

2024-25 APNTS Thesis and Dissertation Abstracts

Clemente, Jomer Anthony S. “Through the Eyes of the Blind: Seeing the Cross in Discipleship (An Inductive Study of Mark 8:22–10:52 As a Literary Unit).” Master Of Science In Theology Thesis, 2025.

By examining the Gospel of Mark, specifically the literary unit from 8:22 to 10:52, this research uncovers profound theological insights into discipleship. Central to this study are the evocative narratives of two blind men healed by Jesus (8:22–26; 10:46–52) and the Twelve’s struggle to comprehend Jesus’ Messianic mission (8:27–10:45), particularly the essence of the cross in discipleship (8:34). The core inquiry investigates the theological dimensions of discipleship gleaned from an inductive study of this pivotal division in Mark.

This exploration examines how 8:22 to 10:52 integrates within Mark’s overarching narrative, the literary role of the healing stories as thematic bookends accentuating the Twelve’s spiritual blindness, and how these miracles illuminate Jesus’ Messianic mission.

Employing an inductive approach, the research meticulously delves into the thematic depth and structural dynamics of this portion, charting the disciples’ transformative journey from misunderstanding to spiritual enlightenment.

The findings reveal that discipleship in Mark’s Gospel is depicted as a transition from spiritual blindness to vivid insight into Jesus’ identity and mission, demanding self-denial, and a willingness to embrace the cross through unwavering faith. Jesus, the Crucified Messiah, exemplifies this journey, calling his followers to emulate His way with wholehearted devotion.

The two-stage healing in the Bethsaida miracle introduces the realities of the disciples’ spiritual blindness, as well as their need for restoration and hope for spiritual clarity. The stark contrast between the Twelve’s initial

lack of understanding and Bartimaeus' immediate healing underscores the crucial need for spiritual discernment and trust.

This emphasizes the critical role of personal transformation, faith, humility, and sacrificial service in following Jesus. Ultimately, this study enriches the understanding of Mark's portrayal of discipleship, illuminating the gracious path from spiritual blindness to having spiritual eyes—not blinded by the matters of the world, but seeing clearly the will of the LORD.

Del Rosario, Surtalicio C. “Comparing Generational Priorities For Continuing Spiritual Formation Among Pentecostal Pastors.” Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Learning Dissertation, 2025.

Spiritual formation is a lifelong, evolving process that reflects the intersection of personal faith, ministerial experience, and theological development. This dissertation examines the distinct formation priorities of middle-adult and older-adult Pentecostal pastors, analyzing how their spiritual growth needs shift as they progress through different life stages. Using a mixed-methods research design, the study integrates qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data to explore the ways in which pastors conceptualize and engage in continuing spiritual formation.

Findings reveal clear generational distinctions in formation priorities. Middle-adult pastors (40–64 years old) connect spiritual formation with leadership development, theological refinement, and personal resilience, viewing it as an essential process for sustaining ministerial effectiveness amid the pressures of active church leadership. Their approach is structured and goal-oriented, favoring formal theological education, pastoral training, and peer accountability networks. By contrast, older-adult pastors (65+ years old) approach formation with an emphasis on wisdom, legacy-building, and faith transmission. Their priorities shift from active leadership development to mentoring younger pastors, engaging in Theological Reflection, and ensuring doctrinal continuity. While both groups affirm the necessity of lifelong formation, their practices, concerns, and expectations differ significantly.

This study affirms that spiritual formation is generationally shaped, aligning with life development theories. It also draws on Macchia's Spirit-empowered formation framework, highlighting the relational, pneumatological, and missional dimensions of pastoral growth. The findings challenge one-size-fits-all approaches to ministerial formation, advocating instead for age-responsive formation strategies that address pastors' distinct theological and vocational needs at different life stages.

The study concludes with practical recommendations for theological institutions, denominational leadership, local churches, and pastoral families. It calls for theological curricula tailored to life-stage-specific needs, structured mentorship programs that foster intergenerational learning, and denominational initiatives that support pastoral well-being and renewal. Additionally, it identifies key areas for future research, including the formation trajectories of young-adult pastors, the impact of gender on pastoral development, and longitudinal studies on the long-term evolution of ministerial formation. By recognizing the generational dynamics of pastoral spiritual formation, this study contributes to the broader discourse on lifelong ministerial development and provides a framework for sustaining spiritually vibrant, theologically grounded, and missionally engaged Pentecostal pastors across all stages of ministry.

Keywords: Pentecostal spirituality, spiritual formation, pastoral leadership, generational differences, theological education, mentorship, lifelong formation.

Hernandez, Lynne Grace C. "Fathers Matter: An Exploration Of Fathers' Perception Of Their Involvement And Their Preschool Children's Self-Regulation In Taytay, Rizal, Philippines." Doctor of Philosophy in Holistic Child Development Dissertation, 2025.

With self-regulation, as some researchers have associated it with later success, and with interest in the role of fathers in child development increasing, a mixed-methods study was conducted among 26 fathers of preschool children residing or studying in Taytay, Rizal, to determine the relationship

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between child self-regulation and father involvement. A quantitative survey measured father involvement and child self-regulation using standardized tests. The Father Research and Practice Network (FRPN) Father Engagement Scale was used to measure father involvement quantity, the Child-Parent Relationship Scale-Short Form (CPRS-SF) to measure father involvement quality, and the Child Self-Regulation and Behavior Questionnaire (CSBQ) to measure cognitive, behavioral, and emotional self-regulation. The Spearman Rank was used to correlate father involvement and child self-regulation at five percent confidence interval, and the Mann Whitney U test was used to compare the self-regulation scores of children with high father involvement and children with low father involvement at five percent confidence interval.

Results show no significant correlation between father involvement quantity and child self-regulation scores, but reveal a significant difference in self-regulation scores between children with high and low father involvement quantity. More specifically, a significant correlation was found between the quantity of father involvement and a child's cognitive and behavioral regulation. A significant difference in child self-regulation scores between children with high father involvement and children with low father involvement.

Further, a significant and strong positive correlation between father involvement quality and overall child self-regulation was found, and a significant difference was found between child self-regulation scores of children with high father involvement quality and low father quality. A significant positive correlation was found between father involvement quality and cognitive, behavioral, and emotional self-regulation. A significant difference was found between behavioral and emotional self-regulation scores of children with high father involvement quality and children with low father involvement quality.

Elements of father involvement related to cognitive self-regulation included verbal explanations of discipline and guidance. Elements of father involvement related to behavioral self-regulation included giving rewards, setting boundaries or limits, and disciplining through spanking. Elements

of father involvement related to emotional self-regulation included the child's expression of extreme emotion, the father's apology, teasing or playful banter, and physical expressions of affection. Play pervades all components of self-regulation.

Father involvement quality is significantly correlated to overall self-regulation and all its components, while father involvement quantity is significantly correlated only to cognitive and behavioral self-regulation. Significant differences between overall self-regulation, behavioral, and emotional self-regulation were found between children with high father involvement quality and low father involvement quality.

A qualitative interview with a family that scored high in father involvement and high child self-regulation was conducted to identify components of father involvement that may be significant in encouraging high self-regulation in children. A thematic analysis was conducted using MAXQDA to identify resounding components of father involvement.

Programs by individuals and institutions involved in the care and education of children are challenged and encouraged to strengthen children's self-regulation by increasing the quantity and, more importantly, the quality of father involvement. Initiatives to replicate in other contexts and to expand the sample size and geographical coverage are recommended.

Muan, James Dong Sian. "A Comparative Analysis Of The Term 'Prophets' in Jeremiah in the MT And LXX: Theological Implications of False Prophecy." Master of Science in Theology Thesis, 2025.

The exploration of the prophetic tradition delves into the nuances of authentic prophecy versus the phenomena of false prophecy, particularly through the lens of the Book of Jeremiah. The analysis commences with a critical examination of the divine selection mechanism for prophets, showcasing the transformational dynamics inherent in God's interactions with human reluctance—exemplified by Jeremiah's calling. In contrast, false prophets actively disrupt the established paradigms of the divine-human relationship, leading to significant confusion and moral misdirection within

their communities. This study posits that true prophets emerge as critical agents of social justice, actively challenging systemic injustices. Moreover, it underscores the imperative of unwavering fidelity to divine truth while advocating for a rigorous ethical evaluation in the exegesis of prophetic scriptures.

Petallar, Mark Gil. “Distinctives of John Wesley’s Religious Education of Children in Eighteenth-Century England.” Doctor of Philosophy in Holistic Child Development Dissertation, 2025.

John Wesley serves as an authoritative figure for churches that follow the Wesleyan tradition. His religious education approach towards children was sought after to inform the current practices of these churches. The present research entitled “Distinctives of John Wesley’s Religious Education of Children in Eighteenth-Century England,” aims to address the gap in the existing Wesleyan literature on the religious education of children, identify distinctives of John Wesley’s selected sermons on religious education of children by comparing Wesley’s sermons on the topic with those of his contemporaries, and supply the Free Methodist Church of the Philippines a Wesleyan foundation for the religious education of children in order to strengthen their current beliefs and practices in this area.

In the review of related literature, the researcher found that there was a lack of literature comparing Wesley’s sermons on children’s religious education and his contemporaries, especially on sermons using Proverbs 22:6. The researcher used Gale’s Eighteenth-Century Collection database and entered the parameters of “religious education” as subject, “London” as place of publication, and “train up a child” as keyword in the database to bring up the list of contemporaries. The research found that Wesley differs in at least five areas of his overall philosophy of religious education for children compared to his contemporaries. These religious education of children distinctives include Wesley’s understanding of God’s involvement through the Holy Spirit in helping children understand spiritual truths and respond to him genuinely, his belief that God can use children to actively participate

in the evangelistic mission of the church, his discernment related to the original design of human beings before the fall, his recognition of the spiritual diseases of human beings after the fall, and his perception of the breaking of the will of children, although this last comes with precautions in its implications.

Piano, Maryan Joy Rose. “Children (7-13 Years) and Empathetic Equine Contact and How This May Facilitate Spiritual Awareness of God, Others, and Themselves: A Constructivist Interpretive Phenomenological Exploratory Study.” Doctor of Philosophy in Holistic Child Development Dissertation, 2025.

This study investigates the impact of equine contact on the development of spiritual awareness (relational consciousness) in children, examining how the wholeness of experience and connectedness might make a difference.

Using a multi-qualitative approach incorporating empathetic equine contact, questionnaires with encouragement to express creatively, together with focus group discussions and individual conversations and observation, the research examines children’s lived experiences with horses to understand how such interactions may encourage spiritual awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-efficacy and resilience and transcendence of difficulties to be able to rise above, to use challenges positively for themselves and others. The theoretical framework of relational consciousness (Hay and Nye 2006, 109) guides the analysis by examining how equine contact may foster children’s spiritual awareness.

Key themes that emerged include: the actual and potential of overcoming fear, both natural and evolutionary fear and anxiety-based disorders, as a result of equine contact; the positive outcomes from being with horses, that is, learning how to communicate with a powerful and potentially dangerous animal using non-verbal methods; the closeness of relationships between human and horse and also the closeness of relationships between humans which emerge as a result of being together with horses; the com-

forting and sensitive nature of horses and their potential to build confidence; and a strong sense of spiritual connection with horses.

The findings suggest that equine contact could nurture children's spirituality and holistic development, though more research is needed to establish causal links definitively.

This study contributes to understanding how regular, guided interactions with horses may offer a pathway for fostering spiritual growth in young individuals and how other animal-assisted activities may support children's wellbeing and spiritual growth. These findings have implications for child development programmes, spiritual education, and animal-assisted therapies.

Wilson, Jonathan E. "Setting the Child in the Midst: A Holistic Approach to Screening Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms in Children after Disasters in the Philippines." Doctor of Philosophy in Holistic Child Development Dissertation, 2025.

The identification of children at risk of developing psychopathology following mass crisis events remains a significant challenge in trauma research and intervention. This dissertation addresses the critical gap between current "stepped care" models, which recommend triaging children based on mental health risk, and the lack of clear methods for such stratification. The research challenges the prevalent practice of treating children as "little adults" in trauma assessment and intervention, arguing instead for a developmentally sensitive, community-embedded approach.

Drawing on three theoretical foundations—disaster response history, Child Theology, and resilience studies—this research presents a novel framework for understanding children's trauma responses. The study employs Child Theology's concept of "setting the child in the midst" and views children as the imago Dei in purest form, reflecting the relational nature of the Godhead. This theological framework, combined with Ann Masten's definition of resilience as "the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt suc-

cessfully to disturbances,” provides a theoretical basis for examining children’s trauma responses within their complete ecological system.

The study analyzes data collected by OpSAFE International across 51 child mental health psychosocial interventions in the Philippines, encompassing 7,015 children aged 6-12 years, the age range of the OperationSAFE CHMHPSS.

Using the Rapid Trauma Assessment Scale for Children (R-TAC), the research measures seven aspects of children’s well-being—somatoform issues, depression, PTSD, coping skills, shock, and stress—as assessed by trained local volunteers. This methodology intentionally embeds assessment within the community context, recognizing that children are both dependent upon their surrounding community for resilience and are themselves part of that community’s resilience.

Statistical analysis revealed significant age-related differences in trauma response ($\text{Chi}^2=163.5$, $\text{df}=6$, $p<0.001$), with younger children showing greater vulnerability. The study identified three distinct developmental peer groups: Group A (6-7 year-olds plus 8-year-old males), showing the most severe PTSS; Group B (9-10 year-olds plus 8-year-old females), showing moderate PTSS; and Group C (11-12 year-olds), showing the least severe PTSS. Each of the 51 interventions represented a unique ecological system of resilience, with first-quartile PTSS scores ranging from 10 to 32 across different locales in different regions of the Philippines after various disasters.

This research makes significant contributions by demonstrating that effective trauma screening must consider both developmental timing and community context. The findings support a model of early intervention that incorporates Psychological First Aid principles while maintaining developmental sensitivity and community engagement. The study’s success in identifying at-risk children through community-based assessment suggests a scalable approach to meeting the needs of entire communities after mass trauma, while ensuring children receive appropriate developmental and social support.

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The results provide a practical framework for improving early intervention strategies and resource allocation in post-disaster mental health services for children. By embedding assessment within community-based interventions and comparing children within appropriate developmental peer groups, this methodology enables more precise risk assessment while supporting community resilience. This approach not only aids in identifying children at risk but also contributes to community restoration—a critical factor in children’s long-term recovery from trauma.