall the approaches vary by providing activities fit for children's skills.<sup>138</sup> The effective children's ministries are aware of it and implement it in the structure of their classes and the depth of Bible lessons.

Thus, productive ministries plan the classes according to the various learning needs of their students, prioritize if possible the smaller teacher-student ratio in the classrooms, are intentional about the balance of activities done in small and large groups, and convey their lessons to children not by just repeating Bible stories each year, but presenting new principles they want children to acquire.<sup>139</sup> That is the example of the quality service to children which includes age-appropriate learning, fun, and spiritual nurture.

One great example of wisely planned Sunday School, which in 1811 reached approximately 1,250,000 children in Great Britain weekly, is the school started by Robert Raikes.<sup>140</sup> It was founded in 1780 and the great care was given to the poor boys of Gloucester, England.<sup>141</sup> Raikes was convicted when he saw those boys "left to their own devices" and becoming "half-wild creatures whose lives were filled with hate, fear, and ignorance."<sup>142</sup> Something had to be done and Raikes did one right thing, he started to gather them, educate them, and bring Gospel to them. He knew their needs and he started from there slowly teaching them the Word of God. That Sunday School was much different from today's one but what maintained the same are the are principles which

---

<sup>138</sup>Michael Conn-Powers, "All Children Ready for School: Approaches to Learning," *Early Childhood Briefing Paper Series*, 2006, <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/SRUD-ApproachestoLearning.pdf>(accessed September 14, 2013).

<sup>139</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 107-10.

<sup>140</sup>Elmer L. Towns, *How to Grow an Effective Sunday School* (Denver, Colo.: Accent Books, 1979), 81.

<sup>141</sup>Frank Glenn Lankard, *A History of the American Sunday School Curriculum* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1927), 54-57.

<sup>142</sup>Towns, *How to Grow an Effective Sunday School*, 81.

were then and should also be nowadays: having the heart for children, knowing them, knowing their needs, providing good teachers, being persistent throughout all difficulties, and trusting in God's guidance.<sup>143</sup>

Raikes had the teachers who were able to help children with their needs. Indeed, proper preparation of teachers is important factor.<sup>144</sup> However, such preparation should first start with prayer. In Wesley's approach to education, teachers were also the key individuals who had to be people of "piety and understanding."<sup>145</sup> The teacher should remember that topics discussed and activities done in the classroom must be relevant to the life of the child. There might be a lot of tips given about the betterment of service and a variety of programs offered for children, but RaNae Street gives an influential reminder that "programs don't change people; only people change people."<sup>146</sup> Thus, it is crucial to evaluate and invest in those who make children's ministry happen. Following Wesley, churches should remember that the education should focus on God but rely "upon people as instruments of God's will and exemplars of godly minds and lives, as imitators of Christ."<sup>147</sup>

### Significance of Teacher-Children Relationships

A significant study by the Commission on Children at Risk which is comprised of 33 children's doctors, research scientists, and mental health and youth service

---

<sup>143</sup>Towns, *How to Grow an Effective Sunday School*, 80-81.

<sup>144</sup>Dick Gruber, *Focus on Children: A Handbook for Teachers* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2006), 53.

<sup>145</sup> Richard P. Heitzenrater, "John Wesley and Children" in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed., Marcia J. Bunge, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 292.

<sup>146</sup>RaNae Street, "Meaningful Programs for Children," in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer (Loveland, CO: Group, 2002), 174.

<sup>147</sup>Heitzenrater, "John Wesley and Children," 292.

professionals<sup>148</sup> has provided an important observation that “the human child is ‘hardwired to connect.’” People are essentially connected, or how the research states *hardwired*, for each other in order to develop healthy and flourishing.<sup>149</sup> The study demonstrates that the environment greatly influences this development.<sup>150</sup> Accordingly, spiritual development and religiosity are the highest priority as they influence on the well-being in significant ways.<sup>151</sup> Children’s spiritual maturing often depends on the help of adult mentors; therefore, the development of relationships between children and teachers is another characteristic of effective children’s ministries.

The Bible teaches that leaders should be shepherds of God’s flock, that is under their care, watching over them—not because they must, but because they are willing, as God wants them to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to them, but being examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:2-3, NIV). This is precisely the attitude which should be encouraged throughout productive ministries. The teachers’ intentionality in the ministry with children plays an important role here. The teacher-child relationships are beneficial both for adults and children.

Children gain positive experience from this interaction.<sup>152</sup> Adults also learn from the children’s ability to “find belief easy and uncomplicated.”<sup>153</sup> Dan Brewster explicates that children’s belief is uncomplicated because they don’t need to analyze, they are direct

---

<sup>148</sup>Commission on Children at Risk, “Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities,” <http://www.americanvalues.org/ExSumm-print.pdf> [accessed 7 January 2013]

<sup>149</sup>Commission on Children at Risk, *Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2003), 6.

<sup>150</sup>Commission on Children at Risk, *Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities*, 17.

<sup>151</sup>Keeley, *Helping Our Children Grow in Faith*, 11.

<sup>152</sup>Belk Jr., “A Study of Children’s Ministries in Baptist Church Plants in the Three Major Urbanized Regions of North Carolina,” 13.

<sup>153</sup>Brewster, *Child, Church and Mission*, 21.

in their feelings, and very open in nature.<sup>154</sup> In this sense children are great teachers and Jesus used them as examples for adults (Matthew 18:3, NIV).

The Holy Spirit works in children as well as adults. However, it is up to those who work with children to encourage relationships between adults and children so they will be nurtured in the church.<sup>155</sup>

### Significance of Curriculum

“Childhood,” Stonehouse writes, “often provides the most crucial spiritual impressions of all, the ones that could shape (or distort) all the experience of later life.”<sup>156</sup> Therefore, the philosophy and the curriculum of children’s ministry, which set the focus and direction of children’s education in the church, must be taken seriously and compiled intentionally. In fact, the philosophy of the church influences the selection and use of the curriculum. As Herman and Cornelia Gregorio explain it, “the child-centered philosophy is based on the educational concept that the child is the center of the educative process.”<sup>157</sup> Thus, the curriculum should incorporate the interests and holistic needs of children and of course, the Bible.

The curriculum selection should consider goals, desired outcomes, and, as Barna says, “long-term, worldview-oriented approach to spiritual development.”<sup>158</sup> In other words, the curriculum should be personalized according to the needs and demands of every individual church. However, when choosing the curriculum churches should remember that the worthy curriculum envisions the following outcomes for the sake of

---

<sup>154</sup>Brewster, *Child, Church and Mission*, 21.

<sup>155</sup>Keeley, *Helping Our Children Grow in Faith*, 11.

<sup>156</sup>Stonehouse, *Joining Children on Their Spiritual Journey*.

<sup>157</sup>Herman C. Gregorio and Cornelia M. Gregorio, *Philosophy of Education in Philippine Setting* (Quezon City, Philippines: R. P. GARCIA Publishing Company, 1979), 69.

<sup>158</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 111.

the students: “what students should know (head/cognitive), do (hands/behavioral or psychomotor), or value (heart/affective or volitional).<sup>159</sup> The activities of the curriculum should be intentional and bring “formation, discernment, and transformation within the life of a given community.”<sup>160</sup> They should also keep up to date because if not, churches will miss many opportunities to instruct the new generation who is actively engaged in using technologies and reading Facebook posts more than the Bible.

Curriculum is a crucial component of teaching<sup>161</sup> and the key resource in the classroom.<sup>162</sup> It is a “roadmap” which means that there is a starting point and the desired destination, but the teacher chooses which route to take in order to reach the destination successfully.<sup>163</sup>

### Significance of Children’s Personal Involvement in Ministry

Can children minister? What ministry can the church offer them? Many scholars in unison write that children not only can, but must be given an opportunity to minister and so, worship God through it.<sup>164</sup> A challenging statement of Gruber is one of those voices which explicate the idea of children’s Christian service:

Help each student find and fulfill his place of service as a member of the body of Christ. If we believe that a child can be saved, then it follows that the same child has a place of service in the family of God. Children have ministry gifts. The wise teacher will seek to discover each child’s gifts or abilities and capitalize on these in lesson preparation and presentation.<sup>165</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup>Blevins and Maddix, *Discovering Discipleship*, 166.

<sup>160</sup>Blevins and Maddix, *Discovering Discipleship*, 177.

<sup>161</sup>Scottie May et al., *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community* (Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 7.

<sup>162</sup>Younger and Flinn, “Sunday School from Start to Finish,” 189.

<sup>163</sup>May et al., *Children Matter*, 8.

<sup>164</sup>Chapman, *Teaching Kids Authentic Worship*, 181.

<sup>165</sup>Gruber, *Focus on Children*, 16.

In other words, churches today should shift from ministry *to* children to ministry *with* children by incorporating the “gifts and graces of children in the church and family.”<sup>166</sup> Fortunately, unlike in the past when children were not heard, today the church seeks to understand and involve them. As a recent research of Scottie May, Katie Stemp, and Grant Burns has proved, many of their respondent congregations have this desire “to bring the whole faith community, including children, into the presence of God during times of corporate worship, shared meals, and community service.”<sup>167</sup> This is a significant finding which highlights that children in the church are now prioritized more than before.

Children experience God<sup>168</sup> and they need to give glory to Him through the worship of service. Children have been observing how adults worshiped the Lord. Now, the church is recognizing that children need a chance to worship as well, but will do it with their own “children’s ways.”<sup>169</sup> Intentional children’s ministries regularly give children opportunities to minister; they help them to recognize their gifts which can be used for the service of the Lord; and they hope to create a habit of worshipping God for the lifetime of the children.<sup>170</sup> Such productive ministries have an awareness that, as Kathleen Chapman states, worshipping God is like glue; it sticks children to Him!<sup>171</sup>

God loves for children to have opportunities to worship Him. The Bible says that when children and infants worship Him, the enemies are silenced (Psalm 8:2, NIV). Moreover, when they do so, they are blessed, healed, empowered, spiritually protected,

---

<sup>166</sup>Blevins and Maddix, *Discovering Discipleship*, 262.

<sup>167</sup>May, Stemp and Burns, “Children’s Place in the New Forms of Church: an Exploratory Survey of Their Ministry with Children and Families,” 278-305.

<sup>168</sup>Stonehouse and May, *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey*, 41-54.

<sup>169</sup>Chromey, *Children’s Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches*, 126.

<sup>170</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 112.

<sup>171</sup>Chapman, *Teaching Kids Authentic Worship*, 181-82.

have peace, and are purified.<sup>172</sup> There are various ways that children can minister in the church. Some of them are scripture reading, telling Bible stories, music, worship, puppets, special performances, prayer, drama, ushering, testimonials, cleaning, or helping old people.<sup>173</sup> The list can be long and diverse; it is unique for every church as the leaders and teachers identify the gifts of their children and help them to participate in the ministry.

### Significance of Workers' Recruitment and Teamwork

According to the survey of Chromey, many of the interviewed churches in his research evaluated their children's ministries with a grade C or below. Among the various struggles the research has revealed, it was often a challenge for those churches to find volunteer support. This frustration of staffing the children's ministry team "with godly leaders who live the holiness lifestyle" is common<sup>174</sup> and thus, authors who write about children's ministry provide various tips for successful recruitment of volunteers.<sup>175</sup>

This advice should be considered as crucial as the climate of the church, the recruitment style, clear job descriptions, equipment of the workers,<sup>176</sup> intentions and characteristics of potential workers,<sup>177</sup> church's standards for staff selection,<sup>178</sup> and others. These tips might be helpful for some churches and at the same, might be useless for others. Every church is unique and thus, the recruitment of the children's ministry

---

<sup>172</sup>Chapman, *Teaching Kids Authentic Worship*, 104-16.

<sup>173</sup>Gruber, *Focus on Children*, 95-101.

<sup>174</sup>Johnson and Toler, *Rediscovering the Sunday School*, 89.

<sup>175</sup>Chromey, *Children's Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches*, 121.

<sup>176</sup>May et al., *Children Matter*, 346-49.

<sup>177</sup>Craig Jutila, "Determining and Developing Your Leadership Team," in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer (Loveland, CO: Group, 2002), 19-23.

<sup>178</sup>Johnson and Toler, *Rediscovering the Sunday School*, 106.

workers should also be personalized. However, there are some general guidelines which could be implemented in every church for the better staffing of ministry.

Recruitment of the teachers is the development of future leaders.<sup>179</sup> It should be taken seriously and cautiously as it will reflect the results of total ministry with children and then, on the lives of boys and girls.

Team-based leadership is a God-inspired activity for any church. In fact, it is the way God designed people to function.<sup>180</sup> In spite of the widely accepted notion that a leader is the one who controls; a leader, as Phil Pringle defines, is “a servant, soldier, and son.”<sup>181</sup> Leaders connect people instead of ruling them. Christian leaders should understand the characteristics of good leaders and master them.<sup>182</sup>

Leadership of any form should, primarily, be in service to God, and only then, for the work of men. “Power with God precedes power with men.”<sup>183</sup> Therefore, Benjamin P. de Jesus reminds that the most valuable in the ministry is not leadership but “regular, disciplined, personal meditation and communion with God.”<sup>184</sup>

Furthermore, according to the definition given by Barna in his research concentrated on leadership, a leadership team is “a small group of people who possess complementary gifts and skills. They are committed to one another’s growth and success and hold themselves mutually accountable. Together they lead a larger group of people

---

<sup>179</sup>Jutila, “Determining and Developing Your Leadership Team,” 22.

<sup>180</sup>Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team: The Miracle of Teamwork and How It Transforms Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2004), 174.

<sup>181</sup>Phil Pringle, *Top 10 Qualities of a Great Leader* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 2007), x.

<sup>182</sup>Eddie Gibbs, *Leadership Next: Changing Leaders in a Changing Culture* (Paranaque City, Philippines: Acts 29 Publishing, 2005), 106.

<sup>183</sup>Jesus, *Leadership That is Christian*, 66.

<sup>184</sup>Jesus, *Leadership That is Christian*, 66.



toward a common vision, specific performance goals, and a plan of action.”<sup>185</sup> Team leadership is beneficial for any organization as it allows people to strengthen their service and accomplish greater projects. One of the mottos of Greenhills Christian Fellowship is Together Everyone Achieve More (TEAM).<sup>186</sup> This wonderful formula which might be one of those distinct characteristics that makes the ministry of GCF productive.

A leadership team does the same tasks as any solo leader does: planning, organizing, assigning tasks, and accepting accountability; only, if the work gets done together with others, the team reaps a wealth of other extra benefits such as collaboration, communication, commitment, realism, a doable pace, and accountability.<sup>187</sup> In other words, teamwork brings people together,<sup>188</sup> encourages them to use their gifts, makes the dream work,<sup>189</sup> and wins championships;<sup>190</sup> consequently, this means that children experience better service.

Teamwork is emphasized by many. It indeed brings wonderful results and is the strength of various mega churches,<sup>191</sup> but no matter how well the team collaborates, Christian leaders should always remember that they are to “believe in and live the cross and resurrection of Jesus” first of all because they must have the conversion they seek to preach to others.<sup>192</sup>

---

<sup>185</sup>George Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership: Finding Strength in Shared Responsibility* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2001), 24.

<sup>186</sup>Production Team of Greenhills Christian Fellowship, *We are One: Knowing Christ and Making Him Known. Through the Years. The 25th Anniversary Publication Greenhills Christian Fellowship* (Manila: Greenhills Christian Fellowship, 2003), back cover.

<sup>187</sup>Fogg C. Davis, *Team-Based Strategic Planning: A Complete Guide to Structuring, Facilitating and Implementing Process* (New York: Amacom, 1994), 253-54.

<sup>188</sup>Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 106-07.

<sup>189</sup>John C. Maxwell, *Talent is Never Enough: Discover the Choices That Will Take You Beyond Your Talent* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 259.

<sup>190</sup>Maxwell, *Talent is Never Enough*, 260.

<sup>191</sup>Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership*, 28.

<sup>192</sup>Joel L. Maribao, *Pinoy Religious Leader* (Manila, Philippines: LOGOS Publications, Inc., 1997), 50.

## Significance of Children's Protection in the Church

Children today are the church leaders tomorrow.<sup>193</sup> If we want the next generation of children to grow to their full potential, their childhood should be ensured with “an atmosphere conducive to their physical, moral and intellectual development.”<sup>194</sup> Every place designed for children, especially church, should provide child-friendly and safe environment. There are several reasons why this is important: firstly, any kind of abuse, physical, emotional, or sexual,<sup>195</sup> damages children not only physically but also psychologically leaving them “scarred for the rest of their lives.”<sup>196</sup> Secondly, church is usually perceived as a safe place without terrible incidents of abuse; however, such shameful incidents do happen in the church settings.<sup>197</sup> So, the church should be aware and do its best to be the most trustful place for the parents to leave their children in. Thirdly, “the efforts to share the gospel can be completely derailed by a serious incident,” thus, children's ministry simply owes kids to provide as safe place as possible, to be vigilant, and prepared for crisis.<sup>198</sup>

In fact, having the awareness about child protection and the security procedures is the distinct characteristic of effective children's ministries. The lives of children are in the hands of God, but they are entrusted to adults who must and are able to protect them. Thus, one of the first steps of the church is to be not silent and promote safer child

---

<sup>193</sup>Chromey, *Children's Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches*, 17.

<sup>194</sup>Elizabeth A. Pangalangan, ed., project director, *Looking after Filipino Children: A Compendium of Philippine Laws and International Declarations, Conventions and Covenants* (Makati City: Children and Youth Foundation of the Philippines, 1998), 110.

<sup>195</sup>Heather MacLeod, “Child Protection,” in *Celebrating Children: Equipping People Working with Children and Young People Living in Difficult Circumstances around the World*, ed. Glenn Miles and Josephine-Joy Wright (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster: Thinking Faith, 2003), 245.

<sup>196</sup>Brewster, *Child, Church, and Mission*, Revised ed., 135.

<sup>197</sup>May et al., *Children Matter*, 321.

<sup>198</sup>Bill Stout, “Safety and Liability in Children's Ministry,” in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer (Loveland, CO: Group, 2003), 34.

environment by compiling a child protection policy for the church or, if there is one already, make sure the policy is “taken off the shelf and applied in the situation.”<sup>199</sup> The effective implementation of it might seem hard but it is one significant contribution towards the goal of ensuring safe childhood.<sup>200</sup>

The goal of chapter two was to investigate the area of existing principles and practices of children’s ministries. I have studied and gathered important information about such topics as biblical and theological insights on children’s ministry, children’s spirituality, the characteristics of mega churches, and the elements of intentional children’s ministries. The next chapter three described the research methods and procedures for the present research.

---

<sup>199</sup>May et al., *Children Matter*, 321.

<sup>200</sup>MacLeod, “Child Protection,” 245.

### CHAPTER III

#### RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This particular chapter identified the method of the study, sources of data, research-gathering procedures, data-gathering instruments, and feasibility of the study. The purpose of the research was to identify the principles and practices of children's ministries in three mega churches of Metro Manila and describe their trends which could be applied in other churches. I, as the researcher, aimed to study the perspectives on the ministry with children, the investment in the ministry with children, the methods and techniques used in the ministry with children, the content provided through the ministry with children, and the recruitment and retention policies for workers in the children's ministries of each church.

#### **Method of the Study**

This research was both qualitative and descriptive in design. Its main purpose was to identify the principles and practices of three Metro Manila mega churches' ministries with children and, based on the findings, describe their trends. In order to present a reliable and balanced study the following triangulation, the process of "cross-checking the existence of certain phenomena and the veracity of individual accounts by gathering data from a number of informants and a number of sources and subsequently comparing and contrasting one account with another in order to produce as full and balanced study

as possible,”<sup>201</sup> was useful here: interviews with the primary respondents, observations, and analysis of original materials used in the ministry with children. Interviews, observations, and checklist for children’s ministries materials were developed prior to the actual research.

I interviewed four or five respondents from each mega church. The total number of respondents was fourteen. Both men and women teachers participated in this study. All interviews took place in the facilities of respondent churches: classrooms, offices, or lounge areas. The majority of interviews were conducted on Sundays. I conducted this study as an outsider of these mega churches’ children’s ministries context; however, I had previously attended each of the respondent churches and had been present at Volunteers Recruitment meetings, General Assemblies, and several Sunday School lessons.

### **Sources of Data**

The data for this research was gathered from the respondents of Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF), Victory Christian Fellowship (VCF), and Christ’s Commission Fellowship (CCF). The respondents from every church were children’s ministries’ directors and one (1) teacher of each age level of children’s ministry. These mega churches had different children’s age groups so the number of teachers participating in the interviews varied. Thereby, five people from CCF, five people from VCF, and four people from GCF participated in this research. Teachers were selected purposively based on the following criterion: firstly, at least three years of experience of teaching the specific age group and secondly, both male and female teachers participated in the interviews. Since parent-child relationships might influence the teaching approach

---

<sup>201</sup>Judith Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press, 1993), 64.

in the classroom and responses on the interview questions, the third criteria was that a participant not be a parent of a child in that specific age group.

Prior to the interviews with the respondents, I studied the websites of GCF, VCF, and CCF in order to grasp the mission, vision statements, goals, core values, and the objectives of the churches. When such information was not accessible via websites, I requested it from children's ministry department of each participating church. Thus, analysis of children's ministries' materials like curriculum and other important resources was another source of data which benefited the study.

Observations in each of the participating churches were one more source of data (see appendix H). The observations took place during the children's ministries' Sunday hours and weekly teacher's meetings. Through such extensive ways of data collection I hoped to gather valid and reliable data. I was assured that the three data-gathering instruments made good triangulation for more balanced study.

### **Research-Gathering Procedure**

The interview questions were divided into five main categories: first, the perspectives of the church on ministry with children; second, the investment of the church in ministry with children; third, the methods and techniques of the ministry with children; fourth, the content provided through the ministry with children; and fifth, the recruitment and retention policies for workers in the children's ministries. Each category included several specific sub-questions (see appendix G).

The first step of the data-gathering procedure was to send official letters to the senior pastors of all three selected churches and get their permission to conduct this research in their churches (see appendices A-C). Secondly, I contacted the Children's

Ministry directors in order to select the teachers and set the interview appointments. After the selection of interviewees, they were contacted as well to get their agreement to participate in this study (see appendices D-E).

Third, on the planned days the interviews were conducted. All the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed afterwards upon the consent of the respondents. I also conducted observations and checked the available materials of children's ministries (see appendices H-I).

Analysis of the data adhered to the following steps: first, I transcribed the gathered data by multiple listening to audio records and study of the interview notes. Secondly, the whole amount of data from interviews, observations, and analysis of children's ministry materials was sorted out according to the thematic questions as they were identified in the research questionnaire (see appendix G). Next, the categories of activities of each selected church were labeled for easier data classification and analyzed in Microsoft Excel. Fourthly, the crucial elements in the activities of each church were determined. And lastly, I identified the key ideas and integrated the data according to the sub-problems of the research.<sup>202</sup>

### **Data-Gathering Instruments**

This study identified the principles and practices of the GCF, VCF, and CCF's children's ministries and described their trends which could be applied to other churches. The study incorporated several data-gathering instruments such as interviews, observations, and materials' analysis. Guidelines for each of these instruments were prepared in advance to cover five main points: perspectives on the ministry with children,

---

<sup>202</sup> "Analyzing Qualitative Data," in *The Learning Store*, <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/g3658-12.pdf> [accessed 21 February 2013].

the investment in the ministry with children, methods and techniques of the ministry with children, the content provided through the ministry with children, and the recruitment and retention policies for workers in the children's ministries (see appendices G-I).



## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents and analyzes the collected data from three mega churches of Manila to see the principles and practices of their children's ministries. These churches are Christ's Commission Fellowship (CCF), Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF), and Victory Christian Fellowship (VCF).

To identify the principles and practices of children's ministries at CCF, GCF, and VCF, which is the main problem of the study, the research considered five distinctive categories of activity which are inherent in intentional children's ministries: 1) the church' perspectives on a ministry with children; 2) investment in ministry with children; 3) methods and techniques used in ministry with children; 4) content provided through ministry with children, and 5) workers of children's ministry.

#### **Perspectives of the Church on Ministry with Children**

Intentionality of the churches on children's ministries can first of all be seen from their perspectives of children and ministry with them. This is the first distinctive category of activity inherent to intentional children's ministries according to Barna.<sup>203</sup> This topic was explored through the respondents' views on integration of the philosophy of children's ministry into the activities of the church, children's spirituality, and family and its role for the spiritual nurture of children.

---

<sup>203</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 97-102.

## The Philosophy of Ministry

Children's ministry of CCF is called NxtGen which stands for next generation.

The mission of NxtGen is stated as “to train children to love, honor, and serve God and others.”<sup>204</sup> The vision of it is “to see a Christ-committed next generation.”<sup>205</sup> In support to it, CCF children's ministry firmly believes and follows Proverbs 22:6 which says “start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” ((NIV). So NxtGen puts a lot of effort into children 0 to 13 years old to help them experience God in their young lives.

As for GCF, the mission and vision of the church also guides the work of children's ministry. It is stated as follows: mission—“lives and communities transformed through Jesus Christ,” and vision—“making disciples of Jesus Christ in the Philippines and beyond.”<sup>206</sup> But, besides that, their children's ministry which is also called Sunday School, gears toward “letting them [children]<sup>207</sup> become Son explorers, discoverers, and doers.”<sup>208</sup> Sunday School of GCF nurtures children from 2 years old to 14 years old in different ways and thrusts to, as it was expressed on the promotional bookmarks of Sunday School, “Discipling Tomorrow's Leaders Today.”<sup>209</sup>

In VCF, their children's ministry, Victory Kids, is defined as “a ministry for children 0 to 12 years old that works in partnership with parents to develop in kids a

---

<sup>204</sup> Christ's Commission Fellowship, “CCF Children's Ministry Mission and Vision” (handout shared at CCF, Manila, Philippines, September 20, 2013).

<sup>205</sup> Christ's Commission Fellowship, “CCF Children's Ministry Mission and Vision.”

<sup>206</sup> “About GCF,” in *Greenhills Christian Fellowship: Know Christ and Make Him Known*, <http://www.gcf.org.ph/pages/about/#top> [accessed 20 September 2013].

<sup>207</sup> I use brackets in this chapter to clarify some pronouns in the quotations from the responses of participants of this study.

<sup>208</sup> Greenhills Christian Fellowship, *Sunday School Nurtures Children in 7 Ways* (Manila, Philippines: GCF, 2013).

<sup>209</sup> Greenhills Christian Fellowship, *Sunday School Discipling Tomorrow's Leaders Today* (Manila, Philippines: GCF, 2013).

lifelong love for Scripture, godly character, and leadership in a fun and exciting discipleship environment.”<sup>210</sup> Their vision is “to train the next generation to honor God and make disciples.”<sup>211</sup> Moreover, as it is stated in Victory Kids Volunteers’ Handbook, VCF children’s ministry also believes that “ministry is and should be an overflow from a deep and growing relationship with the Lord, hence, we put high emphasis on the volunteer’s spiritual walk and discipleship environment.”<sup>212</sup>

CCF, GCF, and VCF value relationships between people and so encourage their congregations to be a part of small groups where, they believe, the relationships are nurtured. All three churches, CCF, GCF, and VCF, desire for children to experience a relationship with God as early as possible. The visions of the churches are similar in part. All of them want children to honor God and share God’s word to other people around them.

#### Integration of the Philosophy of Children’s Ministry Into the Activities of the Church

As stated by Barna, intentional children’s ministries have clear basics of what they stand for and what they exist to produce.<sup>213</sup> Although, the philosophies can be exhaustive or brief, they should be simple and clear in the statements for the volunteers and the congregation to be able to remember them. The mission and vision statements of CCF, GCF, and VCF’s children’s ministries are brief but clear.

When the respondents were asked to say the main points of their children’s ministry philosophy and how it is integrated into the activities of their church, most of

---

<sup>210</sup>Victory Christian Fellowship, *Victory Kids: Volunteers' Handbook* (Pasig City, Philippines: Every Nation Productions, 2013), 1.

<sup>211</sup>Victory Christian Fellowship, *Victory Kids: Volunteers' Handbook*, 1.

<sup>212</sup>Victory Christian Fellowship, *Victory Kids: Volunteers' Handbook*, 1.

<sup>213</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 97.

them knew by heart the mission and vision statements of their churches. However, it was difficult for some to explain how the activities of the children's ministry followed their philosophies or how their philosophies led them in what they were doing.

From CCF, R-CCF1 shared that the philosophy of children's ministry was always used for the goal setting of children's ministry activities. R-CCF2, R-CCF4, and R-CCF5 emphasized that the focus of the ministry at CCF is to see children sharing the Gospel to their friends, classmates, and other people around them. In order to do so, as R-CCF2 said, children are exposed "to God's word as early as they can" and are given ministry opportunities "alongside their parents."

R-CCF4 explained that the children's ministry of CCF is "in line with the mission and vision of the whole organization which is to make Christ-committed followers who will make Christ-committed followers." R-CCF1 commented that the philosophy has been recently slightly changed but it still supports the overall mission and vision of the church. CCF communicates its children's ministry philosophy to volunteers through their retreats, meetings, and the ministry orientations. Thereby, staff members, teachers, and volunteers are motivated by the same goals.

It is clear from these comments that CCF children's ministry shares its philosophy with the teachers of NxtGen. It is also obvious that teachers see ways the philosophy is implemented through what they are doing. As R-CCF5 has stated, they want "to see millions of Christ committed followers that are transformed and transform their families, transform their neighborhood, transform their city, and transform the nations." R-CCF2 and R-CCF5 see this transformation beginning from the families. The vision and mission of NxtGen can be fulfilled through the collaboration of parents and church.

In GCF, R-GCF1 said that it is crucial for them to deliver the mission and vision statements to their teachers and volunteers as they believe that when everyone “embraces the vision and mission” then they “are really working together as a team.” R-GCF4 could not clearly remember the philosophy of GCF’s Sunday School but explained that it is integrated in their classes through providing children with “building blocks” of knowing that God hears them and cares about them. Children need “to really understand the basics of the faith” and that is where the lives start being transformed. Two other GCF respondents said nothing about the philosophy and so there should still be more avenues for the teachers and volunteers to be reminded with the vision and mission of their ministry. The Bible says, “Where there is no vision, people perish...” (Proverbs 29:18, KJV). But when there is one vision, people are united. This is what GCF Sunday School strives for.

At VCF, all respondents emphasized that children can honor God as young as they are. It is in line with the vision “to train the next generation to honor God and make disciples.” R-VCF5 expounded on that saying, “as young as they [children] are, they are encouraged to honor God first and after having that experience with Jesus Christ, even as young as they are, they can make disciples as well among other kids, their classmates and friends.” R-VCF3 also explained that, “when you have faith, you have to witness it to other people.” So VCF children’s ministry believes that children will make disciples after they experience the love of God and are being trained to honor Him.

Intentional children’s ministries put into practice individualized philosophy of the ministry. The purpose of such philosophies is to give precision and direction to the ministry but it must be communicated to other members of the ministry team and the

whole congregation of the church.<sup>214</sup>CCF, GCF, and VCF have clear statements of mission and vision which guide their ministries.

### Views of Children's Spirituality

Children "at an early age have clear ideas about the nature of the divine, the concept of faith, and the meaning of prayer."<sup>215</sup>When CCF, GCF, and VCF respondents were asked to share their views of children's spirituality and the responses they have seen from children which showed the spiritual life of a child, the answers were extensive and almost all agreed that children's spirituality has to be nurtured as early as possible at home and at the church whereas home being the most important one. It coincides with the teaching of Wesley who many decades ago challenged parents to be responsible for the spiritual development of their children.<sup>216</sup>

#### *CCF NxtGen*

Among the respondents in CCF, two said that spirituality of children is something that has been "lost" nowadays, one said that spirituality of children is hard to define, and the other two expressed that spirituality of children should start as early as possible but it is influenced by the environment of a child. According to Shelley, spiritual development is a process which influences and is also influenced; it should be nurtured through "the teaching and example of parents, teachers and other adults."<sup>217</sup> R-CCF4 expressed the same idea that children's "spirituality depends on their experience and the people around

---

<sup>214</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 98.

<sup>215</sup>Moore et al., "Diverse Voices: Children's Perceptions of Spirituality," 107-10.

<sup>216</sup>Stonehouse, "Children in Wesleyan Thought," 140.

<sup>217</sup>Shelley, *The Spiritual Needs of Children*, 46.

them.” R-CCF4 reasoned it with a statement that “whatever they will be receiving at this age will be most likely the things that they will be carrying throughout their entire life.”

R-CCF1 stated that these days “children seek the Lord. If you tell them about Jesus, they will listen. They will gladly welcome.” So children need these opportunities to hear the word of God. It is indeed true, as Brewster wrote, 85% of those who become Christians do so between the ages 4 and 14 years old.<sup>218</sup> Teachers of CCF have this understanding and as it was shared by R-CCF2, “it’s really never too early for them to understand because they have innocent faith, they have a childlike faith that easily believes about God. So it’s really important that they hear about it.” The example of R-CCF4 about the spiritual transformation of a child from being a “rowdy” one to the confession testifies to it:

So he [the child] was telling in the crowd during his testimony, during the last night that he raised his hand while singing and shouting to God and he started crying. So when he cannot hold his tears anymore, he went out and called his mom to say that he was very sorry and that they, that he loved them. He felt, (the teacher is crying), how God loved him during the camp.

R-CCF3 also shared an example of a child’s faith, “When you observe them [children] at the end of the day, you will hear them say to you, you know what teacher, I’ve learned Jesus loves me and I’ve shared with my classmates.” The other experience of a child’s faith was told by R-CCF5 about a student who was continuously bullied in the school but “instead of fighting back he chooses to forgive the other child and then he chooses not to fight back, and he chooses to believe what God tells about him... So instead of believing that he is not special, he is not, something wrong about it, he chooses to believe in God’s word.” These examples from the experiences of CCF teachers are not the only ones but

---

<sup>218</sup>“Children's Movements ,” in *Stand4kids*, <http://www.stand4kids.org/get-involved/childrens-movements> [accessed 12 February 2013].

their responses testify that teachers listen to children, pay attention to their lives, and participate in what is happening to them.

When asked if the church identifies the age when children can be considered as saved, all CCF respondents replied negative. R-CCF1 cleared that they “try to insert the Gospel at any time at any age.” These responses showed that children in CCF are valued and as an outcome there is intentional ministry with children which trains them to love, honor, and serve God and others.

### *GCF Sunday School*

At GCF the responses were different and gave good spectrum of the church’s views of children’s spirituality. R-GCF1 emphasized the importance of the age 2 to 14 years old and said that church puts high importance on young children. It coincides with the findings of Myers<sup>219</sup> and Barna<sup>220</sup> that majority of people becomes Christians before they are fourteen. R-GCF2 said that children are very accepting at the early age and have “dependence on God.” So it is important for children to “realize that ‘Hey, there is really someone who’s looking after me all the time!’” Teachers want children to see “the trust and friendship they have with God.” They rejoice in seeing young children being dependent on God.

Shelley wrote that if children receive religious instruction, they “grow in their understanding of God as Creator, lawgiver and friend” and are “able to articulate their faith.”<sup>221</sup> This concept was expressed by R-GCF4 who noted that children’s ability to understand the Gospel should not be underestimated. R-GCF4 expounded on it, “We can

---

<sup>219</sup>“Children's Movements ,” in *Stand4kids*, <http://www.stand4kids.org/get-involved/childrens-movements> [accessed 12 February 2013].

<sup>220</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 34.

<sup>221</sup> Shelley, *The Spiritual Needs of Children*, 46.



teach them about the Bible just as much as we do older kids also like teenagers and all that. We shouldn't, like, lower the quality just because they're children." This response represents that the teachers of GCF Sunday School focus their teaching on the word of God.

When asked of the age when children are considered as saved, GCF respondents said that there is no specific limitation. R-GCF4 responded that "there's more of the recognition the child can recognize sin" and "a child actually has a sense of right and wrong already that you know that they're choosing it." GCF respondents showed their awareness of children's ability to have relationships with God at any age and be transformed through Jesus Christ.

### *VCF Victory Kids*

Among the views of VCF respondents of children's spirituality, one respondent said that the church has to reach children as early as possible, another respondent also stressed on the fact that children's ministry is an important aspect in helping children develop spiritually, while the next one said that spirituality of children needs to start at home and always be followed up. The last two participants said that children's faith is pure and children nowadays are thirsty for Christ.

Teachers saw a need to implant Jesus in the hearts of the children as early as possible. R-VCF1 commented that "it's easy for children to absorb things at the very young age... We teach the Gospel as young as 3. And more often they hear that, they get prepared to open their hearts. So that when the time comes, they'll be open to it." VCF hopes to be able to teach children even as young as 1 year old in the nearest future.

R-VCF2 expressed that, “Kids’ spirituality always needs to start at home” because children connect their love for parents with their love for God. “The kids have their very special way of saying what their spirituality is. It’s not that defined as adults’.” Thereby teachers need to connect these two aspects in their lessons to help children better understand the presence of God. Indeed, Grossoehme wrote that children are very different from adults in a way that “they use a different vocabulary to describe their experiences. They feel emotions as readily as adults but do not know the same words to describe what is going on inside them.”<sup>222</sup> Teaching children to identify the love for God with the love for parents can be one of the ways to help them feel God. Obviously, in order to do so, parents themselves need to be the representation of Jesus in their lives.

R-VCF5 shared, “Kids today are living toward Christ. They want just to know more about Christ. Because I think the environment today is very much destructing. I think it’s better for them to plant Jesus Christ in their hearts first.” When asked how the church nurtures children’s faith, R-VCF5 replied, “the church simply plants the seed in their hearts. And I believe that God makes it grow.” As described by R-VCF4, children’s faith is “very pure because they are very innocent. It’s fresh.” These responses say that children in VCF are perceived as precious and the time of childhood is valued because that is the beginning when children are trained to honor God.

---

<sup>222</sup>Grossoehme, *The Pastoral Care of Children*, 8.

*CCF NxtGen, GCF Sunday School, and VCF Victory Kids*

**Table 1. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: View of Children's Spirituality**

View of Children's Spirituality															
	NR*	CCF					GCF				VCF				
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Children seek for something nowadays. So, introducing Jesus to them is vital.	3 CS*	X				X									X
Children at an early age can have genuine relationships with God.	8 CS	X		X	X	X		X			X	X			X
Children's spirituality is influenced by their environment.	6 CS			X	X			X				X	X X		
Children's spirituality is fresh, pure, and innocent.	2 CS		X					X							
Churches need to get children to know God as early as possible by sharing Gospel with them and teaching them about God.	17 NCS*	XX	XX X			X	X	X X X X		X	XX		X X	X	
It is important to cooperate with parents to nurture children's spirituality.	3 NCS			X				X				X			
Children's ability to understand the Bible should not be underestimated.	2 NCS											X		X	

\*X: Times of topic being mentioned by respondents

\*NR: Number of responses

\*Children's Spirituality

\*Nurturing Children's Spirituality

Table 1 presents the most frequently repeated responses about children's spirituality among the fourteen respondents. As seen, there is no specific age identified in these churches when children can be considered as saved. Consequently, the next two most repeated points are predictable. CCF, GCF, and VCF believe that children can believe in God and have genuine relationships with Jesus at any age. That is why they try

to share Gospel in all age groups of their children's ministries. These findings reflect in the statement of Moore and others that children "at an early age have clear ideas about the nature of the divine, the concept of faith, and the meaning of prayer."<sup>223</sup>

Acknowledging it and ministering with children accordingly will change the next generation.

When asked, "Can you give me some examples of church's nurturing of the children? Which of those ways of nurturing do you think are the most effective?" R-GCF2 shared about teachers' love for children "because in that way we are like you know instruments of God... And that way, I think that's how they also feel God's love for them." R-VCF2 enthusiastically explained that in their church they are trying to go to the basics which mean "involve the kids' parents with the church" and "start from the cell group." "The cell group is the parents, the cell group is the house, the home and education is very, very essential."

R-VCF3 focused on such a need of children as belonging so VCF teachers are "so personal when it comes to dealing with the kids" and children "feel that." R-GCF4 talked about various "opportunities for the children to have access to Sunday School lessons... opportunities for them to hear about the Bible... no matter how many children attend."

Teachers of CCF, GCF, and VCF want children to have the feeling of belonging in the church and they want parents to be the ones leading their children to God. During the interviews it was frequently mentioned that children's ministry is only a supporter to what parents are supposed to do in terms of spiritual education of children. Teachers have shared that the impact of the church is smaller than the impact of family on any child. It is obvious that teachers want to collaborate with the families.

---

<sup>223</sup>Moore et al., "Diverse Voices: Children's Perceptions of Spirituality," 107-10.

## Family and Its Role for the Spiritual Nurture of Children

The theme of family being the most important for the spiritual nurture of children appears in all fourteen respondents' comments. According to Chapman, the highest calling of a parent, grandparent, or teacher is to help a child build their relationship with God;<sup>224</sup> and moreover, according to William Booth, this is the primary responsibility of the parents.<sup>225</sup> The responses have helped to understand in what ways families have impact on spiritual development of their children.

### *CCF NxtGen*

CCF respondents believe that the family and the church should work together in order to help children mature spiritually but family should have the leading role. R-CCF1 firmly said “that child’s faith grows best in a home atmosphere, where faith is nurtured” and “the church cannot do it alone and the church should not be expected to do it alone.” According to R-CCF4, family “should be the first institution to, to share God’s love for the kids.” R-CCF2 explained that family is a place where children “are not just taught about God but they really see if the parents walk with God or if the parents just tell them about God but their lives are different.” R-CCF2 called this hypocrisy and saw children leaving the faith as a result of it. These responses show that CCF teachers see the family as the main place where child’s faith is nurtured.

R-CCF3, R-CCF4, and R-CCF5 also considered family as the most important. R-CCF3 highly emphasized the opportunities parents have to teach their children every day “how Jesus loves them” and live by it. In terms of the habit of having daily devotions, R-CCF4 added that “it should be the family who should be the first institution to really hone

---

<sup>224</sup>Chapman, *Teaching Kids Authentic Worship*, 181.

<sup>225</sup>Booth, *The Training of Children*, 69.

them like that” and present it “properly in the family setting.” These comments present that parents need to be equipped in helping children to experience God and need to grow daily in their relationships with God.

All five CCF respondents affirmatively said that the church is intentional about family education. R-CCF1 said that they are starting to implement and develop their family ministry through the new structure which guides a person from being in children’s ministry to eventually bringing his or her children to children’s ministry in future. R-CCF4 noted that as much as possible the church educates parents and children. There are series of preaching about family, couple’s retreats where “also it touches on teaching children,” and GLC<sup>226</sup> where one of the essential themes is family life. R-CCF5 also mentioned that one of the core values of CCF is nurturing families. Family education in CCF is evolving. There are programs where the families are taught. The intention of teachers shows that they strongly support the parents to be the main spiritual teachers of their children.

### *GCF Sunday School*

GCF children’s ministry believes in the partnership of home and church. They believe that what is taught in the church has to be reinforced at home because, as R-GCF1 stated, otherwise church is “not really holistically nurturing the child.” R-GCF3 responded that parents “should not just rely on teachers to teach the kids about their spirituality... they should also cooperate when the children get home.” One more important thought comes from R-GCF4 that “if we teach a lot of things here in the church but then the family doesn’t reinforce it, the parents don’t tell the kids about what they’re

---

<sup>226</sup> More information about GLC can be found on CCF official website <http://www.glcequip.com/grow>.

hearing is important, then it won't really mean that much. They won't grow in their faith." In fact, collaboration of home, church, and school is required in order for a child to be well shaped physically, emotionally, and spiritually.<sup>227</sup>

Family education in the church as expressed by R-GCF1 is crucial because parents need to be equipped "in knowing how to care and love their children." For R-GCF2, parents are the people "kids are always in contact with," so "if we don't partner with the families, that, it will be rough, it will be hard for the kids, sometimes they may end up confused or something." GCF teachers see partnership with parents as a need. Such partnership has to be established as soon as possible to holistically nurture children. As of now, GCF does not have avenues where the families could minister together yet. But as R-GCF4 stated, "there're avenues for them to learn." Church provides programs where couples and parents are being taught.

### *VCF Victory Kids*

VCF has department of family ministry which works closely with children's ministry. The family has a big role for them because, R-VCF1 stated, "they [parents] are the ultimate people who would have to decide of their children" and as R-VCF4 responded, "they [children] spend most of the time with their family." Moreover, as R-VCF5 commented, parents choose whether to bring children to church or not. "So, it's the parents' role that to bring them to church," to nurture them, and "also pray their part as their parents to get them closer to Christ."

R-VCF2 emphasized the prayerfulness of family: "it's very essential that we have a prayerful family because that would cement their relationship with God." R-VCF2 also

---

<sup>227</sup>Shipman, "Collaboration," 5.

mentioned the importance of Christian practices at home because parents “lead by example” and cannot teach something they do not do. So at VCF parents are encouraged to be involved in small groups and be spiritually equipped. For VCF teachers parents are the ones setting examples of godly life for their children and reinforcing them at home.

VCF emphasizes the importance of families and is intentional about ministry with them.

There are materials which parents and children can use together to learn about God.

There are seminars, programs, retreats, activities for parents and children where they can bond and have fun together.

*CCF NxtGen, GCF Sunday School, and VCF Victory Kids*

Table 2. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Family and Its Role for the Spiritual Nurture of Children

Perceptions of Family and Its Role for the Spiritual Nurture of Children															
	NR*	CCF					GCF				VCF				
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Children's faith grows best in home atmosphere.	1	X													
Church and home are inseparable in nurturing kids' faith.	8	X	X		X		X	X		X		X	X		
Family has a very big role.	7		X			X		X		X	X		X	X	
Family is a living representation of God's work for children.	6		X		X		X			X		X			X
Family is a place where child really sees Christian practices.	6		X		X				X	X		X			X
Family should teach children about God and kindle it day by day.	3			X	X										X

\*X: Times of topic being mentioned by respondents

\*NR: Number of responses



All three respondent churches put a high emphasis on the role of family for the spiritual development of children. Sciarra said that “parents are meant to have the primary role in teaching and discipling their children.”<sup>228</sup> This same notion is present in NxtGen, GCF Sunday School, and Victory kids. CCF is in the beginning of family ministry, GCF does not have one yet but sees it as an urgent need, and VCF has a well-functioning family ministry. According to Joiner, no matter how big or small church is, it is important to develop a family ministry team concept.<sup>229</sup> Table 2 presents the most often repeated themes from the answers of the respondents. CCF, GCF, and VCF do share similar insights on the importance of family for children’s spiritual development.

Eight out of fourteen respondents identified home and church as partners whose collaboration should be inevitable. Seven respondents said that families are important in nurturing children’s faith. Six respondents identified the role of family as representation of God’s work for children and a place where children really see Christian practices. Thereby, CCF, GCF, and VCF share similar views that children acquire faith and Christian habits at home from their parents. Respondent churches have children whose parents do not attend church; therefore, they organize outreaches and evangelizing programs for such families. It shows that CCF, GCF, and VCF are also concerned about children from non-Christian homes; however, how these programs are mobilized was not a part of this research.

Church should be there to equip families and help their children mature spiritually because, as Schoelles’ research presented, parents’ education is indeed beneficial for raising the confidence level of parents in their ability to be spiritual leaders for their

---

<sup>228</sup>Sciarra, “Partnering with Parents: Developing a Successful Connection between the Church and Home,” 60.

<sup>229</sup>Joiner, *Think Orange*, 237.

children, equipping them with the practical tools to be used at home, strengthening them, and consequently, influencing families.<sup>230</sup>

### **Investment of the Church in Ministry with Children**

The church's investment in children's ministry is the second distinctive characteristic of intentional children's ministries.<sup>231</sup> Churches invest in ministry with children through ministry structure, prayer for children, the support of the leaders of churches, and other ways presented by respondents.

#### **Ministry Structure to Serve Children**

CCF, GCF, and VCF are led by strong committed leadership. CCF children's ministry practices team leadership where the core team consists of seven full time members (see Appendix J). NxtGen is under the executive pastor and the senior pastor. R-CCF1<sup>232</sup> commented that a "flat structure" is the advantage of this existing structure. "So, there isn't too much hierarchy. Every one helps one another." Each of the core team members have their own teams consisted of volunteers and they are "not higher than the others." As a disadvantage of this structure R-CCF1 saw its quite recent implementation and NxtGen is "still experimenting in a way" to see whether this structure needs additional revision in future.

As for GCF, the core team of GCF children's ministry includes two people who are the director of Sunday School and at the same time coordinator of the Christian Education department in the church and the other is children's ministry assistant. There

---

<sup>230</sup>Schoelles, "Equipping Parents to Be Spiritual Leaders in the Home," 152.

<sup>231</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 102-105.

<sup>232</sup>R-CCF1 stands for "CCF respondent 1." There were 14 respondents in this study: 5 from CCF, 4 from GCF, and 5 from VCF. Therefore, respondents from CCF are labeled as R-CCF1-5; respondents from GCF are labeled as R-GCF1-4; and respondents from VCF are labeled as R-VCF1-5.

are two full-time ministers in the Sunday School and “the rest would be all volunteers.”

R-GCF1 added, “and then we also have a working team that consists of elders and deacons.” So the children’s ministry director reports directly to the leaders of the church (see Appendix K). R-GCF1 sees the future of the ministry being led with “people that can be like a core team that would be working closely” with children’s ministry director.

As for the structure of VCF children’s ministry, R-VCF1 explained that children’s ministry is “a part of the children’s ministry division.” It has a “kids’ pastor,” a children’s ministry director, and “two full time staff: one handles the younger ones, the other one handles the older.” The children’s ministry division is directly under the senior and executive pastors (see Appendix L<sup>233</sup>). According to R-VCF1, this structure has many advantages: getting to collaborate; having a kids’ pastor who handles the pastoral side of children’s ministry; having a family ministry as a part of children’s ministry division makes it easier to communicate with the parents; and, for the children’s ministry director being an overseer of entire ministry, it is easy “to see what’s happening with the younger and the older ones.”

Huge ministries of CCF, GCF, and VCF cannot be done without team collaboration and a big number of volunteers. Schaller remarks that large churches have unique perceptions about expectations, performance, staffing, and use of lay volunteers.<sup>234</sup> So it is clear that these churches invest in their volunteers (this point will be expounded more in this chapter) and set up core teams where the responsibilities can be shared. That is how they get to oversee their children’s ministries and implement what is needed.

---

<sup>233</sup> The diagram of Victory Kids ministry structure was drawn based on the interview findings.

<sup>234</sup> Schaller, *The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church*.

## Prayer for Children

Maxwell describes the power of prayer by saying that “God’s hand moves when people and pastors pray together. Through prayer, God makes the impossible, possible.”<sup>235</sup> The Bible and scholars urge that prayer is essential in any ministry of the church. There are five streams of prayer in intentional children’s ministries as categorized by Barna: the individual prayers of teachers for children, the team prayers of teachers and church leaders for children and the ministry, the intercessors’ prayers for children’s workers, the whole congregational prayers for children’s ministry, and lastly, parents’ prayers for children and teachers.<sup>236</sup> Do CCF, GCF, and VCF pray for children? All respondents answered affirmatively. So what are their ways of praying for children in the church?

### *CCF NxtGen*

At CCF, one of the ways children’s ministry is taken care of is through prayer. R-CCF4 stated that CCF “is so big when it comes to praying.” Indeed, from other responses it is seen that prayer is an essential part of teachers’ lives and consequently is important for their ministries. Respondents shared that “all programs should start with prayer and end with prayer,” there are prayer calendars which include prayer requests about children and ministry, and there are prayer meetings. NxtGen leaders hold prayer meetings and there are bigger prayer meetings organized for all teachers. However, when R-CCF5 was asked if the whole church prays for children altogether, R-CCF5 replied, “sadly no” because “the congregation always comes together for prayer, there’s a list of items, [but ] children are not mentioned, are not included there.” R-CCF5 saw congregational prayer

---

<sup>235</sup>Maxwell, *Partners in Prayer*, 7.

<sup>236</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 102-04.

for children as an important element, but as of today there are only prayers concerning children inside CCF children's ministry.

CCF teachers also talked about their personal prayers for children. So R-CCF3 and R-CCF4 called the teachers "prayer warriors." R-CCF2 stated that besides prayer meetings "it's really the heart of the teachers that needs to pray." R-CCF2 admitted that children's ministry of CCF is "getting a bit bigger so it's quite difficult to recall all the names" but teachers still try to pray for children by their names. R-CCF3 also said that "our leaders in children's ministry are as well encouraging us to pray for the kids as our devotion every morning, to include them in our prayers." These responses show that the leaders and teachers of NxtGen pray for the children on everyday basis and believe in the power of prayer.

### *GCF Sunday School*

All GCF respondents said that the church prays for children and all four respondents mentioned different ways how these prayers are mobilized. So R-GCF1 explained that it is the duty of the teachers to pray for their children. R-GCF2 said that the teachers are given the list of families to pray for. R-GCF2 also added that Sunday School is one of the prayer requests of the church "in the bulletins." R-GCF3 mentioned that Sunday School is also being prayed for "even from the pulpit." So children's ministry is included in the prayer points of the whole church.

One more interesting way that the church prays for children was described by R-GCF4 who said that "sometimes once a year, they send pastors to different [areas of the] Sunday School and the pastor will pray for the children there." This is phenomenal, but it shows that leadership of the church actually visits Sunday School and children experience

their prayers. It is an important experience for a mega church. The Bible says that people brought little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them (Matthew 19:13, NIV). As Jesus prayed for children, so it is expected from parents, teachers, and ministers.

### *VCF Victory Kids*

At VCF, as R-VCF1 explained, there were pastoral prayers for children on Sundays but “now no more” because of the big number of children. Nowadays, teachers pray for their children in the classrooms. According to R-VCF3, prayer for children happens in the following ways: during children’s ministry, special prayer time, prayer during the worship, prayer during teachers’ devotions, and prayers for children in small groups.

R-VCF2 said that the leadership of Victory Kids is prayerful. Their intention is, as R-VCF3 stated, “we pray for the growth of the children, for their attitudes, transformation of their, you know, the growth in their faith, transformation in their attitudes.” As they desire for this transformation to happen to all children, they also emphasize children’s ability to pray. R-VCF2 said that “if I will be able to teach these kids to pray, I could pray with them.” From the emotions put in this sentence it was seen that R-VCF2 was passionate to be able to pray together with children. Teachers of VCF pray for children and they want children to be involved in prayer movement.

*CCF NxtGen, GCF Sunday School, and VCF Victory Kids*

**Table 3. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Investment of the Church in Children's Ministry through the Prayer for Children**

Prayer for Children and Children's Ministry															
	NR*	CCF					GCF				VCF				
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
All programs of children's ministry begin and end with prayer.	4	X			X						X		X		
Children's ministry leaders pray for children and ministry.	4	X			X	X						X			
Teachers include children in their personal prayers.	5	X		X		X	X						X		
Leaders of the church pray for children and ministry.	2								X	X					
There are prayer meetings where teachers and leaders of children's ministry pray for children and ministry together.	5		X	X	X	X							X		
There are special prayer handouts.	3		X		X			X							
Children are included in the prayers of the church.	5			X	X			X	X	X					
Sadly, church does not include children in the congregational prayers.	1					X									

\*X: Times of topic being mentioned by respondents

\*NR: Number of responses

Prayer for children and children's ministry is an investment. As seen from table 3, CCF, GCF, and VCF pray for their ministries with children in different ways: prayer meetings, leaders' prayers, devotions, prayer calendars, and others. The most frequent responses were teachers' personal prayers for children, prayer meetings, and churches'

prayers for children which coincides with three prayer streams described by Barna.

Prayer is the most urgent need.<sup>237</sup> Churches need to include children in their congregational prayers more.

### Intentionality of the Church's Leaders and Their Involvement With Children's Ministry

Beckwith stated that if church's leaders do not prioritize children in the church, they lose the growing congregation and future Christian leaders.<sup>238</sup> At CCF there is an executive pastor to whom children's ministry reports, at GCF it is elders and deacons of the church, and at VCF it is kids' pastor. So children's ministries are influenced by people who are administratively responsible for them. Their views of the significance of children's ministry directly affect the investment the church makes into this ministry.

#### *CCF NxtGen*

According to R-CCF1, children's ministry is one of the biggest ministries at CCF. They have a large number of volunteers and seven fulltime staff who weekly minister to children 0 to 13 years old. R-CCF1 shared that the senior pastor of the church has "very soft heart" for children's ministry and has been very supportive. So the church is "liberal about investing a lot." R-CCF5's response was in unison with R-CCF1, "I have an impression that we have a big budget for kids' ministry," because whenever there was a new idea regarding children's ministry, children's ministry director and senior pastor were always considerate. R-CCF2 said that senior pastor usually emphasizes children's ministry through promoting volunteers' recruitment and wants more people to join this ministry.

---

<sup>237</sup>Besford and Stephenson, "The Church's Ministry to Children and Their Families," 154.

<sup>238</sup>Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry. Ministry to Children in the 21st Century*, 81.



Another important point was about leaders' beliefs about children and children's ministry. R-CCF3 explained that the leaders of the church "believe that these kids someday, one of them or most of them, may become the leaders of this church as well, and may impact thousands of people around the world as well." So the leaders, especially the senior pastor, are very strong in telling the parents about their responsibilities in raising Godly children. It is spoken from the pulpit and in meetings.

As R-CCF1 and R-CCF4 shared, senior pastor does not personally go to children's ministry. He delegates the tasks to other pastors. However, the senior pastor's support is felt in his advocacy for children, in meetings, and in his preaching.

#### *GCF Sunday School*

GCF teachers shared that they can see how the senior pastor of GCF loves children. R-GCF2 witnessed it through his interaction with children: "When you see them downstairs, he would usually take the initiative and really like talk to the kids." R-GCF1 added that "when he sees the children, he would check on them if they had attended SS and tell the parents, they have not, to make sure that they do."

All four respondents from GCF said that the senior pastor is supportive and intentional about children's ministry. He asked to add a new group of children in Sunday School who are 13 and 14 years old because he sees that these children still "need to be nurtured and taken care of." R-GCF1 also added that the senior pastor usually makes sure that children's ministry is well taken care of. R-GCF2 felt that children's ministry is taking a big part in the church because "the pastors visit our class and then they talk about what they do and then the children also pray for them." R-GCF3 also mentioned pastors' visitations and prayers for children's ministry.

R-GCF1 highlighted that the senior pastor has recently talked about Sunday School from the pulpit. The pastor urges the congregation to make children and ministry with them a priority because, as R-GCF4 summarized his words, “these are the ages where they’re forming their beliefs and we need to reach them out. Don’t put the children on the side, don’t have that mentality like let’s hide the children.” For R-GCF4 pastors’ verbal expression of the significance of children’s ministry in meetings, devotions, and preaching was the biggest involvement in this ministry.

### *VCF Victory Kids*

R-VCF1’s statement was, “The big men play a big part in having this ministry” because the intentions of the pastors are crucial for children’s ministry. VCF children’s ministry is blessed with pastors “who believe that children’s ministry is not a side ministry.” Pastors make sure that children’s ministry is well taken care of and everything needed is provided. It was shared that Victory Kids is like a movement and there is big support for it.

It was also said that pastors of VCF want children to have the foundations of faith as early as possible. They want them to hear God’s word and therefore have their focus on God. R-VCF3 responded, “They believe really in the children in this church. They really invest.”

*CCF NxtGen, GCF Sunday School, and VCF Victory Kids*

**Table 4. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Intentionality of Church's Leaders and Their Involvement with Children's Ministry**

Intentionality of Church's Leaders about Children's Ministry															
	NR*	CCF					GCF				VCF				
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
The church invests a lot in children's ministry.	6	X			X	X	X				X		X		
Senior pastor has a heart for children's ministry.	8	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X				
Senior pastor has been very supportive.	4	X				X	X				X				
Senior pastor talks to parents about their responsibilities.	2					X	X								
Senior pastor talks about children's ministry from the pulpit.	3					X	X			X					
Pastors visit children's ministry.	2							X	X						
I do not know well but senior pastor emphasizes children's ministry.	1		X												
Pastors pray for children's ministry.	1								X						
Pastors believe in kids as "future leaders."	2			X									X		
Pastors emphasize the importance of discipling kids as early as possible.	2					X				X					
Pastors stand for the interests and needs of children's ministry.	1									X					
The church is very supportive of children's ministry.	5		X		X					X		X		X	

\*X: Times of topic being mentioned by respondents

\*NR: Number of responses

According to the summary of the main points presented in table 4, eight respondents shared that pastors in their churches have a heart for children's ministry. In

relation to this, churches invest in children's ministries. Respondents talked about the investment through budget, leadership of the church prioritizing children's ministry, a senior pastor who expresses the significance of children's ministry in meetings and preaching, and the pastors' concern about the ministry with children. Barna's list of the ways leaders may invest in children's ministries is present at CCF, GCF, and VCF: they represent its best interests in strategic meetings, teach the congregation about the importance of children and motivate parents to take their responsibilities seriously; keep an eye on the quality of the church activities offered for the spiritual nourishment of children; celebrate the victories and progress achieved by the children's ministry; encourage adults to get involved by working with the kids, using their talents and spiritual gifts in ways that advance the development of the young people.<sup>239</sup>

The results in the table also show that respondents often said that the church is supportive. Looking at the next most frequent result, it is possible to say that the churches care because senior pastors prioritize and support children's ministries. It is then evident that the big men play a big part in having intentional ministry with children. The respondents probably did not mention the whole range of investment in children's ministries but it creates a positive impression of how much CCF, GCF, and VCF are intentional about reaching out children.

### **Methods and Techniques of the Ministry with Children**

This is the third distinctive category of activity of intentional children's ministries.<sup>240</sup> How do churches set their goals for children's ministry? What methods and principles do they usually use in teaching? What is the ministerial focus of their teaching?

---

<sup>239</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 104-05.

<sup>240</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 105-111.

And how do they foster relationship between children and teachers? These are the aspects considered in this part. Looking at the methods and techniques gives a glimpse of practical work done by children's ministries of CCF, GCF, and VCF.

### Specific Goals of the Children's Ministry

Edgerly and Crosby put the necessity of goals as one of the growth strategies of Sunday Schools. They explicate that only after teachers clearly define the goals, can they move to a next level which is how to achieve these goals; ultimately, they design the procedures to reach children.<sup>241</sup> According to Barna, intentional children's ministries separate their goals according to three categories which are intellectual, emotional, and spiritual outcomes.<sup>242</sup> CCF, GCF, and VCF have their systems of goal setting and table 5 below presents some criteria mentioned by fourteen respondents of this study.

Table 5. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Specific Goals of Children's Ministry

Setting Specific Goals of Children's Ministry															
	NR*	CCF					GCF				VCF				
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
When setting the goals of children's ministry, we always asses the needs of children.	2	X									X				
When setting the goals of children's ministry, we make sure that in our activities children will feel and see God and His love. Programs should be Christ-centered.	8			X	X	X	X				X		X	X	X

<sup>241</sup>Edgerly and Crosby, *Strategies for Sunday School Growth*, 67-68.

<sup>242</sup>Belk Jr., "A Study of Children's Ministries in Baptist Church Plants in the Three Major Urbanized Regions of North Carolina," 12.

When setting the goals of children's ministry, we consider if discipleship process is there.	6			X	X		X				X		X	X	
When setting the goals of children's ministry, we make sure it is in line with our philosophy.	1										X				
I do not know how the goals are set and what aspects are usually considered because leaders do it all and I am just given the materials for my lessons.	2		X						X						
The goals are well-presented and I am encouraged to accomplish them.	4		X	X		X								X	
When planning the activities of children's ministry, the developmental characteristics and needs of children are considered.	1							X							
When planning the activities of children's ministry, we try to see it from a perspective of children.	2							X				X			
When setting the goals of children's ministry, we are realistic about our resources, capacities, and abilities.	1													X	

\*X: Times of topic being mentioned by respondents

\*NR: Number of responses

Eight respondents coincided in statements that when setting the goals of children's ministry, in the first place they target relationships between children and God. It goes in line with Yust's statement that activities should first nurture children spiritually and contribute to their well-being.<sup>243</sup> So CCF, GCF, and VCF want children to feel God's love through the programs they organize and it becomes the main criteria for designing the goals of children's ministry. Next, six respondents shared that they always consider if discipleship process is present in the programs. Some respondents shared that they do not know what aspects identify the goals of children's ministry because the goals are always set by the leaders of children's ministry and are presented to the rest of the team.

When asked what aspects are usually considered when setting the goals of children's ministry, the prevailing notion among the respondents of CCF was targeting the discipleship of children. R-CCF4 commented that the lessons should integrate teaching Gospel to children and equipping them "with ways on how they can share with other kids or other people." R-CCF3 and R-CCF5 also stated that nurturing the relationships between children and Jesus is the guiding aspect for NxtGen. During the teachers' meeting, teachers indeed devoted much time to plan how the events of CCF can concentrate on sharing the Gospel more. As observed, CCF teachers want to raise Christ-committed followers who will make Christ-committed followers.

Among the other aspects, R-CCF1 responded that when setting the goals of children's ministry, they always evaluate previous programs and analyze their achievements and failures. R-CCF5 noted that they also consider logistics of programs and capabilities of teachers. Leaders of NxtGen planned their activities accordingly and were realistic about the feasibility of their projects. The teachers' meeting showed that

---

<sup>243</sup>Yust, *Real Kids, Real Faith*, 1-2.

the teachers were aware of the developmental characteristics of children and so the programs for younger children were prepared differently than for the older ones.

Similar results were observed from the teachers' meeting at GCF and the interviews. GCF teachers shared that the important aspect for setting the goals of their children's ministry is whether children will "feel and see that God is real, God loves them and God can work in their lives." R-GCF1 stated that genuinely knowing God helps children "when they are out there" so they "know how to respond, how to react" in the world. In connection to it, during the teachers' meeting teachers were concerned with the influence of postmodernism on children. They discussed the challenges of the kids and eventually came up with their goals accordingly. R-GCF2 said that the goals of children's ministry should be in line with developmental characteristics of children and encourage their creativity.

At VCF, R-VCF1 stated that when setting the goals of children's ministry they primarily consider the following questions: "Is this event or seminar making disciples? Will this honor God? Will this train the next generation?" So as R-VCF5 responded, the programs should be Christ-centered. During the meetings, teachers set the goals of programs and lessons according to the philosophy of children's ministry. Interests of children and their needs also influenced on planning.

When setting the goals of children's ministries, CCF, GCF, and VCF consider teachers, facilities, learning needs of children, logistics of classrooms, and purpose of activities. Respondents showed that the children's ministry staff and volunteers are aware of developmental theories and its application. Most important they remember that, as Johnson and Toler wrote, children's programs should be wisely planned and provide



quality Bible teaching.<sup>244</sup> In all respondent churches the goals are set by the children's ministry leaders and delivered to the rest of the team. Leaders encourage teachers and volunteers to achieve those goals.

### Methods of Teaching Children

Churches presented different techniques in teaching children. These results were drawn from interviews and observations. Observations were conducted on Sundays during children's ministry hours.

#### *CCF NxtGen*

Respondents of CCF gave different examples of teaching methods. One of them is the technique of "space repetition." As it was explained by R-CCF1 and R-CCF5, there are certain key phrases or key words that children need to learn from a lesson. These words "repeatedly come up throughout the lesson time: from start to finish." So by the end of the lesson these words become more permanent in children's minds. Besides, the lessons have the same structure every Sunday and, as I observed, it helps children easily switch from one activity to another.

Interactive methods were also used. R-CCF2 responded that interaction with the students is common to most of the teachers. One type of interaction is using drama. It does not require much equipment but makes stories more alive through engaging children into acting. Another type is through music and rhymes. R-CCF3 shared that music was a good method for teaching younger children. And so teachers often use different rhymes and songs to deliver the message to children. I have seen through observations that

---

<sup>244</sup>Johnson and Toler, *Rediscovering the Sunday School*, 27-33.

teachers indeed often used interactive teaching methods through questions and answers, or discussions, or games.

Another teaching method used in CCF is teaching in small groups or having group discussions. R-CCF4 explained that small groups are “about sharing what they [children] have experienced.” It is the time when children and teachers foster learning of the lesson. Group discussion method was indeed engaging for most of the children. Children were more attentive in their small groups than during the large group time because large groups in CCF accommodated many children at the same time.

R-CCF4 also mentioned that media or technology play an important role in teaching older kids. So incorporating media aids in Bible stories is another technique. I observed that short video films were shown to children after the story time. Those videos shared the same moral of the lesson. R-CCF5 talked about such teaching method as journals for children. R-CCF5 explained the purpose of it, “so that they [children] can dig deeper into the lesson and also make sure they apply.” These journals are designed as take home assignments which children bring back every Sunday and present to their small group teachers.

### *GCF Sunday School*

Respondents at GCF listed several teaching methods. These methods are based on the talents of teachers. So R-GCF3 is a conservative teacher who prefers teacher-centered “lecture type of teaching.” Opposite to that, R-GCF4 usually uses interactive method of teaching. I observed that this teacher converses with the students, shares the stories and also listens to the stories of children. In another class teacher used questions and answers

teaching technique. Another respondent, R-GCF2, shared that the usual method of teaching is through visual aids either flannel board or plays.

In all classes at GCF the Bible stories are usually told by one teacher and reinforced by craft activities. I also observed that just few classes used visual aids for the story presentation. Teachers preferred to have group discussions especially when the number of children in class was small.

### *VCF Victory Kids*

VCF respondents said that they try to engage children in the lesson as much as possible through several techniques. R-VCF1 shared that they “try to figure out what’s new, what keeps them [children] excited, what makes it interesting for them.” So as children are “very visual now,” there are more technologies in teaching. R-VCF2 commented that VCF teachers integrate more visual aids in their classes for younger children and more “communication exchange” for older ones. They consider discussions crucial for older children because it helps them to apply Sunday messages in their lives.

R-VCF3 talked about different teaching methods such as using games, contests, and rewards in order to motivate children to listen to lessons. R-VCF4 also shared that the stories for children, depending on a teacher, are animated. I observed that teachers liked to engage children in storytelling by inviting them to act the parts of it. R-VCF5 explained that asking children to answer questions, read a passage, or participate in storytelling are the ways to keep children’s attention. Interactive teaching methods were also observed in groups of older children. Teachers there shared life examples and connected them to the Bible message. Afterwards, older children broke in small groups where discussion was the main method.

*CCF NxtGen, GCF Sunday School, and VCF Victory Kids*

**Table 6. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Methods of Teaching Children**

Methods and Techniques of Teaching															
	NR*	CCF					GCF				VCF				
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Use of visual aids	6				X	X		X			X	X	X		
Use of technologies	2				X					X					
Interactive method of teaching	6		X		X	X				X		X			X
Use of music in teaching	2		X	X											
Group discussion method	2				X						X				
Use of audio aids in storytelling	2								X					X	
Use of skits, dance, etc.	2				X	X									
Technique of space repetition	2	X				X									
Lecture type of teaching	1								X						

\*X: Times of topic being mentioned by respondents

\*NR: Number of responses

Table 6 shows the most frequently repeated methods of teaching CCF, GCF, and VCF use. Among them the methods of using visual aids and teaching interactively were repeated the most often. Visual aids such as videos, flannel boards, stories through images, dances, skits, and plays are the common methods churches use. Interaction happens when teachers in the class integrate conversations with children either through discussions or acting. The next teaching method is storytelling. This is the most common method used in all classes that I observed. However, none of the respondents talked about it. Stories were usually told by one teacher and followed up with videos or discussions.

As a separate question I asked the respondents to share about the usage of technology in their children's ministries. All of the respondents answered that technology is "very important," however, some use it more than others. I observed that CCF, GCF,

and VCF usually used computers, projectors, and audio systems as technological assistance in their classrooms.

All CCF respondents acknowledged the assistance they get from technology in ministry. R-CCF2, R-CCF3, and R-CCF4 responded that technology greatly helps them in storytelling and the presentation of the lessons. However, R-CCF1 stated that it also became a disadvantage, because it is now hard for teachers to catch children's attention without videos or images. Technology helps to "liven the story," but as R-CCF2 commented, the usage of it should be limited, especially for younger children. All classrooms in CCF are equipped with audio and video systems and teachers often use them to enhance Bible stories with short movies which, as R-CCF1 noted, have to "convey the Bible."

At GCF, I observed that technology was not used as much as in CCF, especially in the younger groups. R-GCF1 responded that technology is a "must" and "need" for teachers, because it helps them to be more resourceful and equipped for their lessons. However, a majority of teachers prefer not to use technology in their classes because as R-GCF2 said, "we don't like the kids to be dependent on it... especially young children." R-GCF4 also responded that classroom time should better be spent on "one-on-one" engagement with children. Otherwise, according to R-GCF4, videos should be short and used to stimulate children for discussions.

At VCF, technology is seen as essential for ministry. Respondents shared that good resources available electronically make ministry more effective. R-VCF1 and R-VCF3 stated that technology brings a lot of visual aids in classrooms and, as R-VCF4 explained, videos help children "to see beyond what story's all about." The Victory Kids

classrooms are equipped with television screens and audio systems but I observed that these are used more often with older children than with younger ones.

As seen, CCF, GCF, and VCF try to take full advantage of technologies in their children's ministries. However, they still set limits and monitor the usage of it. Furthermore, they mainly use technology to reinforce children's understanding of Bible stories and application of them in their lives.

### Principles of Teaching Children

Table 7. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Principles of Teaching Children

	NR*	Principles of Teaching														
		CCF					GCF				VCF					
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	
We need to entertain children first in order to engage them in lessons.	3	X										X	X			
We make our lessons engaging but we also admit the importance & presence of entertainment in our programs.	8		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X				
The lessons are more engaging than entertaining.	5							X		X		X		X	X	
Prayer	3				X		X					X				
Making sure the team follows the same philosophy.	2				X		X									
Be real, sincere, and personal with children.	3			X			X					X				
Gospel-centered lessons.	7				X			X	X	X	X		X	X		
Lessons are age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate.	7		X	X		X		X		X	X		X			
Involving parents in children's ministry.	2				X		X									
We practice teamwork to minister more effectively.	10		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X			X

\*X: Times of topic being mentioned by respondents

\*NR: Number of responses

Respondents also shared about the teaching principles in their ministries. Table 7 summarizes their responses. When asked if the lessons focused more on entertainment or engagement of children during the lessons, majority answered, “on engagement.” I observed that indeed most of the observed lessons in CCF, GCF, and VCF were more engaging than entertaining. However, there was always special time given to entertainment either through games, play, or other activities. As some teachers shared, children need to be entertained before they can be engaged in class. Many teachers also mentioned that in their churches there is balance between the two. Although they insert entertaining activities for children in lessons, the main goal is engagement.

Teamwork is another principle of CCF, GCF, and VCF children’s ministries. Respondents shared that the leaders of their ministries build teams who work closely together and delegate the task to other teachers. At CCF, teamwork is one of the strengths of their ministry. CCF, GCF, and VCF believe in the power of a team because, as R-VCF4 stated, together they can get better results. During teachers’ meetings, I witnessed that at CCF, GCF, and VCF teachers exchanged their ideas freely, learned from the experience of each other, and worked in atmosphere of cooperativeness, harmony, and unity. Directors of children’s ministries held the leadership roles but gave freedom to fellow teachers to contribute and take responsibilities for the coming projects. Eddie Gibbs wrote that leaders connect people instead of ruling them.<sup>245</sup> I could see that this statement is true in children’s ministries of CCF, GCF, and VCF.

Included in the other frequently repeated principles are Gospel-centeredness and age-appropriateness of the lessons. Respondents commented that they want children to feel the love of God and be able to apply Bible stories in their lives. So as much as

---

<sup>245</sup>Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 106.

possible they engage children in reading the Bible and reinforce the behavior of having personal devotions. Children are encouraged to bring their own Bibles. In VCF, older children are encouraged to take notes of Sunday messages. During the lessons, teachers try to present lessons in an age-appropriate manner. I observed that teachers in older and younger groups used different words and ways of presenting the curriculum. It means that teachers are aware that as children have different learning styles, so they vary the approaches vary by providing activities fit for children's skills.<sup>246</sup>

### Ministerial Teaching Focus

In this part, I explored the children's ministries of CCF, GCF, and VCF to see if they focused on applying the lessons to the children's lives, memorization of Bible facts, or leading children to get to know God. Respondents were asked which point is emphasized the most in their lessons, which is secondary, and which is tertiary. Table 8 below presents the findings.

Table 8. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Ministerial Teaching Focus

Ministry focuses on	Teaching Focus	NR*	Teaching Focus														
			CCF					GCF				VCF					
			R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	
1 <sup>st</sup>	Application of the lesson to children's lives	4	X	X	X									X			
	Memorization of Bible facts																
	Leading children to get to know God (awe and wonder)	10				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Application of the lesson to children's lives	7				X	X		X	X	X	X					X
	Memorization of Bible facts	2	X													X	
	Leading children to get to know God (awe and wonder)	2			X								X				
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Application of the lesson to children's lives																
	Memorization of Bible facts	7			X	X	X		X		X	X					X
	Leading children to get to know God (awe and wonder)	1											X				

<sup>246</sup>Conn-Powers, "All Children Ready for School: Approaches to Learning," *Early Childhood Briefing Paper Series*, 2006, <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/SRUD-ApproachestoLearning.pdf> (accessed September 14, 2013).



\*NR: Number of responses

\*X: Times of topic being mentioned by respondents

The majority of respondents answered that leading children to knowing God is the focus of their ministry and lessons. Seven respondents put application of lessons to children's lives in the second place. Seven respondents said that memorization of Bible facts is tertiary in their teaching.

At CCF the majority of respondents said that application is important for them. It is "the most valued" because, as R-CCF2 and R-CCF3 stated, children should know and act Christ-like. Memorization of Bible facts was mentioned tertiary by a majority. R-CCF4 explained that it is purposeless if relationship with God is not rooted in God's word. I observed that most of the lesson time was usually given to application. Teachers' tendency in large groups was to connect the story with the lives of children to help them apply those stories when they leave NxtGen. Small groups also reinforced application through motivating children to think about the practicality of those lessons.

At GCF, the main focus of teaching is leading children to get to know God. All four respondents put it in a first place. R-GCF1 expounded on it that they want children to know "how God can be real in their lives" and "that the characters that we study in the Bible are also just regular people." R-GCF4 responded that leading children to know God is the most important because applications are difficult to be taught, especially if teachers and children do not know each other well. However, R-GCF2 said that now "most of the kids are really aware of... His presence and love for them; so, maybe more of the application to their lives." I observed that in three out of four observations lessons focused more on application.

Most of the GCF respondents put application of lessons to children's lives as a secondary focus and memorization of Bible facts as tertiary. R-GCF2 explained that memorizing without understanding is pointless.

At VCF, four out of five respondents said that knowing God is the first and the main focus of their lessons. R-VCF4 stated, "The story is Christ-centered, so we want them [children] to really know Jesus Christ." R-VCF3 said that they do so through exposing children to the word of God. They believe that everything else like applications will follow.

As for the secondary and tertiary foci, R-VCF1 responded that memorization of Bible facts is the secondary focus for younger children but is tertiary for older ones. Application of the lessons to children's lives is secondary for older children but tertiary for younger ones. R-VCF1 explained that when children are young and dictated by parents, they need to memorize simple Bible verses which guide them what to do. But children who are 10 to 13 years old, "these children have their own minds already... So, we need them to learn how to apply the word already." During observations I noted that application was the most often focus of lessons in VCF. Mostly teachers followed the following order, as R-VCF2 said, "how the lesson would affect their [children's] life first, and how the lesson would affect their relationship with God."

Churches want children to know God. They prioritize it. However, observations showed that practically all lessons are more focused on applications. According to Dolan and others, the lessons should be easy-to-understand and give children life principles which can be applied to their lives.<sup>247</sup> They should also provide quality Bible

---

<sup>247</sup> Dolan et al., *What Matters Now in Children's Ministry Early Childhood Edition*, 5.

teaching.<sup>248</sup> NxtGen, GCF Sunday School, and Victory Kids have all three foci, but to varying degrees.

### Relationships between Children and Children's Ministry Workers

The Holy Spirit works in children<sup>249</sup> as well as adults. However, it is up to those who work with children to encourage relationships between adults and children so they will be nurtured in the church.<sup>250</sup> Children's spiritual maturing often depends on the help of adult mentors. People are essentially connected, or as the research by the Commission on Children at Risk states *hardwired*, for each other in order to develop healthy and flourishing.<sup>251</sup> I explored what CCF, GCF, and VCF think about the relationships between teachers and children in the church and how they foster it.

#### *CCF NxtGen*

One of the core values of CCF is small group discipleship.<sup>252</sup> NxtGen fosters relationships between teachers and children through small groups. R-CCF1 stated that it is the way of getting to know children and it is one of the strengths of the church. Large group teachers change every week but small group teachers are encouraged to commit for every week's service. It makes children feel comfortable if they come to the same teacher every Sunday. R-CCF2 said that building relationships with children happens only by spending time with them so, as R-CCF1 responded, small groups help teachers to be close with children and their parents, to know them, and to pray for them.

---

<sup>248</sup>Johnson and Toler, *Rediscovering the Sunday School*, 27-33.

<sup>249</sup>Keeley, *Helping Our Children Grow in Faith*, 11.

<sup>250</sup>Keeley, *Helping Our Children Grow in Faith*, 11.

<sup>251</sup>Commission on Children at Risk, *Hardwired to Connect*, 6.

<sup>252</sup>“About CCF,” Christ's Commission Fellowship, <http://www.ccf.org.ph/about-ccf> (accessed October 7, 2013).

When asked to describe the present relationships between teachers and children, a majority of respondents said it is great. R-CCF3 shared that children are treated as friends. According to R-CCF5, small group teachers and children grow together for several years and develop their relationships even outside the Sunday school. Even though teachers and children can be close in their small groups, the relationships with parents are also important, so R-CCF1 shared that teachers are instructed to develop those relationships. However, it depends on the teacher and as R-CCF4 shared, there should still be “more engagement with the parents and involving parents in the ministry.”

During NxtGen ministry on Sunday, I observed that there were few developed relationships in the large groups among the teachers and older children. However, teachers and children in small groups knew each other well. The atmosphere in the small groups was usually friendly and nurturing. Teachers in small groups showed their care for children through approaching them by personal names and wondering about their weekly routine. Teachers in CCF are intentional about their relationships with children. The church fosters it and encourages small group teachers to be close not only with children but also with their parents.

### *GCF Sunday School*

At GCF, children stay with the same teacher for a year. As R-GCF3 shared, during that time children and teachers “develop bonding with each other.” They “learn to love the kids and the kids also.” Teachers in GCF understand the value of relationships and they want to have more than just meeting on Sundays. R-GCF1 responded that it is the desire of Sunday School to make children “feel that he or she is loved,” “know that he has a family here,” and would “keep on coming back here together with the parents.”

R-GCF2 and R-GCF4 shared that the time when the relationships between children and teachers are nurtured is usually before and after class because during that free time they bond with students, chat with them, or just play if it is younger children. So through any interaction, teachers “serve them and help them see...God’s love and all that.”

During the observations of the GCF classes I noted that teachers and children do have bonding time before and after the class. With younger children teachers prefer to engage in play and with older ones, teachers spend time talking to them. In all classes teachers called their students by names. I also observed that children warmly greeted their teachers when coming in or leaving the room. GCF teachers showed their concern for children.

### *VCF Victory Kids*

Relationships between teachers and children at VCF were described as great. As R-VCF1 explained, teachers in all levels are encouraged to be close to children but they do it differently. Younger children relationships are fostered through play with them and with older ones through “huddle time.” Huddle time is the small group time for children in older levels. This is the time when children and teachers have discussions and find applications. R-VCF5 also responded that this time allows children to share their stories and “struggles of life.” For teachers it helps to “know the person deeply not only by their names, not only by their looks but by what’s inside.”

R-VCF2, R-VCF3, and R-VCF4 shared that there is mutual attachment between children and teachers. Teachers are concerned about their students. They treat them as family. But, as R-VCF2 noted they remember that at first they are teachers. At VCF, I

observed that teachers were personal with the students. They knew their names and greeted every child coming in the room. Children also felt comfortable because they could freely approach their teachers and share with them their concerns.

*CCF NxtGen, GCF Sunday School, and VCF Victory Kids*

I observed that in all respondent churches small group teachers were intentional about their relationships with children. They usually knew the names of their students and children felt comfortable to approach teachers and hug them, talk to them, or just greet them. As much as possible, teachers were personal with children. They wondered about children's lives and engaged them in conversations. According to Belk, children gain positive experience from this interaction.<sup>253</sup> Environment greatly influences children's development<sup>254</sup> so children's ministries of CCF, GCF, and VCF try to make their environments as child-friendly as possible.

Some teachers shared that they spent time with children outside of Sunday school. Although contacting children during weekdays depends on each teacher, several felt that it helped them to be closer with children. All respondents admitted the significance of fostering relationships between teachers and children especially through small groups. However, some shared that teachers still need to invest more in these relationships.

### **Content Provided through the Ministry with Children**

I asked respondents to share about the usage of curriculum in their ministries, opportunities for children to be involved in the ministry of the church, and the level of parents' participation in children's ministry. The exploration of these topics helps to

---

<sup>253</sup>Belk Jr., "A Study of Children's Ministries in Baptist Church Plants in the Three Major Urbanized Regions of North Carolina," 13.

<sup>254</sup>Commission on Children at Risk, *Hardwired to Connect*, 17.

understand the intentionality of churches toward children's ministry. This is the fourth distinguishing characteristic of intentional children's ministries.<sup>255</sup>

### Curriculum in Children's Ministry

Curriculum is a crucial component of teaching.<sup>256</sup> It is a "roadmap."<sup>257</sup>

Curriculum of the ministry should be chosen intentionally. The worthy curriculum envisions the following outcomes for the sake of the students: "what students should know (head/cognitive), do (hands/behavioral or psychomotor), or value (heart/affective or volitional)."<sup>258</sup> Current curriculum of CCF children's ministry is Metro Curriculum. At GCF it is Gospel Light Curriculum and at VCF there is "a mixture of curriculum."

At CCF, there are not any major additional materials besides the curriculum.

Metro Curriculum mainly focuses on the application of lessons to children's lives. It is organized by topics learned and is used for children 7 to 13 years old. Although Metro Curriculum is the main one, parts of Willow Creek Curriculum are used with the 2 to 6 year old children. Both curriculums suggest having large groups, small groups, and the same structure or pattern of lessons. Metro Curriculum provides explicit guidelines for every lesson. Both curriculums are foreign, but NxtGen uses them with minor adjustments due to foreign holidays.

When asked about the criteria for choosing Metro Curriculum, R-CCF1 responded that it is "very clear, child-friendly, age-appropriate, and clear Bible teaching." According to R-CCF4, the format of the lessons in this curriculum makes children return to the fundamental Bible truth. Respondents of CCF saw Metro Curriculum as one of the

---

<sup>255</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 111-113.

<sup>256</sup>May et al., *Children Matter*, 7.

<sup>257</sup>May et al., *Children Matter*, 8.

<sup>258</sup>Blevins and Maddix, *Discovering Discipleship*, 166.

strengths of their ministry. However, R-CCF5 also commented that the lessons are too hard for younger children and too shallow for older ones. The curriculum needs improvement in teaching inward behaviors than just “do this, don’t do this.”

At GCF, children’s ministry uses Gospel Light Curriculum with major changes to it. R-GCF1 explained that the curriculum is too “westernized.” It does meet the needs of Filipino children sometimes and so the stories are approached differently. The curriculum focuses on leading children to get to know God and application of the lessons to their lives. It is organized by topics but teachers change the components of lessons provided in it. GCF teachers use different resources available online and try to contextualize their lessons as much as possible.

At VCF, there is “a mixture of curriculum.” As it was described by R-VCF1, there were some western curriculums used for children’s ministry, but teachers came to the realization that they were “very complicated” and not relevant to the context of Philippines. So they came up with a combination of sources. The curriculum is adjusted “to the needs and the culture so that children can relate to the stories.” In fact, R-VCF1 noted that “the pastors do their own preaching notes for the primary and preteens and I [children’s ministry director] personally do for the younger ones.” They are “deliberate in making sure that the lessons and the preaching is Bible-based and Gospel-centered.” The main focus of Victory Kids’ curriculum is “to allow the children to learn the gospel.”

At all respondent churches, curriculum provides the lessons for each Sunday and help teachers be equipped. CCF, GCF, and VCF use different curriculum sources and contextualize them as they need but the most important is that they make these curriculum sources personalized for their ministries to fit the needs of children.



According to Blevins and Maddix, the activities of the curriculum should be intentional and bring “formation, discernment, and transformation within the life of a given community.”<sup>259</sup> Children’s ministries of CCF, GCF, and VCF adjust their curriculum to reach this goal.

### Children’s Participation in Ministry

Children must be given an opportunity to minister and so, worship God through it.<sup>260</sup> Gruber expressed that if children can be saved, then there should be a place of service for them in the family of God.<sup>261</sup> Children are valued at CCF, GCF, and VCF but are they given an opportunity to use their gifts for the Lord? I have explored how children can participate in churches’ ministries.

#### *CCF NxtGen*

R-CCF1 used the word “allowed” to say that children in CCF can be involved in ministry. Children usually volunteer as ushers along with their parents or help in children’s ministry. Older children in CCF have more opportunities for ministry. They can be Masters of Ceremony, mentors for younger children in Vacation Bible Schools, leaders of small groups, or participate in worship teams and prayer ministries. Children-volunteers are required to have adult mentors. CCF encourages families to minister together so that, as R-CCF2 stated, children can “follow their parents in volunteering and ministering.”

R-CCF3 shared that leaders and pastors encourage parents “to let their kids participate and minister.” However, R-CCF5 commented that if children have growing

---

<sup>259</sup>Blevins and Maddix, *Discovering Discipleship*, 177.

<sup>260</sup>Chapman, *Teaching Kids Authentic Worship*, 181.

<sup>261</sup>Gruber, *Focus on Children*, 16.

relationships with Jesus, they will serve. Children just need steady growing relationships. As R-CCF5 added, “the first ministry that you will look into is a children’s ministry. Because you know that you benefited from it.”

### *GCF Sunday School*

GCF respondents mentioned four main ways of children’s ministry in the church. They are participating in missions, in outreach, in “Praise Factory,” and in a prayer ministry. R-GCF1 shared that in order for children to be involved in ministry, they first need to be exposed to different varieties of ministry. So children in GCF are given an opportunity to meet missionaries and pastors and listen to them. Children are encouraged to share something with the people who these missionaries are going to. This is how children take their part in missions. Leaders and pastors of the church have a special time when they visit Sunday School, share their stories, and are prayed for by the children. R-GCF1 also responded that when possible, children go out to visit other children with their teachers. As R-GCF3 commented, children at GCF are encouraged to use their talents in ministry because “it pleases God.”

### *VCF Victory Kids*

As VCF focuses on family ministry, there are families who volunteer together in the church. Children, as R-VCF1 explained, always volunteer with their parents so there are “a mom and daughter tandem, there’s a father-son volunteer.” There are even clear guidelines for children-volunteers in *Victory Kids Volunteers’ Handbook*.<sup>262</sup> So as shared by majority of VCF respondents, children usually minister in children’s ministry by assisting teachers and younger children, leading worship, or collecting tithes and offering.

---

<sup>262</sup>Victory Christian Fellowship, *Victory Kids: Volunteers’ Handbook*, 3.

When asked how children are encouraged to minister, R-VCF1 responded that children do not need to be encouraged, “they so want to be part of the ministry.” Children are not forced as R-VCF3 stated, but are greatly encouraged to use their talents in ministry.

*CCF NxtGen, GCF Sunday School, and VCF Victory Kids*

Table 9. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Children’s Participation in Ministry

Children’s Participation in Ministry of the Church																
	NR*	CCF					GCF				VCF					
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	
Children volunteer in some ministries of the church.	12	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X
Children volunteer in children’s ministry.	8	X	X	X	X	X						X		X		X
Children can volunteer but under the supervision.	2	X										X				
Children are encouraged to pray for others as ministry.	3	X					X				X					
Children participate in outreach programs and missions.	3						X	X		X						
Children want to be part of ministry.	3											X		X	X	
Children volunteer with their families.	2		X									X				
Encouraging children to use their talents in ministry.	2								X					X		

\*X: Times of topic being mentioned by respondents

\*NR: Number of responses

Barna wrote that intentional children's ministries regularly give children opportunities to minister; they help them to recognize their gifts which can be used for the service of the Lord; and they hope to create a habit of worshipping God for the lifetime of the children.<sup>263</sup> Children in CCF, GCF, and VCF are valued and given opportunities to serve God in the church. Table 9 summarizes the ways children are involved in the ministries of their churches. The most frequently mentioned ministry is volunteering in the children's service, but as seen there are other various opportunities in these churches for children. Children can participate in outreach programs, prayer ministries, and other ministries that their parents are involved in. Children are encouraged to use their talents for God and serve Him with their own "children's ways."<sup>264</sup>

#### Parents' Involvement in Ministry

CCF and VCF respondents shared that they encourage families to minister together because children need to see how their parents serve the Lord. Wesley preached that parents have to "set an example of godly living for children to follow."<sup>265</sup> So the involvement of parents in children's ministry or other ministries of the church is a way for children to be more exposed to ministry. Table 10 presents the opinions of CCF, GCF, and VCF about parents' involvement in children's ministry of their churches.

---

<sup>263</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 112.

<sup>264</sup>Chromey, *Children's Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches*, 126.

<sup>265</sup>Stonehouse, "Children in Wesleyan Thought," 141.

Table 10. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Parents' Involvement in Children's Ministry

Parents Involvement in Children's Ministry															
	NR*	CCF					GCF				VCF				
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Families are encouraged to volunteer together.	1	X													
We try to provide different opportunities for parents to be involved in children's ministry.	5					X	X		X			X		X	
Parents volunteer in children's ministry.	4					X	X				X		X		
We involve parents in children's ministry through building relationships with them.	7		X		X			X			X	X		X	X
We have special events which motivate parents to be involved in children's ministry.	9			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	

\*X: Times of topic being mentioned by respondents

\*NR: Number of responses

Nine respondents have commented that they have special events in their churches and parents are encouraged to participate in those. Some of those events include camps for children and parents, special children's presentations, Vacation Bible Schools, seminars, and conferences. Seven respondents replied that building relationships with parents is the first thing in involving them into children's ministry. So teachers try to get to know not only children but also their families. As five respondents shared, churches also provide opportunities for parents to minister. Parents are invited to join and churches have parents as volunteers in their children's ministries.

At CCF, there are no opportunities for whole families to minister together yet. However, there are several families who do serve altogether in NxtGen. According to R-CCF2, “Partnering with parents in the ministry with children is the most effective way of nurturing children's spirituality.” So CCF teachers try to involve parents through providing trainings for them, updating them about the success of their children, and encouraging them through D-groups (small adult groups of the church). CCF also tries to engage parents through the journals distributed to children. The hope of CCF is that parents “will also know the child through the journal,” through the way they answer. So CCF engages parents to participate in activities of NxtGen but it does not provide clear opportunities how parents can minister with children. R-CCF1 stated that ministry is “really [the] initiative of [the] attendant.”

GCF keeps communication with parents through letters to them and personal talks. R-GCF1 shared that ministry should still develop by involving parents more in children's ministry. The church plans to provide activities for families so parents will see the purpose of what Sunday School does. R-GCF1 commented that there are parents who started volunteering after their children joined Vacation Bible School. So GCF desires to provide more avenues which would encourage parents to minister. There are no designed activities where parents can minister with children but there are special events where parents can participate with their children. GCF Sunday School organizes children's presentations, holiday workshops, children's worship time, to provide family activities which expect parents to join their children.

At VCF, many parents are volunteers. The Victory Kids program seeks advice and partnership from the parents in helping with their children, especially with those who

have special needs. To promote parents' involvement more, R-VCF1, R-VCF2, and R-VCF4 shared that the church organizes seminars and trainings where parents are equipped and they develop a desire to invest in the children of the community more through ministry with them. R-VCF5 responded that building relationships with parents also helps to encourage them to become involved in ministry. R-VCF2 commented that updating parents and engaging in conversation with them about their children is another way of parents' involvement in ministry. However, as R-VCF4 explained, this process happens step by step through the short volunteering opportunities parents have.

As seen from the observations of CCF, GCF, and VCF if parents do not volunteer, teachers build relationships with them and they slowly become engaged in ministry. Although, CCF and GCF do not have clear ways how parents can volunteer in children's ministry, yet, they aim to have it as they realize that parents need to be more connected with their children in the church.

### **Equipping Workers of Children's Ministry and Child Protection**

Lastly, Barna emphasized the preparation of ministers and children's safety in the church as the fifth distinctive characteristic of intentional children's ministries. RaNae Street wrote that "programs don't change people; only people change people."<sup>266</sup> So choosing volunteers intentionally is crucial for effective children's ministries. Following Wesley, churches should remember that the education should focus on God but rely "upon people as instruments of God's will and exemplars of godly minds and lives, as imitators of Christ."<sup>267</sup> Teachers impact the lives of children. Children feel safe if people

---

<sup>266</sup>Street, "Meaningful Programs for Children," 174.

<sup>267</sup>Heitzenrater, "John Wesley and Children," 292.

around them create safe environment for them. I have explored how CCF, GCF, and VCF work with their volunteers and provide child-friendly environment in their churches.

### Procedure and Requirements

At CCF, GCF, and VCF many volunteers minister with children every Sunday. As these churches accommodate hundreds of children each week, the number of ministers should also be big. The following aspects as the recruitment style, clear job descriptions, equipment of the workers,<sup>268</sup> intentions and characteristics of potential workers,<sup>269</sup> the church's standards for staff selection,<sup>270</sup> and other aspects are crucial for an effective ministry with children. So how do CCF, GCF, and VCF recruit their children's ministry volunteers and maintain a big number of them?

#### *CCF NxtGen*

NxtGen recruits volunteers every month. All interested persons go through the same recruitment process which starts by signing up for ministry and attending ministry orientation. Ministry orientation has high importance for NxtGen because, as R-CCF1 explained, people cannot just volunteer "unless they know what they are getting themselves into." In ministry orientation, volunteers get to know the basics of CCF children's ministry. Next, volunteers go through an interview and submission of all necessary documents. After that volunteers get a chance to observe different age groups and choose where they want to be assigned. NxtGen requires ministers to commit for half a year to one full year.

---

<sup>268</sup>May et al., *Children Matter*, 346-49.

<sup>269</sup>Jutila, "Determining and Developing Your Leadership Team," 19-23.

<sup>270</sup>Johnson and Toler, *Rediscovering the Sunday School*, 106.



Besides these requirements, CCF expects all volunteers to be members of the D-groups because the church believes in accountability and spiritual growth of its members through small groups. R-CCF1 also responded that as much as possible volunteers are taken care of spiritually and physically. They get support through prayer and counseling. They also have opportunities to bond together as a team during special events for volunteers. Such events, as shared by CCF respondents, are fellowships, celebrations, trainings, and retreats. CCF respondents feel that they are encouraged to minister with children and are appreciated in different ways.

### *GCF Sunday School*

The GCF Sunday School recruitment process begins with volunteers attending the four training sessions where they get to know basics of Christian Education, child development, and philosophy of children's ministry. After that, volunteers move to observations and get to choose classes for their ministry. However, the leadership of the Sunday School desires that volunteers will minister in age groups assigned to them where the need is. After the observations, volunteers are asked to do a practicum during one Sunday and then are interviewed. Volunteers are required to demonstrate their growing relationship with God through testimonials.

GCF Sunday School values its volunteers and appreciates them in several ways: emails with words of encouragement and appreciation, prayer for them, help and support for them, organizing retreats, having bonding together, and walking alongside with them. When asked how the church encourages people to minister with children, respondents shared that people usually get involved through promotional advertisements, or someone's invitation, or through being involved in short events for children. R-GCF1

commented that volunteers need a lot of support, so the Sunday School leadership tries to provide that nurture for them.

### *VCF Victory Kids*

At VCF, all volunteers start with submission of their applications. R-VCF1 commented that VCF is “very strict” when getting volunteers. So volunteers then go through orientation where they learn of the philosophy of the children’s ministry and its work. Volunteers are informed about their responsibilities and commitment. As a requirement they have to commit for a year, but with a teaching schedule of once a month. Thereby, children have different teachers, but regular group coordinators for every week. After that, Victory Kids leaders take pictures of volunteers and interview them. VCF requires all volunteers to participate in discipleship groups and stay spiritually healthy.

VCF respondents commented that they often bond together with volunteers and consider it as one of the ways of encouragement. They highly value relationships and so try to build friendly relationships. There are also special appreciation events for volunteers but R-VCF1 shared that “a personal thank you” means more to them.

It is obvious that CCF, GCF, and VCF put high emphasis on people they minister with. Caring about children, leaders of respondent churches set up these recruitment procedures which take time and effort to be realized. However, this process is vital in order to ensure that children learn from people they can trust. I also asked about the ratio of male and female teachers in CCF, GCF, and VCF and found out that in CCF and GCF, a majority is female teachers. In VCF, interestingly, younger levels have more female teachers, but older levels have many more male teachers. R-VCF1 explained that Victory

Kids encourages these dynamics, because younger children need “strict” relationships while older children need “buddy-buddy relationships.” CCF, GCF, and VCF appreciate the staff they have but some respondents expressed that there is a need to have more male teachers as role models for boys in their ministries.

### Equipping Children’s Ministry Workers

People who minister with children are rarely teachers as their occupation, so churches are expected to equip their workers with the knowledge and skills to minister effectively. Jutila wrote that recruitment of the teachers is the development of future leaders.<sup>271</sup> There are various areas that need to be considered in the work with children. Teachers need to continuously learn and grow with children in knowing God and building relationships. I looked at the ways CCF, GCF, and VCF prepare their volunteers for ministry.

CCF respondents shared their experience of the training meetings that they usually have for NxtGen volunteers. One training was on teaching skills which includes “teaching children with heart” and “classroom management.” NxtGen equips its small group and large group volunteers by providing special sessions for them. R-CCF4 gave an example of a training on acting skills which is very beneficial for large group teams. R-CCF1 and R-CCF3 responded that technical training has also become necessary nowadays so teachers, especially those who admit and dismiss children, are taught to work with the computers and other technology. R-CCF4 stated that “the ministry is looking for people who can help us... with [the] improvement of skills.” However, R-CCF2 added that real learning happens only when teachers are in the field. The last

---

<sup>271</sup>Jutila, “Determining and Developing Your Leadership Team,” 22.

important training mentioned by CCF respondents is working with children with special needs.

At GCF, all volunteers of Sunday School get basic training in Christian Education and teaching skills. Such training meetings include topics like the role of a teacher and classroom management, developmental characteristics of children, and “emotional, spiritual, and physical” development in childhood. Teachers are also equipped with the skills and ideas how to share Gospel to children. Importance, at GCF, is also given to children with special needs so the church hopes to organize more training in this area. As for now, as R-GCF1 explained, teachers are taught not to discriminate children with special needs in their classes and “just treat them like regular kids, let them feel that they are loved and cared for.”

At VCF, volunteers are offered different kinds of training on a monthly basis. R-VCF1 shared the following topics which were discussed in such training meetings: classroom management, storytelling, theology training, and a gospel center. R-VCF1 explained that VCF invests in training teachers to effectively share the Gospel to children, so that the children will have the right understanding of God and His will.

It is obvious that the topics mentioned by respondents do not cover the whole range of classes they have. Many topics are the same in CCF, GCF, and VCF and show that churches want their teachers to be more professional, working with children and more efficient in sharing Gospel with them. I have also observed that in a majority of classes at CCF, GCF, and VCF, there are children with special needs. Their number is not big, but their presence matters. Churches need to be more inclusive and accommodating for these children. However, it raises other concerns such as special training for teachers

and adaptation of lessons for these children. CCF, GCF, and VCF have little training of this kind and still need to work more to help these children in the church.

### Child Protection in the Church

In order for children to grow to their full potential, their childhood should be ensured with “an atmosphere conducive to their physical, moral and intellectual development.”<sup>272</sup> Church is usually perceived as a safe place without terrible incidents of abuse; however, such shameful incidents do happen in the church settings.<sup>273</sup> So, intentional children’s ministries are aware and do its best to be the most trustful place for the parents to leave their children in. CCF, GCF, and VCF respondents did not share about any serious incidents of child abuse in their churches. However, they commented that they had other unwanted cases which pushed them to enhance the protection of children in the church.

CCF does have a child protection policy, but, as R-CCF1 responded, it is not yet official and is only communicated to volunteers during the interviews. At present the security system in CCF is well developed. There are “gate keepers” for each children’s service who admit children and dismiss them. Dismissal of children happens only if a parent or assigned guardian have a special “pickup sticker.” CCF also secures children by using CCTV cameras and implementing classroom rules. CCF respondents shared two basic classroom rules they always follow: one child and one teacher cannot stay together alone in any facility of the church and children are allowed to leave the classroom only when their caretaker comes.

---

<sup>272</sup>Pangalangan, ed., project director, *Looking after Filipino Children*, 110.

<sup>273</sup>May et al., *Children Matter*, 321.

At GCF, there is no child protection policy, yet, there are rules that the children's ministry follows in order to secure children. The Sunday School of GCF occupies the whole floor and so the presence of the guard on that floor is important for them. GCF respondents also shared that they stay with children until all parents come to pick them up.

VCF has an official child protection policy which can be found in the Victory Kids Volunteers' Handbook.<sup>274</sup> VCF respondents were aware of it and shared how the church protects children. The child protection policy puts strict regulations on adults' assistance to children, especially when children need to be accompanied to restrooms or other rooms. R-VCF1 commented that since VCF is located inside the mall, the church invests a lot into the safety and security of children. Victory Kids has an ID system which allows teachers to monitor the people who go in and out of children's facilities. All children have their security codes and caretakers are allowed to get children only if the codes on the IDs match. Rooms and corridors are also equipped with CCTV cameras and can be immediately watched in the office. Teachers of Victory Kids are also trained to help children during earthquake or fire emergencies.

As seen, among the three respondent churches only VCF has an official child protection policy. But even then, CCF and GCF have rules which they teach to their volunteers. It is important to have those basic regulations in order to ensure the safety of children in the church. However, having a child protection policy is a way for churches to promote a safer child environment. The effective implementation of it might seem hard but it is one significant contribution towards the goal of ensuring a safe childhood.<sup>275</sup>

---

<sup>274</sup>Victory Christian Fellowship, *Victory Kids: Volunteers' Handbook*, 9.

<sup>275</sup>MacLeod, "Child Protection," 245.

## Other Findings

I asked respondents to share about the strengths and weaknesses of their children's ministries, necessary improvements, and recommendations for other smaller children's ministries. CCF, GCF, and VCF respondents commented on these topics according to their experience. All of the respondents of this study have been actively involved in children's ministries in their churches for more than three years.

### Strengths and Weaknesses of CCF, GCF, and VCF Children's Ministries

For some respondents it was easy to talk about the strengths of their children's ministries, but difficult to discuss the weaknesses of it. However, it is crucial to be objective and be able to acknowledge the weaknesses because only then there will be a possibility for improvement.

#### *CCF NxtGen*

CCF is a well-established ministry and so respondents shared what they think makes their ministry work. Teamwork was mentioned as the main strength of the ministry. R-CCF1 commented that everyone works on a team from gate keepers to large group hosts. R-CCF3 and R-CCF5 also talked about the ministry structure and the method of the ministry as important components of their success. R-CCF5 added that they are able to really engage children into the lessons using Metro Curriculum methods. Support of the church was another strength mentioned by R-CCF4. The church supports new ideas in children's ministry and teaches these new ideas to its volunteers through training meetings. NxtGen is prioritized as a ministry of the church, as shared by R-CCF5. Consequently, passionate teachers are the strength of its ministry.

Among the weaknesses, respondents often shared that the number of volunteers and their commitment to ministry are the main challenges. However, R-CCF1 stated, that cannot be controlled and leaders just do as much as possible to encourage volunteers to participate more in ministry. R-CCF4 commented that another weakness of NxtGen is its disconnectedness from parents. In fact, R-CCF1 said that family ministry and children's ministry will hopefully work closer in future and the church will become more family oriented. At last, R-CCF5 noted that the content of the curriculum is weakness of the ministry, because it teaches virtues but "does not promote the love for the word of God." NxtGen still has to improve on training teachers to challenge children for more "inward behavior" than "outward behavior." CCF respondents lastly mentioned that volunteers need to be more trained on engaging children, in storytelling, and in applying the goal of the lessons to life.

### *GCF Sunday School*

According to the majority of GCF respondents, teachers are the strength of their ministry. Teachers were described as loving and caring, good, and teachers who have heart for children. R-GCF1 called the Gospel-centeredness of the ministry as strength of GCF Sunday School. At GCF Sunday School the word of God is a priority and teachers make sure that the Bible is essential for younger and older children.

As for the weaknesses of GCF children's ministry, respondents talked about three major weaknesses according to their experience. R-GCF4 said that GCF needs "more teachers who are available to teach" and R-GCF3 commented that the present teachers need to be more equipped for their lessons. R-GCF2 clarified that the teachers of GCF need to be more relevant with the methods used in classes and learn new ways of doing



Sunday School. Furthermore, as for R-GCF2 and R-GCF4, the ministry should also improve on the ratio of children to teachers, because it is often hard for few teachers to handle the whole class. The other weakness is disconnectedness from other ministries of the church. R-GCF4 shared that pastors do visit the children's ministry, but children do not meet other people from youth or couples' ministries. R-GCF1 responded that Sunday School should also involve parents more in the ministry. Follow-up with children is important because parents and teachers need to work together.

### *VCF Victory Kids*

All VCF respondents named different strengths of their ministry. R-VCF1 stated that volunteer management makes Victory Kids successful. But without the support they get from the leadership of the church, Victory Kids would not have been able to do the things they do. So the support of church leaders is the next big strength of VCF. Collaboration between family and children's ministries also greatly increases the potential of ministry. Safety of children in the church ensured with good relationships between teachers and children is the next strength of VCF. R-VCF5 commented that VCF stands out because of its environment where the relationships between ministers and children are encouraged and nurtured. Other respondents at VCF also shared that training meetings for the volunteers, their unity in goals, and quality of lessons are other strengths of Victory Kids.

As for the weaknesses of the ministry, two respondents said that Victory Kids does not have any. However, other respondents mentioned that the number of volunteers needs to be increased and mainly their commitment to ministry. R-VCF1 also saw inconsistency in children's attendance as another weakness. Discipleship relationships

between children and teachers develop over time, so children's attendance and volunteers' presentations are crucial. VCF respondents shared that new volunteers need to be more equipped in order to improve in their ministry.

### Recommendations of CCF, GCF, and VCF to Other Smaller Children's Ministries

When asked about the recommendations for other smaller children's ministries, respondents relied on their experience and gave their honest suggestions. Table 11 summarizes their answers.

**Table 11. Summary of CCF, GCF, and VCF Responses: Recommendations of Respondents to Smaller Children's Ministries**

Recommendations to Smaller Children's Ministries															
	NR*	CCF					GCF				VCF				
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R1	R2	R3	R4	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Pray.	3	X					X				X				
Leaders of the church have to support children's ministry.	1	X													
Develop discipleship relationships with children.	2		X											X	
Use Metro Curriculum/set-up.	2		X			X									
Have servanthood heart for children.	3			X	X						X				
Keep children excited to learn about God.	1				X										
Be relevant.	2				X		X								
Be age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate.	1							X							
Be Bible and God-centered.	3				X								X		X
Train teachers.	1								X						
Do your best with the number of children you have and equipment you have.	2				X						X				
Establish teamwork.	1											X			
Respect children.	1											X			
Be committed.	1												X		



	Leaders of the church acknowledge the significance of children's ministry and advocate it in preaching and meetings.
	CCF, GCF, and VCF invest in children's ministry through prayer, budget, activities for children, trainings for teachers, facilities, and other programs.
<b>3. Methods and Techniques of the Ministry with Children</b>	Growing relationships between children and God are the main criteria for goals of children's ministry activities.
	Children should be disciplined through any program of children's ministry.
	The most common techniques of teaching are interactive methods, storytelling, small group discussions, and using visual aids for teaching.
	Majority of respondents acknowledged the help of technology in ministry, but shared that it should be limited and monitored.
	CCF, GCF, and VCF children's ministries practice strong team leadership where the core team consists of 2 and more full-time workers.
	CCF, GCF, and VCF emphasize engagement of children in the lessons. However, they admit that it should be balanced with entertainment.
	The lessons are taught according to the age characteristics of children.
	CCF, GCF, and VCF children's ministries focus their teaching on leading children to get to know God; secondly, application of the lesson in children's lives; and thirdly, memorization of Bible facts.
	Relationships between teachers and children should be fostered more through small groups.
<b>4. Content Provided through the Ministry with Children</b>	CCF and GCF use foreign curriculum, but contextualize to meet the needs of Filipino children. VCF has developed its own curriculum based on several foreign ones.
	Children at CCF, GCF, and VCF volunteer in the church, especially in the children's ministry.
	CCF, GCF, and VCF work on motivating more parents to be involved in children's ministry as they see parents' connection with children in the church as crucial.
<b>5. Equipping Workers of Children's Ministry and Child Protection</b>	CCF, GCF, and VCF have strict guidelines of recruitment.
	CCF, GCF, and VCF provide various training for their teachers.
	CCF, GCF, and VCF accommodate children with special needs and so need more training on how to minister to them.
	CCF and GCF do not have an official child protection policy in their churches but do have rules to protect children in the church.
	VCF has a child protection policy which is stated in the Victory Kids Volunteers' Handbook.

Chapter four discussed the data gathered for the study. Chapter five gives the overview of the whole study and proposes recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the principles and practices of children's ministries in the following selected mega churches of Manila: Christ's Commission Fellowship (CCF), Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF), and Victory Christian Fellowship (VCF). The researcher used interviews, observations, and materials' analysis as data collection instruments. Five respondents from CCF, four respondents from GCF, and five respondents from VCF participated in this study. Although, the findings cannot be generalized to all churches, this chapter will discuss the relevance of the findings to churches of various sizes and in different cultural contexts.

Data collection and analysis were guided according to five distinctive categories of activity which, according to Barna, are inherent in intentional children's ministries: perspectives of the church on ministry with children, investment in ministry with children, methods and techniques used in ministry with children, content provided through ministry with children, and workers of children's ministry.<sup>276</sup> This chapter discusses the findings related to each of research questions and the recommendations for other children's ministries which flow from the findings.

---

<sup>276</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 96.

## Summary of Findings

This research found out that CCF, GCF, and VCF are intentional about their children's ministries. They invest early and want children to know God when they are young. Thereby this research recommends that respondent churches continue reaching out more children and discipling them to "make disciples."

### Perspectives of the Church on Ministry with Children

CCF and VCF children's ministries have their own ministry philosophies which put emphasis on children in the church. So the research recommends for GCF and other children's ministries to have a mission and vision which are personalized for their specific children's ministry, but are still in line with churches' philosophies.

CCF, GCF, and VCF respondents believe that children can have genuine relationships with Jesus, so they try to get children to know God as early as possible. CCF and VCF should keep nurturing children's faith from 0 as they state in their ministries descriptions. GCF Sunday School invests in children from 2 years old, but does provide a place and care for children 0 to 1. Other children's ministries should target accommodating children as young as possible because those years are indeed foundational.

Respondents listed the following best ways of nurturing children's spirituality in the church: through teachers' love for children, through parents' involvement, through making children feel that they belong in the church, and providing various opportunities for them to hear God's word. CCF, GCF, and VCF children's ministries should keep on providing special places for children in the church to be connected with Christian community and to learn about God. The research proposes for other children's ministries

to equip their ministries with loving teachers, involve parents, and organize different ways for children to get to know God.

CCF, GCF, and VCF children's ministries realize the significance of the connection between home and church for children's spiritual development. So, they should invest more in family ministry and its connection with children's ministry. They can also provide more opportunities for parents to be involved in children's ministry and have connections with their children in the church. There is a need for intergenerational ministry. Therefore, this study proposes for other children's ministries to find ways of connecting parents and children in the church.

### Investment of the Church in Ministry with Children

#### *Ministry Structure to Serve Children*

CCF, GCF, and VCF children's ministries have strong leadership teams with two and more full-time workers, so they can manage their ministries well. They also practice working in teams which helps them be more effective. However, as some respondents shared, the number of volunteers and their commitment to ministry are still challenges. So CCF, GCF, and VCF can all work on this area. The research recommends for other children's ministries to invest in having persons who will be fully dedicated to their work and mobilize teamwork because "together they can get better results."

#### *Prayer for Children*

CCF, GCF, and VCF children's ministries pray for children during teachers' personal prayers, prayer meetings, and church prayers. According to Barna, there are two more streams of prayer which are inherent to intentional children's ministries: the

intercessors' prayers for children's workers and parents' prayers for children and teachers.<sup>277</sup> From this study it is not clear if these prayers happen in CCF, GCF, and VCF. Prayer for children in the church should happen on daily basis. So other children's ministries are recommended to reconsider their ways of praying for children and make improvements if needed.

### *Intentionality of the Church's Leaders and Their Involvement with Children's Ministry*

According to respondents, CCF, GCF, and VCF church leaders see children as "future leaders" and so urge churches to invest in them early. As a result there is support and much investment going into children's ministries. CCF, GCF, and VCF leaders should keep investing into children as early as possible and emphasize the importance of it.

A perspective of church leaders on children and ministry with them is crucial as seen from the examples of CCF, GCF, and VCF. Pastors need to choose children's ministry as one of the top church priorities.

### Methods and Techniques of the Ministry with Children

Aside from having children's ministry philosophy, CCF, GCF, and VCF set smaller goals for their children's ministries according to intellectual (mind) and spiritual (spirit) outcomes. However, there is not enough information concerning emotional (heart) outcomes. More in-depth research is needed on this. Other children's ministries are recommended to have specific smaller ministry goals set according to intellectual, emotional, and spiritual outcomes.

---

<sup>277</sup>Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 102-04.



This study showed various teaching methods used in CCF, GCF, and VCF. They are unique for each church as children are different. So other children's ministries need to look for new ways of teaching children and experiment what works for them. In fact, some of GCF respondents shared that teachers in their ministry need to learn more relevant ways of teaching. So the respondent churches are also recommended to upgrade their teaching methods after some time in order to keep children's experience of knowing God more exciting.

CCF, GCF, and VCF children's ministries shared how technology assists them in ministry. They should continue utilizing it for a better presentation of Bible stories for children. However, this study suggests that CCF, GCF, VCF, and other children's ministries monitor the usage of technology in ministry.

CCF, GCF, and VCF respondents mentioned that leading children to get to know God is the primary focus for them; however, I observed that lessons were usually focused on the application of the lesson to children's lives. Respondent churches can, in a way, reconsider the connection between these two. They should also keep on nurturing relationships between teachers and children in small groups. It gives children time to talk and be heard. The research recommends to other children's ministries to provide these opportunities for children where they can be listened to.

#### Content Provided through the Ministry with Children

##### *Curriculum in Children's Ministry*

This study recommends to other children's ministries to have uniform curriculum but adjust it to the needs and interests of children as CCF, GCF, and VCF do. However,

GCF makes big adjustments to its children's ministry curriculum. A church should consider compiling its own curriculum which will work perfectly for GCF children.

### *Children's Participation in Ministry*

At CCF and VCF I observed children volunteering in children's ministry. At GCF I saw children ushering. Besides these, there are other ministry opportunities for children in signing, praying, or participating in outreaches. CCF, GCF, and VCF should continue providing ministry opportunities for children in their churches. Children need to see the ways they can serve in the church. So the research recommends for other children's ministries to provide these opportunities for children.

### *Parents' Involvement in Ministry*

VCF encourages mothers to be volunteers in groups with younger children. CCF has parents who volunteer in different age groups. GCF encourages parents to be short-term volunteers. This study recommends for CCF, GCF, and VCF to keep on involving parents in children's ministry; however, based on some responses, they still need to develop more ministry opportunities for parents. The research also proposes for other children's ministries to encourage parents to minister with children as it can be one of the ways to connect children and parents in the church.

## Equipping Workers of Children's Ministry and Child protection

### *Procedure and Requirements*

CCF, GCF, and VCF respondents described their strict recruitment procedures for volunteers. So the research proposes for them to always follow those procedures to

protect children in the church. Other children's ministries are recommended to develop their own recruitment guidelines and recruit wisely persons who exemplify godly living.

### *Training of Workers*

Respondents listed various trainings their churches provide for them; however, several mentioned that there is still a need to have more training, especially on working with children with special needs. CCF, GCF, and VCF can assess the needs of their volunteers and organize more training accordingly. This research recommends for CCF, GCF, VCF, and other children's ministries to train teacher regularly and equip them with relevant teaching skills.

### *Child Protection in the Church*

Among the three respondent churches, only VCF has an official child protection policy. Even though, CCF and GCF set rules for child protection in the church, this study proposes for them to have an official statement. Research also recommends that CCF, GCF, and VCF make sure that all people in contact with children know those rules and follow them. Other children's ministries are suggested to develop basic guidelines for protecting children in the church and deliver them to their workers.

Based on the recommendations given by CCF, GCF, and VCF respondents for other children's ministries, prayer, having a servanthood heart for children, and being Bible and God-centered are the main suggestions from ministers to ministers.

## **Conclusions**

The findings reveal that CCF, GCF, and VCF are doing well in providing the essentials of intentional children's ministries identified by Barna. However, these

principles and practices of intentional children's ministries can also be applicable to other churches of different sizes and in different contexts.

Three findings warrant further reflection and discussion: first, mismatch between the intended goal of teaching with a focus on leading children to know God and the observations in the class room that teachers focused on children applying the lesson to their lives; second, a need for contextualized curriculum; and third, application of the principles and practices of intentional children's ministries in churches of varying sizes and contexts.

### Further Reflections on Significant Findings

#### *Mismatch between the Intended Goal of Teaching and the Current Practice*

When asked if CCF, GCF, and VCF children's ministries focused on applying the lessons to the children's lives, memorization of Bible facts, or leading children to get to know God in their teaching, the majority of respondents answered that leading children to know God is the main focus of their ministry and lessons. Churches want children to know God. They prioritize it. However, observations showed that practically all lessons are more focused on applications.

There might be a number of reasons why this mismatch happens. According to the findings of this research, two reasons came out: curriculum which emphasizes application and equipment of teachers with more practical skills. Stonehouse and May write that the majority of Bible teaching approaches nowadays stress studying the scripture with a focus on application. Eventually children learn disconnected Bible stories and not the

Bible as God's whole story. They are not led to knowing God.<sup>278</sup> In fact, children need to wonder and reflect on God's story. According to Beckwith, adults can help children explore Scripture by asking, "Why do you think God put that story in the Bible?"<sup>279</sup>

Curriculums of CCF, GCF, and VCF children's ministries emphasized application of lessons to children's lives. Teachers, desiring to lead children to know God, may not find the assistance they need to reach their goal while using curriculum with a different teaching focus. Also, when asked what trainings teachers are usually provided in their churches, majority of those were on practical skills of teachers: classroom management, acting, teaching skills, knowing developmental characteristics of children, tech trainings, storytelling, and ways of sharing the Gospel to children. As a conclusion, there is a need for equipping and training to guide teachers in their teaching to lead children to know God.

### *Contextualized Curriculum*

CCF, GCF, and VCF children's ministries depend on western curriculums which, according to the findings from the interviews, often do not match the needs of children in the Philippines. Respondents expressed the desire for contextualized curriculum. Indeed, there is a need for contextualized Asian curriculum resources which would take into consideration the characteristics of Asian learners and their context. May, Posterski, Stonehouse, and Cannell write that six components have to be considered during curriculum planning: aim, student/learner, content, teacher, environment, and evaluation.<sup>280</sup>

---

<sup>278</sup>Stonehouse and May, *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey*, 86-89.

<sup>279</sup>Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry. Ministry to Children in the 21st Century*, 126.

<sup>280</sup>May et al., *Children Matter*, 199.

Development of such resource is extremely challenging and requires collaboration of different people but contextualized curriculum can bring a big change in helping teachers reach the desired goals of their teaching which is to lead children to know God. It would be advantageous for Asian children's ministers to collaborate together and develop contextualized curriculum resources for the churches in Asia.

### *Application of Barna's Principles and Practices in Other Children's Ministries*

As the researcher, I agree with the statement that the principles and practices of intentional children's ministries can also be applied to churches of different sizes in different contexts. However, as I think of the churches I have experience with in Russia, China, and the Philippines, there are many challenges that make the implementation of them difficult. Some of these are, first of all, many church leaders are not aware of the spiritual potential of children and the importance of nurturing children's faith as early as possible. Secondly, children's ministries often lack ministry structure. There is rarely team work and children's ministries are left to one person who soon burns out. Thirdly, there are limited resources for training teachers. So teachers teach children the way they were taught. Fourth, there are little or no curriculum resources. It becomes difficult for teachers to meet the desired outcomes.

Implementation of changes should start with raising the awareness of pastors, children's ministry workers, whole congregation, and parents to the significance of nurturing children's faith. Churches need to look at how God intends church and parents to partner to nurture children's faith. There is a need for contextually appropriate resources and sustainable support for effective implementation of these principles and practices. Further studying and planning is needed to help smaller churches in other

contexts to increase the effectiveness of their ministries with children. We should also remember that any change requires time and a group of people committed to it.

### **Recommendations**

Therefore, based on the findings, this study proposes the following recommendations.

#### Recommendations for CCF, GCF, and VCF

1. Explore the possibility of working together to develop one contextualized curriculum which reaches the desired goal of teaching which is to lead children to know God.
2. Ensure that the Child Protection Policy and Recruitment Policy are appropriately implemented.
3. Study the children's perception of children's ministries of CCF, GCF, and VCF in correlation to their spirituality.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

1. Develop and assess a contextually appropriate curriculum resource that guides teachers in using approaches that give children opportunity to get to know God.
2. Develop a plan for children's ministries leaders to work together in developing biblically sound, contextually appropriate curriculum resources.
3. Develop teacher training that helps teachers to understand how to teach in ways that help children get to know God and grow spiritually.
4. Develop a means of assessing children's ministry to discern whether or not goals and objectives are being met.

5. Develop projects and/or ways to raise awareness of the significance of nurturing children's faith and the spiritual potential of children among pastors, children's ministry workers, whole congregation, and parents.
6. Develop children's ministry resources that are usable in small churches who are just beginning ministry with children.



## APPENDIX A

**Letter of Request to the Senior Pastor of CCF**

Date

Rev. Peter Tan-Chi

Senior Pastor of Christ's Commission Fellowship

Frontera Verde

Pasig City, Philippines

Dear Rev. Peter Tan-Chi,

I, Viktoriia Khen, am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your church, CCF Main. I am currently a student of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, getting a Master's Degree in Religious Education with a specialization in Holistic Child Development. My performance task in this degree is research in the area of my personal interest. The title of my study is "Principles and Practices of Children's Ministries among Selected Mega Churches in Metro Manila, Philippines."

If your approval is granted, I would like to interview the children's ministry director and one teacher from each age level of children's ministry; conduct observations of Sunday School lessons and teachers' meetings; and have a look at the children's ministry curriculum and available materials. One-on-one interviews will be done at each respondent's convenience and should take no longer than 1 hour each. The data of this study will remain absolutely confidential and will be used for educational purposes only.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

God bless you!

Sincerely,

---

Viktoriia Khen, Researcher

---

Dr. Nativity Petallar,  
Advisor and Program Director

## APPENDIX B

**Letter of Request to the Senior Pastor of GCF**

Date

Rev. Larry Pabiona  
Senior Pastor of Greenhills Christian Fellowship  
Ruby Corner Garnet Roads, Ortigas Center  
Pasig City, Philippines 1605

Dear Rev. Larry Pabiona,

I, Viktoriia Khen, am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your church, GCF Ortigas. I am currently a student of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, getting a Master's Degree in Religious Education with a specialization in Holistic Child Development. My performance task in this degree is research in the area of my personal interest. The title of my study is "Principles and Practices of Children's Ministries among Selected Mega Churches in Metro Manila, Philippines."

If your approval is granted, I would like to interview the children's ministry director and one teacher from each age level of children's ministry; conduct observations of Sunday School lessons and teachers' meetings; and have a look at the children's ministry curriculum and available materials. One-on-one interviews will be done at each respondent's convenience and should take no longer than 1 hour each. The data of this study will remain absolutely confidential and will be used for educational purposes only.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

God bless you!

Sincerely,

---

Viktoriia Khen, Researcher

---

Dr. Nativity Petallar,  
Advisor and Program Director

## APPENDIX C

**Letter of Request to the Senior Pastor of VCF**

Date

Senior Pastor of Victory Christian Fellowship  
Ortigas Center  
Pasig City, Philippines

Dear Senior Pastor of VCF Ortigas,

I, Viktoriia Khen, am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your church, VCF Ortigas. I am currently a student of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, getting a Master's Degree in Religious Education with a specialization in Holistic Child Development. My performance task in this degree is research in the area of my personal interest. The title of my study is "Principles and Practices of Children's Ministries among Selected Mega Churches in Metro Manila, Philippines."

If your approval is granted, I would like to interview the children's ministry director and one teacher from each age level of children's ministry; conduct observations of Sunday School lessons and teachers' meetings; and have a look at the children's ministry curriculum and available materials. One-on-one interviews will be done at each respondent's convenience and should take no longer than 1 hour each. The data of this study will remain absolutely confidential and will be used for educational purposes only.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

God bless you!

Sincerely,

---

Viktoriia Khen, Researcher

---

Dr. Nativity Petallar,  
Advisor and Program Director

## APPENDIX D

**Letter of Request to the Children's Ministry Directors of CCF, GCF, and VCF**

Date

Children's Ministry Director of CCF/GCF/VCF

Address

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

I, Viktoriia Khen, am writing to request your permission to have an interview with you. The senior pastor of your church has given permission to conduct this research study at your church. Currently, I am a student of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, working on a Master's Degree in Religious Education with a specialization in Holistic Child Development. My performance task in this degree is to research the area of my personal interest. The title of my study is "Principles and Practices of Children's Ministries among Selected Mega Churches in Metro Manila, Philippines."

If your approval is granted, I would like to interview you and one teacher from each age level of children's ministry. Each one-on-one interview will be done at your convenience and should take no longer than one hour. I would also like to conduct observations during Children's Ministry lessons on Sunday and one teachers' meeting. Lastly, I would like to see the curriculum of children's ministry and some other materials for analysis. The data of this study will remain confidential and will be used for educational purposes only.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Contacts:

Tel: 09052237698 (Globe)

Email: [victoria.khen@gmail.com](mailto:victoria.khen@gmail.com)

Skype: victoria.hyun

God bless you!

Sincerely,

---

Viktoriia Khen, Researcher

---

Dr. Nativity Petallar,  
Advisor and Program Director

## APPENDIX E

**Letter of Request to the Selected Teachers of CCF, GCF, and VCF**

Date

Children's Ministry Teacher of CCF/GCF/VCF

Address

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

I, Viktoriia Khen, am writing to request your permission to have an interview with you. The senior pastor of your church has given permission to conduct this research study at your church. Currently, I am a student of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, working on a Master's Degree in Religious Education with a specialization in Holistic Child Development. My performance task in this degree is to research the area of my personal interest. The title of my study is "Principles and Practices of Children's Ministries among Selected Mega Churches in Metro Manila, Philippines."

If your approval is granted, I would like to interview you. One-on-one interview will be done at your convenience and should take no longer than one hour. The data of this study will remain confidential and will be used for educational purposes only.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

God bless you!

Sincerely,

---

Viktoriia Khen, Researcher

---

Dr. Nativity Petallar,  
Advisor and Program Director

## APPENDIX F

**George Barna's Permission to Use His Study (*Transforming Children into the Spiritual Champions*) for the Purposes of This Research**



## APPENDIX G

### Interview Protocol

Greetings!

Begin with the brief introduction of the research and the researcher.

Tell the respondent that I would like to know what he/she thinks about some questions.

Then test the audio recorder: turn the audio recorder on and ask the respondent to introduce him/herself. Check whether the sound was recorded and the voice was clear. Keep the recorder on to catch all the comments of the respondent.

#### **Questions only for children's ministry directors:**

How is your children's ministry structured? (If possible ask to see the flow chart and photocopy it.)

What do you see as the advantages and the disadvantages of that structure?

What is the ratio of male and female teachers in your children's ministry?

Do the methods and approaches of your children's ministry constantly change or you follow the same patterns throughout the years? Please explain.

How do you equip your workers in the children's ministry?

What do you teach them about the children?

What settings and methods do you use to teach the workers?

What have you tried? What works best?

What length of ministry commitment do teachers make?

How often do they participate in Sunday lessons?

Is your church intentional about the people who work with children? How?

What are the criteria to become one of the children's ministry team members?

What is the process of recruitment?

#### **Questions for both children's ministry directors and selected teachers:**

#### ***Perspectives of the church on ministry with children***

What do you think about children's spirituality?

What responses have you seen from children that you think show the spiritual life of the child?

According to the teaching of the church, when can children be considered as saved?

Can you give me some examples of the church's nurturing of the children?

Which of those ways of nurturing do you think are most effective?

What do you believe is the role of family in nurturing children's faith?

Is the church intentional about family education?

How does the church help families nurture children's spirituality?

What is the philosophy of your children's ministry?

What are the main points of it?

How is it communicated to the teachers?

How is it integrated into the activities of the church?

***Investment of the church in ministry with children***

How does the church invest in ministry with children?

Does the church pray for children?

How?

How does the church mobilize the prayers for children?

What is the intention of your senior pastor regarding children's ministry?

How does he invest in children's ministry?

***Methods and techniques of ministry with children***

How do you design the goals of children's ministry?

What aspects do you consider when planning children's activities, lessons, etc.?

Do you have regular weekly or monthly teachers' meetings where the goals are discussed?

Are the goals well-presented and teachers are encouraged to accomplish them?

What are some of the principles that guide the way in which you teach the lessons?

(Age-appropriateness, structure, authenticity, core principles, etc.)

What are some methods and techniques you always use during the lessons?

What would teacher value the most during the lesson: application of the lesson to children's lives; memorizing Bible facts; or leading children to get to know God through story telling (sense of awe and wonder of God; sense of God's presence)?

Which one of them is emphasized more than the others?

Which one is secondary?

Which one is tertiary?

Most of the time of the lesson is usually given to \_\_\_\_\_. (Application, memorization, sensing God)

Are the lessons more focused on entertainment or engagement?

Can you give some examples?

How are the relationships between teachers and children fostered?

How could you describe the present relationships between teachers and children?

What do you think about the usage of technologies in children's ministry?

How do you use it in your ministry?

What are the benefits of using technology?

Do you have any concerns about negative impact from the use of technology?

Do you face any challenges because of the technology children bring with them to Sunday school?

Have you found ways of using the technology children have to facilitate their learning in Sunday school?

***Content provided through ministry with children***

What curriculum are you currently using? Why?

What are the criteria for choosing curriculum for your children's ministry?

How often do you revise and adjust the curriculum?

Is there specific period of time (a year, quarter, or half a year) when children learn Bible from creation to the promise of Christ's return? (in series)

Do you involve parents in children's ministry? If yes, how? If no, why?

How can children participate in ministry in the church?



How do you encourage them to participate in some of the church's ministries?  
 How can the families participate in the church's ministries? (The whole family ministering together)

How do you encourage families to participate in the church's ministries?  
 What challenges have you faced?  
 What has worked best?

***Recruitment and retention policies for workers in the children's ministries***

Do you practice team leadership? How does the children's ministry teamwork?  
 How are the workers trained?

How often does the training happen?

What are some of the topics discussed during such trainings?

How do you encourage volunteers and maintain large number of them?

How are the workers encouraged and appreciated?

Does your church have a child protection policy?

How does your church protect children?

***Other insights***

What are the strengths of your ministry?

What are the weaknesses of your ministry?

What would you like to improve in your ministry?

What could you recommend to other smaller children's ministries?

What would you like to add to everything discussed?

Thank the respondent for participation and contribution to this research study.

Notes:

At the end of the interview make notes on anything you think would be insightful or that would amplify the tape (body language, facial expression of the respondent, etc.).

## APPENDIX H

**Observations Protocol****Sunday School Lessons:**

Reminder: observe how boys participate in the activities and how girls do (differences between boys' and girls' participation)

**Ratio of boys and girls in the classroom:**

- Large group
- Small group

**Relationships between teachers and children:**

LG:

SG:

**Content of the lesson: application; memorization; sensing God; age-appropriateness; teacher-student ratio**

LG:

SG:

**Engagement of children in the lesson**

- Prayer time
  - LG:
  - SG:
- Worship time
  - LG:
- Story time
  - LG:
- Game time
  - LG:
  - SG:
- Tithes time
  - LG:
- Craft time:
  - SG:

**Entertainment/engagement of children during the lesson**

- Were children prepared for prayer and Bible story telling?
  - LG:
  - SG:

**What is my overall feeling of the lesson?**

LG:

SG

**Other notes:**

**LG:**

**SG:**

**Teachers' Meetings:**

What was discussed during the meeting?

Were the teachers considerate about the needs of children?

What aspects were considered for planning the lessons?

Was the teamwork felt there?

How were the teachers appreciated and encouraged?

Other observations:

## APPENDIX I

**Materials' Analysis Protocol****Curriculum:**

What is the name of curriculum?

What is the main focus of curriculum? (Virtues, facts, or sensing God through God's story)

Are the Bibles stories in series or according to the virtues or topics learned?

Is the curriculum adapted/adjusted? Is it foreign curriculum?

Are the materials for curriculum completion available?

Is the curriculum relevant?

Is it age-appropriate and has activities for both girls and boys?

Does it provide complete guidance for each age level?

Other observations:

**Available Children's Ministry Materials (additional materials to contextualize curriculum):**

What materials are available?

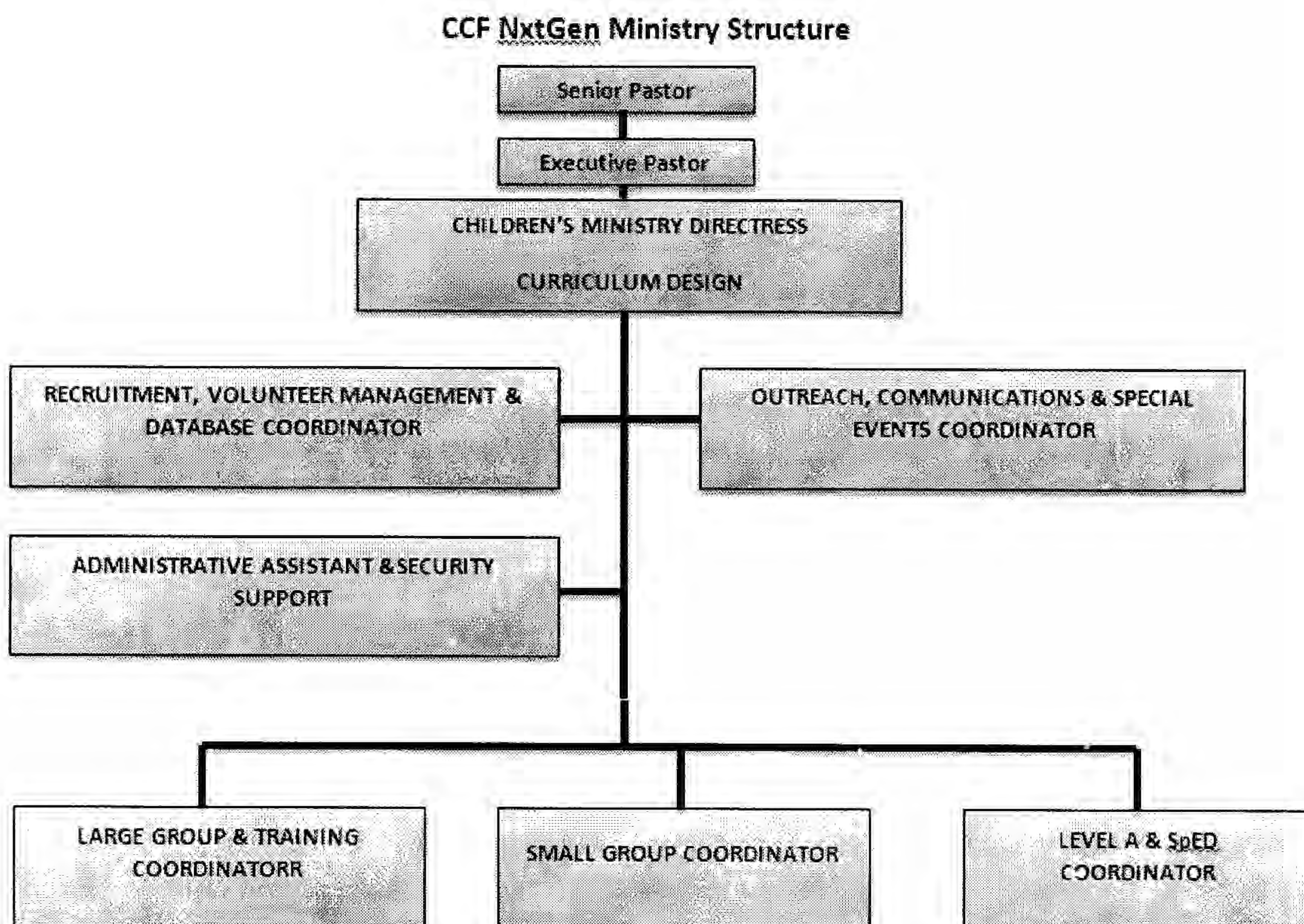
Are the materials relevant?

Are the interests of both boys and girls considered?

Other observations:

## APPENDIX J

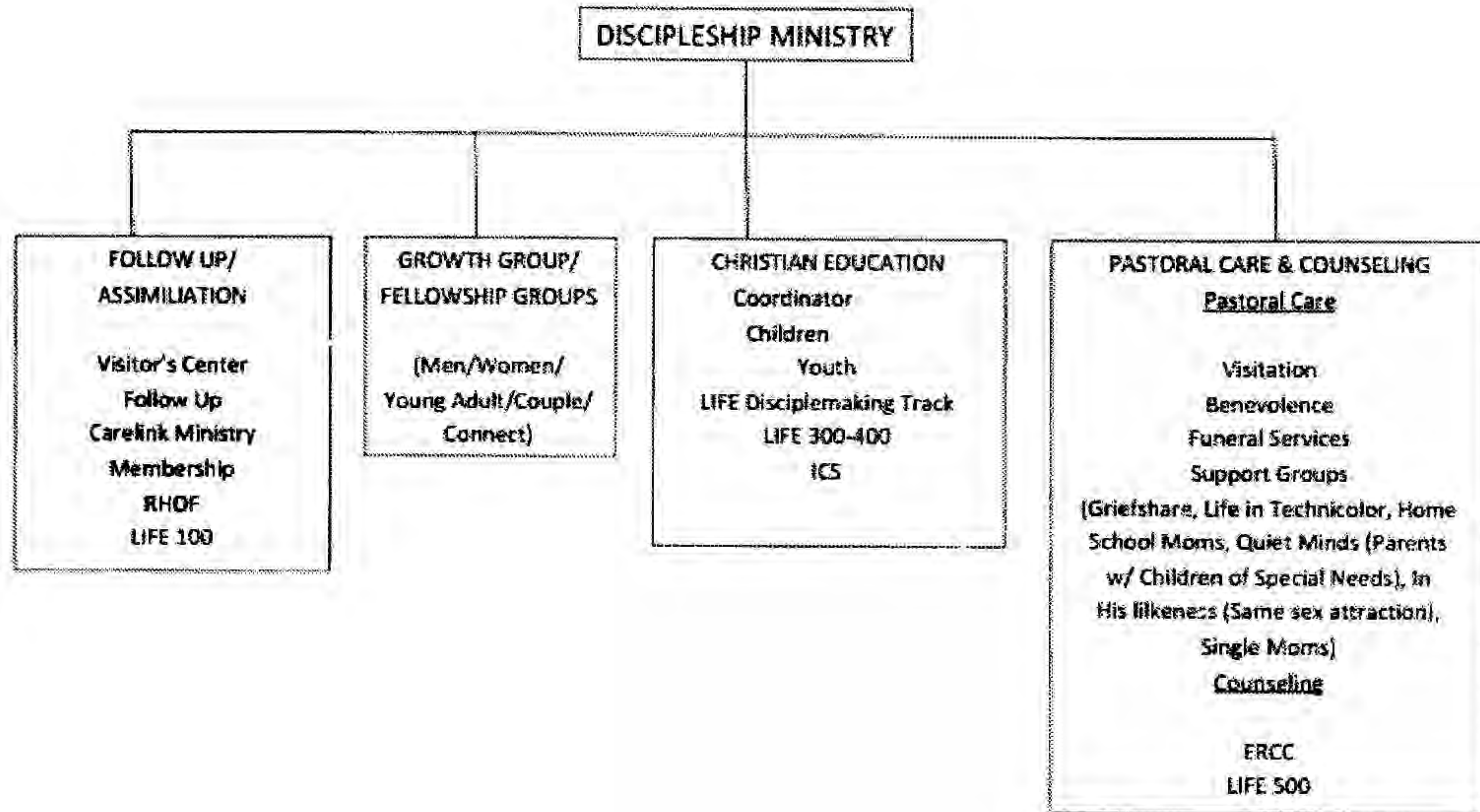
## CCF NxtGen Ministry Structure



APPENDIX K

**GCF Sunday School Ministry Structure**

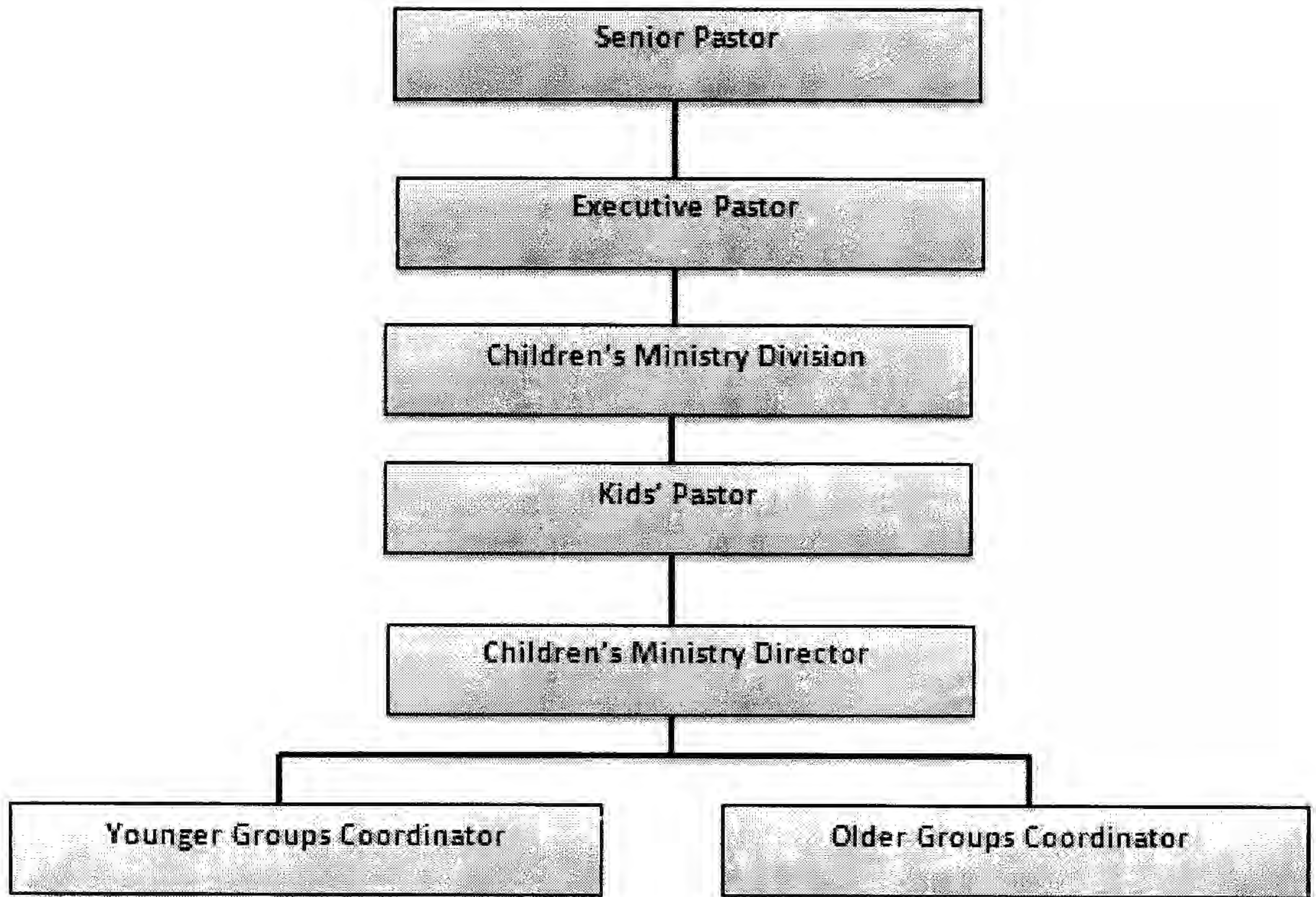
C. Suggested Set Up 2



APPENDIX L

**VCF Victory Kids Ministry Structure**

VCF Victory Kids Ministry Structure



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Literature Published Locally**

- Andres, Tomas Q. *Developing Positive Behavior by Filipino Values*. Manila: Divine World Publications, 1991.
- Brewster, Dan. *Child, Church and Mission: A Resource Book for Christian Child Development Workers*. Makati City: Church Strengthening Ministry, 2005.
- Chromey, Rick. *Children's Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches: Your Step-by-Step Guide for Making a Big Impact on a Little-Bitty Budget!* Makati City: Church Strengthening Ministry, 1995.
- Galloway, Dale and Beeson Institute Colleagues, *Making Church Relevant*. Makati City: Church Strengthening Ministry, 1999.
- Gibbs, Eddie. *Leadership Next: Changing Leaders in a Changing Culture*. Paranaque City: Acts 29 Publishing, 2005.
- Gregorio, Herman C. and Cornelia M. Gregorio, *Philosophy of Education in Philippine Setting*. Quezon City: R. P. GARCIA Publishing Company, 1979.
- Greenhills Christian Fellowship. *Sunday School Nurtures Children in 7 Ways*. Manila, Philippines: GCF, 2013.
- Greenhills Christian Fellowship. *Sunday School Discipling Tomorrow's Leaders Today*. Manila, Philippines: GCF, 2013.
- Jesus, Benjamin P. de. *Leadership That is Christian: A Study of Leadership Theories and Principles, Practice and Examples*. Zamboanga City: The Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines, Inc., 1984.
- Jutila, Craig. *Leadership Essentials for Children's Ministries*. Makati City: Church Strengthening Ministry, 2002.
- Kohl, Manfred Waldemar. *The Church in the Philippines: A Research Project with Special Emphasis on Theological Education*. Mandaluyong City: OMF Literature Inc., 2005.
- Ludag, Anselmo D. *The Filipino Preschool Child*. Philippines: COGA Publishing House, Inc., 1999.
- Maribao, Joel L. *Pinoy Religious Leader*. Manila: LOGOS Publications, Inc., 1997.



Maxwell, John. *Partners in Prayer: Support and Strengthen Your Pastor and Church Leaders*. Manila: OMF Literature, 1999.

Pangalangan, Elizabeth A. Ed. Project director. *Looking after Filipino Children: A Compendium of Philippine Laws and International Declarations, Conventions and Covenants*. Makati City: Children and Youth Foundation of the Philippines, 1998.

Pantoja-Manalac, Ting. *Parent University's The Pinoy Parent: Practical Lessons for Filipino Parents*. Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2000.

Victory Christian Fellowship. *Victory Kids: Volunteers' Handbook*. Pasig City, Philippines: Every Nation Productions, 2013.

### **Studies Published Locally**

Tadeo, Joy Raquel R. "Book Review: *Maalwang Buhay: Family, Overseas Migration, and Cultures of Relatedness in Barangay Paraiso*." *Social Science Diliman*, 6 (2010): 90-3.

Tantengco, Myra Trinidad T. "Family and Home Factors that Facilitate Talent Development and Achievement among Distinguished Filipino Women." *Alipato: A Journal of Basic Education*, 5 (2011): 73-88.

### **Literature Published Abroad**

Barna, George. *The Power of Team Leadership: Finding Strength in Shared Responsibility*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions: Why Children Should Be Your Church's #1 Priority*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books from Gospel Light, 2003.

Beckwith, Ivy. *Formational Children's Ministry: Shaping Children Using Story, Ritual, and Relationship (emersion: Emergent Village Resources for Communities of Faith)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010.

Beckwith, Ivy. *Postmodern Children's Ministry. Ministry to Children in the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Bell, Judith. *Doing Your Research Project*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press, 1993.

Berryman, Jerome W. *Children and the Theologians: Clearing the Way for Grace*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2009.

- Besford, Ros and Paul Stephenson. "The Church's Ministry to Children and Their Families" in *Celebrating Children: Equipping People Working with Children and Young People Living in Difficult Circumstances Around the World*, ed. Glenn Miles and Josephine-Joy Wright. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster: Thinking Faith, 2003.
- Blevins, Dean G., and Mark A. Maddix. *Discovering Discipleship: Dynamics of Christian Education*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2010.
- Booth, William. *The Training of Children*. Salem, OH: Schmul Publishers Rare Reprint Specialists, 1976.
- Brewster, Dan. *Child, Church, and Mission*. Revised ed. Colorado Springs, CO: Compassion International, 2011.
- Cavalletti, Sofia. *The Religious Potential of the Child: Experiencing Scripture and Liturgy with Young Children*. Trans. Patricia M. Coulter and Julie M. Coulter. Chicago, IL: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Publications, 1992.
- Chapman, Kathleen. *Teaching Kids Authentic Worship: How to Keep Them Close for God for Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003.
- Christensen, Randy. *Crucial Concepts in Kids' Ministry: Principles for Effective Ministry to Children*. Tulsa, OK: Insight Publishing House, 2003.
- Cordeiro, Wayne. *Doing Church as a Team: The Miracle of Teamwork and How It Transforms Churches*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2004.
- Cully, Iris V. *Children in the Church: The Dynamics of Christian Education*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1952.
- Davis, Fogg C. *Team-Based Strategic Planning: A Complete Guide to Structuring, Facilitating and Implementing Process*. New York: Amacom, 1994.
- Dodd, Brian J. *Empowering Church Leadership: Ministry in the Spirit According to Paul*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Dolan, Amy, Jill Crew, Matt Guevara, and Henry Zonio. *What Matters Now in Children's Ministry Early Childhood Edition: 21 Perspectives On Influencing Faith from Birth to Age 4*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011.
- Eaude, Tony. *Children's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development: Primary and Early Years (achieving Qts: Cross-Curricular Strand)*. 2 ed. Exeter, UK: Learning Matters Ltd., 2008.

- Edgerly, George A. and Harold E. Crosby, *Strategies for Sunday School Growth: Why Assemblies of God Sunday Schools are Growing*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1983.
- Fowler, Larry. *Rock-Solid Kids: Giving Children a Biblical Foundation for Life*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2004.
- Goddard, Carrie Lou. *The Child and His Nurture*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- Grossoehme, Daniel H. *The Pastoral Care of Children*. Oxford: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 1999.
- Gruber, Dick. *Focus on Children: A Handbook for Teachers*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2006.
- Hall, Miriam J. *New Directions for Children's Ministries*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1980.
- Heitzenrater, Richard P. "John Wesley and Children" in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001.
- Hendricks, Howard. *Teaching to Change Lives*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 1987.
- Henley, Karyn. *Child-Sensitive Teaching: Helping Children Grow a Living Faith in a Loving God*, 4th ed. Nashville, TN: Child Sensitive Communication, Limited Liability Company, 2008.
- Johnson, Talmadge and Stan Toler. *Rediscovering the Sunday School*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2000.
- Joiner, Reggie. *Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009.
- Jutila, Craig, Jim Wideman, and Pat Verbal. *Children's Ministry in the 21st Century: the Encyclopedia of Practical Ideas*. Loveland: Group Publishing, 2006.
- Jutila, Craig et al. *Children's Ministry that Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer. Loveland, CO: Group, 2002.
- Jutila, Craig. "Determining and Developing Your Leadership Team" in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer. Loveland, CO: Group, 2002.

- Keeley, Robert J. *Helping Our Children Grow in Faith: How the Church Can Nurture the Spiritual Development of Kids*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008.
- Lankard, Frank Glenn. *A History of the American Sunday School Curriculum*. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1927.
- Lester, Andrew D. *Pastoral Care with Children in Crisis*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985.
- MacLeod, Heather. "Child Protection" in *Celebrating Children: Equipping People Working with Children and Young People Living in Difficult Circumstances around the World*, ed. Glenn Miles and Josephine-Joy Wright. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster: Thinking Faith, 2003.
- Maxwell, John C. *Talent is Never Enough: Discover the Choices That Will Take You Beyond Your Talent*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007.
- May, Scottie et al. *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community*. Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005.
- Miles, Glenn and Josephine-Joy Wright, eds. *Celebrating Children: Equipping People Working with Children and Young People Living in Difficult Circumstances around the World*. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Thinking Faith, 2003.
- Miller, Sue. "How to Make Changes in Your Children's Ministry" in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer. Loveland, CO: Group, 2002.
- Nye, Rebecca. *Children's Spirituality: What It is and Why It Matters*. London: Church House Publishing, 2009.
- Pringle, Phil. *Top 10 Qualities of a Great Leader*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 2007.
- Rahner, Karl. "Ideas for a Theology of Childhood." *Theological Investigations* 8 (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), 35f, 37. Quoted in *Children and Our Global Future. Theological and Social Challenges*, Kristin Herzog. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2005
- Richards, Anne and Peter Privett, eds. *Through the Eyes of a Child: New Insights in Theology from a Child's Perspective*. London: Church House Publishing, 2009.
- Richards, Lawrence O. *A Theology of Children's Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983.
- Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1967.

- Schaller, Lyle E. *The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1980.
- Sciarra, Mike. "Partnering with Parents: Developing a Successful Connection between the Church and Home" in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer. Loveland, CO: Group, 2002.
- Shelley, Judith Allen. *The Spiritual Needs of Children: A Guide for Nurses, Parents and Teachers*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982.
- Stonehouse, Catherine. "Children in Wesleyan Thought" in *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research and Applications*, ed. Donald Ratcliff. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Joining Children on Their Spiritual Journey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Family Christian Press, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey: Guidance for Those Who Teach and Nurture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Stonehouse, Catherine and Scottie May. "The Story and the Spiritual Formation of Children in the Church and in the Home" in *Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, Holly Catterton Allen, ed. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008.
- Stout, Bill. "Safety and Liability in Children's Ministry" in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer. Loveland, CO: Group, 2003.
- Street, RaNae. "Meaningful Programs for Children" in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer. Loveland, CO: Group, 2002.
- Towns, Elmer L. *How to Grow an Effective Sunday School*. Denver, Colo.: Accent Books, 1979.
- Towns, Elmer L., John N. Vaughan and David J. Seifert. *The Complete Book of Church Growth: 100 Largest Churches, 100 Largest Sunday Schools, Profiles of the World's Most Dynamic Churches, Methods of Church Growth, What the Bible Says about Church Growth*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1981.
- Vaughan, John N. *The World's 20 Largest Churches: Church Growth Principles in Action*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986.
- Wesley, John. *On Family Religion*. Vol. 7 of *The Works of John Wesley*. 3rd ed. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1979.

Westerhoff III, John H. *Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1980.

Yancey, Philip. *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

Younger, Barbara and Lisa Flinn. "Sunday School from Start to Finish" in *Children's Ministry That Works! The Basics and Beyond*, ed. Mikal Keefer. Loveland, CO: Group, 2002.

Yust, Karen Marie. *Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004.

Zuck, Roy B. *Precious in His Sight: Childhood and Children in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996.

#### **Studies Published Abroad**

Commission on Children at Risk. *Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities*. New York: Institute for American Values, 2003.

Dart, John. "Going Mega: The Trend toward Bigger Churches." *Christian Century* 127 (2010): 22-23, 26-27.

May, Scottie, Katie Stemp and Grant Burns. "Children's Place in the New Forms of Church: an Exploratory Survey of Their Ministry with Children and Families." *Christian Education Journal*, 8 (2011): 282-3.

Moore, Kelsey et al. "Diverse Voices: Children's Perceptions of Spirituality." *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 57 (2011): 107-10.

Setran, David P. and Nathan Ramler. "Reimagining Frankena: Toward a Holistic Model for Philosophy of Ministry." *Christian Education Journal*, 9 (2012): 7-26.

Wanak, Lee C. "Rethinking Spirituality: Do Our Schools and Churches Need to Expand Their Paradigms?" *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 29-36.

Werner, Michael. "Why Half the People Joining Churches Choose the Mega Variety." *Humanist*, 71 (2011): 38.

#### **Unpublished Resources**

Christ's Commission Fellowship. "CCF Children's Ministry Mission and Vision." Handout shared with the researcher at CCF, Manila, Philippines, September 20, 2013.

- Escosar, Anastacio Jr. "Corporate Culture in the Church Setting: Assessing Victory Christian Fellowship's Culture of Discipleship and Its Relationship to Church Growth." Doctoral Dissertation, Asia Graduate School of Theology, 2008.
- Petallar, Nativity, Maureen Okundi and Victoria Khen. "The Missiological Presuppositions, Motives, Structures, and Methods Specific to the 4/14 Window." This paper was later presented in 4/14 Window Missiological Conference, Seoul, Korea (February 26-28, 2013).
- Petallar, Nativity. "Holistic Nurture of Children." Class Lecture, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Holistic Child Development Class, 12 January 2012.
- Production Team of Greenhills Christian Fellowship. *We are One: Knowing Christ and Making Him Known. Through the Years. The 25th Anniversary Publication Greenhills Christian Fellowship*. Manila, Philippines: Greenhills Christian Fellowship, 2003.
- Schoelles, Douglas J. "Equipping Parents to Be Spiritual Leaders in the Home." DMin Dissertation, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2009.
- Solito, Judy A. "Perceptions of Intermediate Children toward Sunday School in Selected Churches of the Nazarene in the Metro Manila District." Master's Thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1994.

### Electronic Resources

- "40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood." *Search Institute*. At <http://www.search-institute.org/40-developmental-asset-middle-childhood-8-12> Accessed 9 January 2012.
- "About CCF." *Christ's Commission Fellowship*. At <http://www.ccf.org.ph/about-us/> Accessed 16 February 2013.
- "About CCF." *Christ's Commission Fellowship*. <http://www.ccf.org.ph/about-ccf> (accessed October 7, 2013).
- "About GCF." *Greenhills Christian Fellowship: Know Christ and Make Him Known*. At <http://www.gcf.org.ph/pages/about/#top> Accessed 16 February 2013.
- "About Us." *Victory*. At <http://victory.org.ph/about> Accessed 16 February 2013.
- "Analyzing Qualitative Data." *The Learning Store*. At <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/g3658-12.pdf> Accessed 21 February 2013.

- Barna Group. "New Research Explores the Long-Term Effect of Spiritual Activity among Children and Teens." *Barna Group: Examine. Illuminate. Transform.* At <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/321-new-research-explores-the-long-term-effect-of-spiritual-activity-among-children-and-teens> Accessed 17 February 2013.
- Barna Group. "Research Shows That Spiritual Maturity Process Should Start at a Young Age." *Barna Group: Examine. Illuminate. Transform.* At <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/130-research-shows-that-spiritual-maturity-process-should-start-at-a-young-age> Accessed 5 June 2012.
- Belk Jr., William Michael. "A Study of Children's Ministries in Baptist Church Plants in the Three Major Urbanized Regions of North Carolina." diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009. In Google Books, [http://books.google.com.ph/books?id=xIG0jxnUOGMC&pg=PA3&lpg=PA3&dq=patterns+of+ministry+with+children+-+barna&source=bl&ots=9fz4KUyoyH&sig=W7rMgdSdH4\\_ss3rXQxdpOQ07sHs&hl=fil&sa=X&ei=nW0fUbvIGarkmAWq24D4Aw&ved=0CGUQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=patterns%20of%20minist](http://books.google.com.ph/books?id=xIG0jxnUOGMC&pg=PA3&lpg=PA3&dq=patterns+of+ministry+with+children+-+barna&source=bl&ots=9fz4KUyoyH&sig=W7rMgdSdH4_ss3rXQxdpOQ07sHs&hl=fil&sa=X&ei=nW0fUbvIGarkmAWq24D4Aw&ved=0CGUQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=patterns%20of%20minist)(accessed December 11, 2012).
- "Children's Movements." *Stand4kids.* At <http://www.stand4kids.org/get-involved/childrens-movements> Accessed 12 February 2013.
- Commission on Children at Risk. "Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities." At <http://www.americanvalues.org/ExSummprint.pdf> Accessed 7 January 2013.
- Conn-Powers, Michael. "All Children Ready for School: Approaches to Learning." *Early Childhood Briefing Paper Series*, 2006. <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/SRUD-ApproachestoLearning.pdf> (accessed September 14, 2013).
- Dunn, Lee. "Theories of Learning." Oxford Brookes University. <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocslid/resources/theories.html>(accessed September 14, 2013).
- Mega Church Growth Follows National Trend.* At [http://www.gracecentered.com/christian\\_forums/churches-of-christ-forum/megachurch-growth-follows-national-trend/msg1054620172/?topicseen](http://www.gracecentered.com/christian_forums/churches-of-christ-forum/megachurch-growth-follows-national-trend/msg1054620172/?topicseen) Accessed 19 September 2011.
- Rehal, Amardeep Singh. "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow/the Future Lies in the Hands of Children." sikhcess.org change the world. <http://www.sikhcess.org/here-today-gone-tomorrow-the-future-lies-in-the-hands-of-children/> (accessed July 24, 2013).



Shipman, Mike. "Collaboration." *What Matters Now in Children's Ministry: 33 Perspectives on How to Influence Children's Faith Now*. At [http://corycenter.org/uploads/what\\_matters\\_now.pdf](http://corycenter.org/uploads/what_matters_now.pdf) Accessed 3 July 2012.

"Victory." *Victory*. At <http://victory.org.ph/> Accessed 22 February 2013.

## CURRICULUM VITA

Name:	Viktoriiakhen
Date of Birth:	August 5, 1989
Place of Birth:	Kazakhstan
Citizenship:	Russia
Civil Status:	Single (engaged)
Educational Attainment	
Elementary:	School No. 5, Surajevka Village, Primorski Region, Russia  School No. 3, Ussuriisk City, Primorski Region, Russia
High School:	School No. 25, Ussuriisk City, Primorski Region, Russia  Lyceum of Ussuriisk State Pedagogical University, Ussuriisk City, Primorski Region, Russia
University:	Mongolia International University, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (Bachelor of Arts in English Education)
Work Experience	
Teacher of English:	Language Education Institute of Mongolia International University, Ulaanbaatar Mongolia (July 2006-June 2011)
Piano and English Tutor:	Russia, Mongolia, Philippines (2010-current)
Children's Ministry Experience	
Sunday School Assistant:	Church "Mir," Ussuriisk, Russia (2004-2009)
Children's Summer and Winter Camps Teacher:	Church "Mir," Ussuriisk, Russia (2005-2009)

Awesome Kids Teacher:	Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (September 2012-January 2013)
Sunday School Volunteer:	China (April-May 2013)
Sunday English Bible Study Teacher:	China (April-May 2013)
Teacher of English:	China (April-May 2013)
Kids Klub Teacher:	Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (2011-current)