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BETHEL UNIVERSITY
BETHEL SEMINARY ST. PAUL

THE IMPACT OF PAST HURTS
ON EFFECTIVE MINISTRY
IN A LOCAL AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE
IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP
FOR TEAM AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

BY
IMOGENE LOWERY
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
MAY 2017

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	African American Church
CM	Current Members
GM	Grounded Theory
PM	Previous Members
QRD	Qualitative Research Design

ABSTRACT

This research on church hurts was done to know the cause of hurts within a local African American church and to seek ways to guide the church to healing with practical ministry. In order to understand the underlying cause of hurts in the church, it was important to understand what hurts are. Once identifying those hurts, one can understand how injuries affect others, the ministry or the organization. It is important to recognize when hurts happen in an organization so that one can help those who are hurting to heal.

Hurts that occur in the church can impact the effectiveness of the ministry and impact the team. This research addressed the problem of how to move this local AAC through past hurts to active ministry. The process this study took was to gain an understanding of hurts, what hurts are, and the negative impact of damages against individuals and organizations through biblical and theological research. Literature study sought to gain an understanding of hurts, what hurts are and how hurts impact people and the church in a negative way.

The project utilized QRD and the survey and interview methods to understand the feasibility of whether hurts had taken place in this local AAC. QRD sought to study the phenomenon within its original setting to understand the cause of the event. Insight was gained into the hurts within this congregation through a survey and interviews. The research utilized a survey and interview as the method for collecting data to understand what hurts this congregation experienced. Participants gave their approval by signing a written consent forms for participation in the research.

The surveys were administered to a small population to test for clarity. Previous and current members of this local AAC answered the questionnaire. Data gathered through surveys were collected through the Qualtrics online software. Qualtrics distributed a question-by-question cross tabulation of the survey questions once participants had taken the survey. The data downloaded from Qualtrics into the Microsoft Excel program for an analysis gave insight into the findings related to this project. An analysis of the data completed through Microsoft Excel provided the charts needed for interpreting the understanding of hurts within this local AAC. Biblical-theological and literature research provided insight into the interpretation of the charts. The analysis of themes throughout the findings relied on biblical-theological and relevant literature. The interpretation of the charts made clear the findings that hurt existed within this congregation. The comparison and contrast revealed the extent to which hurts occurred and a comparison and contrast of the hurts that existed within the history of this congregation.

The interview was conducted to understand the underlying cause of the hurts within local AAC. The interview data was analyzed utilizing biblical-theological and related literature. The interviews were summarized and added to the report. The interviews provided insight into the reasons hurts exist within this AAC.

The findings revealed that people who hurt have options in dealing with their hurts. At times Christians choose ways to handle their hurts that show passive-aggressive behaviors. Some Christians have allowed their hurts to remain for long periods of times. Not dealing with injuries causes hurts to remain and become destructive. At times this has impacted the ministry in negative ways. Not dealing with hurts causes the ministry

not to function properly. The proper treatment of these hurts will help the church return to active ministry. The project shed light on an ongoing problem within this AAC, which had caused a significant change in the makeup of the congregation.

The assessment of the problem statement led to implications for the church and the development of the seven principles for ministry to a hurting congregation. The findings resulted in developing the seven principles for a hurting congregation by utilizing the biblical-theological and literature research. The implication for the church is that the church must be aware and realize that hurts occur within the membership. The impact that unattended hurts have on other congregants or the ministry can be devastating. The church must commit to handling hurts in a proper way, so that hurts do not cause such great disturbance within the congregation.

No doubt, pain as God's megaphone is a terrible instrument; it may lead to final and unrepented rebellion. But it gives the only opportunity the bad man can have for amendment. It removes the veil; it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul.

C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

INTRODUCTION

People identify the cause of their pain as many things: their family, church community, business, others and the environment. There are also times when devastating pain comes into their life through no fault of their own (Matt. 5:10). At times, pain in the church takes place when people choose to do things without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There are times when the church acts as Israel did: “Israel disregarded God’s direction, broke God’s commandments, bowed down and worshiped false idols, turned to other nations for help instead of to God, and refused to listen to Him speak through His messengers and prophets.”¹ The mistakes the church makes today that lead to pain in the body of Christ resemble the sins that Israel committed against God. God’s chosen people Israel suffering because her evil deeds went against God’s principles.

According to Kay Arthur, “The ultimate source of pain is sin in a universe that God is in the process of redeeming.”² There are times when pain is not the result of sin but is allowed by the hand of God. For instance Job, who was righteous, feared God and shunned evil (Job 1).³ Although Satan knew that God had blessed the work of Job’s

¹ Kay Arthur, *When the Hurt Runs Deep: Healing and Hope for Life’s Desperate Moments* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2010), 83.

² Arthur, 83.

³ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations are from *The Holy Bible, New International Version*, (Colorado Springs, CO: International Bible Society, 1984).

hands, he believed that if God struck all that Job had, Job would curse God to His face (Job 1:10-11). Although devastation raged all around Job endured the test of time. This proved that his pain was not the result of any wrongs on his part. During his moment of argument and complaining, Job turned to the sovereignty of God for answers (Job 30:20). Job recognized that his pain had a distinct purpose and that God was at work in his life. Job recognized God in a way that he had not known Him before.⁴

According to James MacDonald, “Sometimes in a family, in a church family, things happen that few know about.”⁵ When disagreements happen, Christians may not voluntarily handle their differences on their own. Many Christians have been guilty of leaving such matters for the leadership to handle. The Apostle Paul addressed this issue in his letter to the church at Philippi. Euodia and Syntyche were two women of unique status within the church (Phil. 4:2-3). Paul cautioned Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord (Phil. 4:2).

According to Edward R. Rustio, “These two women had not been pulling together, and both were equally at fault and were not good examples.”⁶ It was urgent that Euodia and Syntyche handle their differences. Samuel D. Rima says that “Where there are serious flaws in a foundation, whether that foundation belongs to a building or a leader, those flaws will compromise the integrity of what the foundation was intended to support and, if repairs are not made, it will eventually result in tragedy.”⁷

⁴ Arthur, 76-77.

⁵ James MacDonald, *Come Home: A Call Back to Faith* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2013), 47.

⁶ Edward R. Rustio, *Philippians: Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 1596.

⁷ Samuel D. Rima, *Leading from the Inside Out: The Art of Self-Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 16.

Paul knew that the peace and harmony of the fellowship within the church had been disturbed. Disturbances will affect the effectiveness of one's ministry if not handled properly. Paul called for urgency in reconciliation, to end the matter and to reunite the two parties.

A variety of things can cause one to experience pain in a church environment. Church hurts occur when Christians fail to address issues within the church. According to Rustio, "Pride, Stubbornness, and ambition for prominence usually get in the way of reconciliation."⁸ Pride, stubbornness, and ambition for prominence have led to hurts. When people hurt, they can get angry. Some people have left the church after being hurt. Some hurts have left deep scars in the hearts of God's people.⁹

Christians have left this AAC after they were wounded, having experienced the seeds of hurts they encountered within the body of Christ. Seeds of hurts are things that cause one to experience suffering that leads to past hurts. These seeds of hurts will leave unseen scars in the hearts of God's people. These hurts need healing so that effective ministry practices will return to the church. The time to deal with the wounds that have taken place within the body of Christ is now. The call of the church is to do effective ministry (Matt. 28:19-20). Effective ministry will only happen in the church when people experience healing from hurts received in the body of Christ. The church will be able to retain members who now leave at alarming rates after having experienced hurts within the church.

⁸ Rustio, 1597.

⁹ MacDonald, 47.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Statement of the Problem

The problem this project addressed was how to move an African American church (AAC) through past hurts to effective ministry. The researcher explored biblical and theological views on what past hurts are and how past hurts, if not dealt with, can negatively impact the practice of effective ministry. The researcher engaged relevant literature to understand the effects of past hurts on an organization and to discover how these wounds have been addressed. The researcher explored options for dealing with past hurts and how effective ministry practices are the results of healed hurts.

The researcher sought to understand hurts within this local AAC through the Qualitative Research Design (QRD). This AAC provided insight on how to move forward into effective ministry. The researcher developed a set of principles to guide this local AAC into effective ministry, based on the survey materials.

Delimitations

Understanding past hurts as they relate to the ministry of this AAC was a useful subject of study. This study on how to move a church through past hurts to effective ministry was limited to this AAC. The researcher examined the hurts within this local AAC and how those hurts impacted the ministries of this local organization. The researcher utilized biblical, theological, and literary resources for understanding what hurts are and how they developed. The research examined the Bible to understand how to

handle hurts according to the biblical text.

The researcher also consulted the biblical text to explain how ministry was hindered or advanced by hurts that occurred in the ministry setting. The information gathered was limited, as it relates to this local AAC. The research was limited to participants eighteen years and older. The research was limited to participants who were members of this local AAC for three years or more. The research addressed hurts that happened in the ministry within this local AAC ministry, among people who profess to be followers of Christ. The research also addressed how these hurts affected this local AAC. The research did not address all hurts, kinds of hurts, or past hurts. The research was limited to a small church setting.

Assumptions

The first assumption is that pain is one of the results of sin and living in a fallen world. The second assumption is that some hurts happen due a person's impure actions and disobedience against others and against a Holy God. The third assumption is that although suffering is a part of the Christian experience, it is not God's desire for people to hurt one another. The fourth assumption is that through the redemptive work of Christ, God has given humans what they need to life as His holy people in a fallen world. The fifth assumption is that although God is not the cause of evil at times He uses hurts to bring about his plan for one's life. The sixth assumption is through the endurance of painful trials Christ can work to bring about Christ-like character in one's life.

Subproblems

The first subproblem was to explore biblical and theological views to understand what past hurts are. This identified the hurts and their causes, what leads to past hurts and

how they negatively affect the practice of ministry. The second subproblem was to engage relevant literature in understanding past hurts: what past hurts are, the cause of past hurts, and the negative impact of past hurts on organizations. The third subproblem was to investigate and identify the cause of hurts within this local AAC, utilizing the QRD, through the Qualtrics online survey, and to seek insight from this organization on their view of effective ministry and how to move forward into effective ministry through the inquiry process. The fourth subproblem was to analyze the survey materials, determine the results of the materials studied and the cause of hurts within this AAC, and identify participants' views of effective ministry based on their surveys. The fifth subproblem was to develop a set of principles to guide this local AAC through its process of addressing past hurts and onto the course of doing practical ministry, based on this AAC's view of effective ministry from the surveys.

The Setting of the Project

The setting for this project was Minneapolis, Minnesota. The AAC began leasing space from a Presbyterian Church in 1983. In 1988, the African American congregation bought the church building.¹⁰ In 2001, the congregation sought to restore the building to its original appearance.

A restoration committee was formed to help the church acquire the funding necessary for restoring this historic building. In 1997, the church raised funding from various donors. The main capital campaign was called "Simple Gift: Restoring a Prairie School Church."¹¹

¹⁰ Maianne Preble, Redeemer Missionary Baptist Church, Minnesota Case Study. Fall 2009, http://www.preservation/case_study/redeemer_baptist_church.org (Accessed March 21, 2015).

¹¹ Preble, 2009.

The deterioration of the building was seen in signs of poor maintenance. This included the tarnished look of the stained-glass windows as well as instruments that were not functioning properly. The building was not accessible by those who require mobility services. Although the building was in such a deteriorated condition, the growing congregation reached out to the public through a variety of ministries. Those ministries included evangelism, a food shelf, a prison ministry, a recovery ministry and ministry to the ill, to women and to men.

The restoration of the church building began in October 1999 and continued through September 2000. The restoration aided in preserving this historic building. After eleven months of restoration, this African American church congregation utilized their building for serving the community and for worship. Perhaps most importantly the restoration of the African American church acted as a reminder that “preservation does not occur overnight. Sometimes it can take fourteen years of dreaming, six years of planning and eleven months of sweating to get the job done.”¹²

The ministry pressed onward as the leadership team changed over time. It was not until years later that the church began to experience a decline in its membership. The membership fell to about fifty. At times the church was in an unstable state in which the church blamed the pastor for the dwindling membership and ministers. The pastor blamed the church for the lack of commitment. The church has been tremendously affected by this unstable condition. Moreover, the membership has fallen to approximately twenty active members.

¹² Preble, 2009.

As the work on the church building flourished, the lives of the congregants lingered in a state of decay. The inner work needed to restore the human soul seemed so easily neglected. Only the Holy Spirit could reveal the inner wounds of members of this AAC that needed healing.

These hurts caused pain in the lives of God's people. The members' lives were in critical condition because of hurts. The impact of these hurts worked to destroy the ministry and the lives of those involved. Hurts are active ingredients that work contrary to the ministry, destroying the church and the lives of those wounded. These hurts caused painful sores that wounded those who encountered the injured. Hurts have caused injured members to leave the ministry. Understanding what took place in the lives of members of this AAC was important. Ways were sought to move God's people beyond their past hurts so that they can serve effectively in the ministry and the realm of their calling.

Importance of the Research Project

Importance of the Research to the Researcher

This project has been significant to the researcher in that it helped the researcher understand the identity of the critical currents that hindered the ministry of the church through unhealed hurts. The research was essential to the investigator's role and calling to minister to the needs of those within this local church. As the researcher sought to understand hurts from a biblical perspective, this project clarified how to maneuver this church through hurts to healing. This project was useful in establishing a set of principles to guide this local AAC into effective ministry to fulfill her calling on the earth.

Importance of the Research to the Immediate Ministry

This project was relevant to the current ministry in that it provided the

opportunity for the church to look at problems concerning the ministry of this AAC. It was important for the church to understand the cause of hurts within this local congregation. The value of understanding what disturbed the flow of ministry through this AAC was necessary to the health of this local church. The project provided insight into the ministry and why certain ministries were phasing out or ceasing to flourish. The project helped the present ministry understand the cause of its ministry failures.

The church had the opportunity to seek the remedy that was needed to allow healing and set her on the course to begin effective ministry. This project was significant to this congregation in that it provided insight and guidance into her spiritual development. It did this by providing a resource to help the church begin to move beyond the hurts she had experienced. The seven principles for a hurting church is a potential guide to helping this church heal. One of the most important aspects of this project is that the congregation learned from the past situation on how important it is for God to guide every aspect of its members' lives and how important it is to handle immediately any hurt that presents itself.

The Importance to the Church at Large and to the Academic Field

Although this research took place in a small church, the research addressed relevant issues and may shed light on similar problems for the church at large. Every day many people leave churches. Few churches deal with the reasons people leave, and their reason for leaving remains unaddressed. People spread rumors when individuals leave the church. Not addressing the reason people leave contributes to the rumors. When one person leaves the ministry the church should be alarmed and diligently seek to restore back to God those who leave. Jesus referred to good shepherds who would leave their

ninety-nine sheep in open country to search diligently for one lost sheep (Luke 15:4).

This project will help the church recognize why people have left the church because of hurts experienced within the ministry. This project will assist the church to look at why these hurts lingered. Moreover, this project will benefit the church at large as a source of light in addressing past hurts from a small church context. For the church at large, this project can shed light on areas where people may have experienced past hurts resembling those suffered by this local congregation.

The academic field may benefit from this project because it addresses a problem that many churches encounter. Thus, the project can become a resource that can be built upon to help the church community. The academic field may build on this project in order to probe more deeply in these issues. In this way, the project may be utilized as a tool that sheds light on a related area of ministry.

Data and Methodology

Nature of the Research

The approach utilized the qualitative research method. The research strategy was designed to explore the idea of hurts within the ministry and the cause of such hurts. The researcher sought an understanding of what the congregation believes effective ministry is, based on the surveys. The researcher used the QRD and the Qualtrics online survey. This model was used to help the researcher discover the problems that exist within this church. This model was utilized to develop a set of principles to be used by this church as a guide to move forward into effective ministry.

The researcher utilized the Qualtrics online survey instrument for generating, collecting, and interpreting the data collected. The participants accessed the surveys

through an online link to their email account. All participants taking the survey were over the age of eighteen. The research participants signed a consent form that acknowledged their permission to participate in the research either by verbal, recorded, or written consent.

Subproblem Treatment

First Subproblem

The first subproblem was to explore biblical and theological views to understand what past hurts are. This was done to identify them and their cause, what leads to past hurts, and how they negatively affect the practice of ministry.

Second Subproblem:

The second subproblem was to engage relevant literature in understanding past hurts: what past hurts are, the cause of past hurts, and the adverse impacts of past hurts on organizations

Third Subproblem:

The third subproblem was to investigate and identify the cause of hurts within this AAC utilizing the QRD through the Qualtrics online survey as a method of research. The survey was used to seek insight from this organization about its members' views of effective ministry and how to move forward into effective ministry.

Fourth Subproblem:

The fourth subproblem was to analyze the survey materials, determine the results of the materials studies and the causes of hurts within this AAC. The analysis identified participants' views of effective ministry based on their surveys.

Fifth Subproblem:

The fifth subproblem was to develop a set of principles to guide this local church through its process of addressing past hurts, and on to the course of doing practical ministry based on the members' view of effective ministry from the surveys.

CHAPTER TWO: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

God's Redemptive Plan in the Old Testament: A Means of Healing Hurts

It is important to comprehend how hurts began in order to understand how hurts affect people and the church. The Old Testament gives examples of past hurts and of the impact injuries have on a ministry. Genesis provides clues to help understand the problem of pain. God had planted a garden and given Adam the charge to care for it and keep it (Gen. 3:15). The Lord did not want Adam to be alone, so he made a helper suitable for him to live with him in the garden (Gen. 3:18, 21-22). At this point, Adam and Eve had not experienced pain.

Adam and Eve

Pain first occurred as punishment for the willful act of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:6). The breaking of what seemed to be a simple command led to tragedy (Gen. 2:16). Although the tree in the midst of the garden was visible, Adam and Eve failed to see the hidden dangers that would affect their lives. Adam and Eve lived as if the visible fruit of the forbidden tree did not pose a significant threat to their existence. Adam was aware of the consequences of not following the command of God (Gen. 2:17).

Adam and Eve failed to see the reality of a persistent threat and it changed their lives forever. June Hunt says that they failed to see the tip of the iceberg in their path

that could be catastrophic and could tear their hearts open or capsize their life.¹

Adam and Eve's opened eyes revealed that they wanted something other than what God wanted for them.

The serpent deceived Eve into believing that eating of the fruit was the right thing to do (Gen. 3:4).² "The serpent made a direct contradiction of God's word seem reasonable, by denying God's judgment, he invented a false motive for God."³ Being deceived, Eve traded the truth of God for the lie of the serpent. Adam and Eve's relationship with God was tainted through deception. Longman says, "When the man and woman ate from the tree they immediately changed their relationship with God and with each other."⁴ Such distorted relationships were not a part of God's original plan but were the results of sin.⁵ One's sinful pride leads to destructive behavior. Pride is the cause of people trying to do things on their own.

According to Robert Jamieson, Adam perceived Eve's ruin, ate of the tree from love, and was not determined to survive her.⁶ As for Adam and Eve, "Life had changed, and shame, fear, and guilt entered paradise."⁷ Their shame, fear, and guilt were the result

¹ June Hunt, *Hope for Your Heart: Finding Strength in Life's Storms* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 104-105.

² Robert S. McGee, *Search for Significance* (Houston, TX: McGee, 1987), 22.

³ Robert L. Deffinbaugh, Keith Krell and Stephen Leston. *Genesis through Numbers: Where Do We Come From? Quicknotes Simplified Bible Commentary Series. Vol. 1*, edited by Tremper Longman III, (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, 2009), 16.

⁴ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 16.

⁵ Paul J. Kissling, *College Press Commentary: Genesis, Vol. 1* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2004), 178.

⁶ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1961), 19.

⁷ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 17.

of the serpent's deception. "The fear of guilt replaced the truth of innocence."⁸ The history of every temptation and sin is the same: first comes the motion of the mind, then comes the increase of passionate desire, all ending in the degradation, slavery and ruin of the soul.⁹ The desire to eat from the tree resulted in the breaking of a simple command. The breaking of a simple command given to Adam by God led to Adam and Eve's destructive behavior.

The serpent ultimately won Eve's imagination and feelings. Adam's fall followed shortly after.¹⁰ Not only did Eve sin in her distorted thinking and a false sense of accomplishment, but she also gave the fruit to her husband who ate.¹¹ It is possible that one will disobey God's word when one is convinced that the consequences of rebellion are not as severe as God's word warns.¹² Disobedience occurs when one's rebellious attitude perceives there is more to gain than to lose. The fruit of the tree was "good for food, pleasing to the eye, and desirous of gaining wisdom" (Gen. 3:6). For Adam and Eve, there was much they would lose.

According to Tremper Longman, "A [more] complete transformation could not be imagined, than the one described here, as Adam and his wife attempt to hide from God."¹³ They hid from each other and tried to hide from God out of fear (Gen. 3:10).

⁸ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 16.

⁹ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 19.

¹⁰ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 19.

¹¹ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 16.

¹² Kissling, 190.

¹³ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 16.

Robert S. McGee says, “Fear and anger flow out of an unstable base.”¹⁴ A weak base results when one finds their worth in something other than God.¹⁵ People’s worth lies in the very thing that affirms them.¹⁶ Adam and Eve’s affirmation came through the lie of the serpent.

Out of shame Adam made coverings out of fig leaves and hid their nakedness (Gen. 3:7). Adam only knew of his nakedness because he was suddenly ashamed of it.¹⁷ The result of the fall is that people shift the responsibility for embarrassing behaviors onto others.¹⁸ Adam and Eve looked at someone or something as the cause of their problem. Paul J. Kissling said that Eve blamed the serpent, saying that she ate because the serpent deceived her (Gen. 3:13). Some people blame their problems on things that they can see or on others. Adam placed the blame on God because the woman given to him for a companion and helper was the one who had given him the fruit to eat.¹⁹ It seems that for Adam the only solution for his problem was denial and avoidance.²⁰ Adam denied his wrong action when he blamed someone else for giving him the fruit to eat.

When people do not take responsibility for their actions but deny their involvement in the problem others will get hurt. Kenneth Polley refers to church wounds in this way: those who view struggles as sin and avoid them “bypass the opportunities for

¹⁴ McGee, 24.

¹⁵ Hunt, 24.

¹⁶ McGee, 24.

¹⁷ Kissling, 200.

¹⁸ Kissling, 197.

¹⁹ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 20.

²⁰ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 17.

growth.”²¹ Hurts are not only the result of sin but are occasions for the people of God to mature in their spiritual development.²² At times hurts take place in the lives of God’s people in the church when they do not live according to the word of God. Pain happens when people are quick to respond or say what is on their mind. James warns to be “quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger” (James 1:19). Adam did the opposite and responded quickly in denial of his wrong action, placing blame on Eve.

Adam and Eve entered the world of pain through the fall. Adam and his wife chose to give up the world they knew in the Garden of Eden, which was free of pain, and entered the world filled with pain and hurts. They became creatures with a sinful nature, with the ability to hurt others and be hurt by others. Although life in the world did not have to be the result of pains and hurts, these things occurred because of Adam and Eve’s disobedience (Gen. 3:17-19). According to Jamieson, Adam and Eve’s actions show that they were ungrateful and disobedient, dishonored God, and loved self and the creature above the Creator.²³ Adam and Eve’s actions stemmed from a weak base.

The painful consequences led to judgment and separation from God. As a punishment for the sin committed, God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden (Gen. 3:24). According to Thomas Griffith, when God expelled Adam and Eve from the garden, this was an “act of separation.”²⁴ God pronounced judgment on all involved. Adam toiled

²¹ Kenneth Polley, “Avoiding Division within a Church: A Proactive Approach for Identifying Sources of Conflict and Creating a Healthy Ministry Environment” (DMin Thesis, Bethel University, May 2015), 1-194.

²² Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Way of the Heart* (New York, NY: Fifteenth Printing, 1981), 23.

²³ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 24.

²⁴ W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1979), 51.

to eat of the ground (Gen. 3:17-19). For Eve, “pains in childbearing would be very severe, with painful labor she would give birth to children” (Gen. 3:16). The serpent would crawl on its belly eating the dust of the earth (Gen. 3:14-19).

Life in the Garden of Eden ended and pain began in the physical life of humanity. The process of physical deterioration that leads to physical death started when people acquired a sinful nature in the physical body.²⁵ The sinful nature caused another problem for Adam and his wife. Although Adam and Eve covered up with a garment made of fig leaves, the leaves were not enough to cover them; the issue was “spiritual vulnerability.”²⁶ Adam and Eve were vulnerable spiritually and were capable of being hurt. Adam and Eve were left susceptible to the attacks of the serpent. “Adam and Eve’s problem was not just a physical problem; it was a physical issue that needed a spiritual solution.”²⁷

The skin of an animal was a suitable covering (Gen. 3:15, 21). “The coats of skin that God made for Adam and Eve implies animal sacrifice.”²⁸ The animal sacrifice points to the sacrificial act in the promised Redeemer in which repentance and faith are needed (James 1:9, Heb. 9:22). The remedy to restore sinful creatures back to God is through the God-appointed sacrifice. The spiritual solution to Adam and Eve’s problem restored worship between God and humankind. Worship was the only acceptable mode of adoration for sinful creatures through divine appointment and instruction.²⁹ Through

²⁵ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 17.

²⁶ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 17.

²⁷ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 17.

²⁸ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 20.

²⁹ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 20.

intervention into the problem that caused Adam and Eve's pain, God reinstated fellowship with them. He gave them the opportunity to worship Him.

Understanding how pain began helps one understand the cause of hurts and how they linger and become old wounds. After Adam and the woman disobeyed their Creator, God described the fallen world. "It is virtually a catalog of all kinds of suffering—including spiritual alienation, inner psychological pain, social and interpersonal conflict and cruelty, natural disasters, disease, and death."³⁰ Pain is inevitable because it is a fallen world. Understanding how pain began is necessary for recognizing the actions that lead to one's hurts.

Adam and Eve imagined they would be wise; they did not comprehend the effect wisdom would have on the things they did not know. "After the fall, Adam's mind was filled with vain imaginations and limited by a lack of intimate communication with God."³¹ Although "Adam did not die the moment he ate the forbidden fruit, his body underwent a change, which led to dissolution; the union subsisting between his soul and God had dissolved, he was accountable for the miseries and pains of his life."³² God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

Eve bore children through painful labor because of her disobedience (Gen. 3:16). Adam's toil of the ground was painful because of the curse pronounced on the ground (Gen. 3:18-19). The unfortunate implication of this event was that humanity lost its

³⁰ Timothy Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* (New York, NY: Riverhead, 2013), 131.

³¹ Robert S. McGee, *Search for Significance* (Houston, TX: McGee, 1987), 21.

³² Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 20.

protected status with God.³³ “Mankind then began to struggle with the feelings of arrogance, inadequacy, and despair, and valued the opinion of others more than the truth of God.”³⁴ Through success and the approval of others, humanity had been robbed of its “self-worth: and had been set on a destructive path to search for ‘significance.’”³⁵ Therefore, God entered this challenging course of life to provide a remedy for one’s spiritual life so that humans could deal with the pain that occurs in the physical life. God’s plan to redeem humanity from the curse of sin and death was set in motion to save and heal humanity from past hurts.

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed the Messiah’s mission to come to earth and be anointed to declare the good news to the poor. Jesus was sent to bind up broken hearts, proclaim freedom to the captives, and release the prisoners from darkness (Isa. 61:1). Isaiah spoke of the Messiah’s mission to proclaim the good news of salvation to the poor in spirit. Through the Messiah’s mission, people would experience salvation healing for their hurts and receive freedom from the dark prisons in which these hurts have held them captive (Isa. 61:1). The Messiah provides healing for people who have been injured by others when their pain remains unchecked.

In the Garden of Eden, God dealt with the destructive source of pain in Adam and Eve’s life. The source of their pain was a desire to have what they wanted outside of God’s plan for them. Adam and Eve’s attempt to get what they wanted resulted in tragedy. This tragedy led to blame. Each wanted to cast the blame on the other to avoid

³³ McGee, 22.

³⁴ McGee, 22.

³⁵ McGee, 22.

the pain, but a solution to the problem was needed. It was here in the Garden of Eden that God began to interact with human pain to provide the necessary cure for the cause of such suffering.

The biblical story of Adam and Eve is a graphic illustration of how pain begins. Hurts occur when one disobeys God's command and blames others for one's wrong actions. Hurts also happen when bad advice is taken to heart or when one does what one wants. Because Adam and Eve did things their way, the consequence of their actions was painful. After the curse had been pronounced on the ground, Adam's work of the field were painful. At times, the fruit was hard to obtain because of the curse pronounced on the ground.³⁶ Adam's descendants faced famine. The ground would not yield its substance but grew thorns and thistles.³⁷

Eve endured pain in childbearing because of her wrong action. The Creator's design to bring forth new life was a painful reminder that one could not live apart from God's terms.³⁸ By disobeying God's command, Adam and Eve set in motion a fatal injury called hurt. When Adam and Eve began to blame one another for their wrong, out of their pain, they started to hurt each other.

It is important for churches to recognize how hurts happen in their midst. Adam and Eve were living examples of how pain begins. Understanding the cause of pain as the result of rebellion in the lives of Adam and Eve helps one understand how hurts occur in the church setting. For the body of Christ to survive, God's plan is the plan to follow. Just

³⁶ Kissling, 206.

³⁷ Kissling, 206.

³⁸ Kissling, 203.

as with Adam and Eve, a church that seeks to do what it wants without any regard for the feelings of others will set itself up to cause hurts within its membership. The church must realize that any attempt to do anything on its own will result in failure. The church must always seek God for answers to her problems. The church must take responsibility for her wrongs just as an individual must own up to his or her wrongs. Those who have sinned must confess their faults to God who forgives (1 John 1:9). Hurts happen when people do not recognize or acknowledge their faults. James says one must acknowledge one's mistakes and pray for one another's healing (James 5:16). Hurts will happen in the lives of God's people and the church when a church disobeys God's plan and creates its own agenda. When the church does not know God's plan and follows its own way, destruction occurs.

Regardless of how simple the consequences seem concerning one's action, one must always be committed to following and obeying God's instructions. Eve took the wrong advice to her heart through heeding the voice of the serpent. Adam and Eve's actions are an illustration of how hurts happen in the church. Injuries occur when the church follow bad advice. Christians will blame each other for following the wrong advice. Taking the wrong advice to heart sets one up for disappointment and sets one on a course to be injured.

It is important for the church to follow God's instructions, whether audible or through His written word. A church that does not follow the instructions given by God's leaders will encounter hurts as well. Understanding and obeying God's word is essential for life in Christ. The church must recognize the reliability of those giving the word. One's personal relationship with God is important. One must nurture his or her

relationship with God each day. The church must have an active teaching ministry. Its teachers need to be equipped to teach the word of God. It is important to hear from God through daily communion and fellowship so that one can recognize and listen to the voice of the Lord.

The Impact of Past Hurt on an Organization

In order to understand the effects of past hurts on people and organizations, it is important to comprehend how pain began and turned into old injuries. Jacob and Esau's experiences are examples of how pain that one encounters becomes past hurts. Life for Jacob and Esau began as they "jostled" in their mother's womb (Gen. 25:22). The day of their birth, Esau came forth as Jacob's hand grasped Esau's heel (Gen. 25:26). As the boys grew older, the anguish over the birthright caused pain to enter into what would have been a simple act of blessing for Isaac's family. The lives of Esau and Jacob provide clarity about how hurts become past hurts and are destructive, and how these hurts impact the family and organization in a negative way.

The Life of Esau

Genesis gives an example of how the hurts Esau experienced in life affected the family unit and his relationship with his brother. Esau was the eldest twin son born to Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 25:24-26). Esau, an experienced herdsman, was favored by his father; Jacob was not the outdoors type and was approved by his mother.³⁹ As the firstborn son, Esau was in a position to inherit most of his father's possessions and the right to succeed him as the family patriarch.⁴⁰ Esau did not see the benefit that would

³⁹ F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, *Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by Robert, Lockyer (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986), 351.

⁴⁰ Bruce and Harrison, 351.

result from the birthright. One day Esau was faint with hunger, and the smell of lentils was more pressing at the time.⁴¹

Esau asked Jacob for a bowl of lentils. Jacob had the opportunity to make a bargain with him concerning his birthright (Gen. 25:29-34). Esau's desire for food resulted in his making a rash decision. His attempt to sell his birthright shows that he did not appreciate the value of the inheritance, nor did he realize the spiritual aspect of the birthright (Gen. 25:29-34). "To the ancient Hebrews, one's birthright represented a high spiritual value."⁴² Esau disregarded the value and responsibility of the birthright when he vowed to sell it.

The birthright recipient's responsibility was to serve in the role of priest for the family and to encourage worship of Yahweh.⁴³ By vowing to sell his birthright, Esau made a bargain that Jacob would act as the priest of the household. The deal made between Esau and Jacob over the heritage turned into a harsh reality. When their father Isaac was old and could not see well, he wanted Esau to inherit the birthright blessing (Gen. 27:1).

Before Isaac could bless Esau, Isaac made one last request of Esau. Esau was sent to hunt for game with which he prepared Isaac's favorite venison (Gen. 27:4). Rebekah sent Jacob out to bring two young goats, which she used to make Isaac's favorite food, while Esau was yet hunting for game (Gen. 27:8-10). "Disagreement arose over which of the twins would receive the birthright and carry on the covenant that God had made with

⁴¹ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 32.

⁴² Bruce and Harrison, 351.

⁴³ Bruce and Harrison, 351.

Abraham.”⁴⁴ Rebekah devised a plan to have Jacob receive the blessing of birthright instead of Esau.

Rebekah prepared the meal for Isaac. To obtain the blessing Jacob posed as Esau and took the meal to him (Gen. 27:19). In the midst of this, seeds of hurt were planted in the family. Rebekah had her plan, and Isaac had his plan. Seeds of hurts are things that cause pain to someone or an organization. Each member of the household worked against the unity of the family because each wanted to do things his or her own way. Rebekah and Isaac each had their plan for the blessing. Different impediments caused Isaac’s family hindrances. These obstacles developed from the seeds of hurts were planted within the family through the actions of each member. Impediments that went deeper into the family were anger, hatred, revenge, and tainted or broken relationships that led to disharmony in the household.

Esau was unaware that his younger brother had been blessed with the birthright blessing based on the schemes of his mother Rebekah and of Jacob (Gen. 27:21-22). Esau returned and found that when he was ready to serve his father, someone had already served the meal and received the blessing (Gen. 27:30-32). Isaac was upset, and his body shook after realizing the blessing fell on someone other than his oldest son (Gen. 27:33). Esau wept bitterly when he heard his father’s words. Esau said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father” (Gen. 27:34). Esau wanted the blessing, and by the constructs of the firstborn birthright, he should have received the benefit.

According to F. F. Bruce, Esau was not responsible nor did he have the faith or

⁴⁴ Bruce and Harrison, 512.

wisdom needed to make the firstborn birthright a reality.⁴⁵ Esau cried because he realized that there was not a blessing left for him (Gen. 27:34). Esau's lack of faith resulted in his experience of pain. Esau did not understand the importance of the blessing. But, one could hardly blame Esau alone. Rebekah and Jacob plotted against Esau, going against the firstborn birthright to the inheritance. The parent's scheme to pick their favorite son for the blessing revealed their favoritism. Esau's lack of faith and farsightedness along with Rebekah and Isaac's favoritism were impediments that caused pain within the household.

Once Esau realized that he would not receive the birthright based on the scheme of his brother, he was furious and bitter and wanted to kill Jacob (Gen. 27:41). "His deep hurt; that Jacob had outwitted him in securing the birthright, his bitter disappointment, his pathetic sobbing, and the burning shame that quickly kindled into intense hatred and desire for revenge are deeply moving."⁴⁶ Esau's thought was that if he killed Jacob, he would receive the birthright blessing (Gen. 28:8-9). The skirmish between the two brothers caused a strain on the family unit and on the relationships within the family (Gen 27:41).

If Isaac had sought the Lord on behalf of his family, he could have alleviated their separation. "Instead of trying to heal the family feud that Isaac and his wife had caused by their selfish favoritism, Isaac perpetuated the feud and destroyed his family."⁴⁷ "While Isaac's favoritism unlike Rebekah's had a basis, that basis seemed self-focused and even

⁴⁵ Bruce and Harrison, 351.

⁴⁶ Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison, *Wycliffe Bible Commentary: A Phrase by Phrase Commentary of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers), 31.

⁴⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe. *The Bible Exposition Commentary New Testament, Vol. 1 Matthew – Galatians* (Colorado Springs, Co: David C. Cook, 1989), 121.

somewhat carnal.”⁴⁸ One should not condone a parent’s favoritism of one child over the other. Favoritism was an impediment that worked against the unity of Isaac’s family. Bias caused pain within the household.

The Lord spoke a prophecy to Rebekah while Esau and Jacob were in the womb. One people would be stronger than the other, and the elder would serve the younger of the two nations that were in her womb (Gen. 25:23). The Hebrew word for nation is *gowy* and refers to a “nation” or “people.”⁴⁹ The two nations that were in Rebekah’s womb were the Edomite’s, the descendants of Esau, and the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob (Gen. 25:23). Esau represented the nation of the Edomite’s, and Jacob represented the Israelites.

Rebekah’s interpretation of the prophecy led her to believe that Jacob and Esau were the nations (Gen. 25:23). One may argue that Rebekah intended to do the will of the Lord; that she acted as she did because she believed that the prophecy stated that the elder should rule over the younger. Rebekah’s understanding of the prophecy led her to believe that Jacob, the younger son, was to be blessed. Although Isaac preserved the blessing for Esau, Jacob deceived him. (Gen 27:1-4). Rebekah’s interpretation of the prophecy led her to respond in deceit. She acted to ensure that the actualization of the prophecy took place based on her understanding.⁵⁰ Genesis says, “The elder shall serve the younger” (Gen. 25:23). Rebekah’s interpretation of the prophecy resulted in favoritism based on the

⁴⁸ Kissling, 249.

⁴⁹ James Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), 26.

⁵⁰ Kissling, 246.

lesser individual, whom she interpreted as being Jacob.⁵¹ Rebekah schemed by helping Jacob obtain the birthright out of favoritism and her understanding of the prophecy given to her.

To prevent failures in our faith community, an understanding of the Bible is necessary. Paul J. Kissling says,

When we are confused and unclear about exactly what God's word says, we set ourselves up for failure. When we know God's word and see it being deliberately violated and do not speak up, we also set ourselves up for failure as well as encouraging failure in our faith communities.⁵²

Rebekah's actions were the result of a problem. Hurts took place within the family structure because of a failure to clearly understand the word of the Lord, or in Isaac's case not knowing the prophecy spoken to his wife. Hurts occurred because Rebekah did not speak up concerning the prophecy given to her. She saw that it came to pass. Rebekah tried to please God because of the prophecy was spoken to her (Gen. 25:2-26).

Rebekah heard Isaac speak to Esau concerning the blessing and wanted his favorite food prepared so that Esau would be blessed before he died (Gen. 27:2-4). Rebekah knew that Isaac had arranged to bless Esau, so she tried to divert the blessing so that Jacob would be blessed. According to W. H. Griffith Thomas, Rebekah's object was to preserve for Jacob the blessing that God intended for him.⁵³ Rebekah believed that the purpose of God was in danger. To prevent such a great wrong from taking place, she

⁵¹ Kissling, 249.

⁵² Kissling, 191.

⁵³ W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1979), 49.

devised a plan to put the purpose of God in action.⁵⁴ The family struggled and plotted against each other to put their plan into action. “So, she resorted to the most contemptible deceit to secure the blessing for her younger son.”⁵⁵ Rebekah attempt to do God’s work without His help. This resulted in pain for the family.

Rebekah did not make known to Isaac the prophecy given to her concerning Jacob. However, Thomas believes, “It is clear that he knew of the purpose of God concerning his younger son” (Gen. 25:23).⁵⁶ “The fact that Isaac’s love for Esau had another basis than his future relationship to the promise given to Abraham may hint at the fact that he did not know about the Lord’s message to Rebekah.”⁵⁷ Isaac’s “partiality for Esau, combined with his fleshly appetite, led the patriarch into grievous sin.”⁵⁸ Isaac based his decision to bless Esau on favoritism and possibly on the cultural norm of favoring the elder son.

By working wholeheartedly to have one son blessed over the other, Isaac and his family failed to see the hidden impediments that caused problems within the family unit. The obstacle that caused pain in the household were favoritism, deception, a failure to know the word of the Lord, and working against God’s plan when it went against the cultural norm. These ingredients became active ingredients within Isaac’s family.

Unchecked pain caused disharmony in the family and resulted in long-lasting hurts.

Although Isaac wanted to bless Esau with the birthright, Rebekah had a different

⁵⁴ Thomas, 249.

⁵⁵ Pfeiffer and Harrison, 31.

⁵⁶ Thomas, 248.

⁵⁷ Kissling, 249.

⁵⁸ Thomas, 248.

plan. Rebekah went against the structure of the family in that Isaac as the head of the household chose to bless Esau, and Rebekah chose to help Jacob obtain the blessing through their schemes (Gen. 27:5-10). Neither act was right because neither relied wholeheartedly on God's plan of action. According to McGee, Rebekah took it upon herself and regarded God as unable to carry out His purpose, thinking that either He had forgotten or else that His will could be frustrated by human craft and sin.⁵⁹ Any attempt to carry out God's will apart from Him will result in pain and failure. The favoritism expressed by Isaac and Rebekah showed how their actions contributed to the family pain.

The parents added to this pain because they favored one child over the other. Through the act of deception, the family becomes a hindrance to itself. Even through this act of deception, the will of God comes forth, and the family blessing could continue through Jacob. Members of the family worked against God's plan to bring about their desired plan. Attempting to put one's plan into action causes problems for one's life and those involved in the scheme. Although the family worked against God's plan, God could bring forth His plan for the household in His timing (Gen.28:13-15).

In Isaac's family, favoritism, deception, and failure to know the word of the Lord worked as active ingredients which caused pain to members of the family. These active ingredients caused pain within the household. Hurts worked to destroy the family unit. At times, unseen injuries caused pain in the family (Gen. 26:34; 27:41, 46; 28:1-2). Some people hide the pain that comes from unseen hurts.

Rebekah feared for Jacob's life and manipulated Isaac into sending Jacob away.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ McGee, 249.

⁶⁰ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 56.

Rebekah convinced Isaac to send Jacob to Haran, to prevent his murder, which contributed to the pain of family separation. However, Rebekah led Isaac to believe that she would not have anything to live for if Jacob married a Hittite woman just as Esau had done (Gen. 27:46). Jacob experienced the pain of separation when he was sent away from his family to prevent Esau from killing him (Gen. 27:41-46). Isaac believed that he sent Jacob away to find a wife from Rebekah's family when indeed he did not know about Esau's plot to kill Jacob (Gen. 27:41, 28:2). Esau's life revealed hidden hurts that needed healing. Injuries of this magnitude help us understand how damages affect individuals and organizations.

Esau was in the dilemma of operating out of his distress. When Esau learned that it would displease his father if Jacob took a wife from among the Canaanite women, he responded to the words his father had spoken to Jacob (Gen. 28:8). Attempting to please his parents and to get his dad's blessing revoked, Esau married Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael (Gen. 28:8-9).⁶¹ Esau did not realize there was nothing that could be done to have the blessing overturned. Marrying Mahalath was an attempt to get what he wanted at any cost.⁶² "Esau is one of those who, as it has been truly and accurately said, tries to do what God's people do in the vain hope that somehow or other it will be pleasing to God."⁶³ Esau would not do "precisely what God requires, but something like it."⁶⁴ If Esau had done what God expected out of a sincere heart, his actions would have pleased God (Col. 3:23-24). Halfheartedly doing God's will would not please God.

⁶¹ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 34.

⁶² Thomas, 258.

⁶³ Thomas, 258.

⁶⁴ Thomas, 258.

Esau responded out of his pain when he married Mahalath.⁶⁵ He attempted to please his parents, hoping that it would result in an overturned blessing. God had rejected the family of Mahalath.⁶⁶ This error caused Esau to displease God. Just as Esau had done, “It is so natural to shape our self-image by the attitudes and opinions of our parents, our peer groups, and our society.”⁶⁷ Attempting to please his father, Esau tried to fix his problem instead of dealing with his hurt.

When people operate out of a pain-stricken state, they may try to make things right. But they usually makes some things worse because they have not dealt with they pain. A person operating out of a pain-stricken state will try and try to fix the situation but only to make it worse. Individuals in this state will seek to correct their condition by attempting to please others. When people operate out of pain, they will try to soothe their pain by trying to satisfy people, acquire material possessions, and gain more friends, among many other things.

Some individuals who operate out of a pain-stricken state will also try to hurt others. Due to church injuries, some people go deeper into their pain-stricken situation because they are blind to the solution to their problem. They do not see the solution because they believe someone else is the problem. Some people have experienced painful situations because they could not see the solution to their problem. Individuals who set their gaze on their problem could not see the solution. Those who could not see the solution to their problem fixed their gaze on what they believed was the cause of their

⁶⁵ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 34.

⁶⁶ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 34.

⁶⁷ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 35.

problem. Individuals fixed their gaze on the one whom they think is the cause of the situation and begin to blame them for the trouble. People who get stuck on what caused their pain will not see the solution to their pain and their wounds will grow old.

Isaac's family experienced many impediments, lies, deception, theft, scheming, and manipulation, which are contrary to the will of God. All these caused hurts. Injuries become past hurts when they linger and are not given care. Muted hurts pose risks to one's health and well-being and cause insecurities. "If a person does not give their hurts to God, the enemy will use them to keep that person bound and wrapped in grave clothes so that they cannot move forward into all the Lord would have them to do or become."⁶⁸ Past hurts will keep a person bound in previous situations.

Manipulation, coercion, and controlling other people occur when people want things to happen their way without consideration of what God wants them to do.⁶⁹ "Manipulation, intimidation and dominating another human being are blatant uses of control and illegitimate authority."⁷⁰ These impediments worked against the welfare of the family unit. The family experiences hurts that flow out of these obstacles. Impediments are injuries or obstacles that go against the well-being of a person or organization.

Through manipulation, intimidation, and dominance, Isaac's family searched for their worth. A search for one's worth outside of the will of God will result in pain. Pain

⁶⁸ Chester Kylstra, and Betsy Kylstra, *Biblical Healing and Deliverance: A Guide to Experiencing Freedom from Sin of the Past, Destructive Beliefs, Emotional and Spiritual Pain, Curses and Oppression* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2005), 178.

⁶⁹ Steve Sampson, *Confronting Jezebel: Discerning and Defeating the Spirit of Control* (Minneapolis, MN: Chosen Books, 2003), 14.

⁷⁰ Sampson, 14.

occurs because people will find their value in other individuals or things that will fail them. Kenneth Boa says, “People are constantly in danger of letting the world define them instead of God because that is so easy to do.”⁷¹ Esau did not entirely give up the world and put God first in his life but tried to meet some of God’s wishes by a little alteration in his conduct.⁷² He failed to renounce sin but attempted to cover it with “minor virtues.”⁷³ Esau tended to conform to the practices of God’s people and was not truly godly at heart.⁷⁴

Yahweh had already determined that Jacob would receive the blessing (Gen.25:22-23). Esau did not have the faith to accept the privilege and responsibility of the birthright, so it passed on to Jacob by default. But regardless of what the Lord had already determined, those involved wanted to bless the person they favored. They allowed their own standards to decide who would receive the blessing. When a person defines his or her value by the norms of another, he or she will always allow his or her past to reign in his or her life. In this way pain will linger for years, as in the case of Jacob and Esau.

When pain has not been dealt with properly, it will cause destruction in an organization. These hurts soon become past hurts that are destined to wipe out the family, hinder the ministry or destroy it in some way. The impediments that happened within the family worked against Isaac’s family and caused a disturbance in the household. Hurts from past issues then become the present, active ingredients in the lives of God’s people.

⁷¹ Boa, 35.

⁷² Thomas, 258.

⁷³ Thomas, 258.

⁷⁴ Thomas, 258.

When people allow past hurts to reign in their lives, those injuries will continue to be a destructive force in their everyday lives. When care has not been provided for injuries that occur in church, the wound will get worse.

The result of disharmony in Isaac's family occurred when members of the family sought ways to fulfill their plan. Fulfilling one's agenda without any regard for the unity of the whole family is a selfish act that causes pain within the household. Deceit, favoritism, manipulation, self-satisfaction, and disagreements were the cause of pain and disharmony in Isaac's family. The impediments the family experienced were anger through the pain of deception and the separation that resulted from this anger. Rebekah's favoritism and attempt to manipulate God's plan led to anger, tainted relationships, separation, and pain within the family. Isaac's favoritism and trying to satisfy his hunger resulted in hurts within the family. Showing favoritism sets people against one another as seen in the lives of Esau and Jacob. Esau's pain began when he neglected the value of the birthright given to him. Esau opened the door to experience pain in his life when he offered his birthright for a bowl of lentils.

The church has been called to work together as one unified body of Christ. The church must keep the unity of the fellowship. It should not attempt to carry out God's plans by relying on self instead of relying on God. It is important for the church to hear and heed the voice of God through the written and spoken word of God. When the church fails to rely on God, hurts happen and people are at risk of leaving the church. The body of Christ has been called to humility and not favoritism. Bias taints relationships within the church whereas humility exhorts members to be all that they can become. It encourages them to do the work of the ministry.

The church can learn from Esau to value all that God has given the church. These gifts include time, talents, treasures, people, gifts, or material possessions. Although Esau did not value the birthright, devastation set in when he believed that Jacob manipulated the birthright out of his hand. The church must recognize the value of all that God has given her to do concerning her service unto the Lord. When the church gets careless in her service, people begin to put their plans in place. Hurts will happen when people start to work their own plans and not include God. Leaving God out of the plan causes some members to get hurt and exit the church. When people get hurt, instead of managing their hurt they leave believing that they will continue to get hurt if they remain in the church.

The Biblical View of How to Handle Hurts

It is important to understand how to manage one's hurts by recognizing how hurts begin and how hurts become past hurts that impacts the lives of individuals and organizations. The life of Jacob serves as an example of how past hurts occur and how they become enduring pain within a family. The story shows how Jacob handled his hurts and how he received healing in time. Joseph's life serves as an example of how long-lasting hurts can be healed and how unity can be restored to the family.

Jacob was obedient to his father's wishes and went to Paddan Aram to take a wife from his mother's family (Gen. 28:5). Jacob's life encompassed hurts as he journeyed to Paddan Aram (Gen. 27:42-45). Jacob, rejected by his father, brother and father-in-law by deception experienced God's discipline in his life.⁷⁵ Jacob went to Paddan Aram as a deceiver instead of responding to the deception and rejection of his family and father-in-

⁷⁵ Aaron Früh, *The Forgotten Blessing: Ancient Words that Heal Generational Wounds* (Grand Rapids MI: Chosen Books, 2006), 69.

law Laban. But his labor for Laban showed that he had become an honest man.⁷⁶ It was in the house of Laban that God began His disciplining work in Jacob's life.⁷⁷ The discipline that God worked in Jacob's life equipped Jacob so that he would not respond out of his pain but instead out of an upright heart. Jacob's heart and spoken words became attuned to one another (Luke 6:45). Jacob's life revealed how he trusted in God with an undivided heart (Gen. 28:20, Prov. 3:5). God's discipline in Jacob's life equipped him for his encounter with Laban and his encounter later in life with his brother Esau. Jacob understood the importance of not trusting in self but relying on God. Jacob's life continued to conform to God's discipline as seen through his years in the house of Laban.

Jacob left Beersheba and journeyed to Haran (Gen. 28:10). He stopped to rest for the night and had a dream in which the angels of the Lord descended and ascended on a ladder that led to heaven (Gen. 28:12-13). Jacob heard the Lord speak of the Abrahamic blessing to him in a dream (Gen. 28:13-14). The Lord pronounced a blessing on Jacob in saying his descendants would be numerous and his territory would be vast (Gen. 28:14). God blessed the people of the earth through Jacob.

The actualization of God's promised protection to watch over, never leave, and take Jacob back to his land was accomplished (Gen. 28:15; 31:3). Jacob realized the Lord was in that place and asked the Lord to provide for his needs (Gen. 28:20). Jacob purposed in his heart to serve God and he set up a pillar in honor of the Lord's house upon his safe return to his father's house (Gen. 28:21). He gave the Lord a tenth of all the Lord had given him (Gen. 28:22). Jacob worshiped the Lord. He believed God would

⁷⁶ Jane Rubietta, *Finding Your Name: From Insecurity to Inheritance—The Lives of Isaac and Jacob* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2015), 266.

⁷⁷ Thomas, 291.

allow him to return to his homeland someday.

While in Haran, Jacob worked for Laban seven years. After that time he was deceived with the wrong bride. Then he worked seven more years to gain Rachel, the one he truly loved (Gen. 29:15-28). Although Laban deceived Jacob, he responded to Laban out of a heart that had been disciplined by God (Gen. 30:33). Even though Jacob served Laban with honest labor and did not take anything that belonged to Laban, Laban's sons were not pleased (Gen. 31:1).

The pain of rejection and deception did not rule Jacob's life at Paddan Aram. Jacob chose to be in control of his pain and rejection and did not allow it to rule over his life. Jacob decided to allow God to be in control of His life (Gen. 28:20-22). Out of this more balanced life, Jacob continued to work for Laban. When the time came to leave Paddan Aram, Jacob chose to communicate with Laban about the unpleasant things that occurred in his life (Gen. 31:36-42). Jacob had worked for Laban twenty years and had not taken anything from Laban. Jacob had repaid all that the beasts of the field had devoured (Gen. 31:38-39). Jacob had encountered restless nights, frost and drought (Gen. 31:40). Out of twenty years in Laban's house Jacob had served him fourteen years for two daughters (Gen. 31:38-41).

Jacob worked and endured brutal outdoor conditions. "But the boss's sons reframed it."⁷⁸ Laban's sons claimed that Jacob had become wealthy by taking everything that their father owned.⁷⁹ "Jealousy creates liars of many, and Laban's sons started lies—

⁷⁸ Rubietta, 268.

⁷⁹ Rubietta, 268.

more deceit—about Jacob when Jacob prospered.”⁸⁰ False rumors were an attempt to damage Jacob’s character. If one does not handle false rumors well, one will respond out of character. Jacob handled these rumors well.

Jacob noticed that Laban’s attitude towards him changed (Gen. 31:2). God protected Jacob from harm. During the night, Jacob had an encounter with the Angel of the Lord (Gen. 31:11). Jacob received the word of the Lord spoken to him concerning the time to leave Laban’s house (Gen. 31:3). Jacob obeyed the voice of the Lord. Out of fear Jacob did not let Laban know that he was leaving (Gen. 31:26; 31). Jacob took his wives who were Laban’s daughters, and their children and all that he had gained and fled for Canaan (Gen. 31:18).

Laban was angry that Jacob left without telling him. Laban claimed that he would have sent Jacob and his family away “with joy and singing to the music and tambourines and harps” (Gen. 31:27). Laban was angry that he was not allowed to kiss his daughters before they left (Gen. 31:26). Laban thought it was a foolish thing for Jacob to leave in that way. Laban also said it was in his hand to do harm to Jacob, but the God Jacob served had spoken to him, that he “cease to speak good or bad” to Jacob (Gen. 31:29). Jacob did not trust Laban but followed the voice of the Lord. Because Jacob was obedient to the Lord, the plan of God was activated and no harm came to Jacobs’s household from Laban.

Laban caught up with Jacob and accused Jacob of stealing his gods (Gen. 31:30). Jacob was angry because of Laban’s accusations (Gen. 31:36). To refute Laban’s claim, Jacob allowed Laban to search his tent and household (Gen. 31:33). He asked Laban to

⁸⁰ Rubietta, 268.

put the findings of his accusations in front of their relatives and enable them to be the judge of the sin committed (Gen. 31:36-37).

It is ironic that “Rachel his favorite and greatly beloved wife, still retained some of her Syrian superstitions, and had stolen the teraphim, or small household gods, belonging to her father.”⁸¹ Laban did not discover the items due to Rachel’s act of deception (Gen. 31:35). According to Thomas, Rachel was Jacob’s greatest hindrance in life.⁸² Jacob’s biggest obstacle came through the one he truly loved.

Jacob responded out of a disciplined life, although he had experienced many hurts. In the presence of witnesses, Jacob replied to Laban by recounting his hardships in Laban’s house and revealed how he was treated at the hand of Laban (Gen. 31:38-42). In the presence of witnesses, Jacob and Laban made amends. Jacob and Laban made a covenant agreement to live in peace and committed not to harm one another (Gen. 31:44, 52).

Jacob served Laban for twenty years and experienced wrong at the hand of Laban, but he did not allow those wrongs to consume him. Jacob dealt with his hurts and did not respond out of his pain. God’s steady work in Jacob’s life allowed him to answer to Laban concerning harsh working conditions, and the accusations against him (Gen. 31:1, 31, 38-42). Jacob chose to communicate with Laban about the very thing that brought hurt to his life (Gen. 31:38-42). Jacob faced accusations that he had stolen Laban’s flock and become wealthy (Gen. 31:1). He face accusations that he had stolen Laban’s gods (Gen. 31:32). He refused to respond to those charges out of anger (Gen. 31:31). Jacob

⁸¹ Thomas, 285.

⁸² Thomas, 285.

allowed room for Laban to remove the accusations made against him (Gen. 31:36-37).

Jacob was willing to go even further. He made a covenant of peace and ate with him after they settled their differences (Gen. 31: 53-54). Jacob set up a pillar of stone and called it Gilead, and his relatives set up stones in a heap. The pillar and heap served as a witness that God kept watch between the families; that they would not cause each other any harm (Gen. 31:45-53). Laban allowed Jacob and his family to go in peace as the Lord planned (Gen. 31:55).

Jacob's story serves as an example of how to handle hurts in a healthy way so that a family, church, or community can be efficient in doing the work of the ministry. It is important to understand how past hurts can affect people, families, and organizations. Jacob and Esau's lives are examples of how to handle past hurts, although it took twenty years for them to settle their differences. There are times when people get hurt and leave the church. Once people experience hurt in the church, it may take time for them to settle their differences and allow healing to take its course.

Although people get hurt and leave the church, it does not necessarily mean that God is not working in their lives. Jacob's life attests to the fact that God was working in his life. Before Jacob reached Paddan Aram, he asked the Lord to protect and provide for him, and return him safely to his father's house (Gen. 28:20-22). Jacob relied on God through prayer. God spoke to Jacob concerning Laban's attitude towards him (Gen. 31:2). The Lord also spoke to Jacob concerning the time to leave Laban's house because of Laban's stance (Gen. 31:3). Jacob was afraid and relied on God through prayer to save him from Esau (Gen. 32:11). Jacob understood the value of communication with God and others concerning his cruel treatment (Gen. 31:31, 38-42 and 32:9-12). Jacob was willing

to communicate with the right people about how they treated him. Jacob's willingness to communicate his hurts allowed room for healing to take place in his life.

Some people have experienced false accusations from those in the church, just as in the case of Jacob. Falsely accusing a person of something wrong will result in hurts, no matter what the accusation is. When accusations hurt people, they continue to hurt unless they allow the power of God to work and bring healing to their wounds. It is important for the church to utilize an essential element—communication with God and one another—concerning hurts encountered in the church. The church must realize that people who experience hurts and leave the church needs time for their wounds to heal. It is important for the church to communicate with God through prayer on behalf of those who experienced hurts in her midst. Prayer is a necessary element for healing wounds because the power of God can impact situations where pains reside.

The Healing of Long Lasting Hurts

To understand how to heal old hurts one must know how hurts begin. One must also know the result of hurts in the lives of individuals or in the ministry that needs healing. The lives of Jacob and Esau attest to the healing of long lasting injuries. Jacob left Canaan and traveled to Paddan Aram where he lived for twenty years after a disagreement over who should receive the birthright blessing to become a priest of the family. Through scheming, deceptions, manipulation, and favoritism Esau missed out on the birthright blessing and became angry with Jacob for obtaining the blessing through deceit. Jacob and Esau's relationship was damaged.

Jacob had an experience with the Lord at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-22). Jacob vowed that God would be his God if God allowed him safe travels, provisions, and a safe return

to his father's house (Gen. 28:20). After Jacob went to Paddan Aram, God's disciplinary work began in his life. Jacob was not sure how Esau felt about doing harm to him after twenty years (Gen. 27:13-30), but he was ready to face the challenge. Jacob prepared to approach Esau and knew it was possible that Esau's heart was evil against him. Fear and distress came upon Jacob as he prepared for an attack he thought might come from Esau (Gen. 31:7). Jacob took his fear to God in prayer, asking God to save him from his brother Esau (Gen. 31:11). Jacob prepared for the battle through prayer and sought the Lord on Esau's behalf. Jacob did not allow fear to cripple him. He was willing to meet Esau face to face.

Before Jacob reached Paddan Aram he prayed, asking God to keep, protect, and take him back to his homeland (Gen. 28:20-22). The Lord spoke to Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28:12-15). In Paddan Aram, Jacob's personality took on new meaning. Jacob's communion with the Lord showed that he talked with God and listened to His instructions. Jacob's life showed that he served God out of a changed heart. Jacob chose not to do evil to those with whom he came in contact (Gen. 32:13, 20).

After twenty years of living in the home of his uncle in Haran, Jacob returned home to Canaan to face the challenges that he left behind. As Jacob traveled back to his homeland, he wondered how Esau would treat him. After twenty years, Jacob was still afraid and distressed because of Esau (Gen. 32:7). Jacob had sent messengers to Esau with gifts and hoped to find grace in his sight (Gen. 32:5). Esau set out to meet Jacob with a company of four hundred men (Gen. 32:6).

Out of fear, Jacob divided the people into companies (Gen. 32:7-8). Jacob cried out to the Lord for deliverance and asked God to deliver him from the hand of Esau (Gen.

32:9-11). Once again Jacob took a present from his possessions and sent it by the hand of his servants to Esau to appease him (Gen. 32:20). Jacob sent a second company and a third with gifts to appease Esau (Gen. 32:19). The people of each group told Esau that Jacob followed behind them (Gen. 32:20). Jacob hoped Esau would accept him after seeing his face (Gen. 32:20). Jacob understood the power of prayer and sought God for intervention in his situation. It was through Jacob's relationship with the Lord that he learned how to handle the encounter he would face with Esau.

After resting for the night and before reaching his homeland, Jacob had an experience where he wrestled with an angel until daybreak (Gen. 32:24-25). "It was in this kind of broken weakness that a person could begin to strive with God and humans and prevail."⁸³ Through this encounter, Jacob enquired after a blessing of the Lord, saying, "I will not let you go until you bless me" (Gen. 32:26). In his struggle with the angel, Jacob vowed "to not let go," and God blessed him (Gen. 32:29). At that time, God changed Jacob's name to Israel, saying; "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:28). Jacob recognized that he must surrender everything to God and God preserved his life (Gen. 32:30). As Jacob prepared to meet Esau, God reminded him of His promised protection.⁸⁴ Jacob saw God face-to-face and recognized His presence in the place he named Peniel (Gen. 32:30).

Jacob wrestled with the angel and was ready to fight with Esau if necessary (Gen. 33:1-2). He traveled ahead of the company of people, bowed to the ground seven times, and approached Esau (Gen. 33:3). Jacob had already sent messengers ahead of the

⁸³ Wallace, 63.

⁸⁴ Kissling, 350.

company of people to present Esau with gifts. He bowed down, attempting to find favor with Esau (Gen. 33:8). The relationship and peace between Esau and Jacob were broken twenty years earlier. Now, for Jacob, “The way to reconcile broken peace was to do one’s duty, and pay respect upon all occasions as if it had never been broken.”⁸⁵ Jacob showed respect to his brother. Peter says that one’s conduct should be honorable so others may see it and glorify God (1 Pet. 2:17). Although Jacob did not know what kind of response he would receive from his brother, he chose to respond according to God’s principles.

Esau ran to Jacob, embraced him, fell on his neck, and kissed him (Gen. 33:5). Esau showed love for his brother “as one heartily reconciled to him, he received him with all the endearments imaginable, embraced him, fell on his neck, and kissed him.”⁸⁶ Esau wept as a sign of remorse. Jacob cried for joy because Esau kindly received him. Esau wept in repentance for having thought to do Jacob harm.

After “Jacob returned to Canaan, Esau forgave him and set aside their feuds.”⁸⁷ It took twenty years, but Esau and Jacob successfully restored their relationship with one another (Gen. 33:1-20). They were reunited. Jacob had found favor with God and with others. Jacob and Esau wept as a sign of repentance and joy that led to a restored relationship between the brothers.

Jacob and Esau’s hurt lingered and caused separation between them as old wounds formed. Although their injuries remained, they did not get stuck in them but allowed time for their wounds to heal. Jacob faced one of the most overwhelming

⁸⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s on-line Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*, “Genesis33” accessed March 20, 2016, www.biblestudytools.com.

⁸⁶ Matthew Henry, www.biblestudytools.com.

⁸⁷ Bruce, and Harrison, 351.

challenges in life—to return to his homeland knowing that he would meet his brother who had lived with his unresolved pain. Fear could have been a hindrance to Jacob, but he took his fear to God and prayed for deliverance from that which was unknown. Jacob did not know how Esau would respond. Through prayer, Jacob received reassurance of the promise God had made to his descendants.

God can bring good out of one's hurts.⁸⁸ He can use injuries to develop and mature people who do not get stuck in their hurts.⁸⁹ Although Jacob remained in Laban's house for twenty years, he was working off a debt that he owed for his brides. God used that time to work on Jacob's heart. Jacob had experienced Esau's anger, and anger could do nothing to save him from the hand of Esau. He realized that only God could change Esau's heart and reunite him with his brother.

Although God was not the cause of the hurts, Jacob and Esau experienced how at times God allows hurts to take place in one's life. There are times when hurts have a purpose in the lives of God's people. God used those pains to build character, change people's lives, and reunite them for His purpose. Although Joseph's family made some mistakes in their lives, God's did not nullify His purpose for their lives. God accomplished His plan through them.

Although people experience unnecessary hurts in the church, God can use those pains to build character, change lives, and save the unsaved. When people get hurt and leave the church, their leaving does not mean that they have experienced God's saving grace. God enables people to make choices in life. At times, one's choice may not be the

⁸⁸ Kylstra and Kylstra, 178.

⁸⁹ Kylstra and Kylstra, 178.

best. Although God's judgment on one's wrong choices is warranted, God will use one's choices to build character, change lives, or save the unsaved. That is why it is important to be mindful about how one responds to hurts. God can accomplish His purpose in the lives of individuals who recognize their wrong choices, repent, and allow the saving grace of God to change their heart.

The church can learn a valuable lesson from Jacob. The church must rely on the power and word of God to change hearts and heal unresolved hurts. Jacob prayed for the power of God to save him from Esau, who had purposed in his heart to do harm to Jacob. Through prayer, God changed Jacob's situation and brought him right out of what seemed to be a dangerous situation. Jacob followed God's direction and was reunited with his brother.

Members of the body of Christ are affected by pain that persists and turns into hurts. These injuries will cause people within the church to feel unworthy of God's grace and the fellowship of other believers. Pain in this sense is a pain that is so devastating that one tends not to want relief from those in the present ministry. It causes them to leave the church. It is important for the church to pray for those who leave wounded, and to pray for herself. Prayer and daily communion with God prepares one for dealing with things to come. Through prayer, one can find relief from fearful situations. Prayer can help bring peoples' hearts to God for change. It prepares them for reconciliation.

It is important to remember that some hurts take time to heal. When people surrender their situation to God, He will guide and direct them toward reconciliation. In one's brokenness, one must always remember to respect others who may have been at fault for the hurt that occurred. Respect allows room for people to recognize their part in

wrongful situations and make amends for their wrongs. God at times uses pain to build character, so it is important for those who have been hurt to recognize when the hand of God is working to bring about good in their situation.

The Old Testament Remedy for Healing Past Hurts

It is important to comprehend how hurts begin and how they affect a person or organization and prevent healing from taking place. Joseph's life took what might seem like a brutal turn when his brothers threw him into a pit. Joseph did not forget his dreams that landed him in the pit. "Joseph on his part found himself different from the whole family in taste, values, aims, and beliefs."⁹⁰ To see his dreams fulfilled, Joseph knew how important it was not to focus on his hurts. Joseph's determination to accomplish his dreams revealed the key to handling his hurts. Joseph's family experienced pain and separation from the household. Their pains came about as a result of what happened to Joseph. Jacob suffered pain from what he presumed happened to his son. His hurts became past wounds and were destined to control his life. The life of Joseph illustrates explicit details on how he and his family experienced healing from hurts.

Joseph had a dream and told it to his brothers. They did not like his dream (Gen. 37:6-7).⁹¹ Joseph had been born to Jacob at an old age (Gen. 37:3). Jacob's name had become Israel many years earlier. Jacob's love for Joseph exceeded his love for his other sons (Gen. 37:3). Joseph's father gave him a unique coat that he had made (Gen. 37:3). His brothers recognized that their father Jacob loved Joseph more than them. They hated Joseph and refused to say nice things to him (Gen. 37:4).

⁹⁰ Wallace, 3.

⁹¹ Kris Vallotton, *School of the Prophet: Advanced Training for Prophetic Ministry* (Minneapolis, MN: Chosen Books, 2015), 191.

Joseph's brothers did not want any part of Joseph's dreams. After Joseph had told his siblings about his second dream, their anger toward him escalated.⁹² Joseph then told his dream to his father, who interpreted in the same way that his brothers did.⁹³ One day Joseph's brothers acted on the resentment that they harbored in their hearts toward Joseph.

Jacob had sent Joseph to Shechem to check on his brothers and the sheep (Gen. 37:14). Once Joseph arrived at Shechem, he was sent on to Dothan to search for his brothers there (Gen. 37:17). Joseph's brothers saw him coming and began to plot what they should do to him (Gen. 37:18-19). They wanted to kill Joseph and throw his body in an empty well, attempting to destroy his dreams (Gen. 37:20).⁹⁴ Reuben tried to convince his brothers to spare Joseph's life by putting him in a well instead of killing him (Gen. 37: 21-22).⁹⁵ While Reuben was away, Joseph's brothers attacked him, stripped him of his robe, and threw him into an empty well (Gen. 37: 23-24).

Joseph's brothers continued to act upon the resentment that they had in their hearts. While they sat and ate, they saw traders who were traveling from Gilead going to Egypt (Gen. 37:25). Because of their jealousy, Joseph's brothers took the opportunity and sold him to the traders for profit (Gen. 37:26-27). The Midianite traders accepted the offer and bought Joseph for twenty pieces of silver, and took him to Egypt for trade (Gen. 37:28).

The pain associated with Joseph's life affected Reuben and Jacob. Reuben returns

⁹² Vallotton, 191.

⁹³ Vallotton, 191.

⁹⁴ Vallotton, 191.

⁹⁵ Vallotton, 191.

to the empty well, wept, and tore his clothes (Gen. 37:29). Although the brothers never actually told their father that Joseph was dead, they “deceived him into thinking so.”⁹⁶ They reported to their father, after having drenched Joseph’s coat with the blood of a goat. Their father believed that a wild beast had killed Joseph (Gen. 37:18-36).

The pain that Jacob experienced caused him to tear his clothes and put sackcloth upon his loin because he believed a wild beast had killed his son (Gen. 37:34). As Jacob tore his clothes, the length of the tear signified the depth to which the pain tore into his soul.⁹⁷ Jacob refused his sons and daughters when they came to comfort him. He was prepared to carry his pain for life, and even to his death. Jacob’s pain knew no bounds. He wept for his son and said, “I will go down to the grave to my son” (Gen. 37:35).

For Jacob, Sheol was the best way to describe the painful hurts that had occurred in his life.

Hebrew Sheol describes the underground abode of the dead, answering to Greek Hades. There, according to tradition, disembodied spirits continue to exist in shadowy regions that have no exit and no communication with God or man. It is a mere half existence; Jacob realized that he would be going to Sheol soon, but he had no hope of seeing an end to his poignant suffering until that hour.⁹⁸

Jacob’s pain would remain even beyond the ordinary reality of life and linger into the depths of Sheol. He could only envision life as a shade in Sheol, cut off from God and life as it existed in the world. It was a pain that brought devastation to the remainder of his life and would hinder abundant life from flowing through his existence if healing remained unknown to him. The pain that Jacob experienced is an example of what church

⁹⁶ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 56.

⁹⁷ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 42.

⁹⁸ Pfeiffer and Harrison, 38.

experiences and how they occur.

Jacob did not want to release the pain and discomfort of what he believed was his son's death. He had prepared to continue mourning for his son (Gen. 37: 35). Jacob prepared for his pain to carry him into death and abide with him there (Gen. 37:35). He experienced the pain and loss of his son whom he believed a wild beast had killed (Gen. 37:31-33). Is it possible that he could have realized that his sons hated Joseph because of the favoritism Jacob exhibited towards him? Jacob did not think that his sons would have done wrong by Joseph.

Jacob seemed to experience un-forgiveness. It seemed he felt responsible for sending Joseph to look for his brothers. Is it possible that Jacob had feelings of guilt because of what he believed happened to Joseph? Sometimes the hardest part of forgiveness is to forgive oneself. Pride says,

Your sin is too big to forgive, and unworthiness says, you do not deserve forgiveness; you deserve to keep feeling miserable. Both try to block self-forgiveness. Also, the demonic spirit of un-forgiveness, which works to prevent a person from forgiving others, will also work to keep him from self-forgiveness. This spirit will also team up with the demon of self-hate to stop the ministry. Deliverance may be needed, as well as helping the person choose to love himself as God loves him.⁹⁹

Unworthiness said to Jacob, "remain in that miserable state."¹⁰⁰ Jacob did not see relief in sight for his pain. When pain is devastating, a person may not feel worthy of forgiveness. It is possible that Jacob felt guilty for sending Joseph out alone to look after his brothers. Guilt would provide a motive for one not wanting to be comforted. Some people who feel guilty about things that happen to another may not feel worthy of forgiveness.

⁹⁹ Kylstra and Kylstra, 50.

¹⁰⁰ Kylstra and Kylstra, 50.

Jacob experienced hurts that were caused by his sons although he assumed the source of his pain was related to a wild beast killing Joseph. Jacob attributed his injury to what he believed was the cause of his hurts. It was up to Jacob to deal with his pain so that it would not linger. However, Jacob made the choice that his pain would linger. These are the kinds of hurts that turn into past hurts and will silence a ministry.

It was not until a drought came upon the land that we hear from Jacob. Jacob's pain seemed to mute his ministry. Joseph was found distributing grain in Egypt to those in the famine (Gen. 42:6). During that time, Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain because of the drought in the land. He had heard that there was grain in Egypt (Gen. 42:1). There was a pressing need in the family, so Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain so that they might live and not die (Gen. 42:1-2). He was concerned and wanted to provide for their needs and satisfy his hunger and the desire of his family. He did not know that Joseph, the son whom he presumed was dead, was living out his purpose for the kingdom of God in Egypt.

Unknown Jealousy can create chaos in a family. The jealousy displayed in the lives of Joseph's brothers affected the family. Jealousy led to the pain that Jacob experienced. Jealousy through the actions of Joseph's brothers resulted in past hurts. When their father presumed his son Joseph was dead, the pain he experienced seemed to be unbearable. He did not want relief from his pain, nor did he want to be comforted. The magnitude of pain he experienced caused him to push away from those who should have cared for him. Jacob stated that he would carry his pain to the grave. Pain for Jacob had become past hurts.

The church must realize that favoritism causes hurts in the body of Christ. When a

people do not believe that they belong to the body of Christ, it will reflect in their lives. Some people deal with their hurts by trying to prevent ministry from moving forward. The harm that one sets out to do will affect others in the setting. Joseph's brothers sought to bring harm to Joseph and to end his dreams. This caused long-lasting pain in the family.

Some people in the church have experienced pain that cuts into their souls. When they feel that they are responsible or at fault for the misfortune of another, pain sets in and tends to be unbearable. When people get hurt in the church to the extent that they do not want to be comforted by those in the church, they will leave the church. When guilt sets in and people feel that they caused suffering, they will leave the church out of embarrassment because they will feel that they do not deserve forgiveness or the fellowship of the believers. It is in situations like these that pride will prevent people from forgiving themselves and others because they do not want to acknowledge that they can make mistakes. Therefore, their pain remains and gets old. They live life in the present carrying old wounds that are capable of being healed if they would begin by acknowledging their suffering.

Healing Past Hurts

To understand how to heal hurts it is important to comprehend how pains begin and how pain affects individuals or an organization. The story of Joseph gave an OT perspective on the healing of old wounds when one's life conforms to God's ways. Joseph chose to live in communion with God, following God's ways. He put his trust in God above all else (Prov. 3:5). Although Joseph had experienced hurts at the hand of his brothers and when in Potiphar's house, he did not give up on the dream given him by

God. Joseph used his God-given abilities even when circumstances placed him in dire situations where it seemed he was forgotten (Gen. 37:24, 28; 40:20). Because Joseph was in tune with God, he allowed room for healing to take place in his life. Joseph looked at his situation from the point of God-given purpose. His life attests to the fact that a person can become all that he or she can be when God is working to bring healing to hurts.

Joseph was living in Egypt in the house of Potiphar after being brought to Egypt and sold by Egyptian merchants. For Joseph, life in Potiphar's house was not without painful situations. Joseph faced false accusations by Potiphar's wife and was thrown into prison. There he was confronted with the possibility of not being remembered (Gen. 40:20). Although Joseph experienced a bad situation, his faithfulness and obedience to God brought about the Lord's blessings.¹⁰¹ As time passed, Joseph had an encounter in which the opportunity to interpret a dream for Pharaoh led to his promotion and being placed over the affairs of Pharaoh (Gen. 41:15-16, 41-43).

The pain Joseph experienced separated him from his family. The attack on Joseph by his brothers also brought pain to the family unit. The outcome of Joseph's fate was unknown to his brothers when they sold Joseph into slavery. They did not know that Joseph would end up in Egypt living out the purpose of the Abrahamic blessing as God worked His purpose in and through Joseph's life. God used the famine that was in the land to give favor to Joseph's household and to God's people (Gen. 42:6).

Joseph's life experience placed him in a position in which he gained skills for serving God's people during a time in which the land experienced drought (Gen. 41:37-57). As the drought came upon the earth, Israel sent his sons to Egypt in search of food

¹⁰¹ Kissling, 455.

(Gen. 42:1). Joseph had been put in a position to distribute grain to people across the land during the time of drought (Gen. 41:41). Elevated to a position of authority, Joseph demonstrated the favor and power of God that rested upon his life. He had planned well for this time and knew what would be needed. When his brothers arrived to buy grain, they did not recognize Joseph (Gen. 42:8). Joseph kept his identity unknown to his brothers and bargained with his brothers as if they were spies (Gen. 42:14). They were unaware that he knew them, but for the “purpose of the Lord,” he assumed them to be spies (Gen. 42:8, 14).

Joseph took Simeon and bound him and made a plea for them to return with their brother Benjamin (Gen. 42:18-20). Joseph communicated with his brother by an interpreter so that they would not know him (Gen. 42:23). He turned from them and wept and returned and communed with them (Gen. 42:24).

When Joseph’s brothers left Egypt, their sacks had been filled with grain and the money they brought to Egypt (Gen. 42:35). They reached Canaan and told their father about their encounter in Egypt (Gen. 42:29). When they emptied their sacks, they were afraid because of the money that was in their sacks (Gen. 42:27-28). Jacob felt bereaved, for he still experienced the loss of his son Joseph whom he presumed dead. Simeon was in Egypt, and Benjamin was to join his brother in Egypt at Joseph’s request (Gen. 42:34).

Joseph used the opportunity to have his family reunited in Egypt so that God’s plan for their lives would go forth. Joseph knew how to create conflict in a healthy way to heal the hurts within his family. Eventually, Joseph kept his younger brother in Egypt so that his brothers would return with their father and bring their family to Egypt (Gen. 42:20, 24; 43:8). There was a purpose for Joseph’s life and the way in which he handled

the hurts in his life continually guided him to his purpose. It was through injuries and pain that Joseph's character matured and his trust in God developed.¹⁰²

While Joseph awaited the return of his brothers with Benjamin, Jacob sent his sons to Egypt not knowing that Joseph was alive. They took a gift of their treasures—fruit, balm, honey, spices, myrrh, and almonds—and doubled the money that was placed back in their knapsacks (Gen. 42:11-12). Joseph had the house servant prepare a meal for his brothers. As they reached Joseph's home, they were afraid. But Joseph began to commune with them about their father (Gen. 42:27-28). As Joseph looked upon Benjamin, he left the room and wept before returning to his brothers (Gen. 42:29).

Again, Joseph sent his brothers on their way home and devised a plan to have his father brought to him in Egypt. He placed the money into the sacks with the grain that his brothers were to take home. Joseph also put a silver cup in Benjamin's sack so that it looked as if Benjamin had stolen it from Joseph's home. When Joseph sent his servants and had his brothers brought back to the palace, he found the cup in the sack. His plan was to have Benjamin stay in Egypt as his brother's journeyed home once again. However, Joseph's brothers told him that if Benjamin did not return home, calamity would come upon their father. Joseph did not want that to happen and he wept.

Joseph sent his servants out and made himself known to his brothers (Gen. 45:3). He had been verbally abused, rejected and sold by his brothers into slavery as a young boy. But he did not hold this against them.¹⁰³ Joseph wept out loud and the members of the whole house heard him. He returned and comforted his brothers (Gen. 45:1-3) and

¹⁰² Joyce C. Baldwin, *Message of Genesis 12-50: From Abraham to Joseph* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1986), 157.

¹⁰³ Früh, 140.

told them not to grieve or be angry, for it was God's plan to preserve their lives (Gen. 45:5).

Prosperity did not make Joseph proud, and when he conversed with his brothers, he revealed that he had meditated on the course of his life and came to understand that the hand of God had controlled even the painful sequences of events resulting from his brothers' poor actions to sell him.¹⁰⁴

Joseph then sent for his father and asked that he not delay (Gen. 45:8). Moreover, the family hurts were healed.

As time passed, Joseph brought his sons Manasseh and Ephraim to his father Jacob, and Jacob blessed them that day by the laying on of hands (Gen. 48:19-20). In the symbolic act of laying on of hands, a person transfers a spiritual power or gift to another. In this case, Jacob symbolically transferred a blessing from himself to Joseph's sons. As Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, he blessed them according to the gifting and callings that he saw in them.¹⁰⁵ A person was installed to an office (Deut. 34:9) by laying on of hands (Gen. 48:18), or for the Levitical service (Num. 8:10).¹⁰⁶ Jacob also invoked a blessing upon Manasseh and Ephraim. The blessing was a way of speaking a good word for someone or something (Gen. 22:17).¹⁰⁷

Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh also carried prophetic significance and force (Gen. 48:19-20). Ephraim and Manasseh were the fourth generation of Abraham's descendants in which the second-born took prominence over the first-born, reversing the usual pattern. The reversal of the birthright in the lives of Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over

¹⁰⁴ Baldwin, 156.

¹⁰⁵ Früh, 140.

¹⁰⁶ Bruce and Harrison, 458.

¹⁰⁷ Früh, 18.

Esau, Joseph over Reuben, and Ephraim over Manasseh deviated from the norm or traditional birthright blessing.¹⁰⁸

Moreover, Jacob said, “In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh” (Gen. 48:20). Jacob was saying, “All of Israel will bless her children with this blessing: May God cause you to forget the pain of your past and make you fruitful and prosperous in your future!”¹⁰⁹ Jacob had chosen to forget the pain that he had endured in his past. According to Aaron Früh, “Each person who continues this practice today is speaking by faith that their children will forget the pain of their past and bear fruit in their future.”¹¹⁰ Once individuals set aside their differences and resolve the pain of their past, they will be able to bless the very one who cursed them, and their future will be full of fruitfulness.¹¹¹ This fruitfulness can be seen in the lives of Joseph and Jacob, and their willingness to forgive and live out God’s purpose on the earth.

Joseph wanted his family to be blessed. He showed them how to handle hurt in a meaningful way so that life could be lived and enjoyed in the blessings of God. Through Joseph’s willingness to forgive and desire to serve God, his household was reunited. “The blessing was not given to him to make his family happy; it was the promised blessing of Abraham, in which the nations of the earth would be blessed and redeemed from corruption.”¹¹² The influence God gave to Joseph was a foretaste of the blessing that God had promised Abraham would be passed on to the world. It was through Joseph’s life and

¹⁰⁸ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 17.

¹⁰⁹ Früh, 144.

¹¹⁰ Früh, 140.

¹¹¹ Früh, 140.

¹¹² Ronald S. Wallace, *The Story of Joseph and the Family of Jacob* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2001), 38.

obedience to living out his part in the Abrahamic blessing that his family experienced healing from their hurts.

In the midst of pain and being separated from family, Joseph did not forget his dreams. Although He was in a strange land, He continually put his trust in God. Joseph utilized the tools and favor given him to accomplish God's will. He recognized the hand of God working in his life. Joseph chose to focus on the purpose given to him and allowed God to accomplish His purpose through him. He realized that his hurts were for the purpose of the Lord (Gen. 45:5). Joseph did not condemn his brothers but exhorted them not to be angry (Gen. 45:5). In their remorse and weeping, he wanted them to recognize the purpose of God and be restored. As Joseph sent his brothers to bring his father to Egypt, he exhorted them to not quarrel on the way (Gen. 45:24). Joseph knew that it was easy for his brothers to begin to quarrel about who was responsible for him being in Egypt. He did not want them to concentrate on the negative outcome of the situation. He wanted them to focus on the purpose that he was destined to accomplish.

People in the church can experience healing from their hurts. When staying in one's life, they will soon become past hurts. Past hurts are experiences from the past that people carry on into the present life. They then become present active ingredients in one's life that continue to cause pain until they are alleviated, through either healing or death. People within the church who allow past hurts to remain active in their lives can cause damage to the ministry. Joseph's life is an example from which the church can learn. When jealousy is active in the church, people will try to hinder the ministry in some way. The church must recognize the degree to which jealousy can damage an individual and affect the lives of those in the church.

For the church to receive healing from past hurts, one must recognize that all pain begins with one fault or another. The person who experiences pain may not be the one blamed. Regardless of who is at fault one must recognize the hurts. The church must be equipped to help people who are hurting and must practice the word of God to deal with individual's pain. Paul in the Book of Galatians says that a person caught in any trespass should be restored in a gentle spirit by one who is spiritual (Gal. 6:1, Matt. 8:15). Those who are spiritual have a duty to help those whom experience hurts by helping them recognize the source of their pain so that they receive forgiveness and restoration.

The church can learn from Joseph that one should not harbor bitterness in one's heart (James 3:14). The church must focus on the purpose given her and utilize the tools given her so that those who are hurting can receive healing from their wounds. The church must not lose sight of God's purpose in the midst of suffering. It is important to recognize the hand of God working in one's midst. It is important for the church to communicate with those who are hurting to provide the opportunity for restoration to take place. Some who have been hurt by the church can learn a valuable lesson from Joseph's life and exhort those who have hurt them not to be angry but to recognize the purpose of God in one's life.

God's Redemptive Plan in the New Testament: A Means of Handling Hurts

It is important to understand God's redemptive plan and the light of one's salvation in order to understand that one has the means of healing one's hurts. By understanding God's redemptive plan as a means of handling hurts, one can comprehend the effect hurts have on others and organizations. This can enable one to utilize the remedy that Christ has given to heal those wounds. There had to be a reason for Jesus'

entrance into the world in bodily form. The New Testament prophets echo the repeated call of God, spoken to His people of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, God had continually called for people to turn away from their evil ways by cleansing their heart (Jer. 4:14, Eccles. 38:10, Joel 2:13). One's evil ways are the ways whereby harm caused to oneself results in a broken relationship with God and others.

God's people frequently experienced unnecessary hurts because of their rebellion against God. The people of God was warned that when they turned from God, all that they put their faith in would be detestable to God (Jer. 3:13, 23). God called his people to come down from the mountains and commotion that was destructive for their lives (Jer. 3:23). Again and again, the prophets called for God's people to turn from their wicked ways and turn to God (2 Chron. 7:14, Joel 2:12, Acts 3:19).

God made a covenant with His people. He wanted to be their God and most definitely wanted them to be His people (Jer. 32:38, Ezek. 37:27, 2 Cor. 6:16). God promised to give His people an "undivided heart" and put a "new spirit" in them and eliminate the "stony heart," and "give them a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 11:19). God made a new covenant with His people. His law would be written in their minds and on their heart (Jer. 33:33, Heb. 10:16-17). People all over the universe are called from the greatest to the least to "know God" (Jer. 33:34). No longer will people live in ignorance of what God requires of their life. Because God provided the sacrifice to atone for iniquity and to set people free from sin, humanity has the necessary means to heal her hurts. The atoning sacrifice of Jesus' blood was poured out for many for the remission of sins (Heb. 9:28). Through Jesus' sacrifice, one can obtain salvation and have the necessary means to handle one's hurts.

The Redemptive Work of Christ

Christ's redemptive work provided Christians with the resources required for healing hurts so that hurts do not have to linger and become past hurts. The Old Testament prophets' declaration of the coming Messiah (Isa. 61:1) had become a reality. The Gospel of John records that the word was in the beginning, and the Word was God, and the same Word was with God (John 1:1). The New Testament prophets talked about Immanuel, who became "God with us," and clarified that this was the Messiah spoken of by the Old Testament saints (Isa. 7:14, Matt. 1:23). The Gospel of John spoke of this Anointed One who came to dwell among humanity. Jesus came to accomplish a mission for all who would believe in Him (John 3:16-17). God's purpose was not condemnation, but to save the world through His son Jesus (John 3:17-18). John declared that the Messiah came to save creation, which was in darkness because people loved the darkness rather than the light (John 3:19).

John brought clarity to Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah came to open the eyes of the blind and set at liberty those who were bound. He clarified that, through the gift of salvation and the fulfillment of the prophecy spoken by the New Testament saints, the salvation of the Messiah had become reality. The Messiah entered the world and offered the means to unlock the destructive forces that cause pain in the lives of all who believe in Him through the gift of salvation (John 3:16-18). People would come to know God and what He has done for their salvation.

A sacrifice was needed to provide the means that were necessary for handling hurts. "God, however, provided a method of which humanity's penalty could be paid, and

fellowship reinstated with God.”¹¹³ Jesus’ sacrificial offering was the means (Matt. 20:28, Rom. 3:25 and 10:10). In the New Testament narrative, the Gospel writers agree that this sacrificial act was the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:21, Mark 8:31, Luke 9:22, John 2:19). The expression of this sacrificial act in Jesus was the key to salvation for “whoever believes in Him” (John 3:17). This sacrificial act was “an act of obedience towards God and an expression of self-giving love for His followers and the model for His followers to imitate.”¹¹⁴ This act of obedience and expression of “self-giving love” should exemplify Christ’s character in the lives of God’s people.

Christ’s redemptive work on the cross illustrates the alternative and mode for handling one’s hurts. Stephen Seamands says,

The arms of Jesus on the cross—open, extended, reaching, out—offer a radical alternative to our escape routes and pain avoidance mechanism. They beckon us to embrace suffering, not evade it; to accept and actively bear anguish, not avoid it. Jesus became a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:5) KJV). To walk the healing path, we too must be willing to engage the sorrow and grief in our lives.¹¹⁵

To embrace one’s pain and help others bear their infirmities, one must extend open arms to those who are suffering and not avoid one’s hurt. Pain continues when people avoid their pain and the pain of others. To avoid pain it is easy to label people who are hurting by refusing to open one’s arms to them. The way in which one handles hurts will reflect Christ’s expression of “self-giving love.”

The actualization of God’s promise takes place when He redeems people from their

¹¹³ Bruce and Harrison, 935.

¹¹⁴ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1969), 30.

¹¹⁵ Stephen Seamands, *Wounds that Heal: Bringing Our Hurts to the Cross* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2003), 118.

recklessness and purifies them as His precious possessions (Titus 2:14). Moreover, whoever believes on Jesus, the Anointed Messiah would have the means to handle their hurts and know how to prevent harms from becoming past hurts or destructive forces in their lives (Rom. 10:9-10). The Bible gives an explicit example of why it is necessary for the people of God to have the means to handle their hurts. Colossians says people once walked in the ways of the worldly nature (Col. 3:5). When people walk in the way of the human nature, they were prone to hurt others.

The descendants of Jacob were asked what faults their ancestors found in God that they stayed so far from Him (Jer. 2:5). Jerusalem was invited to be saved by washing the evil from her heart (Jer. 4:14). The world was in a state where people were separated from God because of sin (John 3:19). It is through sin that people encounter pain in their lives. God's redemptive plan was needed to save humanity from her sinfulness. God's redemptive plan provided the remedy to heal humanity's pain.

Witnesses to God's Self-giving Love

In order for one to become a witness to God's self-giving love, one must understand and rid one's being of the deeds of the sinful nature. The sinful nature is a pain mechanism. Some pain therefore is manifested through the sinful nature. The sinful nature in which God's people once walked was: "sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed" (Col. 3:5). These impurities must die in the lives of God's people (Col. 3:5). However, the people of God must also get rid of things such as anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language (Col. 3:8). These things cause hurts. God's people must not lie to each other since one has taken off the old self or the false self and put on the new self (Col. 3:9-10).

Once God's people have put on the new self, they have God's Spirit, which helps them embrace their hurts. Although there is a battle that rages between the new self and the old self, one must remember that the warfare is between the new creation one has become in Christ and the old person that one was in Adam (Rom. 5:12-21).¹¹⁶ Because of the battle that rages in the inner person one must continually strive to walk in the Spirit. It is when people fail to walk in the Spirit that they intentionally hurt one another.

Jesus' example is a way of embracing one's hurts. Jesus promised to give his people a new heart and promised to endow them with His power (Acts 1:8). Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of His Father (Acts 1:4). As Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives, His disciples received word that they would receive the Spirit's power (Acts 1:8). The disciples would be Jesus' witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the world (Acts 1:8 and 28:19, 20).

Jesus told his disciples that the power of the Holy Spirit was needed for them to be His witnesses. This witness experience is through word and deed (Col. 3:17). In Greek, the "word" is an expression of one's thought.¹¹⁷ The spoken word concerning the resurrected Messiah, the things spoken out of one's mouth, and any word that comes from the expression of thoughts should imitate the expression of "God's self-giving love" (1 Cor. 15:4; John 3:16). In Greek, the word for deed is *ergon*, which means an act, deed, doing labor, or work.¹¹⁸ Deeds are actions that demonstrate the power of the resurrected Christ in one's life.

¹¹⁶ Boa refers to the inner and outer self and the battle that rages within, because of the new person in Christ and old person in Adam, which is a mortal remnant of the old person (107).

¹¹⁷ Strong, 53-54.

¹¹⁸ Strong, 36.

People whose actions confirms to the will of God know how to embrace their hurts. “Acts are good, not because they are analogous to the truth, beauty, and goodness as such, but because they conform to God’s will.”¹¹⁹ The power of God that works through a person’s words and actions will confirm that one is living out the expression of God’s self-giving love (Col. 3:17). Hurts should be a source of witness to the power of God. These harms should not linger and become a destructive force in one’s life.

David prayed to God and expressed the need to have his words please God. He said, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer” (Ps. 19:14). David acknowledged that the words of his mouth concerning the glory of God and His works must be acceptable to God. He recognized that the word of God warns the wicked not to continue their wicked ways and warns the righteous not to turn from their good ways.¹²⁰ To prevent hurts one must carefully consider his or her spoken words and thoughts. David sought to express God’s self-giving love through words carefully spoken and the meditation of his heart. He relied on God to help him with the words he spoke. David also discovered his faults which were forgotten or overlooked and expressed the need to have these mistakes forgiven (Ps. 19:12).¹²¹

Followers of Christ must choose wisely the words they speak to another concerning their hurts (James 1:19). Words not chosen wisely can hurt another person or make them angry, and anger does not achieve the righteousness of God (James 1:20). The

¹¹⁹ Robert M. Franklin, *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 58.

¹²⁰ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 470.

¹²¹ Matthew Henry, 470.

righteousness of God is achieved when one's words and actions are in sync and express the self-giving love of Christ. A person whose life has been transformed into a new creation in Christ can achieve the righteousness of God in their life. God has given His word and power for Christians to exemplify the transformative work of God in their lives.

The God-given power of the Holy Spirit enables people to handle their hurts in a productive manner. Paul in the book of Galatians says, "The entire law is fulfilled by this one command, to love one's neighbor as oneself, and if one bites and devours another, they will be destroyed by each other" (Gal. 5:14-15). The desires of the fleshly nature yearn to devour or destroy another (Gal. 5:15). The flesh and its desires create hurts in the lives of people while the Spirit and His desire will bring healing. Christians must live so that their actions do not destroy others. This requires that one walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

Unless the human spirit surrenders to the power of God, one will remain in the state of the flesh. One must surrender to God and depend on His Spirit for guidance. One cannot live for God while walking in the flesh. Those who walk in the Spirit of God display Christ's self-giving love in their lives. One who walks in the Spirit of God will not fulfill the desires of the fleshly nature (Gal. 5:16). "Unlike those who are fallen, those who are redeemed are able not to sin."¹²² When a person walks in the Spirit, they have the necessary means to combat the desires of the fleshly nature.

Christ openly "embraced" His pain on the cross. He gave the power of His Spirit so that Christians can openly embrace their hurts, and receive healing for their agony. God gave His people the means to handle their hurts through the death of His Son Jesus. God

¹²² Boa, 107.

provided the remedy of the blood of His Son Jesus, which was shed for many (Matt. 26:28). He gave the gift of salvation, through which people can express God's self-giving love. This expression of God's self-giving love is seen in the lives of Christ's followers, through the spoken words and deeds.

Christ promised to give a new heart to those who believe in Him. He promised the power of His Spirit to those who believe. God's people must imitate Christ's self-giving love in their lives. An individual who walks in the Spirit emulates Christ's self-giving love through his or her words and deeds. A person who takes on the responsibility to embrace his or her hurts is imitating Christ's self-sacrificing love. When a person knows how to embrace one's hurts, then he or she is capable of helping others imitate Christ's self-giving love in their lives.

The church has been given the means for handling hurts within her midst. The church must equip people through the word and encourage them to acknowledge their hurts. The church must equip believers who demonstrate God's power in their lives. It is important for people to recognize the call to return to God when one has wronged another. Each member must acknowledge responsibility to put away the deeds of the fleshly nature. Christians must recognize their responsibility to walk in the Spirit of God.

It is important for members of the church to understand that the power of the Spirit is needed for them to handle their hurts. Through the power activated in one's life, one is capable of walking in the Spirit and is equipped to handle injuries. When people in the church get hurt, the church must encourage individuals to embrace each other's hurts so healing can take place. The church must make disciples who imitate Christ's self-sacrificing love. When the church fails to make disciples for the kingdom of God, people

are not equipped with the necessary means to handle their hurts.

The Remedy for Healing Past Hurts through A Biblical Perspective

It is important to understand that Jesus gave the remedy for healing hurts to His followers. He commanded His followers to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that He has commanded. He promised that He will always be with His followers (Matt. 28:19-20). Jesus commands His followers to make disciples who will obey all that He commanded. Disciples who commit to following Jesus not only have the gift of salvation, they also have the remedy for healing their hurts. When the great commission is carried out, those who commit to following Jesus have the remedy to heal their hurts.

As Jesus called His disciples, He began to teach them what He would later require them to do through the great commission. Jesus helped His followers understand how to make disciples who would have the remedy to heal their hurts. Jesus taught His disciples lessons that would equip them to be disciples in His kingdom. He taught them to be devoted to His teachings and to love Him and others. Jesus demonstrated His love through His action. He taught them about the debt of forgiveness and what it means to be great. Jesus also taught them what active faith entails. Through Jesus' teachings, His followers were equipped with the essential character needed to handle their hurts. Faith in Jesus and obedience to His commands are necessary to become a disciple of Jesus who has the essential character for handling hurts.

Faith and Obedience

Jesus taught the crowd near the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1). Simon and the other fishermen washed their nets after a long night at fishing and nothing to show for it

(Luke 5:2). Jesus saw two boats and entered one belonging to Simon (Luke 5:1-3). He asked Simon to cast out a little distance from the land (Luke 5:3), then He taught the crowd that gathered. After Jesus had finished speaking, He instructed Simon to navigate a distance from land. Simon was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus commanded Simon to let down his net in the deep water for a catch (Luke 5:4). Simon responded by calling Jesus Master. “Master was a term that recognized Jesus’ authority to command and it implied an attitude of obedience.”¹²³ Before Simon cast the net where Jesus commanded, his spoken words revealed some doubt. Simon said they had fished all night and turned up empty-handed. “It was a well-known fact that fish were caught in shallow water at night instead of in deep water during daytime.”¹²⁴ Nevertheless, Simon was obedient to Jesus’ request letting down his net in the deep water (Luke 5:5). Jesus began building faith that responded in obedience in Simon’s life through the words spoken to him (Rom. 10:17). Faith and obedience were needed to become Jesus’ disciple. Faith that responds in obedience is necessary for building the characteristics required to handle one’s hurts.

Simon was not hesitant about going against the usual routine of fishing. “It takes courage and daring, patience to work on the seas, and it also takes a great deal of faith.”¹²⁵ Simon was willing to submit to Jesus’ authority although he did not understand all that Jesus was doing.¹²⁶ After Simon surrendered to Jesus and obeyed His command,

¹²³ Bruce and Harrison, 684.

¹²⁴ Wiersbe, *Matthew – Galatians* 186.

¹²⁵ Wiersbe, *Matthew – Galatians*, 185.

¹²⁶ Wiersbe, *Matthew – Galatians*, 186.

his net overflowed with fish and began to break (Luke 5:6, 7). The fisherman called for help from the other boat manned by James and John (Luke 5:7).

Simon and the disciples filled the boats with so many fish that the boats began to sink (Luke 5:7). Simon and his fellow fishermen were “astonished at the catch” (Luke 5:9). Simon put his focus on Jesus and did not look at the large catch as a way to make a profit.¹²⁷ Jesus said the very thing that one treasure would be revealed through the heart (Matt. 6:21). Simon’s heart did not disclose that he had an issue with material things.

The huge catch brought Simon to his knees as he realized his sinfulness (Luke 5:8, 9). To be saved one must recognize and acknowledge his or her sinful condition. Simon was humbled before Jesus. Humbleness is an essential characteristic needed for salvation. Fear would hinder the work of salvation in Simon’s life if it took root in the heart. Jesus said to Simon “do not be afraid” (Luke 5:10).

Through the miraculous catch of fish, Jesus began to build faith in Simon’s life that would not be afraid to believe. “There is no fear in love. However, perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love” (I John 4:18). If Simon feared, he would not develop the faith needed to believe in Jesus and to accomplish his destiny. Fear is a hindrance to the perfecting of one’s faith. It is through testing of one’s faith that endurance occurs, and patience will accomplish its perfect work in one’s life (James 1:3). Fear that hinders one’s faith will hinder the destiny that God has given. Jesus taught the disciples so that their faith would develop into a perfect love for God and others. Perfect love would cast out all fear in their lives.

¹²⁷ Solomon Andria, Issiaka Coulibaly, Tewoldemedhin Habtu, Samuel Ngewa, *African Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 1307.

If fear had taken root in Simon's heart, it would have abolished the ministry he was to accomplish. Jesus spoke positive affirmation into Simon's life. "From now on you will fish for people." Through this affirmation, Jesus presented a vivid image of the ministry that Simon would encounter. For the disciples would fish for people through evangelism. Through the preaching of the gospel message, people would turn to Jesus as Lord and Savior. People would be saved from the grip of sin and destruction.

Jesus called Simon (who was later named Peter) and his fellow laborers in the fishing trade to follow Him (Luke 5:1-11). "In their walk of faith, all serious believers must make choices to leave behind certain things and persons in order to follow the Lord Jesus into lives of Christian maturity."¹²⁸ Simon and the other fishermen responded to Jesus' call to follow. "So they pulled their boats up on the shore, left everything and followed Him" (Luke 5:11). Simon had many challenging encounters that equipped him to live and serve as a disciple in the kingdom of God. Those difficult situations helped the disciples to grow into spiritual maturity. Another experience that would help them grow into discipleship and spiritual maturity came through Jesus' teaching on love, faith, and forgiveness.

Faith that Results in Love and Forgiveness

It is important to understand how a faith that results in love and forgiveness is the outworking of God's sacrificial love in the life of a believer. It is through faith that results in love and forgiveness that people have the remedy to heal their hurt. A person can help others heal through the outworking of love exhibited in one's life. Through the attitude of a repentant sinner, Jesus demonstrated love, faith, and forgiveness. Through this

¹²⁸ Janis Maasen, *Peter the Leader: How an Imperfect Man Became the Leader of the Church* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2009), 52.

demonstration, Jesus taught Simon that love is the outworking of faith through a heart that was receptive to forgiveness. The woman had the kind of faith that was made alive and was not dead (James 2:26).

One day a Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner (Luke 7:36). As Jesus sat at dinner in the Pharisee's house, a situation emerged which prompted Jesus' teaching on love, faith and forgiveness. A woman who had sinned heard that Jesus was eating dinner at the house of a Pharisee (Luke 7:37). She entered the house carrying an alabaster jar of perfume (Luke 7:37). As Jesus reclined at the table, the woman knelt down behind Jesus and washed His feet with her tears (Luke 7:38). She dried His feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured perfume on them (Luke 7:38).

The woman showed that she had a contrite spirit and was remorseful for her many sins. The Pharisee grumbled concerning the matter. "The Pharisee instead of rejoicing in the token of the woman's repentance confined his thoughts to her former bad character."¹²⁹ He wondered why Jesus, a prophet, allowed someone of this stature to touch him (Luke 7:39). This situation sparked the opportunity for Jesus to teach on saving faith that results in love and forgiveness. It was this kind of faith that Jesus began to build in His disciples.

Jesus spoke to Simon about two parties who owed a debt (Luke 7:41). Neither party had the money to pay the debt (Luke 7:42). One owed five hundred denarii and the other fifty (Luke 7:41). Although each had their debt canceled, among the two, who had the greater love (Luke 7:42)? Simon supposed the one with the most significant debt would have more love (Luke 7:42). Jesus told Simon he had judged correctly. He turned

¹²⁹ Henry, 950.

again to the woman and gave Simon an analogy of the woman's act of love and Simon's reluctance to show love. Simon failed to administer the simple duties of a host when Jesus entered his home. The woman's faith demonstrated a real act of love.

Jesus used this encounter to show Simon that the woman had shown much love towards Him from the moment that He entered her presence (Luke 7:44-50). The woman expressed her love for Jesus through her actions. She realized her sins were forgiven. When repentant sinners express sorrow for their sins, evidence will confirm the forgiveness of their sins.¹³⁰ The outward working of love is revealed through the good deeds they commit to doing because of the love of God in their heart. Active love responds to faith. Love is faith in action. James says the Patriarch Abraham was justified by his works when he offered Isaac on the altar (James 2:21). In doing so, faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect (James 2:22). Although the woman showed much love for Jesus, she was not saved by her love. Faith saved her through grace (Eph. 2:8-9). She demonstrated her faith and forgiveness through her grateful act of love. She had much for which to show love.

Jesus declared the forgiveness of her sins (Luke 7: 48). "For God to forgive sin, two conditions are necessary; life must be substituted for that of the sinner (Lev. 17:11, Heb. 9:22), and the sinner must come to God's sacrifice in the spirit of repentance and faith (Mark 1:4; Acts 10:43; James 5:15)."¹³¹ The woman's faith was the basis of her forgiveness.¹³² Repentance brought about godly sorrow which resulted in a change of

¹³⁰ Henry, 950.

¹³¹ Bruce and Harrison, 392.

¹³² Liefeld and Gaebelein, 902.

heart. Her act of love showed that she realized she was forgiven.¹³³ Forgiveness heals the scars and pains in one's life caused by a sinful lifestyle or the sinful actions of another.

Although forgiveness removes the pain caused by one's wrong action, forgiveness never puts one in harm's way by causing one to trust those who have caused pain. Some people have been afraid of forgiving their offender because they have lost confidence in them. One must put their trust in God and allow the Spirit of God to lead one to rebuild lost trust where necessary. Some hurts heal, but trust may be hard to restore in situations where injuries occurred.

The woman received Jesus' "pronouncement of salvation—saved, and told her to go in peace."¹³⁴ Peace was a sign that one was well or whole. "The peace that Jesus Christ spoke of was a combination of hope, trust, and quiet in the mind and soul, brought about by a reconciliation with God."¹³⁵ Through forgiveness the woman obtained salvation. Through forgiveness, her hurts were healed. She was forgiven of her many sins and reconciled back to God.

Through forgiveness, people have the means needed to handle their hurts and allow healing for others as well. Forgiveness brings a release from the penalty of sin and its governing power in one's life (Rom. 6:1-23). "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). The woman recognized the forgiveness of her many sins. The love displayed through her actions was the result of a heart that was receptive of forgiveness.

¹³³ Liefeld and Gaebelein, 902.

¹³⁴ Liefeld and Gaebelein, 902.

¹³⁵ Bruce and Harrison, 813.

Jesus continued the mission that He came to accomplish. He set out to demonstrate an important characteristic needed in the life of His followers. No believer should be without the distinguishing mark of Christ, which is love. Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are My disciples if you love one another” (John 13:35). Jesus set out to demonstrate the love He required of His followers. On behalf of His followers, Jesus showed the love that speaks through His sacrificial acts.

Love That Speaks through Actions

Jesus desired to eat the Passover feast with his disciples. He sent Peter and John into the city to prepare for the Passover feast. Instructions given to Peter and John were that a man carrying a water jar would lead them to the place where they would celebrate the Passover (Luke 22:7). They followed the man to the house and inquired of the owner about the guest room (Luke 22:10). They prepared the guest room to celebrate the Passover meal. Jesus joined the disciples there and reclined at the table for supper. “The disciples did not know what to expect as they met in the upper room. The evening turned out to be one of painful revelation.”¹³⁶

During the meal, Jesus told His disciples that He must suffer (Luke 22:15). The idea of suffering was not new to His disciples for Jesus had told them of His impending death many times (Mark 9:31, 8:31, 10:34; Matt. 16:21, 26:2; Luke 18:33). On one occasion Jesus told Peter, “The Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and He must be killed and on the third day raised to life” (Luke 18:32-33). Although the disciples had heard Jesus say that He must die, their focus seemed to be on something other than His death.

¹³⁶ Wiersbe, *Matthew – Galatians*, 265.

Jesus' desire was to eat the Passover meal with His disciples before He suffered (Luke 22:15). He instructed His followers in this manner before His death: Jesus took the bread and said, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper would be a reminder of His sacrifice for a world that needed salvation through His death on the cross. After supper, He took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). This pouring out of Jesus' blood was for sin, which caused humans to be lost and separated from fellowship with God. Jesus came to restore fellowship and relationship with all who would come to the knowledge of Him and believe in Him (John 1:12).

After Jesus had explained the Lord's Supper to His disciples, a dispute arose over which disciple would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Luke 22:24). Jesus taught that the world viewed greatness as those who sits at the table and are served (Luke 22:27). He explained that the kings of the Gentiles, or "benefactors," viewed greatness as the way in which one person exercised authority over another (Luke 22:26). Jesus wanted His followers to demonstrate greatness through their humble service to others. Jesus used another demonstration to teach the disciples a lesson on greatness.

An Expression of Self-giving Love

It is important to understand Jesus' expression of love in order to understand how love in the life of the believer is a key to healing hurts. In view of His death, Jesus wanted to express the full extent of His love for the disciples. Jesus removed His tunic and wrapped a towel around His waist (John 13:4). He took the basin that He had filled with water and washed the disciples' feet and dried them with the towel that was wrapped around His waist (John 13:5). Jesus took on the role and duty of a servant. According to

Tokunboh Adeyemo, “Washing feet was such a menial job that no teacher would expect his disciples to do it.”¹³⁷ Merrill C. Tenney said, “None of the disciples were ready to volunteer for such a task, for each would have considered it an admission of inferiority to all the others.”¹³⁸ The disciples did not want to feel inferior but wanted to be great. The lesson that Jesus wanted the disciples to learn was not about inferiority. Jesus wanted the disciples to learn a lesson about humility in serving each other in the kingdom of God.

When the Lord came to Simon Peter, Peter asked, “Lord are you going to wash my feet” (John 13:6)? The Lord replied, “You do not realize what I am doing, but later you will understand” (John 13:7). When the Lord prepared to wash Peter’s feet, Peter protested. He did not want the Lord to wash his feet (John 13:9). Peter’s reaction was that he did not see this as a task for one of such honor. Jesus dispelled the notion that status and greatness should exist in those in a position of rule. Jesus demonstrated that His status did not hinder Him from greatness and that His greatness came as one who serves others in God’s Kingdom. Through Jesus’ “Voluntary humiliation,” the disciples’ pride was rebuked.¹³⁹ The Lord’s service to His disciples was an example of the service He wanted them to render to one another. After Jesus had finished teaching on the subject of greatness and servanthood, He turned to His disciples with another severe message.

Simon may not have expected the message that Jesus spoke to him. Jesus said, “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat, But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail, and when you have turned back, strengthen your

¹³⁷ Solomon, Coulibaly, Habtu, and Ngewa, 1307.

¹³⁸ Merrill C. Tenney, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 136.

¹³⁹ Tenney, 136.

brothers” (Luke 22:31-32). Jesus spoke to His disciples but specifically called Simon by name. Although the disciples forsook Jesus, Simon also denied Him.¹⁴⁰ Simon had already confessed that Jesus was “The Christ of God” in a conversation that arose over whom others thought Jesus was (Luke 9:20). Even so, “Peter confident and somewhat arrogant . . . heard the Master tell him that he would be a complete failure to the point that he would need to be ‘converted,’ or would need to turn again back to the faith and to follow Jesus.”¹⁴¹ No one wants to hear that he or she is going to be a failure (although at times things happen that will cause one’s failure).

Jesus assured Simon that He had already prayed for him concerning his faith. Simon was given a charge to strengthen his brothers once he was converted (Luke 22:23). It seemed as if Simon did not understand Jesus’ message. Jesus response was that before the rooster crowed, Simon would deny three times that he knew the Lord (Luke 22:34). Simon’s response was that he was ready to go to prison and even to death with the Lord (Luke 22:33). The unfolding of Simon’s failure was recorded when Jesus drew near the Mount of Olives. Jesus continually demonstrated the characteristics He expected of His followers so that the healing remedy would be active in their lives.

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives and prepared to pray. He asked the disciples to pray, as He went a short distance away and prayed (Luke 22:42, 43). After Jesus returned from prayer, He found His disciples fast asleep, exhausted from sorrow (Luke 22:45). They failed to pray for themselves as the Lord requested. Jesus warned the disciples again to pray that they would not fall into temptation (Luke 22:46). Jesus earnestly

¹⁴⁰ Wiersbe, *Matthew – Galatians*, 266.

¹⁴¹ Maasen, 61-62.

prayed for His Father to take away the cup that He would suffer if it were His will (Luke 22:42). The Lord must have felt abandoned and betrayed. Nevertheless, the Lord knew that His will was to do what God wanted. He returned to the disciples to find them fast asleep (Luke 22:45). Once again, they had failed to pray. God's people are urged to be of sober spirit, on alert by watching, and to pray without ceasing (1 Peter 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:17). Jesus wanted the disciples to pray that they would not fall into temptation. At that moment, they failed to see the importance of prayer. They did not know that danger was near.

As a crowd neared Jesus, His betrayer approached to kiss Him (Luke 22:47). The disciples asked if it was time to use their swords, and one struck the servant of the High Priest and cut off his ear (Luke 22:50). Jesus healed the ear of that servant. Jesus told the mob that they had plenty of opportunity to seize Him while He was teaching in the temple court (Luke 22:53). The mob seized Jesus and led Him away, and Simon followed the Lord at a distance. (Luke 22:54). Jesus knew the course that His life would take. For Simon, it seemed that fear had struck once more.

Simon sat in the cool of the night, hoping to keep warm by the courtyard fire. According to Warren W. Wiersbe, "For his courage and zeal, the apostle Peter was totally unprepared for Satan's attacks."¹⁴² Simon had not earnestly contemplated the Lord's warning. A girl identified him as one who was with Jesus. Simon denied that he had known Jesus (Luke 22:57). When identified again, Simon denied any claims that he was one of Jesus' followers (Luke 22:58). Again, another identified Simon as a Galilean, and one who was certainly with Jesus (Luke 22:59). Simon denied it, insisting that he did not

¹⁴² Wiersbe, *Matthew – Galatians*, 270.

know anything about the asserted claims (Luke 22:56). Simon disowned Jesus because of danger and distress.

Simon set his gaze on Jesus and caught Jesus' eye, and as he was speaking, the rooster crowed (Luke 22:61). Simon left the courtyard and wept bitterly (Luke 22:61-62). Weeping was a sign of regret or godly sorrow. Simon displayed the kind of sorrow that caused his heart to receive the grace of God. Although Jesus was experiencing a moment that would lead to excruciating pain, He did not fail to recognize the pain that Simon experienced in his denial. Jesus continued to display the love that He wanted His followers to emulate.

Jesus had told His disciples that this moment would come when He must die. They were not prepared for His death. At daybreak, the council convened, and Jesus was passed from the chief priests and elders of the law to Pilate and on to Herod to endure the trials that would ultimately lead to His crucifixion (Luke 22:66). After the trial, the shout of those who wanted Him crucified rang out as He was led away (Luke 22:20, 23). Pilate granted the demands of the people and released Barnabas, and Jesus was crucified instead (Luke 22:33). Through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection the means to handle hurts have been given to the church. Jesus demonstrated the power of His resurrection as He restored Simon to the faith.

Simon Peter

The disciples experienced the encounter with Jesus after His resurrection in which they had a great catch of fish. After fishing all night, once more the disciples returned with empty nets (John 21:3). The disciples heard a voice shout to them asking if they had any fish (John 21:5). They replied and were told to cast their net on the right side of the

boat and they would find some fish (John 21:6). The result of Peter's obedience to the Lord's command led to his catching much fish (John 21:6). The disciples recognized that it was Jesus who called out to them "to come have breakfast" (John 21:11). Jesus appeared to His disciples a third time after His resurrection (John 21:14). After they had finished eating, Jesus turned to Simon named Peter with a question. Jesus wanted to know if Peter's love was the result of one who had been forgiven much. Jesus focused on Peter's devotion of love as the key to his reinstatement (John 21:15-17). Three times Peter replied to the Lord's question and three times the Lord gave Peter a command.

Although the Lord knew Peter would deny Him, He took the time to pray for Peter. The Lord prayed that Peter's faith would not fail in his time of failure (Luke 22:32). The way in which the Lord spoke to Peter concerning his ultimate failure was unique. It is what the Lord requires of His followers. To restore one who has fallen in a Spirit of meekness (Gal. 6:1). The Lord also reaffirmed Peter's duty to those who are weaker. Once he had converted or turned back to the faith, Peter's duty was to strengthen his brothers (Luke 22:32). Through the outward working of restoration, the love of God works through the life of the believer. Just as Peter was called to restore those weaker in the faith, the Christian's calling is to the same duty.

It is important for the church to remember the obligation of those who are strong in the faith to those who are weaker. When painful situations occur, those who are at fault are usually condemned instead of restored to the faith. Jesus prayed for His disciples and warned them to pray beforehand that they would not fall into trying situations. It is important for the church to pray for those who have experienced pain in her midst. The love of God would be revealed through the actions displayed in followers of Christ.

Christ's love shows when Christians pray for those who are hurting. The love of Christ will be revealed when Christians restore those who are weaker in a spirit of meekness. When the believers' lives fail to display the love of Christ, others will suffer and experience hurts. These hurts can impact an organization and affect the ministries of that organization.

The Impact of Hurts on An Organization

It is important to understand that past hurt can cause devastation to an organization. God has given the means to handle one's hurts. Therefore, one can comprehend how to manage one's hurts and their effects on others and organizations, and realize that the remedy has been given to heal those hurts. Through His teaching, Jesus captured an example of how organizations were impacted by hurts. A large crowd gathered at one of the greatest feasts in Jerusalem, the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus encountered some religious leaders who were stirred up over the fact that He had healed a young lad on the Sabbath. The religious leaders were going through the motions of what we call church today. They were not concerned for those who were hurting, especially if they were in pain on the Sabbath. The tradition of the religious leader's took precedence over peoples' pain.

To avoid trouble with the Pharisees, Jesus left the area and went into Galilee. The most direct route to Galilee was through Samaria. It was in Samaria that Jesus encountered a woman who was living with past pain and needed the remedy to heal her hurts. The Samaritan woman's life revealed a glimpse of the healing remedy. Through Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, one can understand the impact that hurts have on people and the church.

The Samaritan Woman

Jesus went through Samaria, to convey the way of life to the Samaritans.¹⁴³ “Jesus wearied from the journey and midday heat, paused for rest.”¹⁴⁴ He came to rest on the parcel of ground near Jacob’s well (John 4:6). Day after day the Samaritan woman went to the well to draw water, a necessary substance for daily use, including that fact that it quenched her natural thirst (John 4:13). She went to the well when no one else was apparently there. One may have thought that she wanted to be alone. A more likely explanation was that the other women of the village had ostracized her.¹⁴⁵ Her unhealthy lifestyle put a wall between her and the women of her village.¹⁴⁶ Although she was in an unhealthy state, she continued to live on the surface of life. Her daily task was to do life as usual. One may assume that all was well with the Samaritan woman.

Jesus entered the world of the Samaritan woman and her daily routine and asked her for a drink (John 4:7). She replied, “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” (John 4:9). Her response seemed defensive. She needed to break “past bondage” to move forward with her life. Her response demonstrated that there were bad feelings between the Samaritan people and their neighbors, which sometimes erupted into some skirmishes. The Samaritans were a mixed-race people, and Jews chose not to associate with the Samaritans because of their bloodline.

The Samaritan woman responded through the hurts of avoidance, pains of

¹⁴³ Pfeiffer and Harrison, 1080.

¹⁴⁴ Pfeiffer and Harrison, 1080.

¹⁴⁵ Pfeiffer and Harrison, 1080.

¹⁴⁶ Peter Scazzero and Warren Bird, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleashing a Revolution in Your Life in Christ* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 74.

letdowns, sorrows, disappointments and her sinful lifestyle. “It may be that having the inevitable pain and disappointment of life causes some people build walls around their heart.”¹⁴⁷ “People with shrapnel lodged in their heart from something in their past do not want to be known.”¹⁴⁸ A person in this frame of mind will respond in a self-justifying way. People who is not aware of the pain in their hearts will fail to hear their heart’s cry.

Jesus allowed the opportunity to engage the woman in conversation about water (John 4:10). The woman desired the water that Jesus offered (John 4:15). She reflected on the well when she asked Jesus how He was going to get this “living water” that He would give. The Samaritan woman desired the water for the wrong reason. She believed that drawing water daily would not be necessary after getting the living water that Jesus offered (John 5:16). Could it be that she wanted to continue living on the surface of life, or maybe even conforming to an outward spirituality?

Jesus knew the depth of the Samaritan woman’s heart and summoned the issues that were keeping her in past pain. Jesus addressed her hurts by allowing room for her to be known. “Heart issues make intimacy difficult to maintain because intimacy revolves around knowing and being known. Being known is tantamount to being found out or discovered.”¹⁴⁹ Instead of allowing her to continue to focus on the physical aspects of her life, Jesus saw the opportunity to engage the Samaritan woman concerning her spiritual health. He concentrated on the cries of her heart. Jesus offered her water to quench her thirst forever if she would only drink (John 4:14).

¹⁴⁷ Andy Stanley, *It Came from Within: The Shocking Truth of What Lurks in the Heart* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books Inc., 2006), 20.

¹⁴⁸ Stanley, 56.

¹⁴⁹ Stanley, 56.

Jesus knew that those who thirst after physical pleasures of life would continue to thirst and never be satisfied. Their thirst resembles that of people who pant after the image they see when they look in a mirror. The false self only deals with the outer appearance and never deals with the issues of the heart. It is the outer person that tends to be important because that is all that a person can see. One sees things with the natural eye but fails to connect with the inner depth of the heart.

The kinds of people who can address the issues of the heart are those who are in tune with those around them.¹⁵⁰ The church must create “resonant” people, people who can deal with the small fires within the church for the church to be active. For a leader, knowing when and how to generate conflict to bring about change in a sick organization is vital to the health of an organization.¹⁵¹ Resonant leaders “inspire through passion, commitment, and thoughtful concern for people and the organizational vision. They cause people around them to want to move, in concert, towards an exciting future.”¹⁵² They give people courage and hope and help people to become the best that they can be.¹⁵³ Once Jesus made the connection that would tap into the Samaritan woman’s heart, He began to deal with the issues of the heart.

Jesus and the woman talked. He heard the cry of her heart. Jesus told her to call her husband (John 4:16). Her response was that she did not have a spouse. Jesus

¹⁵⁰ Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee, *Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2005), 4.

¹⁵¹ David R. Caruso and Peter Salovey, *The Emotionally Intelligent Manager: How to Develop and Use the Four Key Emotional Skills of Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 175.

¹⁵² Boyatzis and McKee, 9.

¹⁵³ Boyatzis and McKee, 9.

continued to engage her in conversation and dealt with the issue of her heart (John 4:16). Most people who profess to be Christians will refuse to deal with the condition of their heart. They remain stuck traveling the roads that led to their past lives, with no hope of immediate relief from the pain that will eventually cause their failure. At times, their pain may seem unbearable. Moreover, some will not deal with their pain because of pride.

An excellent opportunity for the woman at the well took place because she encountered a leader who knew how to hear her heart's cry. Healthy leaders must confront the negative feelings in others to be effective.¹⁵⁴ A powerful leader envisions hope, which enables them to move toward their vision and goals while inspiring others toward the goal.¹⁵⁵ Resonant leaders are compassionate; they understand people's wants and needs and feel motivated to act on their feelings concerning those wants and requirements.¹⁵⁶

The conversation with the Samaritan woman continued, and Jesus engaged her concerning worship. They conversed about the place of worship, where her ancestors worshiped, the mountains, and even where some presumed to be the best location for worship. Jesus brought the conversation into reality by saying that the hour is coming when true worship will not consist of the place or mountain in which one worships (John 4:20-21). True worship involves a daily lifestyle that worships the Father in "Spirit and Truth" (John 4:23).

Jesus brought the key element of salvation into the conversation. When a person's

¹⁵⁴ Caruso and Salovey, 175.

¹⁵⁵ Boyatzis and McKee, 9.

¹⁵⁶ Boyatzis and McKee, 9.

daily lifestyle worships God in spirit and truth, the transformation has occurred in one's being from the inside out. Jesus allowed the opportunity for the woman to drink of the water that He offered. The result was "a well of water springing up into eternal life" that flowed from her being (John 4:14). An essential routine needed in the Samaritan woman's life was daily communication with God. In communicating daily, she refused to reenter her past pain.

The Samaritan woman began to talk about the Messiah and said that He was coming and would declare to them all things. Jesus told her that He was the Messiah (John 4:26). There are many things about which one can communicate with God concerning the pains hidden deep within one's heart. Through communication, one can cultivate one's relationship with God and with others. A person must cultivate his or her relationship with God and others on a consistent basis. Cultivating one's relationship with Jesus is necessary for healing and handling hurt that one encounters in the church.

The Samaritan woman returned to her village to call the people of her village to come and see a man who told her everything that she had ever done (John 4:29). The Samaritan woman's life was a demonstration of the power of God at work through word and action. The powerful, eternal word of God softened her heart. She had become a transformed vessel for the kingdom of God. She handled her hurts in an efficient way and went forth into effective ministry for the kingdom of God.

When the Samaritan woman went back to her village, she called a community of people to come to Jesus. She invited them to come and get to know the same transforming power that she had encountered in the person of Jesus (John 4:28-29, 39). She called them to experience the result of what it meant to love God with all of one's

being and to know not only God but also one's interior—the nature of one's own heart, soul, and mind.¹⁵⁷ One who encounters Christ has truly become Christ's disciples, called to love God and one another with a pure heart (John 13:35). By loving God and loving others from a pure heart, one can handle their hurts so that they do not become past hurts. One may hurt, but will not hurt others intentionally out of their pain.

People have been left in this state in our churches, living in an “exterior world” on the surface of life but with the internal hurts still raging.¹⁵⁸ Leaders must be able to help people move beyond this destructive area of life. The way to help others with issues of the heart is reflected in the life of the woman of Samaria as she communed with Jesus. There are people in churches today who want to have the cries of their hearts heard. The church must rely on the power of God to listen to the cries of the heart. Jesus gave an example of hearing the heart of those who have left the church after having experienced past pains. Some people who get hurt in the church remain stuck in their past pain as they live out their Christian duty in the church. Issues relating to hurts must be dealt with when they surface. Recognizing the issues that surface through the heart's cry is significant to helping others heal.

The church needs to equip people who can hear the heart's cry. Through the aid of the Holy Spirit, they would be able to probe areas where hurts reside to help those who are living in past pain. Jesus demonstrated through His leadership style that He had compassion for the Samaritan woman. He helped her deal with the hurts that she experienced. Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman about her hurts to pick her heart so

¹⁵⁷ Scazzero and Bird, 57.

¹⁵⁸ Scazzero and Bird, 57.

that transformation could happen. He offered her the most important substance that would change her life and allowed her the opportunity to accept His offer.

The Samaritan woman showed love for the people in her village from a compassionate heart that wanted others to encounter Christ (John 4:28-29). For those who are concerned about the effectiveness of church ministry, this is an indication that one cannot attend to the hurts of others if one continues to hurt and never addresses issues “deep beneath the surface” of one’s life.¹⁵⁹ One’s well-being is crucial for biblical discipleship.¹⁶⁰ Because of the pain and hurts the Samaritan woman experienced, one can envision the healing process that took place through her encounter with Jesus. The life of the Samaritan woman is an example of how healing past hurts can lead to active ministry.

The Samaritan woman lived a separate life from those in her community because of her debased lifestyle. Although she lived in community with other people, her daily routine showed that she did not interact with them. She lived a separated and defensive life. The women in the community did not intermingle with her. After communing with Jesus, the Samaritan woman returned to her village with a message to share with those from whom she had previously distanced herself. She began to take the gospel message to those in her immediate neighborhood. She compelled them to come and meet Jesus, who told her everything that she had done. Her changed lifestyle empowered the Samaritan woman to compel others to come and hear the gospel message.

The church can learn from the Samaritan woman’s encounter with Jesus, that those within the church must have a personal encounter with Jesus. One’s personal

¹⁵⁹ Scazzero and Bird, 47.

¹⁶⁰ Scazzero and Bird, 19.

relationship is crucial for discipleship and leading others to Christ. One's personal relationship with Christ is essential for understanding how to handle one's hurts so that healing can take place. Effective ministry happens when one has truly connected to Christ through a personal relationship. The healing of one's heart through the gospel message empowered one to compel others to encounter Jesus. Those within the church must experience the love of Christ and show love to those whose hearts are crying out in pain.

Conclusion

In order to understand the biblical remedy for healing hurts, it is important to comprehend how hurts begin and how those hurts impact others and organizations. The Bible gives several passages on how to heal hurts from a biblical perspective. Matthew says,

If a brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you; if they listen you have won them over. If they do not listen, take one or two others along; by the testimony of two or three witnesses, the matter will be established. If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church, and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or tax collector (Matt. 18:15-17).

When a person errs, the objective is restoration and not condemnation.¹⁶¹ Restoration is an element in healing hurts. Hurts that are in the process of growing old could heal. Those who are strong in the faith and their Christian walk are called to be people of renewal.

In Jesus' teachings, the stronger vessel is always sent to the weaker vessel (Matt. 18:15 and 5:23-24). Those who are strong in the faith are to be patient with those who are weak in the faith. Those who are stronger must bear the infirmities of those who are weak, and not please themselves (Rom. 15:1). Through the duty given to the strong, those

¹⁶¹ Michael J. Wilkins, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 114.

who are weaker will grow stronger. Those who struggle with hurts will gain strength and understanding of their hurts. Then people will understand how to handle their hurts.

If one's brother sins, one is to rebuke him (Luke 17:3). If he repents, one is to forgive him (Luke 17:3). If a person sins several times and repents, one must forgive him or her (Luke 17:4). Peter asked Jesus the question, how many times should one who has sinned against another be forgiven up to seven times? Jesus answered, "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (Matt.18:22). Forgiveness is required when wrongs take place. Unforgiven wrongs will lead to hurts. One must be willing to forgive oneself as well as the offender.

People misunderstand the concept of forgiveness in some circumstances. When one forgives another, they will not necessarily trust right away if at all. Often people want to wait until they can trust a person before they forgive him or her. Christians are not called to trust others but to forgive. Although hurts heal, healing does not always result in restored trust. Hurts take time to heal. There is no limit to forgiveness. Forgiveness is a healing remedy for hurts. Forgiveness is essential for reconciliation. Restoration is another element in the healing process.

Jesus demonstrated just how important reconciliation is among His followers. Jesus taught about anger and reconciliation in His sermon on the mountain, saying that when one comes to offer one's gift at the altar and remembers that one has "ought against another," they must make amends with the one who caused the offense (Matt. 5:23-24). When people offer their gift without making amends, the door to pain remains in their lives. When one has transgressed against another, it will reflect on the actions of the heart. The attitude reflected in one's life will flow over into one's service rendered to

God and to others. When people convey their gift to God without making right any wrong done to others, their pain will remain and their gift remains unprofitable.

Holding a grudge damages one's relationships with God and with other people. Jesus called for the one who knows of the offense to take responsibility for the attitude in which he or she offers the gift. When one takes responsibility for the way in which one offers the gift, one assumes the obligation for restoring the person who holds an offense. "Reconciliation requires that you give a repentant person an opportunity to demonstrate repentance and regain your trust."¹⁶² "To be reconciled means to replace hostility and separation with peace and friendship."¹⁶³ When a person has been reconciled to another, the two have settled their differences, or have come to an agreement in which the parties involved can live at peace with each other.

One's obligation as a follower of Christ is to take responsibility for one's wrongs and to ask forgiveness of anyone who has been affected by one's wrong action. Both parties must confess their faults (James 1:19-21). It is Important to be "quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 5:16). When people are not willing to think about what they are about to say before they say it, they could say things that will cause others to get angry.

Followers of Christ are admonished not to think of themselves more highly than they ought but to use sober judgment according to the faith God has given (Rom. 12:3). One should not eagerly look for opportunities to point out another person's faults.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Grand Rapids, MI: Seventh Printing, 2007), 153.

¹⁶³ Sande, 219.

¹⁶⁴ Sande, 153.

When people esteem themselves above others, they will fail to help the others because of their pride. The Bible says, “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). Pride is a sin against which one must heed warning. When a person is eager to point out another person’s fault, they are not the one who should restore such a one who has fallen or is in need of restoration.¹⁶⁵ A person is destined to fall when pride resides in the heart. “We must take heed of having too great an opinion of ourselves, or putting too high a valuation upon our judgments, abilities, persons, performances.”¹⁶⁶ When people see themselves in a sober judgment, then they will be committed to going to the one who has a fault against them. Therefore, the person who uses sound judgment will take responsibility for the way in which he or she offers a gift unto God.

The love that one displays in one’s life will be reflected in how one treats those who have caused hurts. The Scripture teaches that the key to knowing the followers of Christ is by the love exemplified in their lives toward others (John 13:35). The love that one has for another is a key to healing hurts. The wounded person must make amends with the person who has initiated his or her hurt. One who is eager to restore another must be patient, because eagerness is a clue that one is not equipped to restore another who is weak in the faith.

Followers of Christ are required to “go and make amends with those who have been offended before offering one’s gift unto the Lord” (Matt. 5:24). “The wounded person must also do his part by acknowledging unforgiveness, looking at the full impact of his hurt, working through painful memories and then reaching a place of

¹⁶⁵ Sande, 153.

¹⁶⁶ Matthew Henry, “Commentary on Romans 12,” *Blue Letter Bible*, last posted March, 1996, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/mhr/rom/rom/012.cfm>.

forgiveness.”¹⁶⁷ Forgiveness does not release the offender from the consequences of his or her actions. The result of one’s wrong actions is not left up to the one transgressed to repay wrongs committed. The Bible says, “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone” (Rom. 12:17). Do not take revenge for the wrong actions of another; the Lord will avenge the wrong done to another (Rom. 12:19). The Christian responsibility is to overturn evil by continually doing right.

Followers of Christ’s should exemplify the self-giving love of Christ. The Christian cannot exemplify Christ’s self-giving love without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, it would be impossible to display the love that transforms one’s heart to forgive. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential in the process of forgiveness. Forgiveness is necessary for the healing process. Forgiveness does not just happen in one’s heart. “When a person is wrestling with forgiveness do not merely pray a simple prayer. Call on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to help that person do what he could not do on his own.”¹⁶⁸ “People desperately need the supernatural power of God to resolve their dilemmas. When they see convincing proof of the power of God transforming lives around them, they are drawn to God’s presence.”¹⁶⁹ The Holy Spirit works through the heart of love to draw others into the transforming power of God.

Love is one of the essential elements in the process of healing. The transforming power of God works in the heart that has been transformed by God’s Spirit. Through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, God has given the Christian a crucial element for

¹⁶⁷ Kylstra and Kylstra, 43.

¹⁶⁸ Kylstra and Kylstra, 43.

¹⁶⁹ Sue Curran, *Prayer in Another Dimension: Discover the Keys to the Next Level of Prayer* (USA: Xulon press, 2006), 17.

handling their hurts. It is important that Christians operate out of a heart transformed by the word of God. The attitude of one's heart is essential to handling problems. The transformation will not prevent pain but will help one deal with its agony. A heart transformed by the word and Spirit of God will display an essential element of the Christian character: love. Essential care given to one's character results in one's ability to love.

God promised to write his word on the heart and to put His Spirit within (Ezek. 36:26-28, Heb. 10:16-17). Through the word of God, one is brought forth to be a kind of first fruit of creation (James 1:21). Through having their sins taken away, people can be God's people (Rom. 11:27, 1 John 1:9). "He saved us, not because of righteous things we have done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5-6). Through this new birth, God has given followers of Christ the heart to love God and others.

The duty of God's people is to "love God with the whole heart, mind, and soul and to love one's neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-39). It is with the heart that one believes in Christ and "so experience both love from God and the presence of Christ in one's heart" (Rom. 5:5 and 10:9-10, Eph. 3:17).¹⁷⁰ Although one is free in Christ,

The liberty we enjoy as Christians is not a licentious liberty: though Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. He has freed us from the obligation of it, the gospel is a doctrine according to godliness (1Tim. 6:3), and is so far from giving the least countenance to sin that it lays us under the strongest obligation to avoid and subdue it. Though we ought to stand fast in our Christian liberty, yet we should not insist upon it to breach of Christian charity; we should not use it as an occasion of strife and contention with our fellow Christians, who may be differently minded from us, but should always maintain such a temper towards

¹⁷⁰ Bruce and Harrison, 467.

each other as may dispose us by love to serve one another.¹⁷¹

The liberty one has in Christ frees one to live in fellowship with others. One has been released to live in fellowship through the love one has for Christ. This love causes one to serve another out of a right attitude.

Love obligates Christians to handle their hurts in a productive manner. Love is a quality that causes one to recognize how one handles situations that cause strife. To love God with the whole heart will dispel the evil that one might think or seek from the heart to do to others. It is this kind of love—love that does not rely on the condition or the circumstances that resulted from one’s pain—that helps one handle hurts in a productive manner. To handle one’s hurts in a productive manner reveals that one can love one’s neighbor as well (Matt.22:39).

When one becomes angry, the ability to sin is pressing near or is “crouching at the door” of one’s heart (Gen. 4:7). The word of God exhorts those who become angry that they, “do not sin” and that they are not let the sun go down on their wrath (Eph. 4:26). The Greek word for wrath is *parorgiomos*. It means rage.¹⁷² If the sun sets on one’s rage, the opportunity presents itself for one to become angrier and to respond out of that anger. People are exhorted to manage their anger, so they do not remain angry. If one remains angry, time allows anger to govern the person through behaviors exhibited in one’s life.

If a person abides in a state of anger, he or she is capable of hurting others (Eph. 4:26). It is through the thoughts of one’s heart that one dwells in a state of rage, or through the transformation of the heart that one chooses to escape such outrage. Cain was

¹⁷¹ Matthew Henry, “Commentary on Galatians 5,” *Blue Letter Bible*, last posted March 1996, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/mhr/rom/rom/012.cfm>.

¹⁷² Strong, 68.

given a warning concerning the condition of his heart (Gen. 4:7). One must free the heart of bitterness, wrath and anger (Eph. 4:31-32).

Galatians says it is for freedom that Christ has set one free (Gal. 5:1). Those who have been set free in Christ have been set free to not return to bondage. It is important for people to know the truth. People are set free through the truth (John 8:32). The truth spoken in love heals and leads to freedom in Christ (Eph. 4:15-16). Paul warned that once a person is free he or she ought to eliminate the route to bondage from one's life. It is a route that brings indulgence in sin that leads to bondage again (Gal. 5:13). Israel, God's chosen people, took the path that resulted in bondage over and over (Judges 1:10-16). This route caused Israel much pain (Judges 1:20-21). Christians are not to indulge in sin. Sin leads to bondage, strife and hurts.

The Scripture exhorts people to recognize the things that cause fighting in their members through lust (James 4:1-6). When people recognize things that cause fighting against others, they are better able to handle situations that lead to hurts. Showing love is a quality that is essential to have toward those who hate (Matt. 5:10-11, Luke 6:27). All of the actions of a Christian's life must demonstrate love. Love is the basis of all the qualities that come together as the remedy for healing hurts.

Many things can lead to hurts in the church. Difficulties in the ministries can lead to pain. Difficulties between members within the church can lead to hurts. Not having the means to accomplish the work of ministry causes blame and can result in harms within a church. James says that those who are blessed are those who do not give up in times of difficulty (James 1:12). Blessed are those who endure when troubles come their way (James 1:12). By enduring troubled times, one is not able to prevent some hurts from

taking place in one's life. Because of the condition of one's heart that one can endure when trouble comes one's way.

It is important for the church to recognize that the attitude in which people render their gift to God is essential to the fellowship of the church. People render their gift to God daily without any thought to making amends with those who have wronged them or those they have wronged. If the attitude of one's heart is not right, one should not render one's gift unto God before helping those wronged to be reconciled back to the faith (Matt. 5:24). Reconciliation tends to be an area in which the church fails to help those who are hurting. It is so easy to say that it is time for offering, ministry, singing, teaching or preaching without admonishing people to consider the attitude of their heart.

People will detect the attitude of one's heart through the love shown to others. Essential care given to hurts comes from one's ability to love. Through the love of Christ one is obligated to handle one's anger promptly. God sent His Son Jesus into the world to accomplish salvation, and He has given us the gift of salvation. God has given Christians the means to help them live righteously before Him. God has also given Christians help in their interactions with others in the world.

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A Means of Handling Hurts through Related Literature

It is evident that people do get hurt in the church. Many people have experienced bad situations in the church. Christians and non-Christians alike have had trouble in the church. These difficulties become problematic when people get hurt by members of the church body. In order to understand why individuals experience hurts in the church and the cause of hurts, it is necessary to comprehend what related literature has to say about hurts and how individuals handle their hurts.

Understanding Hurts

Many people have experienced a variety of situations that lead to hurts in their lives. Christians have been hurt by the church over things such as the “placement of a bike path,” replacing the cross with a screen on the sanctuary wall, and “religious spite.”¹ There are cases where people have expressed in one way or another that they have been angry due to things that took place in their personal life.

Research reveals that people express anger when traffic is unfriendly, when others are argumentative, when bills pile-up, when someone fails to do what they promised, when another person is critical, when a child refuses to mind, or when one feels ignored.² Many people experience chaos in their personal lives. Chaos must be dealt with or it will

¹ Stephen Mansfield, *Healing Your Church Hurt: What to Do When You Still Love God But Have Been Wounded by His People* (Austin, TX: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 8.

² Les Carter, *The Anger Trap: Free Yourself from the Frustration that Sabotages Your Life*, Forward by Frank Minirth (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 6.

eventually affect others.

People had expressed that they have been hurt by the church when they had a need that the church would not address. Some Christians have been hurt when they feel no one cares. Christians have been hurt because the hospitality ministry did not visit them when they were sick. Some parents have been angered when their children were corrected in a rough fashion by members of the church. Others have been hurt when they have a financial need that the church cannot meet. For many people these experiences have turned into church hurts. Individuals who have been hurt by the church handle their hurts in a variety of ways.

Individuals have handled their hurts in ways that do not always reveal they have been injured. Once people have experienced injuries by the church some use their experience with pain as a legitimate cause for leaving the church. There are valid reasons for leaving a church. For instance, if doctrinal error is taught or unethical practices are taking place or condoned one has valid grounds for departing.¹ Although many individuals leave the church after being hurt, there are some who remain in the church. Many Christians stay in the church even after being hurt by other Christians. Whether a person stays in the church or leaves, church hurt is evidentially a problem that one must address.

It is obvious that people enter the church with wounds prior to becoming followers of Christ. Yet the church exists to help people heal. In order to understand church hurts, one must turn to the perspective of low self-esteem. This will give clarity to how some church hurts develop.

¹ Rick Reiner, *Living in the Combat Zone* (Tulsa, OK: Rick Reiner Ministries, Inc., 1998), 17.

Understanding Hurts through the Perspective of Low Self-esteem

It is important to understand hurts through the viewpoint of low self-esteem in order to find healing for those who have experienced church hurts. This is important even though low self-esteem is not a valid reason for being injured. Understanding hurts from the perspective of low self-esteem will help one recognize how hurts have developed in the church.

Documentation shows that some individuals with low self-esteem have a problem with the fear of rejection.² Approval seekers have an on-going and increasing need to be affirmed and to be “liked, praised, admired, disliked, hated, or despised.”³ David Miller and Teresa Moran, in their book *Self-esteem: A Guide for Teachers*, say that a person’s perceptions are influenced “In the courage of social interaction and messages” conveyed by others.⁴ According to Miller and Morgan, one’s perception takes shape in this way:

Our perceptions are influenced by what we believe others think of us ... this belief—that our self-esteem is affected by the messages we get from others around us—is widely accepted. From such messages, we develop a belief that we are worthy, likable people—or not. We get a feeling that we are accepted into a social group—or not. People appear to respect us and our views—or they do not. It is important to note that these messages can relate to our achievements (our performances or competence in certain domains) or ourselves as individual humans (irrespective of how talented or successful we are).⁵

Miller and Moran’s perception can cast one in a positive or negative light. The perception of how a person is viewed by others is necessary to the self-worth of the individual

² David Miller and Teresa Moran, *Self-esteem: A Guide for Teachers* (Thousand Oaks, CA: 2012), 31.

³ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart: The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1981), 22-23.

⁴ Miller and Moran, 31.

⁵ Miller and Moran, 31.

seeking such approval. These opinions of those who have been influenced by such perception have been revealed in their actions and attitudes. People who receive messages from others that they are “selfish, not to be trusted, or is [sic] useless” will see themselves in a negative light if they have low self-esteem.⁶

According to McGee, A person who believes that his or her self-worth has its basis in the approval of others will do virtually anything to please others.⁷ This belief in approval says that in order to feel good about oneself others must approve the one seeking such approval.⁸ People who seek another’s approval feel good about themselves as long as others are pleased by what they do. Individuals who obtain the approval of others will do what others want instead of what should be done. Pleasing other people fills the void in one’s life that has been embraced by so many hurts. At this point, a person is vulnerable to the intentional or unintentional actions of another. Some church hurts have developed because of the intentional or unintentional actions of Christians within the church.

A person who has experienced past rejection and low self-esteem seeks the approval of others because they needed to feel significant.⁹ Christians have opened their life to hurts through approval seeking. Joyce Meyer in her book on *Approval Addiction*, says that the person seeking such approval “will always experience pain when that

⁶ Miller and Moran, 32.

⁷ Robert S. McGee, *Search for Significance* (Houston, TX: Robert S. McGee, 1987), 59.

⁸ McGee, 52.

⁹ Joyce Meyer, *Approval Addiction: Overcoming Your Need to Please Everybody* (New York, NY: Warner Faith, 2005), VII.

approval is withdrawn—as it always is, at one time or another.”¹⁰ When a person does not obtain the approval sought the wounds of rejection deepen. Deep wounds have left scars in the hearts of Christians who have experienced church hurts. Understanding how approval seekers respond to rejection is one way of identifying how church hurts happen.

Church hurts have cast a negative image on the church and resulted in deep wounds in the lives of people who have been wounded. For example, when the church does not recognize approval seekers, they may experience rejection and leave the church instead of receiving guidance to deal with their issues of endorsement. The work done in the ministry may be the only hope in helping one find real significance in Christ. Charlie Quill in his book, *Anger and Anger Management* says, “Parents and other adults can help build young people’s self-esteem by being supportive, not critical. Love and firm support will always motivate somebody more than harsh criticism and complaints.”¹¹ Without love and firm support, people will continue to search for their identity by other means. Carefully considering the hurts people encounter before coming to Christ can be beneficial to understanding how church hurts happen. It was important to identify how one’s search for significance can lead to church hurts.

According to Kenneth Boa,

People . . . seek to validate their personal worth through appearance, status, and talent. Carried far enough, efforts to find love and acceptance lead to sensuality, and immorality, efforts to find significance and identity lead to materialism and greed, and efforts to find competence and fulfillment lead to excessive competition and aggression. In extreme cases, these can lead in turn to perversion, theft, and violence.¹²

¹⁰ Meyer, 19.

¹¹ Charlie Quill, *Anger and Anger Management* (New York, NY: Rosen Publishing Group, Inc. 2009), 10.

¹² Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 108-109.

The things that people utilize to validate their worth leads to a variety of issues that can cause hurts in their lives.

To minimize failure people have tried to find their identity and worth in the search for the right friends, driving the right car, or wearing the right clothes.¹³ Individuals who seek to validate who they are by the standards of others or in things are not aware of their true worth. One's behavior will exemplify that one has a problem with his or her identity. An example is revealed in the lives of young people who have low self-esteem. Quill says, "Low self-esteem is one of the biggest causes of anger among young people today."¹⁴ Low self-esteem is just one way of understanding how young people get hurt in the church. According to Quill, "Psychologists believe that extreme low self-esteem can even drive teens to commit crimes of violence."¹⁵ Anger and resentment are causes of violent behaviors. Although violent behaviors do not cause all church hurts, a look at violent behaviors can contribute to one's understanding of how church hurts occur.

Anger

It is necessary to understand violence in order to understand how anger contributes to church hurts. Anger that has been bottled up in one's life will lead to destructive behaviors. For many, anger is a primary enemy of the heart.¹⁶ Unresolved anger usually becomes stuck in one's heart. Anger that becomes lodged in the heart will show up in one's character. Anger that becomes lodged in one's heart has the potential to

¹³ Boa, 108.

¹⁴ Quill, 10.

¹⁵ Quill, 10.

¹⁶ Andy Stanley, *It Came From Within: The Shocking Truth of What Lurks in the Heart* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2006), 64.

become destructive. Anger in this way is the result of unresolved wounds.

Unresolved anger has caused people to respond in an immature way. When anger has manifested in violent ways, it has become destructive.¹⁷ Documentation shows that destructive anger has the potential to destroy one's character and relationship with others.¹⁸ According to Daniel Goleman, "The consequences of anger—especially its long-term effects—are that the mind is disturbed."¹⁹ Through this disturbance, a person experiences internal unrest.

All anger is not bad, "Many ... Christians believe wholeheartedly that anger, sadness, and fear are sins to be avoided, indicating something is wrong with one's spiritual life."²⁰ But anger is an appropriate response by humans when threatened or harmed. Anger is a choice and one must take responsibility for it.²¹ There are a variety of ways in which people deal with their anger. One can "choose to let it out in aggressive or assertive ways, in lashing or loving ways."²² Many Christians have caused harm to others because of how they handled situations that caused them to become angry.

Once a person becomes frustrated he or she will often "vent their frustration onto other people."²³ The instant failure is allowed to manifest as anger it will result in

¹⁷ Daniel Goleman, *Emotions that Destroy: How Can We Overcome Them?* (New York, NY: Bantam Dell, 2004), 158.

¹⁸ Stanley, 64.

¹⁹ Goleman, 158.

²⁰ Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 26.

²¹ Chip Ingram and Becca Johnson, *Overcoming Emotions that Destroy: Practical Help for Those Angry Feelings that Ruin Relationships* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 144.

²² Ingram and Johnson, 144.

²³ Quill, 11.

unhealthy behaviors. Anger hurts the church and other organizations when people hold their anger inside and allow it to spew onto others. Angry people have resorted to verbal insults, fights and a variety of other violent activities to deal with anger that has been bottled up in their lives. Anger desensitizes one to the harm one may inflict on others or oneself “at a time when one feels one owes it to oneself to do whatever one wants.”²⁴

Church hurts have taken place when anger is manifested in harsh way (although people do not always revert to destructive ways of handling anger). There are people who do not allow their anger to manifest in violent ways. There are people who choose to deal with their anger in silent ways. However, many Christians have caused harm to others when channeling their anger by silent means.

A person who deals with anger in a silent way will have a withdrawn attitude. He or she will withdraw from the person who caused the hurt. People who handle their anger by silent means have sought ways to be alone. Such people handle their hurts by withdrawing from the crowd. Withdrawal becomes the means to handling one’s hurts. Anger channeled in silent ways may reveal a sluggish attitude in the person who has been hurt. When angered, one will refrain from helping with a task even if they had the capacity to help.

Dealing with anger in silent ways does not always eliminate church hurts. Christians who deal with their anger in silent ways will not confront the person whom they believe has hurt them. Some individuals have dealt with their hurts through quiet means and held grudges against the person whom they think has hurt them. The grudge they hold will show up in their attitude. Those who are responsible for such damages may

²⁴ Stanley, 214.

not know that they have caused any pain. Their initial interaction with the one who was unintentionally hurt has resulted in church hurts.

All anger does not lead to church hurts or violence. Yet there are people who choose to vent their anger in non-violent ways. Henry H. Mitchell in his book *Black Church Beginnings* says African American culture did not lose its way of venting anger, which is known as “signifying.”²⁵ Mitchell says the “rhetoric of African ritual insult”²⁶ is a way in which one vents anger against an offender. This method of venting anger survived and has been adapted from African American street culture. Venting in this way allows for a healing release of the hostility from being wounded.

Venting helps the offended one avoid responding to the offender. Feelings are vented without permitting response by the offender, who, “although in earshot, is presumed to be excluded from the conversation.”²⁷ Signifying allows the offended an escape route from the hurts or insults hurled toward him or her. Venting in this sense is the means one utilizes to deal with an insult to prevent further harms. Although the offender hears what is being vented, it is up to the offender to deal with the offensive action that he or she initiated.

Understanding anger is just one way of identifying how hurts happen in the church. Anger is not the only way that hurts happen in the church. Some experiences with church hurt varies. Understanding the cause of church hurts is key to understanding how the church is impacted by the hurts that have taken place in her midst. It is important to

²⁵ Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the Hidden Years* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 7.

²⁶ Mitchell, 7.

²⁷ Mitchell, 7.

understand how hurts began, in order to comprehend the cause of one's hurts.

Determining the Cause of Hurts in One's life

It is important to identify the leading cause of hurts in a person's life in order to understand how hurts started, and to identify ways healing can begin. "The individuals who experience church hurt may spend years trying to recover from the pain that many Christians classify as church-hurt."²⁸ Steven Sutton in, *Finding the Purpose in Church-Hurts* says, one does not want to call it "church hurt."²⁹ Church hurts exist because the church has failed to take on her responsibility to proclaim the gospel that "Jesus saves." Many leaders use the Scripture to help members "stockpile" their pain instead of providing a remedy to it.³⁰ Church becomes the place where people have been conditioned by the false self that says, "Fake it until you can make it," or by the habitual self that seeks to "get all that one can." Some Christians believe that they can fake Christianity. When Christians fake Christianity the gospel ceases to be important in their lives.

Sutton says, "Many Christians want healing, deliverance, and relief from their pain without the transformative work of Christ."³¹ Individuals with this problem have been conditioned to do the work of the ministry out of a heart that lies in wait for transformation. The work they do in the ministry has precedence over the pain that resides in the heart. People in this state turn to materialism. For them, church becomes the

²⁸ Steve Sutton, *Finding the Purpose in Church-Hurt: Recognizing the Pain and Controlling the Suffering* (Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2014), 7.

²⁹ Sutton, 7.

³⁰ Sutton, 6.

³¹ Sutton, 6.

place where they learn to get all that they can. This is greed. Henri J. M. Nouwen in his book *The Way of the Heart* says, “Compulsive is the best way to describe the false self.”³² According to Nouwen, “The compulsive manifest itself in the lurking fear of failing and the constant urge to prevent this by gathering more of the same, more work, money, and more friends.”³³ Any attempt to operate in the false-self causes one to encounter church hurts and experience pain.

Even so, there are some individuals who attempt to hide their hurts through the tasks that they do daily. They will take on any assignment that should be done in the church. Some people attempted to hide their pain by working for financial gain. They work hard at accumulating friends for their own benefit. People encounter hurts when they have become dependent on the “false self and the secular way of life.”³⁴ The heart that has not been impacted by the gospel continually thrives on seeking to gain more of the secular life. The secular life becomes the remedy to the pain encountered through church hurts. Work, money and friends become the remedy to all the pain the habitual self stores in his or her heart. Therefore work, money and friends became the cover-up for the fear of failing and its pain. Once the compulsive person fails at what he or she seeks to obtain, someone or something is to blame.

Blame

Understanding blame helps one grasp how church hurts develops and how the continuation of those hurts has impacted the ministry of the church. People in all walks of

³² Nouwen, *Way of the Heart*, 22.

³³ Nouwen, *Way of the Heart*, 22.

³⁴ Nouwen, *Way of the Heart*, 22.

life revert to blame for one reason or another. When people fail at their own gain they blame others. Blame leads to ongoing bitterness and resentment.³⁵ Some people show bitterness and resentment because of troubles they have encountered in life. There are people who revert to bitterness and resentment at any failed attempt to get what they want or to get their way.

Christians have experienced hurts and reverted to bitterness and resentment. When the pastor cannot meet the needs of the congregation some may even blame the pastor for their pain and suffering. Unmet expectations have caused some Christians to express their hurts by becoming bench members. Don Colbert in his book *Deadly Emotions* says, “The person who feels bitter nearly always believes that someone else is at fault.”³⁶ Through bitter experiences, Christians have given up on the work of the ministry due to hurts they have encountered in the church. Christians have become bench members when their zeal for the work of the ministry fizzled out.

When blame is present in one’s life, encounters with negative experiences from the past will influence one’s present experience. Colbert says, “People who play the blame game do not just blame another person for past failures or events, but they continue to blame the person for current failures and negative experiences.”³⁷ When blame shows up in a church it is an indication that someone somewhere in the organization has experienced hurts. These harms will lead to havoc if not dealt with.

Blame will show up in various ways. Blame shows up because of lack of finances,

³⁵ Don Colbert, *Deadly Emotions: Understanding the Mind-Body, Spirit Connection that Can Heal or Destroy You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 127.

³⁶ Colbert, 127.

³⁷ Colbert, 129.

attendance, member retention, lack of growth, high turnover, no bulletins and church decline. The greatest sign of blame is when people use the phrase: “People say.” People use blame in this way to protect themselves from being seen in a bad or wrong way, shifting the responsibility onto others.

Blame is an attack mechanism usually pointed in one direction. Blame is also used as an attack mechanism in which one vents one’s feelings. The phrase “People say” has been used as attack mechanism. Attack mechanisms have been used to launch verbal missiles at others with regularity and deadly precision. Some people have experienced hurts in the body of Christ because of this kind of selfishness.

Those who blame others for their problems revert to this sort of selfishness as a means of handling their hurts. Some Christians use an attack mechanism when they are not comfortable speaking about their concerns. Some people use blame as a way of talking about their problem and how they feel by attributing it to someone or something. People blame others because they are not comfortable communicating their hurts, beliefs, or how they feel. Some people use blame as a way of expressing how they feel about a situation, based on what another person has said. When the words “They say” or “people say” are used, this is an indication that the speaker has a problem with the situation at hand.

“People say” is how one protects oneself from any accusation related to blame. Blame in this way leads to gossip. Gossip has led to harm within an organization. Gossip will defame an organization from the inside out. It is important to understand how hurts impact organizations for hurts to be managed and for healing can take place.

Christians must realize when they are on the verge of walking in ways that will

cause harm to others and they must do something about it. Christians must handle their hurts in an appropriate manner. When Christians fail to handle their hurts, others get hurt and the impact on organizations take a negative effect. Because it is evident that hurts happen, it is important to understand how hurts impact organizations in order to find the remedy for healing those hurts.

The Impact of Hurts on Organizations

Communication Failure

It is important to look at communication failure in order to comprehend how hurts impact organizations. One way of understanding how hurts impact organizations is to learn from organizations that have experienced failure. The church can learn from other agencies and their failures in order to understand painful situations that have developed in her midst. John Baldoni in his book *Great Communication Secrets of Great Leaders* addressed the issue of why companies fail. When some failure happens, whether it was a product failure, the defection of a leader, or a market reversal, leaders have two choices.³⁸ According to Baldoni, “They can say nothing and hope the story just goes away, or they can speak out and work out their issues with input from key stakeholders.”³⁹ Communication failure is a problem that many ministries face. Baldoni says, “Invariably companies make the wrong choice—in the face of bad news, they hibernate rather than proclaim.”⁴⁰ Problems arise in the church when people are kept in the dark concerning issues that will affect them.

³⁸ John Baldoni, *Great Communication Secrets of Great Leaders* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 3.

³⁹ Baldoni, 3.

⁴⁰ Baldoni, 3.

A failure to communicate has been one of the greatest problems of the church. This problem surfaces when people believe they have been left out of important conversations concerning the church. Many organizations fail to include their members in the main conversations about the membership or about key issues the membership felt were important. Members get hurt when they were not given the opportunity to state their concerns about important issues concerning the organization. A failure in communication will lead to the failure of an organization.

The organization must recover from the damage done when a communication failure occurs. When a local body does not recover from injury, the breakdown in membership is evitable. The impact of hurts on the ministries is the result of a failure that occurred within the church. People will leave because they have been hurt or have not been allowed to participate in decisions made by the group. Those who exit the church have the potential to persuade others to leave. Failed communication has led to church hurts and resulted in negative impacts on the church. Failed communication leads to a variety of issues. It is important to understand how failed communication has contributed to deeper wounds that occur as the result of church hurts.

Passive-aggressive Behaviors

In order to comprehend the impact of hurts on organizations by those who have experienced church hurts, it is important to understand how communication failure has led to damages within an organization. It is also important to comprehend to how hurts caused by communication failure can lead to even deeper wounds and greater destruction. The breakdown in the organization is inevitable when the communication is one-sided. Although one-sided communication continues Baldoni says key stakeholders huddle

quietly among themselves rather than speaking to employees. Although the communication continues, a barrier is formed as the solution because people form their opinion about the situation. When communication is one-sided, people will create their message, usually by way of “rumors, innuendo, and gossip.”⁴¹ One way to identify that hurts have occurred in an organization is when people create their message about the organization or members of the organization.

The effectiveness of the organization erodes when a communication failure occurs. Communication failure contributes to church hurts in a variety of ways. Communication failure causes people revert to passive-aggressive behaviors. An indication that church hurts exist in an organization is when passive-aggressive behaviors are in operation within the organization. Passive-aggressive behaviors in the church are warning sign that a breakdown exists in communication or relationships. Passive-aggressive behaviors provide clues for understanding church hurts.

It is important to understand passive-aggressive behaviors in order to understand how hurts impact the organizations. Gossip is a form of passive-aggressive behavior. Quill refers to passive-aggressive anger as ways in which people have been “attacked in subtle indirect passive ways.”⁴² Some people have used these indirect passive ways in the church as an attack device. Among the ways people have utilized passive-aggressive tactics are through “resentment, stubbornness, procrastination, sullenness or intentional failure to do requested tasks.”⁴³ Being able to recognize passive-aggressive behaviors in

⁴¹ Baldoni, 3-4.

⁴² Quill, 18.

⁴³ Quill, 18.

one's organization is vital to the health of the organization. When passive-aggressive behaviors are not recognized the organization may be impacted in a negative way.

Passive-aggressive behaviors that are actively working in an organization are a warning that something has gone wrong within the organization. The presence of gossip and rumors are indications that people showing passive-aggressive behaviors are damaging the body of Christ. Rumors and gossip brought about by passive-aggressive behaviors infiltrates the organization and causes destructive.

Passive-aggressive behavior is expressed in the church through “gossiping about others, being overly critical, holding a grudge ... dirty looks, and the silent treatment.”⁴⁴ These are the currents that will cripple a ministry. These currents will tear down the very lives one is called to build up in God's people. Problems for the organization occur when false rumors or gossip surface because members attempt to explain what has happened in the organization without having the facts. When rumors about the organization spread, people will believe them. Rumors have caused damage to organizations because of the negative light cast on the organization. Gossip has resulted in damage to organizations when others believe rumors about an organization. At times these damaging rumors have caused people to pull away from organizations impacted by these destructive means.

Passive-aggressive behavior has shown up in the church when leaders do not communicate with the church concerning critical business decisions. A failure to communicate with the congregation has caused many instances where passive-aggressive behavior occurred. Failed communication or non-communication has created problems for organizations. Rumors, innuendos and gossip have caused harm to organizations that

⁴⁴ Quill, 18.

fail to communicate with their employees. When this happens, church hurts are inevitable and damage to the church will occur. John P. Kotter in his book *The Heart of Change* says, “Never underestimate the power of the mind to disempower.”⁴⁵ There are people within our churches who engage in silent, passive-aggressive behaviors to disempower and tear down the ministries of the church. Some people who experience hurts within the church have reverted to these behaviors. These forms of passive-aggressive behavior have impacted the church in destructive ways. Christians who engage in such behaviors must question the relationship they have with Christ and with others.

Christians have used passive-aggressive behaviors to influence others without saying a word. David Faust in his book *Praise under Pressure* says, “Strong but undetectable undercurrents of gossip and unresolved anger ... pull people down, divide churches, and drown morale.”⁴⁶ Some Christians have used these tactics to influence others that the ministry is of no value. People have attempted to destroy the organization by using these tactics. Damaging character or personalities shows up in the church through passive-aggressive behaviors.

The character or personality shows up in one’s speech and actions. Albert Ellis says, “Nothing undermines change more than behavior by individuals that is inconsistent with their words.”⁴⁷ Inconsistencies happen when people are living and talking two different languages. These inconsistencies are evident in the lives of some Christians who cause harm to others in the church. These behaviors are exposed in one’s outer being

⁴⁵ John P. Kotter and Dan S. Cohen, *The Heart of Change: Real Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations* (Boston, MA: Howard Business School Publishing, 2002), 112.

⁴⁶ David Faust, *Praise Under Pressure: Shepherd, Psalmist, King, Sinner* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing Company, 1996), 43.

⁴⁷ Albert Ellis, *Anger: How to Live with and Without It* (New York, NY: Citadel Press, 2003), 25.

through the activities of the heart. A study of the heart's attitude gives clarity to why many hurts occur.

A Heart of Stone and the Heart of Flesh

It is important to understand the heart in order to comprehend how hurts impact organizations and to seek ways to handle those hurts. According to Herbert Lockyer, the heart is “The inner self that thinks, feels, and decides.”⁴⁸ The heart is capable of speaking, thinking and making wise decisions.⁴⁹ However, the heart that thinks, feels and decides does not always make wise decisions. The decisions that one makes come from the hidden depths of the heart. The things that are hidden in the depth of the heart matter more than anything else for who a person is and what will become of that person.⁵⁰ The things that are hidden in the heart will express who one is in good and bad situations.

Therefore, the heart responds to good and bad situations in life out of God's wisdom or one's feelings. The heart responds to painful situations both through right or wrong actions and in positive or negative ways. There are Christians who have reacted in a negative way to bad things done to them. They may even respond in negative ways based on the consequences of their actions. The negative experiences contribute to a defect in one's character. Documentation reveals that, “The heart often means someone's true characteristic or personality.”⁵¹ One's character is made up of the evil or good foundation rooted in the heart. The response coming out of that foundation contributes to

⁴⁸ F. F. Bruce and R. K., Harrison, *Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Herbert Lockyer, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1986), 466.

⁴⁹ Bruce and Harrison, 446.

⁵⁰ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 16.

⁵¹ Bruce and Harrison, 446.

the makeup of an individual. An individual character develops based on the evil or good that flows from the heart. The evil influences cause some to experience hurts. Some people have caused hurts because of the evil influences of the heart.

Although parents work hard to influence the behaviors and beliefs of their children, most adults have changed their views about what their parents told them.⁵² As adults, they are in control of their attitudes, ideas and actions. The influences of one's parents, teachers, religious leaders and environment may greatly contribute to one's personality, which is by no means is fixed or unchangeable.⁵³ One's character or personality is at the mercy of the good or evil that one allows to develop in the heart. When people experience things in life, they choose to respond to those experiences based on what is in the heart. A heart that yields a negative response to outward matters has a weak base. This weak base has been seen in the soulish or stony heart.

The stony heart is one that has been cooled by the troubles of the world. A heart of stone is not always recognizable. The pain that this heart has encountered is not outwardly visible. Peter Scazzero's iceberg model is one way of understanding the inner unrest of the soulish or stony heart. Human lives have been compared to that of an iceberg, in which ninety percent is lived below the surface.⁵⁴ Ten percent represents the part of life that is visible to the naked eye. The ninety percent of the iceberg is where internal unrest occurs in the hidden areas of the heart. The heart that has endured pain in the ninety percent of life responds because of what self perceives as a threat to the self or

⁵² Ellis, 25.

⁵³ Ellis, 24.

⁵⁴ Scazzero and Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 74.

an attack against the individual. When a person perceives that an attack has occurred against them, inwardly unrest will cause a disturbance. This disturbance may extend to the immediate environment.

The soulish or stony heart experiences inner unrest because of the outer confusion it has experienced. The soulish believer allows his or her heart to be governed by such outer confusion. The heart experiences inner unrest because it has encountered unpleasant surroundings. Inner unrest will cause the heart to respond out of feelings. When pain brews inwardly and spews out onto others it is because the person does not know how to handle his or her hurts.⁵⁵ A person who responds out of his or her feelings may act without concern for safety or for the safety of others. These actions occur because the heart has experienced pain and has responded out of its pain. The pain which the heart experiences because of inner turmoil can help in understanding how church hurts transpire.

Impact of Inner Unrest

It is important to understand how people respond to inner turmoil in order to comprehend how the church has been impacted by hurts. The pain that the heart encounters will show up in one's character because of the way in which one responds to inner turmoil. Robert Augustus Masters uses the container method in referring to feelings. In the container method, feelings are "heated liquid" in a container.⁵⁶ The container method reflects an individual who does not know how to deal with his or her feelings. Individuals in this state "often are seen by others as having a bad temper, losing

⁵⁵ Robert Augustus Masters, *Emotional Intimacy: A Comprehensive Guide for Connecting with the Power of Your Emotions* (Boulder, CO: Sounds True Inc., 2013), 51.

⁵⁶ Masters, 51.

control, and taking their feelings out on others.”⁵⁷ Hurts happen because some people do not deal with the inner unrest of the heart. People who experience inner unrest and do not handle it properly contribute to the hurts others experience. Inner unrest shows up in many ways.

The heart that harbors anger, resentment, blame and jealousy is a heart of inner turmoil. Paul A. Mickey and Robert L. Wilson refer to inner turmoil as an intrapersonal struggle.⁵⁸ This type of struggle takes place inside of the individual’s heart. The struggle occurs because of the individual’s inconsistent values. When these struggles lead to hurts, it is because the individual has not dealt with the issue or conflicting values. There are some who will not take on the responsibility for their inner hurts. Most people believe that someone else is at fault for their pain.

Jeremiah said, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick: who can understand it” (Jer. 17:9)? Because sin is one of the most common responses of the heart, “If we truly believed in the destructiveness of sin, we would be quite afraid of it.”⁵⁹ Sin depicted as a spiritual sickness affects the heart.⁶⁰ It is this sinful heart that is unresponsive to God and insensitive to others.⁶¹ A heart that is unresponsive to God and insensitive to others responds without using true goodly wisdom. The unresponsive or insensitive heart does not glorify God. One’s character and personality are renewed

⁵⁷ Caruso and Salovey, 65.

⁵⁸ Paul A. Mickey and Robert L. Wilson, *Conflict and Resolution* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1973), 35.

⁵⁹ McGee, 59.

⁶⁰ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 642.

⁶¹ Stanley, 66.

through regeneration because of the redemption work done in the heart.

The removal of stone from the heart allows the heart to respond to God and others out of an upright character. According to Erickson, regeneration is necessary for a lasting change, because human hearts and personalities are corrupt.⁶² Regeneration is necessary for one to deal with the hurts encountered in life. A new heart and Spirit bring about lasting change in one's life, as exemplified by the depiction of regeneration as a crucible experience. The crucible experience is depicted as a refiner's fire where one is brought into right relation with God.⁶³

Some people are brought into right relations with God but seem to have forgotten that the main purpose of the heart is to love God and to love others. When people choose to respond out of the issues that flow continually out of the heart, they will experience pain. Although God has forgiven, some people will not forgive. "In fact, they may very well be held hostage to bitterness and anger" over hurts they experienced.⁶⁴ Individuals have a hard time looking in the mirror because of their condition.⁶⁵ "They already did so and did not like what they saw." An intentional or unintentional reminder will result in one reaping the consequences.⁶⁶ As time passes, one begins to take on their issues and become the person who hurts others out of past hurt. Persons in unpleasant situations will continue to birth "generations" of people who continue to hurt others out of unresolved

⁶² Erickson, 673.

⁶³ F. LeRon Shults and Steven J. Sandage, *Transforming Spirituality: Integrating Theology and Psychology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 31.

⁶⁴ Stanley, 123.

⁶⁵ Stanley, 56.

⁶⁶ Stanley, 56.

issues from the past.

Many times when people allow things to become lodged in their hearts, “It erodes their faith in God.”⁶⁷ It is childish to think that people automatically forgive when wronged, and it is also childish when one believes it is not up to them to make restitution to those wronged.⁶⁸ When people ignore any aspect of who they are as people made in the image of God, this results in “destructive consequences” in one’s relationship with God, with others, and with oneself.⁶⁹ One’s past lives will continue to influence them in some way.⁷⁰ As long as one believes that someone else is the problem, the root of the problem remains. The source of the problem must be dealt with to heal the destructive behaviors that contribute to pain. It is not whether Christians are dealing with their wound, but how Christians deal with their pain that is the key to healing hurts. Instead of blaming others for one’s hurts or failures, one must choose the healthy way to live by turning to God. Hurts continue in the lives of individuals when they allow their present life to be influenced by past pain. Past pain influences one’s present life because of internal unrest that causes a disturbance in one’s immediate context. These influences in one’s life will affect the ministry or organization. Past pain is an indication of what church hurt does in the life of an individual. If not handled properly, past influences will cause an erosion of one’s family or ministry. Some hurts that are not addressed in a proper manner lead to breakdowns in the ministry. Understanding hurts and how these hurts occurred can help in understanding the path to take in healing one’s hurts before the

⁶⁷ Stanley, 123.

⁶⁸ Stanley, 124.

⁶⁹ Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 18.

⁷⁰ Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 28.

damage becomes too severe.

Remedy for Healing Hurts through Relevant Literature

It is important to understand how one can seek healing from one's hurts by turning to relevant literature for insight. A person once asked, "Where is the Love?" and emphatically replied, "It's in the heart!" Love must always be in the heart. One must continually live a life of love from the heart. Rick Warren, in his book *The Purpose-Driven life* says, "Life is all about love."⁷¹ "Because God is love, the most important lesson He wants people to learn on earth is how to love."⁷² Among all of the pain and evil in the heart, there is a spark of love that is capable of flowing through whatever we encounter in life. This spark of love that can flow through any hurt and allow the healing touch of forgiveness to reside in one's being. Boa describes this love as loving God completely, which involves our whole personality—our intellect, emotion, and will.⁷³ When one comes to love God completely, all the evil in one's being is routed out by God's love.

Love gives in forgiveness because forgiveness is rooted in love. Love gives by releasing the offender. The love of Christ cried out from the cross for the hurts that many would encounter: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." This expression of love is a healing remedy to healing offenses. Though wounded, Christ cared for humanity's wounds. People who have been wounded are called not only to "care for their

⁷¹ Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 123.

⁷² Warren, *Purpose Driven Live*, 123.

⁷³ Boa, 31.

wounds and the wound of others but to make their wounds a source of healing power.”⁷⁴

This source of healing power is wrought in the lives of people who are aware of their loneliness because they recognize Christ who is the source of their healing.

Forgiveness is then wrought in one’s being as an expression of Christ’s love. Forgiveness that works through the manifestation of Christ’s love is a key to healing church hurts. It shows that one is capable of completely loving God. Christians who completely love God will love others despite the offenses they encounter through church hurts. Christians are capable of loving others because they have been called into God’s pardoning love. The love of God for his people is a love that forgives. Through the forgiveness of sins, Jesus released a new and overflowing love that fills and directs the life and actions of God’s people (Luke 7:47). It is through this forgiving love that one must interact with those who have experienced church hurts.

Christians who completely love God will love others because God’s love abides in their heart. Jesus created a new situation through God’s mercy. Jesus proclaimed God’s mercy as a new event that changes everything. Jesus’ proclamation of God’s mercy offers people a necessity to participate in this life-changing event. The individual and the community of believers can take part in this new situation through the affirmation of God’s mercy. Church hurts will be healed through Christians whose lives and actions attest to God’s mercy in Christ Jesus. They can help those who are hurting from church hurts. A Christian who has experienced God’s mercy realizes the importance and presence of the Holy Spirit in healing his or her hurts. Allowing the Holy Spirit to work in one’s life is a key to healing one’s hurts.

⁷⁴ Nouwen, *Wounded Healer* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 82.

Involving the Holy Spirit in Healing - Growth and Maturity

It is important to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of healing hurts. The Holy Spirit must be allowed access to one's hurts so that the healing process can begin. Christians should not only have a head knowledge of God but a heart knowledge of Him as well. Christians must grow in love by undoubtedly knowing God.⁷⁵ A continuation of heart awareness and interaction with the word causes one to grow in one's relationship with God through Christ Jesus and through the inward working of the Holy Spirit. According to Willard, "Spiritual formation is focused entirely on Jesus; its goal is an obedience or conformity to Christ that arises out of an inner transformation accomplished through positive interaction with the grace of God in Christ."⁷⁶ Through the inner working of the Holy Spirit, one can cooperate with the grace of God daily. It is through positive interaction with the grace of Christ that one can respond out of a heart, which has been transformed by that same grace in which one interacts daily.⁷⁷ Interacting with God's grace causes one to deal with the unrest of one's heart.

"God has endowed each of us with certain essential qualities that reflect and express him in a unique way."⁷⁸ The healing of internal unrest in one's heart allows the reflection of these essential qualities to illuminate one's outer being. As one's true self emerges, the false constructs that one has accumulated are being stripped away by the

⁷⁵ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 22.

⁷⁶ Willard, 22.

⁷⁷ Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 28.

⁷⁸ Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 28.

Spirit of God, causing one to respond in a mature way.⁷⁹ People who react in a mature way reflect consistency between their inner thoughts and actions. As one serves God and others, one will grow in maturity. Growth at times causes pain, and hurts can result in growth that leads to spiritual maturity. In referring to one's service in the church, Warren says a servant's heart will reveal one's maturity.

Real servants are always on the lookout for ways to help others. When they see a need, they seize the moment to meet it, just as the Bible commands us: whenever we have the opportunity, we must do what is good for everyone, especially for the family of believers. We miss many occasions for serving because we lack sensitivity and spontaneity. Great opportunities to serve never last long. They pass quickly, sometimes never to return. You may only get one chance to serve that person, so take advantage of the moment. Never tell your neighbor to wait until tomorrow if you can help them now.⁸⁰

Although a servant's heart reveals Christian maturity, the heart that misses the opportunity to serve reveals its inner core through those missed opportunities.

Many Christians miss the opportunity to serve others because of grudges and hurts in their life. Christians miss the opportunity to serve others because they allow the hurts they have experienced in the church to become a blocking agent to their service to others. Allowing the Holy Spirit access to these blocks in one's life is essential to the effectiveness of one's service to God. Allowing the Holy Spirit access to one's heart is one way of building a trusting relationship.

Christian service in the church takes place through trusting relationships that have been built. Service in this sense has been revealed in the lives of those who are aware of their hurts and understand how to handle them. It is important to understand one's service to God and others through the lens of hurts. It is important to recognize the role hurts play

⁷⁹ Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 28.

⁸⁰ Warren, 259.

in one's life. Although hurts should not happen, one's perception regarding those hurts must be understood. Finding the right counsel is necessary for healing one's hurt. In doing so, those who have experienced church hurts have the opportunity to experience healing from their wounds. It is essential for the pastor to recognize those who have been hurt and guide them to the necessary care for their hurts. There are a variety of ways to meet the needs of those who have been hurt in the church. One way to meet the needs of those who have been hurt is through small group ministries.

Serving through Small Groups

It is important to understand the role that small groups play in the lives of those who have experienced church hurts. "The pastor can connect people who are hurting with individuals and groups within the church who can provide love and support" when these trusting relationships are present.⁸¹ Small groups provide two key components that are needed to help those who get by the church. Those two elements are love and support. A person who has attended to his or her wounds is capable of rendering service to help those who were wounded find healing for their wounds. Through love and support, those who get wounded have the support needed to care for their wounds.

According to Charles V. Gerkin, "The life cycle concept provides a highly useful structure for the work of Pastoral care."⁸² The life cycle concept "Helps the pastoral caregiver understand individuals and facilitates the pastoral task of gathering together persons with common problems so that they may provide care for one another."⁸³ Small

⁸¹ David G. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 35.

⁸² Charles V. Gerkin, *An Introduction to Pastoral Care* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 151.

⁸³ Gerkin, 151.

group care can be facilitated by utilizing the life cycle concept as well as rendering one's service through love and support.

Some people who hurt have left the church. There are times when one may experience challenging situations in their service to God, but giving up should not be an option. Many times people just want their hurt to end. Some want their troubles to go away without dealing with the pain that resides inside. Others just want a better life. Through serving others, people open their lives to possibilities. Caroline Barnett in *Willing to Walk on Water* said, "Serving others is more than something the Bible commands us to do. It is, in fact, a blessing that will not only change those around us but will also make a difference in our lives."

When one obeys God and serves others, his or her life is changed from the inside out.⁸⁴ Through serving, one's heart is changed to reflect the heart of God.⁸⁵ Documents show that people who serve others are at their best and can experience healing in their personal life.⁸⁶ It is important to understand that one's service can be the result of a co-dependent relationship.

Service viewed through the lens of co-dependency could prove beneficial for understanding hurts. A co-dependent person is an adult child of a dysfunctional family. The adult child takes on the caregiving role learned in the family of origin.⁸⁷ According to Wimberly, "The co-dependent person suffers from deep unmet needs similar to the

⁸⁴ Caroline Barnett, *Willing to Walk on Water: Step Out in Faith and Let God Work Miracles Through Your Life* (Austin, TX: Tyndale, 2013), 172.

⁸⁵ Barnett, 172.

⁸⁶ Barnett, 172.

⁸⁷ Edward P. Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 85.

needs of the addict; however, the co-dependent becomes a caregiver rather than an addict.”⁸⁸ The person in this functional role believes his or her self-worth and appearance are defective. Wimberly says a co-dependent person’s service is self-demeaning and self-destructive because he or she is convinced that the only way to live is by serving others.⁸⁹ There is always a sense of guilt of not doing enough. “There is a compulsive need to separate the self from anxiety relating to guilt and shame by overworking and serving.”⁹⁰ “Being in a codependent relationship often produces unbearable anxiety, which is the result of a belief in a flawed self.”⁹¹ Through pastoral counseling, a person in this role of service can find healing from the guilt and shame that rules their life. It is important to understand pastoral counseling to comprehend how one can receive healing from past hurts. Christians are not to bypass those who are wounded and sitting in the pews week after week. Attending to the needs of others is a part of the pastoral counselor’s role.

Healing Church Hurts through Pastoral Counseling

It is important to understand pastoral counseling as a resource in which one can find healing for hurts. In pastoral counseling, one must be able to discern the false self that operates out of the self-condemning nature. A self-condemning nature keeps one in bondage to shame, fear, and guilt, and causes one to function in resistance out of self-defensive and self-protective instincts. In understanding church hurts one can comprehend how people could be kept in bondage to the hurts that have taken place in their lives. Individuals who have experienced hurts utilize their self-protective instincts to

⁸⁸ Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling* 85.

⁸⁹ Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling* 85.

⁹⁰ Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling* 86.

⁹¹ Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling* 85.

prevent more hurts. Some people leave the church to avoid further hurts from occurring. Others give up on doing ministry although they have remained in the church. Some people are trapped by church hurts.

Church hurts prevent some people from moving forward in life and cause a block in ministry for some Christians. Pastoral counseling is one way to help those trapped by church hurts. Documentation shows that “A significant aspect of the pastor’s caring ministry with adults in the generative years is a consequence of the inevitable presence of failure, assisting individuals, institutions, and even larger social entities to recognize and counter the presence of relational failure with the good news of the gospel.”⁹² Pastoral counseling is one way of utilizing the gospel to provide care to those who get hurt in the church.

It is important to understand how those who have experienced church hurts can experience healing through pastoral counseling. David G. Benner in his book *Strategic Pastoral Counseling* says, “A pastoral counselor is one who brings Christian meaning to the problem experienced by those whom he or she helps.”⁹³ Pastoral counseling is one method of helping people who are trapped in the realm of bondage from church hurts. Finding healing from the realm of bondage is how people find freedom to live in the true self. Edward P. Wimberly says, “In individual counseling, the focus is on the individual and where God is at work helping the person find emotional healing and wholeness.”⁹⁴ In counseling, one must be willing to share their church hurts with another so healing can

⁹² Gerkin, 202.

⁹³ Benner, 92.

⁹⁴ Edward P. Wimberly, *Prayer in Pastoral Counseling: Suffering, Healing and Discernment* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 23.

take place. It is important that the counselor has the heart to listen to the individual who has experienced church hurts.

The one who listens to the hurts of another must be trustworthy and have an understanding heart. A person giving pastoral counseling must have developed skills in listening. The “art of listening” is key in pastoral counseling. According to Charles V. Gerkin,

Listening involves more than simply hearing the words that people say. It means being attentive to the emotional communication that accompanies the words. It means listening for the nuances that may give clues to the particular, private meanings that govern a person’s inner life. It means listening for hidden conflicts, unspoken desires, unspeakable fears, and faint hopes. First and foremost pastors must be listeners who invite self-disclosure and thus communicate acceptance and nonjudgmental care.⁹⁵

Through the art of listening pastoral counselors come to know the person needing counsel. The art of listening provides the counselor the opportunity to hone in on the pain and hurts that one is struggling with in life. Listening is important as the stages of the counseling process develop. Counseling helps the counselee understand the problem that is at hand.

The presenting problem should be explored during the intake stage of counseling.⁹⁶ Pastoral counseling is one way of understanding the presenting problem for those who have experienced church hurts. Through counseling one can understand the problem that has caused destruction in one’s life and in the church. Once the presenting problem has been identified, understanding the counselee’s background information that is pertinent to the presenting problem is necessary for understanding how to heal his or

⁹⁵ Gerkin, 91.

⁹⁶ Wimberly, *Prayer in Counseling*, 23.

her hurts through counseling.

To help the counselee understand their presenting problem, the counselor must be a person of empathy. According to Wimberly, “Empathy involves putting oneself in another’s shoes so that the counselor can understand what the counselee is feeling. It also involves communicating what the person feels in ways that help him or her understand how their feelings are linked to some meaning, metaphor or image.”⁹⁷ Once the connection has been made, the counselor “Takes the time to reflect back to the counselee, including a piece of the larger picture in the reflection process. Through empathy, the counselor helps the counselee make some important connections by moving from metaphor to a theme or piece of the story.”⁹⁸ The counselee can set goals help understand the presenting problem once the connections are made.

Setting goals helps one recognize the theological issues undergirding the negative stories of one’s life.⁹⁹ Setting goals help one become aware of psychological dynamics involved in one’s story that lock one into certain frustrating behaviors and attitudes.¹⁰⁰ The counselor must be careful about telling the counselee what must change or what needs changing.¹⁰¹ “Counseling involves an exploration of behavior and the sources of resistance to change, not simply telling a person what he or she must change.”¹⁰²

Wimberly uses a biblical narrative method for pastoral counseling, in which the

⁹⁷ Wimberly, *Prayer in Counseling*, 39.

⁹⁸ Wimberly, *Prayer in Counseling*, 42.

⁹⁹ Wimberly, *Prayer in Counseling*, 23.

¹⁰⁰ Wimberly, *Prayer in Counseling*, 23.

¹⁰¹ Benner, 94.

¹⁰² Benner, 94.

“counselor-generated stories” are one way of utilizing the Bible in the counseling process.¹⁰³ As one’s story unfolds, one can recognize how one’s past relationships may be the blocking agent to one’s healing. According to Gerkin, “in the case of failed relationships, the pastor is most often approached by one who feels injured in a relationship. The injured person usually expects support and often agrees with an accusation against someone, even though that request is usually made to disguise the hurt and anger.”¹⁰⁴

Bob Morehead in his book *Counsel Yourself and Others from the Bible* reveals that the Bible is the first place one should turn to for help with issues that are pressing in one’s life. David G. Benner says, “The key to the engagement stage of the counseling process is the pastor and parishioner working together on the problem they identified as the central concern.”¹⁰⁵ The issues that are pressing in one’s life will block his or her personal growth. The main theme will reveal the dramatic story that blocks one’s personal growth. To recognize the main theme that blocks one’s personal growth, one must identify metaphors and images that led to the main theme.¹⁰⁶ The goal of bringing the Bible story into dialogue with the personal mythology is to lead one to a healthier mythology.¹⁰⁷

Through pastoral counsel, the counselee can be led to forgiveness and understand how to forgive themselves. The counselee can be led to receive inner healing through

¹⁰³ Wimberly, *Using Scripture*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Gerkin, 203.

¹⁰⁵ Benner, 96.

¹⁰⁶ Wimberly, *Prayer in Counseling*, 50.

¹⁰⁷ Wimberly, *Prayer in Counseling*, 44

counsel. Through inner healing of their hurts people have been prepared to handle the challenges and understand the meaning of illness in their physical body. Inner healing prepares their heart to become the receptacle to faith that opens their life to healing in the spiritual realm.

Counselors can assist the hurting person to find healing once the destructive forces in the counselee's life are recognized. Documentation shows that "care for the people of God involves care that confronts issues of injustice and moral integrity in the life of the people."¹⁰⁸ Care involves giving careful attention to the injuries that people have encountered. Careful attention involves discernment of the situation and providing compassionate care to handle the situation. Through simple counseling one can find the remedy to healing one's church hurts. Pastoral counseling guides one to true service in the body of Christ. Real service comes through one's relationship with Christ Jesus.

Healing Prayer

It is important to understand that there are hurts that are deep rooted. Some wounds are rooted in the depths of one's heart. When people hurt, one thing to consider is the fact that one must take into account the hidden depths of one's heart and engage the Holy Spirit in the healing process.¹⁰⁹ A healing remedy to such deep-rooted hurts requires prayer. John Eldredge says,

Daily Christians are called to live for God, and living for God involves living in the context of war and peace. As Christians live their lives in the context of war, it involves a constant battle of the enemy in all areas of life.¹¹⁰ Those who are

¹⁰⁸ Gerkin, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Brad Long and Cindy Strickler, *Let Jesus Heal Your Hidden Wounds: Cooperating with the Holy Spirit in Healing Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2001), 74.

¹¹⁰ John Eldredge, *Moving Mountains: Praying with Passion Confidence and Authority* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2016), 183

practiced in warfare prayer are the ones who enjoy the greatest freedom and breakthrough—the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom. 8:21).¹¹¹

Through prayer one gains courage to handle one's hurts and help others as well. Prayer is important in the context of Christian living. Christian living involves spiritual warfare. Through warfare prayer, the battle is fought against the destructive forces that cause church hurts.

It is important to understand prayer in order to understand how prayer has been utilized to heal church hurts. Prayer takes place in many forms in the lives of those who are hurting. Prayer may be offered through pastoral counseling when dealing with hurts. The prayer of healing is another way that prayer is offered to involve the Spirit of God in the healing process. Contemplative prayer helps one connect thought and heart in prayer for inner healing. Through prayer a person can be released to God so that the Holy Spirit can deal with the heart, bringing forgiveness and healing in one's being. Although prayer is utilized in a variety of ways, prayer that wars against the destructive forces in the spiritual realm can bring a release of those destructive forces in one's life.

These are areas in one's life where the spiritual battle could be fought. The spiritual struggle occurs to render weak the destructive forces that cause church hurts. Breaking agreement with the strongholds in one's life and choosing to live in victory in Christ is essential for one's healing. Through prayer, the strongholds in one's life can be broken. According to Eldredge, it is through one's authority in Christ that the enemy is banished, as one renounces the treaty to live in agreement with the tactics of the enemy.¹¹² The rendering powerless of the enemy's tactics in one's life opens the heart to

¹¹¹ Eldredge, 183.

¹¹² Eldredge, 195.

healing. The healing process begins as Jesus' presence is invited into the wound.¹¹³

Inviting the presence of Jesus into one's wound gives freedom and hope to live out one's faith in the service of God. Having banished one's agreement with the enemy, one must invite the healing love of Jesus into the heart and soul.¹¹⁴ When the healing love of Jesus is present one will continually have God's strength to draw upon, even when future hurts arise in one's life. One will also have the means to equip members of the church body so that church hurts will cease within the body of Christ.

Summary

The body of Christ is affected daily because of church hurts. When it comes to church hurts people will attest to the fact that members of the church have hurt them. Church hurts have happened, and the end may not be near. Church hurts do not only hurt those who have sustained the hurts. Church hurts affect the entire body of Christ. A person who gets hurt has options as to how they will handle their situation. Some people choose to use the hurt they encountered to pay it back in one way or another. Some may decide to leave the church while others may opt to remain as members of the body of Christ. Church hurts occur because people have received undue injuries within the church. Church hurts continue when those who have been hurt revert to damaging the church or other members of the body of Christ.

The church has been hurt by the actions of those who initiated the hurts as well as by the decisions of those who have sustained the hurts. At times the church leadership may carelessly or unknowingly initiate hurts to the body of Christ. Once hurts have

¹¹³ Eldredge, 195.

¹¹⁴ Eldredge, 195.

occurred, the individual's response to his or her hurts will determine how the body of Christ will be impacted. The body of Christ has been impacted in a negative way due to church hurts. The body of Christ has been impacted when members leave. This affects the church in a variety of ways. That person's service to the body of Christ has been totally lost to that local church. The attitude that the person displays also affects the body of Christ. If the person begins to gossip or spread rumors the negative feedback within the community taints the church and its leadership. Not only will negative feedback outside of the church cause damage, but feedback within the church has also resulted in damage.

Church hurts affect the church whether a person leaves or remains in the church; the ability to causes damage is great. People have come into the church seeking new life in Christ and have been hurt in the process. Hope is diminished when people experience church hurts. Once church hurts have taken place in the body of Christ it becomes obvious that there is a problem. Church hurts lead to other problems that are not apparently clear or visible to the eye. Underneath church hurts are tactics that will affect the ministry. Church hurts causes problems for the church as well as for the one who has been hurt.

For some people church hurts present a greater problem than attending to their own spiritual healing. People who have experienced church hurts have sought a variety of ways of dealing with their hurts. They may not immediately seek spiritual help for their hurts. Some people revert to the false self to handle their pain as the need to address the hurt presents itself. The false self presents a variety of problems for the individual who has experienced church hurts. The false self allows the hurts to continue and the wounds

to worsen. When a person operates out of the false self and seeks the wrong remedy for one's pain, others get hurt because the remedy always leads to selfish gain.

Greed becomes an issue for some as they attempt to deal with their hurts. The attempt to gain more money and financial security becomes a problem that cannot heal their pain or close their wound.

At times individuals revert to tactics aimed at diminishing, tearing down, or destroying the ministry. Such tactics are revealed in the attitudes that one displays after being hurt. Some tactics have been displayed through passive-aggressive behaviors. Passive-aggressive behaviors have impacted the ministry in negative ways. Whether sullen or silent or loud and visible, passive-aggressive behaviors work in ways that impact the ministry. Passive-aggressive behaviors can work through gossip, innuendoes, and rumors to tear down or destroy the people of God and the ministries.

These behaviors show up in a person's character. These behaviors are activated through anger, bitterness, sullenness, resentment, stubbornness, and procrastination. The damage done to the ministry or body of Christ becomes apparent when people leave the church in large numbers, or when the ministry becomes stagnant. The damage becomes apparent when those who remain within the body of Christ consistently fail to do their assigned tasks in the ministry. Recognizing the issues that lead to church hurts can provide a ministry with ways to help those who have been hurt.

When people remain as members of the body of Christ after getting hurt, healing must be sought to prevent further damage to the person and the body of Christ. If healing is not sought, a wide variety of things will occur that will continually harm the person and damage the church. People who have sustained church hurts have reverted to many

damaging behaviors. Behaviors such as gossip, rumors, and innuendos have impacted the church in many ways. Rumors and gossip not only damage the church from the outside. Rumors and gossip slowly infiltrate the inner circle of the church and seeps into the surrounding communities causing damage to the local body. Inside the church those who get hurt lose interest in doing the work of the ministry, their service to God and the local assembly ceases.

At times people who have been hurt revert to their old nature, which causes them to become slothful about the things of God and their service to the body of Christ. Their lazy attitude hinders the work of the ministry when they silently refuse to do the assigned tasks. These attitudes impact the church by halting the ministry. Passive-aggressiveness in action within a church will result in damage to the church when those who have sustained hurts persuade others within the ministry that the ministry is of no value.

The church has been at fault when these behaviors occur. For instance, when a church fails to communicate with its members some may revert to passive-aggressive behaviors to deal with the unspoken messages. They may believe that the church does not value them and create their way of dealing with the conversations that have taken place. Their way of handling the situation is to build their version of the situation and communicate their version through rumors. The rumors continue and spread within the church to select members who continue to gossip concerning the conversations or decisions that took place without the church body. The effectiveness of ministry is damaged when church hurts happen due to negative behaviors being acted out within the church.

The church must help those who have been hurt to find healing. The church must

display and live out Christ's love with open arms and an open heart. The love of Jesus can flow through one's heart, allowing forgiveness to flow to others when one opens his or her heart to Christ. A person can deal with the actions and attitudes of others in a loving way to eliminate hurts that would otherwise continue. One's service to God and others becomes an area in which one can continually receive healing and render healing to others. It is important that one's service to God reflect the service that one renders to those in the body of Christ. One's service will display the love that one has for God and others. A key component for healing church hurt is the love of God.

Through compassionate care, one can guide others to the resources needed to help them find healing for their church hurts. The church should be equipped to handle church hurts. Pastoral counsel, small groups, and prayer are ways that people can find healing. It is important that the healing process includes a listening ear and a caring heart extended to those in the healing process.

The Holy Spirit must have total access to the process of healing. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the heart can forgive and find the remedy for healing one's hurts. Those who have been placed or called to serve in the capacity of helping must be compassionate and have a love for God and God's people. One whose life displays God's love will display love for the people of God through one's service to others. Such people are aware of their wounds and know how to find healing for their hurts when they take place.

Those who are aware of their wounds are capable of allowing God to guide the healing process in their lives. They are capable of rendering service to others although they may be experiencing hurt at the moment. Their pain becomes a source through

which character could be developed in their lives. Their lives not only becomes a source of healing and character development but their wounds becomes a source of healing that could help the wounded.

CHAPTER FOUR: PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH METHODS

The project began with a concern regarding the idea of how people get hurt within the church. Church hurts, or past hurts tend to be common among people in Christian circles. Moreover, many Christians get hurt but do not always talk openly about their experiences in their communities. As a long-standing member of this local AAC, the researcher's longevity and experience of being immersed in the community consistently torn apart has brought about a desire to understand what if anything was at the core of this chaos. A desire to figure out if church hurts played a role in this AAC's pain, brought the researcher to investigate the possibility of what hurts may have taken place within this local AAC. Deciding how to go about uncovering the feasibility of whether hurts had occurred or not led to the next steps in the research project. In order to study the problem in its setting, it was important to turn to a research method that would be beneficial for this study.

Research Methodology

The researcher utilized the research method that clarified hurts in this local AAC. The researcher could determine the underlying cause of hurts within this AAC by studying this event within this setting. The researcher committed to using the Qualitative Research Design (QRD) to address the research problem. QRD was used to gain insight into the underlying problem.

Design in Qualitative Research is an ongoing process that involves "tracking" back and forth between the different components of the design, assessing the implications of goals, theories, research questions, methods, and validity threats

for one another. It does not begin from a predetermined starting point or proceed through a fixed sequence of steps but involves interconnection and interaction among the different design components.¹

QRD was used for research that seeks to study a phenomenon, group of people or strive to understand the underlying cause of an event. QRD is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.² QDR is used for examining the feasibility of hurts within this AAC and determining the cause of those hurts. QRD can ascribe meaning to life and the experiences that one has in life when the research has been done in the actual context of the study.

The researcher utilized the qualitative method of research. Qualitative research is “a form of social inquiry that focuses on how people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world in which they live.”³ It was important to comprehend this research method to recognize how to go about understanding the problem that the researcher sought to address.

Qualitative research focuses on interpreting and making sense of the world in which one lives. The researcher’s own experience and longevity in this congregation is qualitative. The researcher has experienced many of the transitions within this local AAC. The researcher’s life experiences connect to those within this local AAC. Although the researcher has a long history within the setting of this local AAC, it is important that the researcher’s own qualitative experiences do not merge with the research that this project seeks to understand. It was important for the researcher to focus on the

¹ Joseph A. Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (Thousand Oaks: CA, Sage Publications, 2005), 3.

² John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2009), 4.

³ Anne D Greig, *Doing Research with Children*, 2 ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2007), 136.

experiences of those within this local AAC. It was just as important for the researcher to remain unbiased in examining the hurts within this local AAC. The next step was to utilize the QRD to understand a particular experience within this AAC community.

It was important for the researcher to understand this phenomenon in the lives of members of this AAC by utilizing the GRD. Grounded Theory helps one generate a theory based on the occurrence of the phenomenon that has been understood by QRD. According to Stephen Gibson, “Grounded theory is a systematic discovery of the theory from data or social research, used in developing, refining, or building a theory and not testing it.”⁴ John W. Creswell says, “The intent of a grounded theory study is to move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory, a unified theoretical explanation for a process or an action.”⁵ Through grounded theory one generating and discovering a theory or explanation for a course of action.

The researcher “derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action or interaction grounded in the views of the participants.”⁶ According to Creswell, “Theory might appear in a research study as an argument, a discussion, or a rationale, and it helps to explain (or predict) phenomena that occur in the world.”⁷ According to Creswell, in research there are different ways to understand an occurrence that takes place, it may be through an argument discussion, or there may be a rationale, for why something happened. When hurts happen, they may be a reason that hurts occur in the church. Ways

⁴ Stephen Gibson, “Empowering Congregations to move From Hospitality to Celebration of Ethnic Diversity within Their Churches” (Doctoral Thesis, Bethel Seminary, May 2016).

⁵ John w. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Los Angeles CA: Sage, 2013), 85.

⁶ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 85.

⁷ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 51.

to understand hurts are through arguments or discussions among other means. Upon understanding the research method to use for this study led to the next step of the research.

Consent Forms

The researcher had previously explored the possibility of doing research in this AAC. The researcher explained the projected and obtained approval to carry out the studies in this AAC. The researcher talked with the congregation and explained the process for conducting the survey in this AAC. The researcher explained the consent forms to the participants. Members were given time to ask questions they may have had concerning the consent form. The participants were introduced to the research and given the opportunity to sign a consent form required for doing research with a population of people.

The members of this AAC signed the consent form for participating in this research. The researcher collected the consent forms and filed in a folder for safe documentation that each participant gave consent for participation in the research. The consent forms were reviewed to be sure all participants, who would be taking the survey had signed a consent form. The researcher checked the consent forms and prepared for the next phase of the project. The researcher then sought a research tool for carrying out the research.

Surveys: Developing and Testing the Surveys

It was important that the researcher understood the software utilized in the research project. Upon gaining insight into the Qualtrics survey platform, the researcher continued to move forward with the project. The survey platform was tested to get to

know the ins and outs of the software. The researcher tested the Qualtrics platform before setting up the actual survey. The test was to gain insight into how to set up and operate the software and to understand the ins and outs of the software. The test was done to see if this survey tool was adequate for conducting the research. Once the researcher decided to use the Qualtrics online platform, the researcher began formulating the questions for the survey.

The researcher continues by formulating the questions used in the study. This researcher developed questions used in the investigation by utilizing biblical-theological and related literature. The questions were used to set up the survey for conducting research among this AAC population. The questions were drawn up and reworked to narrow the selection of inquiries. The questions were rephrased for clarity and understanding. The researcher set up the surveys.

The next step consisted of setting up the survey that was used in the research project. The researcher used the Qualtrics software and generated the questionnaire used for gathering data. The researcher entered the questions into the Qualtrics survey software. There was a total of eighteen questions that the participants had to answer two of which were participant required information. The participant necessary information has a yes or no answer.

Each question had a response option. The participants would record their responses to the questions asked. The Likert scale ranged from word choices of always to never. Other choices given on the questionnaire ranged from extremely likely to extremely unlikely, and extremely long to never. The participants would record their responses to the questions in the options within the survey. The survey responses would

provide data that research project would utilize in determining the feasibility of hurts within this AAC.

Qualtrics software would provide what the researcher needed to set up and deliver the survey and to generate feedback. The Qualtrics software was created and tested with the actual survey questions. The researcher tested the software using sample questions and set up a test pilot survey using the real issues for the survey. The researcher developed the survey and conducted a test pilot with a small population. The questionnaire was tested for delivery, as well as for understanding and to be sure the software was working accurately. There were a few minor problems that took place once the survey was set-up. The minor problems were eliminated.

CM: The First Survey

The next phase consisted of distributing the survey to the participants. The questionnaire was ready to be sent out. The researcher obtained a list of email addresses for each member of this AAC. Each member received a link to the survey through his or her email account. The email contained a password for the members to enter to take the questionnaire. The study was set up with the online link to prevent participants from taking the survey more than once.

During the next phase, ten AAC members received the questionnaire through the Qualtrics online survey software. The AAC congregation has decreased to a total of eleven members including the researcher. Due to the decline in the congregation the survey size was ten members. The sampling size of a population of this quantity was ten which was the amount needed to complete this research through the inquiry method. Documentation shows that the sample size guidelines for a congregation of the size of

this AAC is ten and the sample size was ten.⁸

The researcher sent the surveys to participants giving participants adequate time for taking the survey. The survey method of investigation was a way of asking participants questions that would provide insights into the research question. The survey method provides an anonymous platform for surveying members. This anonymous platform gave members a place in which they could feel free to record their answers to the questions on the survey without being identified. The purpose of the study was to generate data that would substantiate whether hurts have taken place in this local assembly. There was also a scheduled reminder sent out to participants who did not take the survey in the one-week timeframe.

Two of the AAC members did not have an email address and stated that they could not take the survey online. The researcher asked these two members if they would be willing to take a paper copy of the survey and have their data entered into the system. The two members agreed to take the paper survey and to have their data put in the Qualtrics survey platform. The members were given a paper copy of the inquiry to complete. Once the members completed their surveys, the researcher tried to enter their survey into the platform. A few minor problems delayed entering the information into the Qualtrics platform. The researcher realized that the custom features would not allow the entering of information through one email address. The survey was set to prevent members from taking the survey more than once. A problem prevented the two surveys from being entered in the Qualtrics platform. Once all the remaining surveys were in, the researcher had to allow an option to enter the data into the software. At the close of the

⁸ Robert V. Krejcie, D.W. Morgan, *Table of Determining Sample Sizes for a Given Population*, 1970, 608.

study, the researcher adjusted the settings and entered the data into the software. The researcher kept a file of the paper surveys. A second survey was set up to use to compare and contrast the data from the first study.

The next steps consisted of setting up the second survey. The researcher created the second survey for PM to take. The surveys were compared and contrasted to determine if hurts had occurred in this AAC setting. The name of the first study was CM. The second survey was titled PM. PM or people who are no longer members of this AAC took the second survey. The name given to the surveys were also CM and PM.

PM: The Second Survey

The next steps the researcher set up the survey for PM of the AAC. The study was used to compare and contrast the data from the two surveys to understand the probability of hurts within this congregation. To compare the data a survey had to be set up for PM. This was the second survey which was titled "PM Survey." This survey was created using Qualtrics online research software. The researcher copied the first survey and made it available to the PM taking the survey.

The same questions asked of PM were requested of CM. The researcher made a minor change to the introductory section in the survey. The preliminary question was modified to address the length of time in which the previous member had not been a part of this AAC. The participants had the same choice for answers as the previous group of participants. The survey was set-up and ready for the remaining information to be included. The researcher obtained a list of PM names from the church who would be taking the survey. The Qualtrics online survey was set-up with the names and email addresses often PM. The email link provided access so that former members of this local

AAC could take the survey.

The survey was sent out to participants with an introduction and consent form for participating in the project. The email included an explanation of the study, consent form, and passcode for taking the survey. This inquiry began with a slow response but picked up soon after. Once the deadline for the surveys was completed, and the study had closed, the next step was to analyze the data from the CM and PM surveys.

Tool for Interpreting the Data

The researcher completed the data for the CM and PM surveys. The researcher downloaded the data from the CM and PM surveys into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was converted into charts that displayed the results of the surveys in graph form. The collected data was analyzed using the tables from the Microsoft spreadsheets. The researcher looked for themes and compared the subjects throughout the tables. The topics were then interpreted utilizing the biblical-theological and literature review to determine the extent that hurts played a role in this AAC.

Another Microsoft spreadsheet was set-up to compare the data between the two sets of findings. The researcher converted the spreadsheet into tables. The tables consisted of a side by side analysis of the CM and PM survey data. This data was compared to determine the hurts that existed within this AAC. The Microsoft spreadsheet was set-up to compare the data between the two sets of findings. The collected data was analyzed using the charts from the Microsoft spreadsheets. The researcher looked for themes and compared those themes throughout the spreadsheets. The researcher studied the charts for meaning and understanding into the hurts that resided within this local AAC. The topics were then interpreted utilizing the biblical-theological, literature

research and findings. The comparison and contrasting were made of the data to understand and identify of hurts that reside in this local AAC, and to understand the cause of those hurts. The downloaded file was stored on the researcher's computer for documentation and safekeeping for the research project.

Interviews

It was necessary to conduct the interviews for understanding the underlying cause of hurts within this AAC. The interviews added to the qualitative nature of the project by seeking to understand the cause of hurts within this AAC. The researcher contacted the participants who had been willing to be interviewed at the onset of the project. The interviewers were the PM and CM of this AAC. Each participant signed a consent form for participating in the research. These forms were filed away with previous data. Each participant agreed to a phone interview. The participants and researcher set a day and committed to doing the interviews.

The researcher conducted three interviews. They were conducted the interviews by phone. The interviews were done to make clear the underlying cause of hurts within this AAC. The participants answered five research questions. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed using Microsoft Word document. The researcher analyzed the data by looking for themes through the data. The biblical-theological and literature provided some insight into the interviews. The data was then analyzed to seek underlying caused to the hurts within this AAC. The data was then summarized and added to the research project. The interviews were summarized. The researcher utilized the biblical-theological, literature review and findings for interpreting the interviews. The researcher included the results in the research report.

Summary

The research sought to understand the hurts within this local AAC. The researcher attempted to understand the hurts of this congregation through a qualitative lens. The researcher sought not to allow the qualitative experience to become problematic to the study and research of this project. The participants were willing to take the survey and had prepared by signing the consent forms. The surveys provided a valuable source for gaining data that and were utilized in the research project. The interviews added to the qualitative nature of the project and proved to be of much value to the research. Upon seeking to understand the phenomenon that exists in this local AAC, it was time to turn to the next phase for analyzing the data collected. Upon completing the research, the data was analyzed, and the findings were reported.

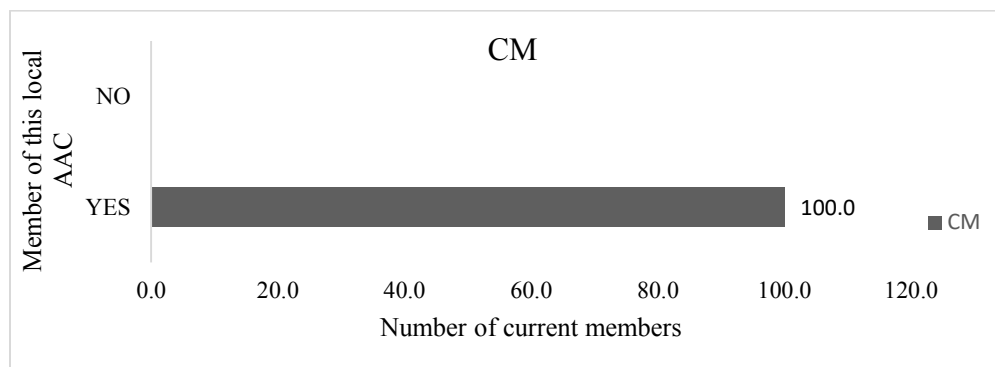
CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The research question sought to address how to move the AAC congregation through past hurts to effective ministry. To address the movement to the effective ministry, the researcher needed to understand the feasibility of whether past hurts exists within this local AAC. To figure out if hurts exist or play a role in this ministry, the research turn to the next step which consisted of analyzing the data collected through the surveys.

CM Survey Results from Tables 5.1-5.17

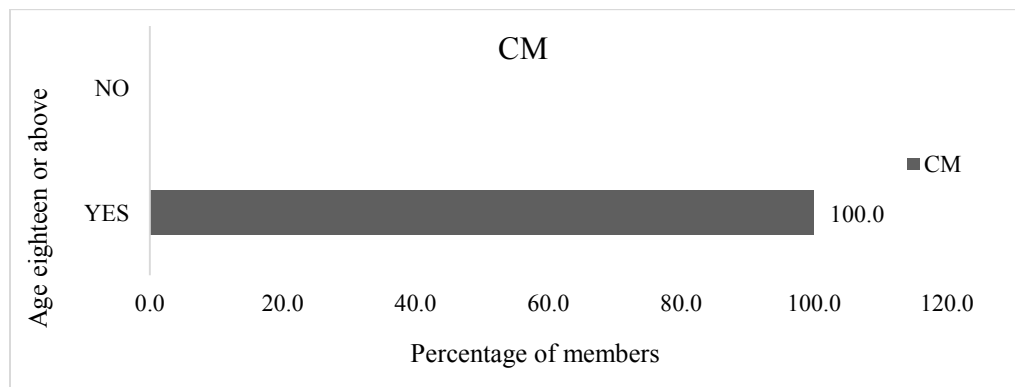
CM Survey Results

The researcher sent the survey to ten CM of this AAC. All ten CM completed the questionnaire. The current membership of this AAC has dwindled in number to a total of eleven members which includes the researcher. The total number of members that took the survey were ten out of eleven. The number of participants taking the survey is representative of the current membership of this AAC. The results of the study reveal that out those surveyed, ten were CM who are 18 years old or older. The following findings have been calculated based on the number of individuals who has taken the survey.

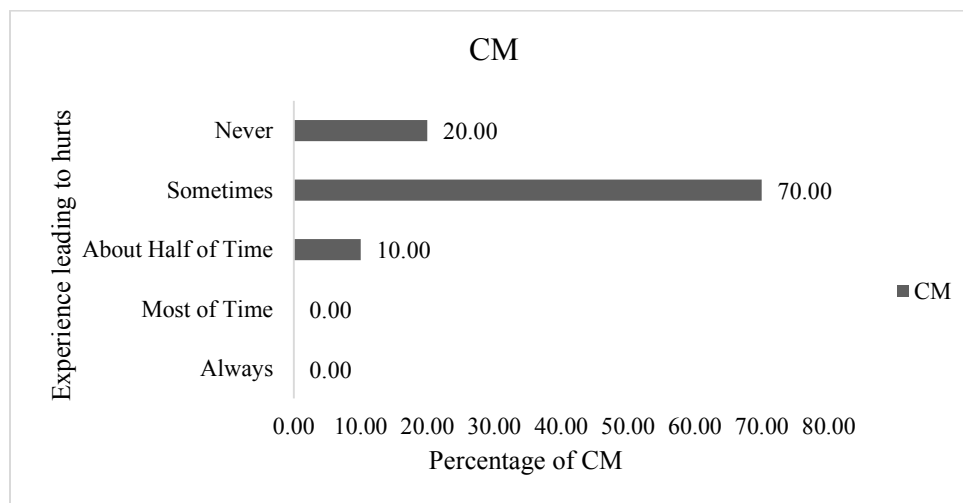
Table 1.1, Number of CM taking the survey

All participants who took the survey stated that they were a member of this AAC.

The findings are representative of that fact all ten members who took this survey are CM.

Table 1.2, CM that are eighteen years of age or more

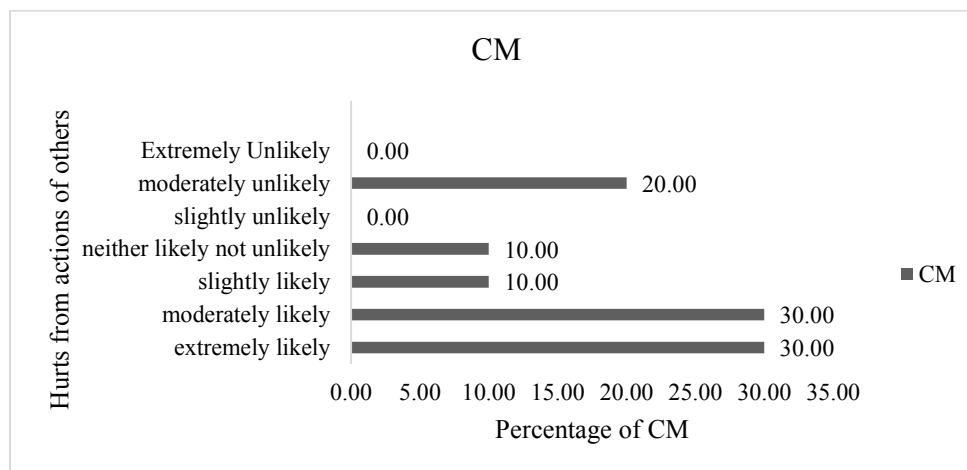
The findings reveal that all CM who took the questionnaire are 18 years old or older. A preliminary requirement was that members taking the survey are 18 years of age and older. The preliminary required information cautions against non-members participation in the inquiry process.

Table 1.3, Aware of experiences that led to hurts

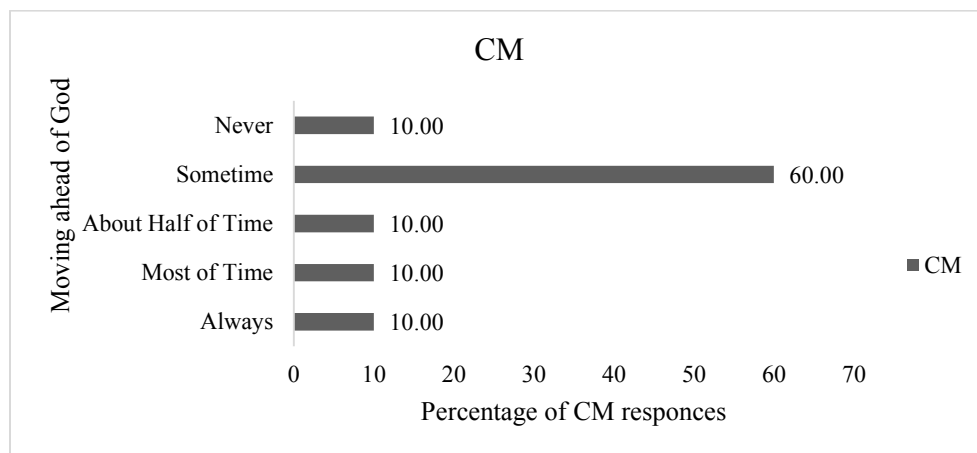
The findings indicate the degree to which CM recognize that their experiences within this AAC have resulted in hurts. Only 20% or two out of ten members of this AAC acknowledge that they did not have experiences that led to hurts. The findings show that an average of 80% or eight out of ten members admit that they have had an encounter that resulted in hurts in their lives. Any experiences that lead to hurts must be addressed to prevent them from becoming old wounds. A significant number of CM recognize they had experiences that led to the hurts they encountered. The findings represent the fact that some Christians have experienced encounters in the church that have caused hurts in their lives (Table 1.3).

The defects that are underneath the surface of one's wounds will eventually "compromise one's integrity" if care has not been given to address one's wounds.³⁰⁹ Having an awareness of one's hurts allows room for one to gain an understanding of what caused the hurts that one has experienced.

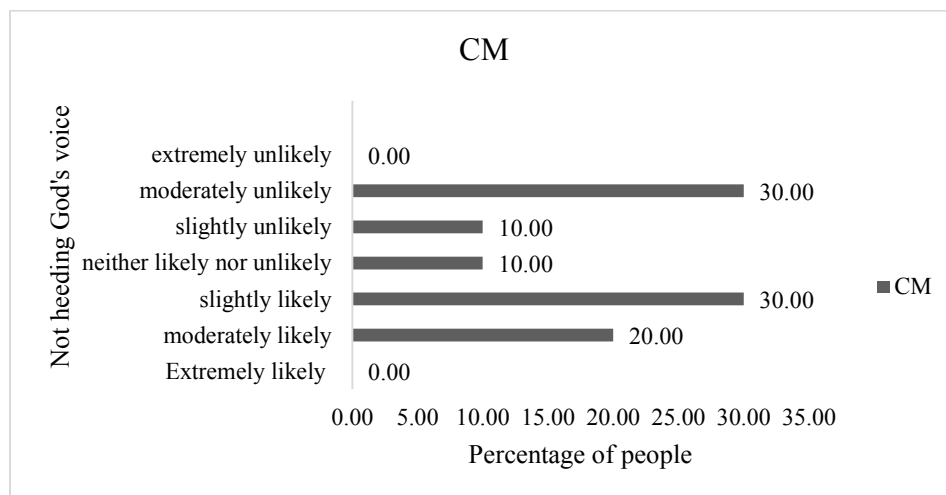
³⁰⁹ Rima, 16.

Table 1.4, Hurts resulting from actions of others

The findings reveal how CM have experienced hurts that are the results of the actions of other members. The average number of those who have likely experienced hurts are 70% or seven out of ten. Member who experienced hurts within the body will eventually separate from the body if those illnesses do not heal. When separation of disorder happens, the body becomes weak and begins to break down. John gave an example of a Samaritan woman who suffered hurts due to her separation from her community (John 4.1-26). The church experiences this disorder when people leave due to hurts they have encountered. The people of God suffer this disorder when they experience separation from the body of Christ.

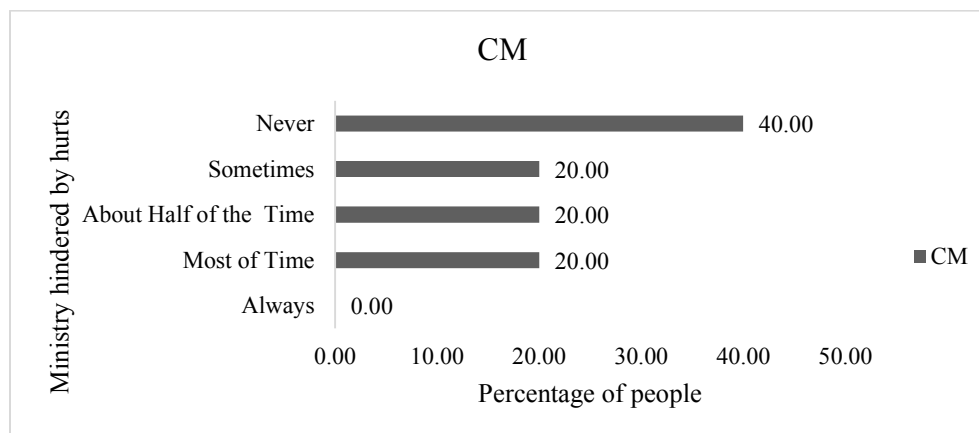
Table 1.5, Moving ahead of God in doing His will

The results reveal that the work of the Lord gets done without the help of the Lord (Table 1.5). Christians who do not involve God in the plans that He has for their lives will experience hurts. People get hurt in the church, or disaster happens when the church moves ahead of God's plan. The work done at that point becomes a work done in the fleshly nature. The desires of the fleshly nature are contrary to the desires of God; the desire of the fleshly nature seeks to devour one another (Gal. 5:15). The war between the flesh and the Spirit is an indication as to why some hurts have taken place within this AAC. There are many among this AAC who have moved ahead of God's plan (Table 1.5). Among the CM who realize they rush ahead of God in doing his work may have experienced the repercussion for such actions (Table 1.5).

Table 1.6, Not heeding God's voice

The findings show that CM are likely not heeding the voice of God. Not following the voice of the Lord, caused some members are experiencing hurts. A failure to heed the voice of the Lord opens one's heart to deception. When a person has been misguided, it will eventually show in their actions. Genesis records that the serpent deceived Eve into thinking that it was good to eat of the fruit that Adam had been commanded not to eat (Gen. 3:4). Eve followed the voice of deception (Gen. 3:4). Through deception, Adam and Eve experienced a broken relationship with God because they did not heed His voice and follow His command. The failure to follow God's command led to shame, fear, and guilt. Shame fear and guilt was the result of wrong actions due to the serpent's deception.³¹⁰ This deception resulted in injuries and pain in the body of Christ.

³¹⁰ Robert L. Deffinbaugh., Keith Krell and Stephen Leston. *Genesis through Numbers: Where Do We Come From? Quicknotes Simplified Bible Commentary Series*. Vol. 1, Edited by Tremper Longman III, (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, 2009), 16.

Table 1.7, Ministry hindered by hurts

There are a few CM who never allow the painful experiences they encountered within the church to hinder their ability to do ministry. However, the painful experiences of CM have at times prevented some members from moving forward in ministry. Many CM are among those whose life has been affected by their ability to move forward in ministry due to church hurts. Documented reveals that the spirit of unforgiveness impacted the ministry when it is in operation in one's life.³¹¹ Unforgiveness keeps people in bondage and causes pride to get in the way.

Pride is at the center of unforgiveness and causes one to believe that their sins are too big to be forgiven, and unworthiness causes one to think they do not deserve forgiveness.³¹² The spirit of unforgiveness holds one in bondage and prevents one from forgiving oneself. Unforgiveness have hindered people from going forward in ministry. The failure to move forward in ministry when one is called by God to go forth caused the body to suffer. Hurts that occur in the ministry impact the church when those hurts cause a disturbance that continues. These disturbances affect the body of Christ in negative

³¹¹ Pfeiffer and Harrison, 38.

³¹² Pfeiffer and Harrison, 38.

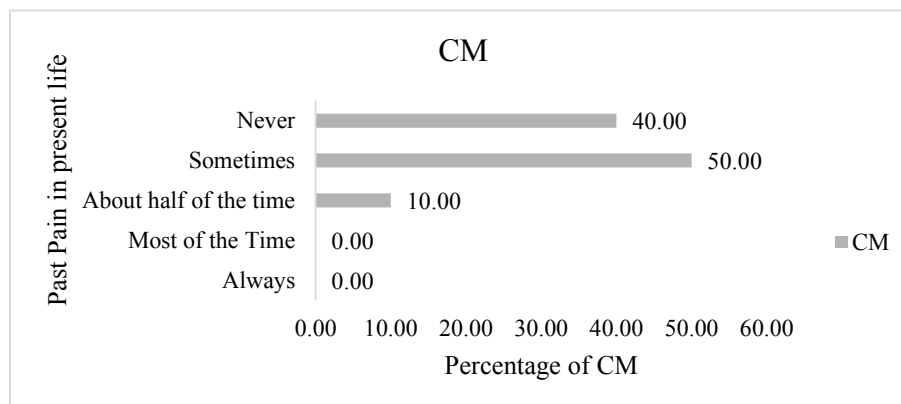
ways due to unresolved hurts.

Table 1.8, Length of time hurts last



The ability to deal with one's hurts are important. The span of time that hurts persist can cause problems in the lives of God's people. The findings show that some Christians within this AAC have allowed their hurts to remain for a long time. Painful experiences that resulted in hurts caused some Christians to experience long-lasting hurt (Table 1.8). Genesis account revealed hurts that Jacob experienced which were pains in his life (Gen. 37:34). Jacob's hurts were brought about because of the protective actions of family members and favoritism shown by his father. (Gen. 37:23-35). The family experienced pain that lasted for years. Hurts causes wounds to get worse. When wounds get worse, and the end is not in sight for healing the ministry will suffer.

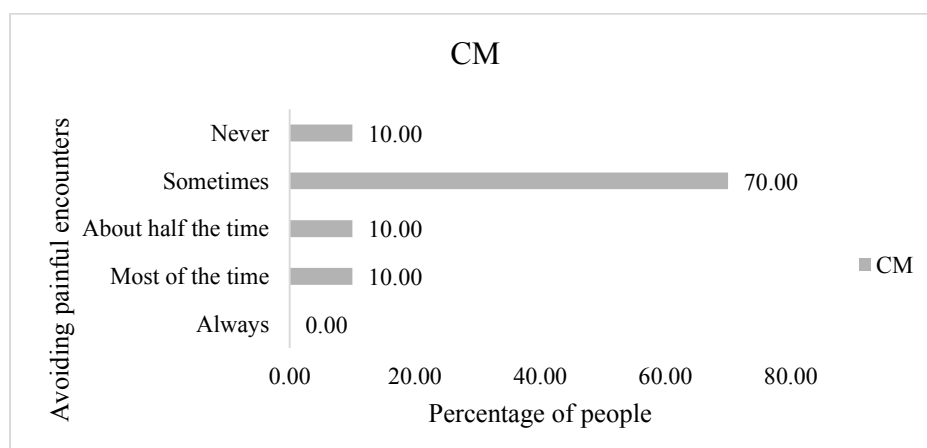
Table 1.9, Past pain and present life



The findings have revealed that some CM have allowed the painful experiences with past hurts to penetrate their current life (Table 1.9).

Painful encounters that permeate one's present life causes this internal disturbance. Scazzero and Bird refer to one's life where one may experience an internal disturbance while the outer life tends to be well kept.³¹³ This inner turmoil happens when hurts from the past continually rage in one's life. Over half of the CM in this AAC have experienced this inner turmoil at one time or another (Table 1.9).

Table 1.10, Avoiding painful encounters



The findings reveal that some CM avoid dealing with painful situations they have encountered (Table 1.10). Avoiding painful encounters is one way that prevents a person from dealing with their hurts. Not dealing with one's hurts prolong the healing process, and allows more hurts to follow. Some people see avoidance as the only solution to their problem.³¹⁴ Those who see their painful encounters as sin will miss the opportunity to

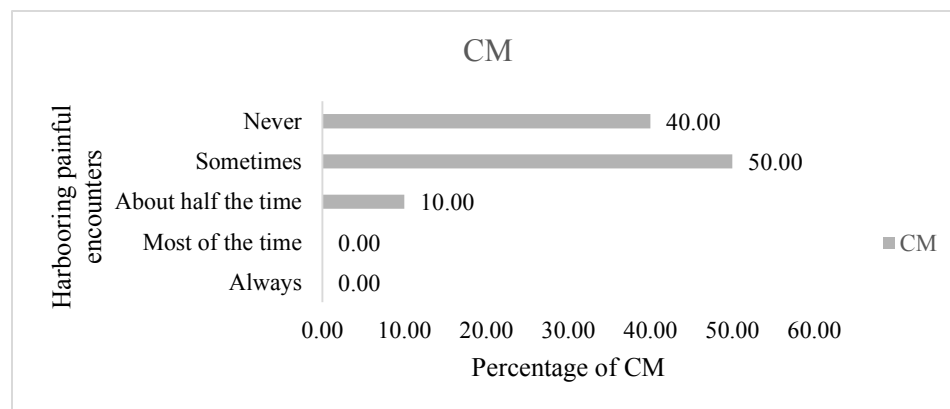
³¹³ Scazzero and Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, 57.

³¹⁴ Deffinbaugh, Krell, and Leston, 17.

grow spiritually, by allowing God to mature them through their pains.³¹⁵ When people remain in painful confrontations, the effectiveness of the ministry goes lacking.

Approximately 80% of CM revert to avoidance to deal with the painful situations they encounter.

Table 1.11, Harboring painful encounters in the heart



The findings show that some CM never allows the residue of painful situations they have experienced to remain in the heart. While that may be true, some CM has often allowed things that have caused their pain to stay in the heart. Harboring hurts in one's heart have led to bitterness and all kinds of malice (Gen. 37:18-20). The heart that harbors hurts becomes the ground for the works of the evil one. Members of his AAC has harbored painful encounters in the heart (Table 1.11). Harboring painful confrontations in the heart leads to inner turmoil.

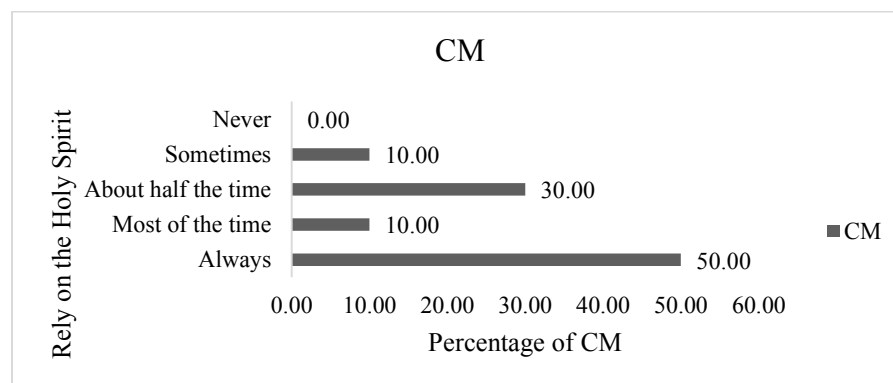
Literature research has also revealed that the inner struggle or inner turmoil lead to hurts in one's life because of conflicting values.³¹⁶ Christians struggle with conflicting

³¹⁵ Kenneth, Polley. "Avoiding Division within a Church: A Proactive Approach for Identifying Sources of Conflict and Creating a Healthy Ministry Environment" (DMin. Thesis, Bethel University, May 2015), 1-194.

³¹⁶ Paul A. Mickey and Robert L. Wilson, *Conflict and Resolution* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1973), 35.

values because they have not been faithful to God, and have not given up dealing with the works of the enemy. Documentation reveals that people in this condition have not given up the world but have made a little alteration in their conduct which allows them to appear goodly at heart.³¹⁷ In doing so, Christians are constantly being defined by the world instead of God.³¹⁸ The struggle with harboring painful encounters in the heart becomes an inner struggle which causes inner turmoil. The inner battle happens when Christians conform to the ways of those around them instead of totally conforming to God's ways in the heart.³¹⁹ This inner turmoil wages war against one's soul (1 Peter 2:11). Harboring painful encounters in the heart has led to painful hurts among members of this AAC.

Table 1.12, Relying on the Holy Spirit in painful situations



It is important to recognize the value one has in relying on the Holy Spirit. The findings demonstration that some CM always relies on the Holy Spirit when wisdom is needed to handle tough situations. Relying on the Holy Spirit when tough situations arise shows that the witness experience through word and deeds are operative in the lives of

³¹⁷ Thomas, 258.

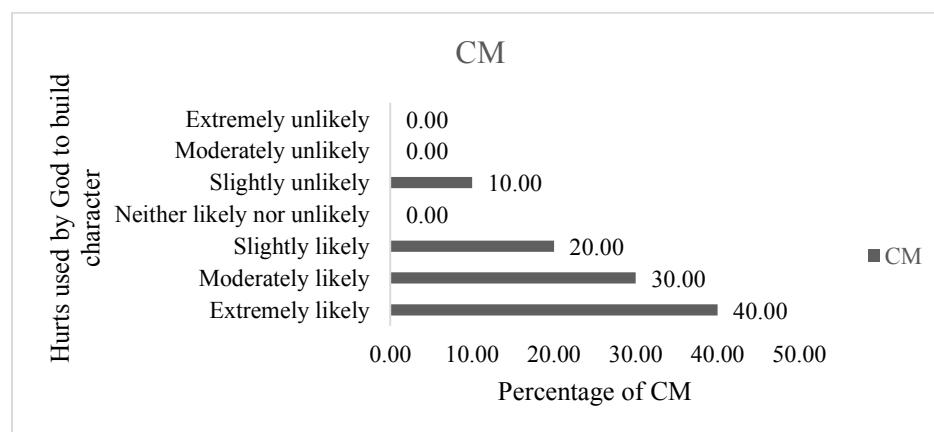
³¹⁸ Boa, 35.

³¹⁹ Boa, 35.

Christians. It is important that the actions of God's people conform to His will.³²⁰ It is just as important that the inner being conforms to God's will as well.

The door to havoc is opened in one's life when one neglects the Holy Spirit's ability to give the wisdom needed to deal with agonizing encounters. The encounters that one experiences turn into painful situations because one has relied on self instead of the Spirit of wisdom. When a Christian does not depend on the Holy Spirit for the guidance needed, he or she negates God's ability to help in times of need. People dishonors God, showing that they were exalted above God as they depend on their abilities.³²¹ Self-love comes into play when one is exalted above God. One reveals that one loves oneself more than God. When Christians promote themselves above God, they open their heart to hurts and inner turmoil. Approximately 50% percent of this AAC recognize the importance of relying on the Spirit's wisdom to handle painful situations (Table 1.12).

Table 1.13, Hurt's used by God to building character



The character has likely been built in the lives of some CM by God through dangerous encounters they have experienced in life. Not all CM have experienced God

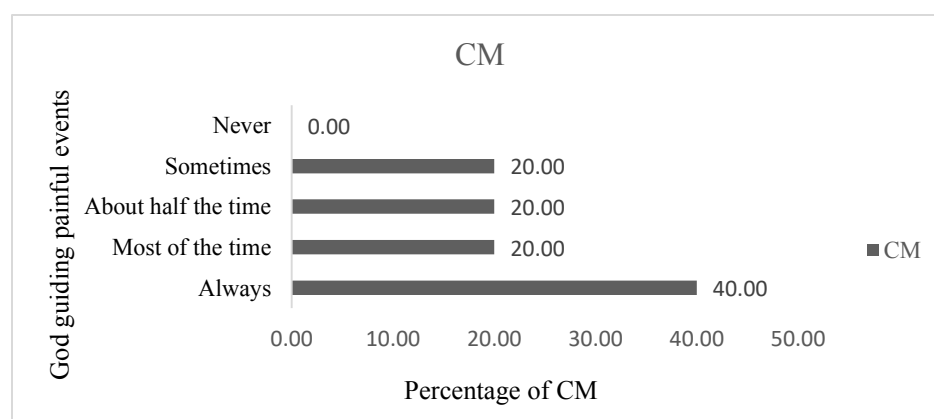
³²⁰ Robert M. Franklin, *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 58.

³²¹ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 24.

building character in their lives through hurts. Those who have not experienced God building character through their hurts may be because God does not always use hurts to build character or that those who experienced the hurts have been resistant to God building character in their lives.

The biblical-theological review shows that Jacob had left his father's house and was living in the house of his uncle, Leban. Jacob lived in Laban's home as he worked out a promise to marry Laban's daughter Rachael (29:18-19; 29:25-26; 29:26-27). Through working hard in brutal conditions to gain an honest living and the promise to marry Rachel, Jacob faced lies, deceit, and false rumors which came as an attempt to damage his character.³²² Jacob handled each situation by allowing God to continually build and protect his character from those who set out to cause him harm. Understanding the hand of God working in one's life to build character will allow a person to open their heart to the Holy Spirit's help. When a person set out to cause harm to others, those unpleasant encounters have caused others to experience pain (Table 1:16).

Table 1.14, God guiding painful events in one's life



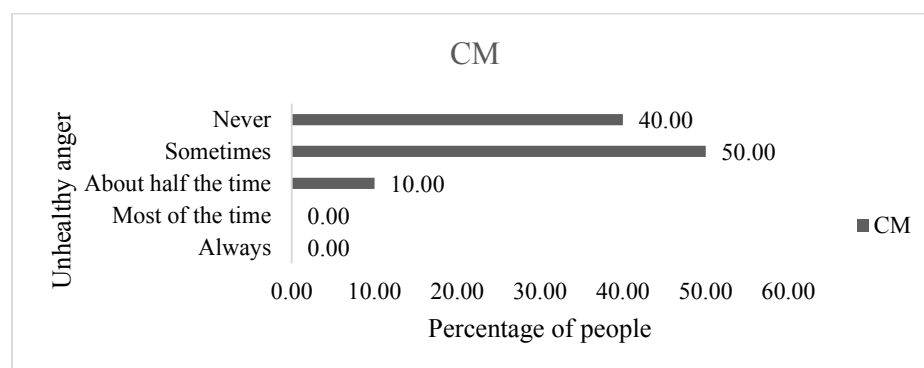
The findings reveal how the hand of God has been allowed to be the guiding source when life calls for guidance through extreme events. The hand of God is always

³²² Rubietta, 268.

the guiding source for many CM when painful events are present in their lives. The biblical-theological review shows that Joseph experienced hurts at the hands of his brothers, these were hurts that were intending to destroy the dreams God had given Joseph. The hurts led to attacks against Joseph's character as well (Gen. 37:20). Joseph faced many character building accusations. He experienced hurts at the hand of his brothers, was taken to Egypt and sold into slavery, but Joseph did not give up on the dreams given to him by God. Although Joseph's life had all the makings for a character building defect to take place, Joseph chose to allow the hand of God to guide the course of his life (Gen. 37:4; 26-28; 40:20).

Joseph allows God to use his hurts to build character in his life. When God is not able to guide the painful events in the lives of His people, their actions will reflect that there is a defect in one's character. These damaging results have been seen in the lives of Joseph's brothers, who became jealous and sought ways to destroy Joseph (Gen. 37:20; 26-28). The wrong actions of Joseph's brothers impacted the family unit through many hurts.

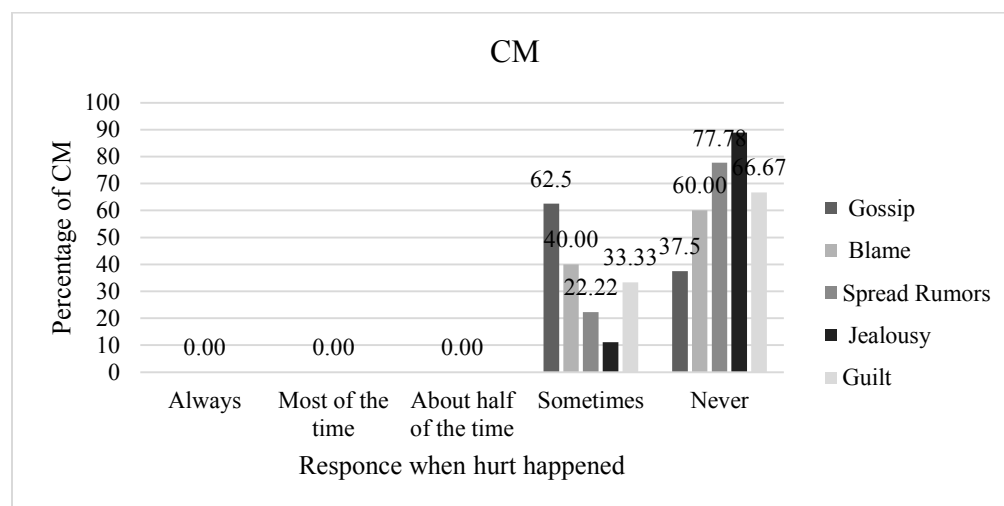
Table 1.15, Anger channeled in unhealthy ways



When it comes to handling anger, the finding reveals how often CM have channeled anger in unhealthy ways. Among CM some have never channeled anger in

unhealthy ways when dealing with painful encounters they have experienced in the church. Anger directed in unhealthy ways have impacted the lives of Christians in the body of Christ. The findings reveal that 60% of CM have channeled anger in unhealthy ways. Anger channeled in unhealthy ways have caused a disturbance in the body of Christ when Christ followers revert to passive-aggressive actions.

Table 1.16, Blame, gossip, rumors, guilt and jealousy

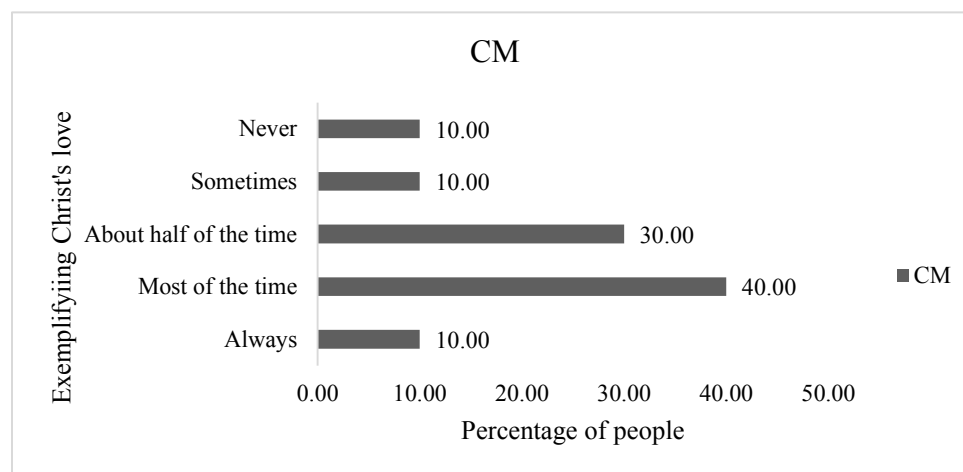


The findings indicate that when people are hurt, their response may often be seen through gossip, spreading rumors, or blaming others. The findings show that some CM have even become jealousy or even experienced guilt because of hurts they have encountered in the body of Christ. Gossiping tends to be the most common way in which CM deal with hurts they have experienced in the church. Blame tends to be the second most common way in which CM handle their hurts. Some CM experience guilt when they were hurt by the church. Spreading rumors tends to be a least popular way for CM to handle their hurts.

Biblical-theological literature research had shown that people respond in various ways when dealing with hurts. The findings had attested to the fact that Christians have

responded by gossiping, spreading rumors, blaming others and the church or to jealousy and even to guilt (Table 1.16). These are impediments that will cause hurts to others and cripple a ministry.³²³

Table 1.17, Characterizing Christ's love in one's life



The findings reveal that CM exemplify the self-sacrificing love of Christ in their lives. Exemplifying the love of Christ in one's life is key to the Christian experience. Christ exemplified this sacrificial act of love as the model for His followers to imitate, in His obedience towards God and the expression of self-giving love for his supporters.³²⁴ To imitate Christ's self-giving love, one must strive to have a relationship with Christ and walk in the Spirit of God daily. The self-giving love of Christ would then be reflected in one's words and actions (Col. 3:17).

Those who walk in the Spirit displays Christ love in their lives, and those who do not walk in the Spirit shows the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). Without the sovereign reign of God's love in one's life, the ability to lead others in the church becomes

³²³ David Faust, *Praise Under Pressure: Shepherd, Psalmist, King, Sinner* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing Company, 1996), 43.

³²⁴ Volf, 30.

problematic. When the love of Christ does not reside in the heart, souls that are seeking Christ, and the ministry suffers. When the body of Christ fail to equip people with the remedy needed to exemplify the love of Christ in their lives, the effective ministry of the church is hindered. The hearts of God's people are then turned to other avenues that lead to hurts. This reveals that Christ is not at the center of one's being. Having Christ at the core of one's soul brings one to trust the Lord with his or her whole heart (Proverbs 3:5-6). When Christians have failed to exemplify the love of God in their lives, the heart then becomes set on the fulfillment of one's desires which leads to hurts.

Summary

The CM survey revealed that hurts existed within this AAC. The extent to which harms became past hurts exist within approximately 40% of members (Table 1.8). The extent to which this pain was carried into the present life is identified in ten percent of congregants (Table 1.9). Another 50% have at times carried pain from past hurts into the present life (Table 1.9). Some of the pain that members of this AAC experienced are due to hurts caused by other members (Table 1.4).

Members have also experienced hurts from not heeding God's voice (Table 1.6). When hurts occurred, some CM has harbored the pain from those hurts in their heart (Table 1.11). Allowing pain to remain in the heart will lead to unhealthy anger (Table 1.15). Some people respond in passive-aggressive ways due to anger. Passive-aggressive behaviors also result in hurts to Christians within the body of Christ. These behaviors known as gossip and bitterness causes harm to others and the church. Christians have avoided painful situations in an attempt to prevent pain in their lives (Table 1.10). Christians have tried to avoid painful situations by turning to other means to soothe their

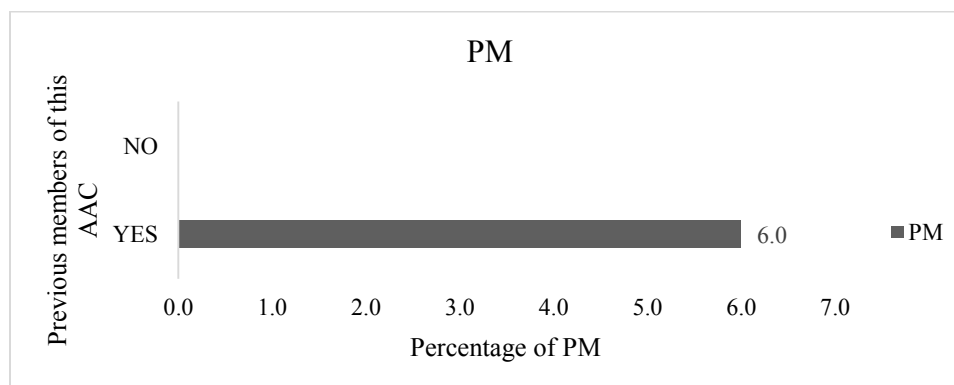
hurt.

Hurts occur when members of the body do not rely on the Holy Spirit for wisdom to deal with tough situations. Hurts occur in relationships within the family when one does not depend on the Holy Spirit for guidance. Approximately 50% of CM rely on the Holy Spirit for words of wisdom when life called them to deal with painful encounters (Table 1.12). Through relying on the Holy Spirit for wisdom, the painful confrontations one experience can be accessed by God. A person's painful encounters can be utilized by God to build his or her character (Table 1:13). Many CM recognize they need God to guide the painful encounters of their lives (Table 1:14). CM acknowledge that God has likely used their hurts to build character in their lives (Table 1.13).

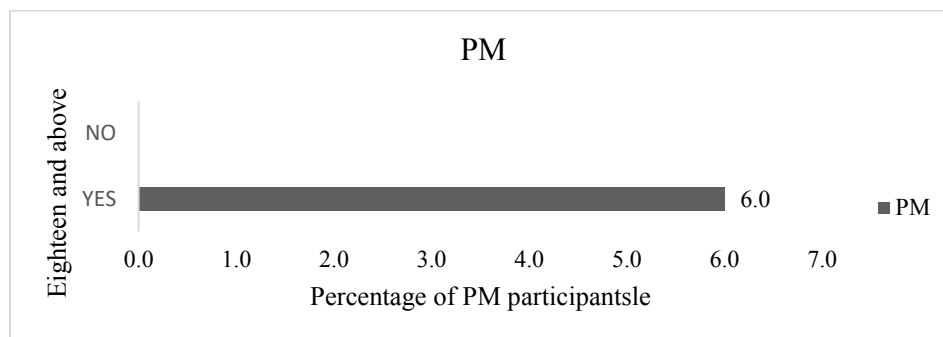
PM Survey Results of Tables 2.1—2.17

It was important to survey PM to conduct a comparison of data between CM and PM to determine if hurts persist within this AAC. The surveys were sent out to a total of ten PM. The findings revealed that out of ten surveyed, six PM responded to the survey. The following results are representative of the six PM who completed the questionnaire.

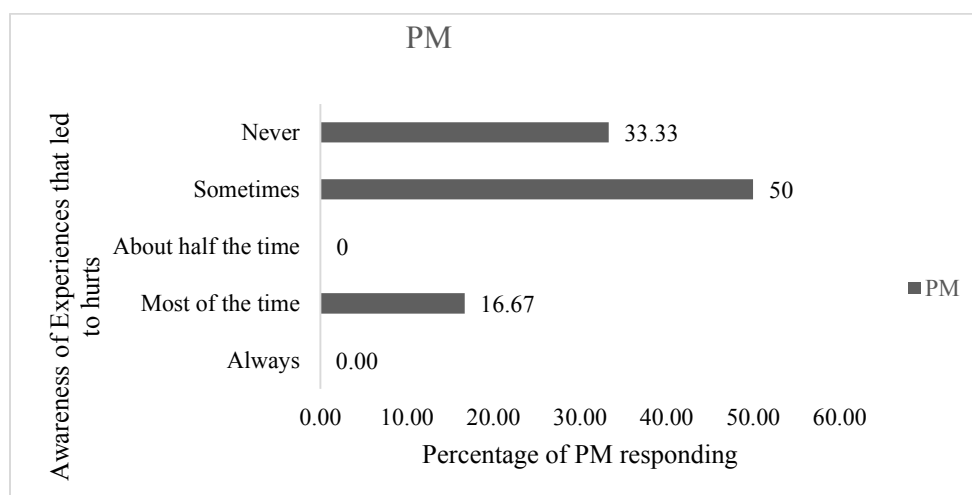
Table 2.1, Number of PM who are members



The findings reveal that all six who took the survey stated they had previously been PM of this local assembly.

Table 2.2, PM eighteen years of age and above

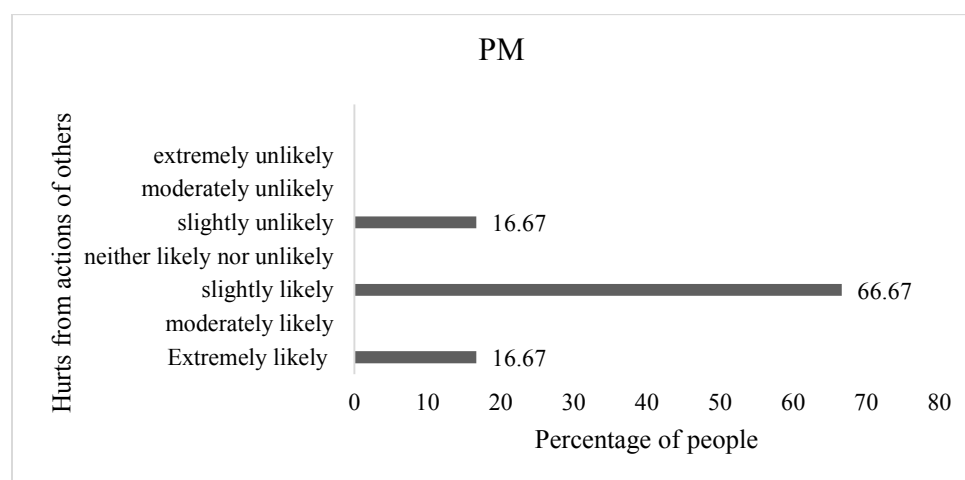
The findings show that all who took this survey state that they are eighteen years or older. The preliminary required information was to ensure that those taking the survey were over 18 years of age.

Table 2.3, Awareness of experiences that resulted in hurts

An Average of 66% of PM is aware of experiences they encountered that led to hurts. The findings reveal the awareness to which non-member recognize that their experiences lead to hurts (Table 2.3). A person can allow God to heal their wounds if they are aware of their hurts. As Jacob prepared to return to his homeland with his family, he was conscious of the struggle that he had left behind. Jacob prayed unto the Lord concerning his trouble (Gen. 32:26-28). Although Jacob and Esau had experienced old

wounds, they allowed God to work in their hurts to bring about restoration in their lives (Gen. 33:8). Because Jacob and Esau was willing to handle their hurts, their relationship was restored (Gen. 33:1-20). The effectiveness of ministry occurs when people allow healing and restoration to alleviate their past wounds while restoration happens in one's relationships. Restoration also allows healing to take place in one's relationship with God.

Table 2.4, Hurts result from the actions of others

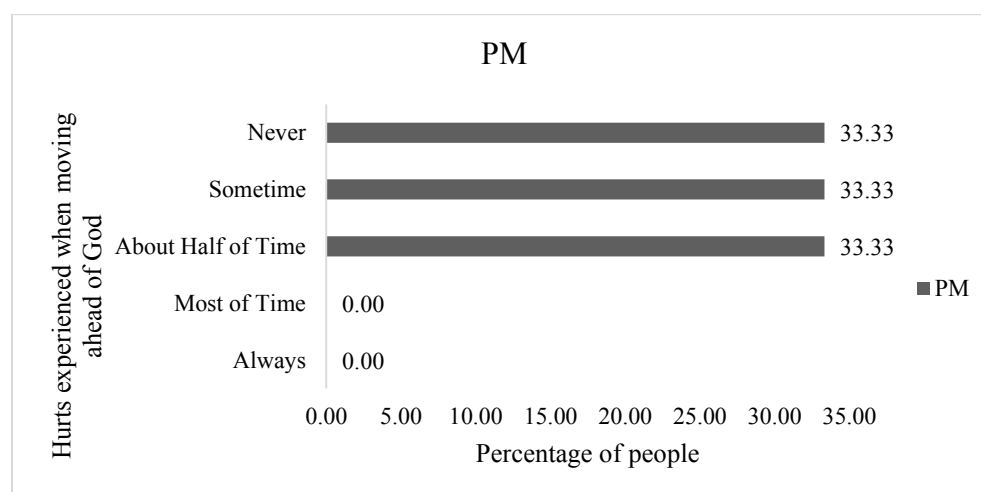


The findings reveal the extent to which hurts have occurred in the lives of Christians due to the decisions of another (Table 2.4). It is extremely likely that 17% of PM have experienced hurts due to the actions of others. The findings reveal that it is slightly likely that 16% have experienced church hurts. It is slightly unlikely that 17% have experienced hurts due to the actions of others.

Hurts experienced as the result of the decisions of another person must be addressed for healing to take place. The Genesis account of Esau's life revealed that Esau experienced hurts upon not receiving the birthright. Esau had experienced hurts due to the actions of those within the family. Jacob and Esau were willing to restore their

relationship (Gen. 32:3-6). It took time for the relationship between Jacob and Esau to heal, after 20 years they were reunited (Gen. 33:1-20). There are times that Christians do not want to take the time needed to heal old wounds, they prefer to go on hurting and blaming others for their hurts (Table 1.16; 2.16). Reconciliation requires that each person has been given the opportunity to demonstrate repentance and to work on regaining trust of the one who caused the hurt.³²⁵

Table 2.5. Move ahead of God in doing His will



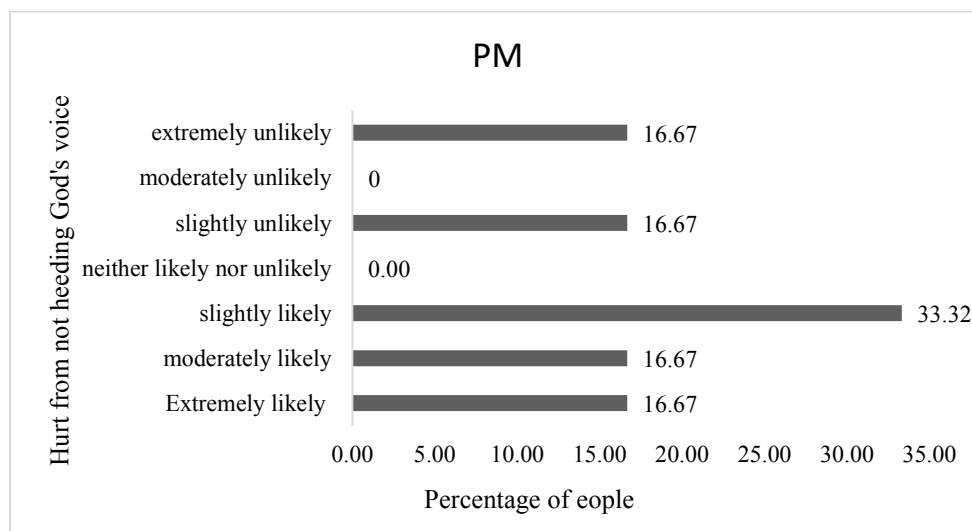
The findings reveal a three way tie among PM when it comes to moving ahead of God while doing His work. Half of the time 33% of PM have attempted to leave God out of the picture when doing God's work. At times 33% of PM have admitted that approximately half of the time, they have done work in the ministry without including God. The findings reveal that 33% of PM have never left includes God in the practice while doing His work.

The findings reveal Christians have often tried to do God's will by moving ahead of God's plan (Table 2:5). Rebekah schemed to help Jacob obtain the birthright which

³²⁵ Sande, 153.

she may have believed belonged to him (Gen. 25:22). It seems that one may get the job done by moving ahead of God when doing God's will, but this has always led to hurts or painful consequences.

Table 2.6, Not heeding God's voice



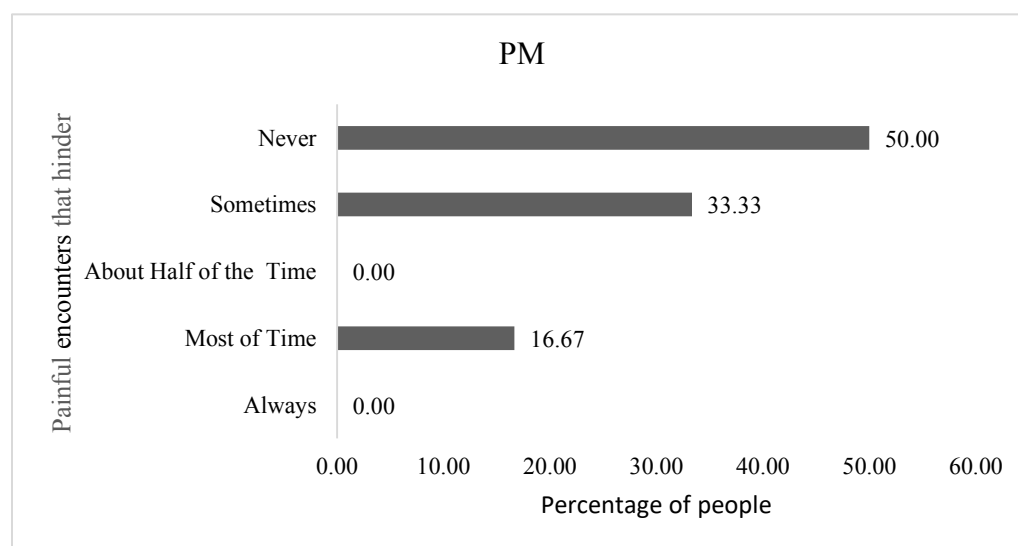
The likelihood of hurts being the result of not heeding God's voice is extremely unlikely in 16% of PM. The findings reveal that it is slightly unlikely in 16% of PM that hurts are the result of not heeding the voice of the Lord. It is extremely unlikely that the cause of hurts is due to not heeding God's voice in 16% of PM. There is a slight possibility that 33% of PM were hurt due to not heeding God's voice. It is slightly unlikely that 16% of PM were hurt from not heeding God's voice.

Simon called Peter's experience with heeding God's voice resulted in obedience, he let down his net and caught lots of fish (Luke 5:9). Simon choice to follow Jesus was a leap of faith which revealed he was not fearful (Luke 5:11). Simon learned to heed the voice of the Lord; his obedient action led to his accomplishing the destiny that God desired for him to accomplish.

Among PM 33% committed to heeding God's voice. Not heeding God's voice

was one of Israel's greatest struggles.³²⁶ Failing to heed God's voice will prevent one from accomplishing the destiny that God has for them to accomplish. It is moderately likely that 16% have experienced hurts due to not heeding the voice of God (Table 2.6). The likelihood that hurts is the result of not heeding God's voice adds to the feasibility of how hurts occurred in this AAC. Any probability of not heeding God's voice puts one in danger and allow one's heart to be open to pain. Adam and Eve suffered pain due to not heeding God's voice, Eve having her thoughts led astray from devotion to God (Gen. 3:4-7; 2 Cor. 11:3).

Table 2.7, Painful experiences that hinder one from moving in ministry



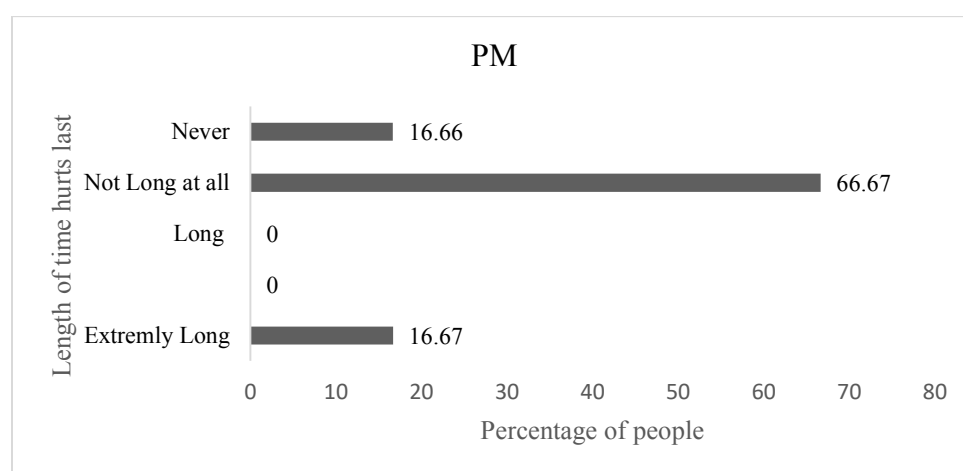
Painful experiences within the church did not obstruct the ministry of 50% of PM. Most of the time 17% of PM have been delayed from moving forward in ministry due to hurts they have encountered during their experience in the church. At some point or another 33% of PM have experienced hurts that prevented the movement of ministry in their lives.

When the ministry is hindered due to hurts, the impact is seen and experienced by

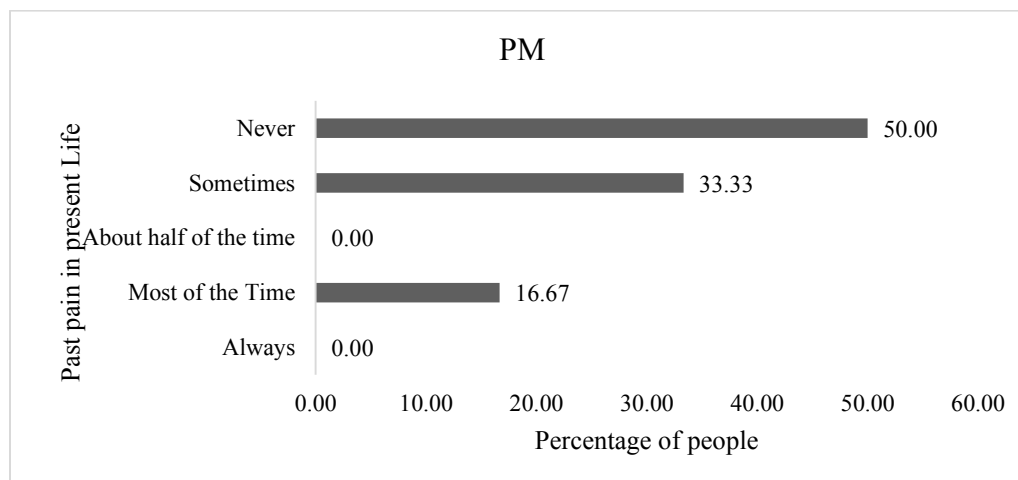
³²⁶ Arthur, 83.

others within the ministry. Christians who were once vibrant in their service tend to have lost hope of accomplishing any tasks that arise. Moving forward in ministry tends to be a thing of the past. The painful experiences they have encountered has causes the ministry to come to a standstill. Worship service continues from Sunday to Sunday, but the outcome of doing effective ministry is evident. The painful encounters tare at the hearts of members, halting the progress of ministry.

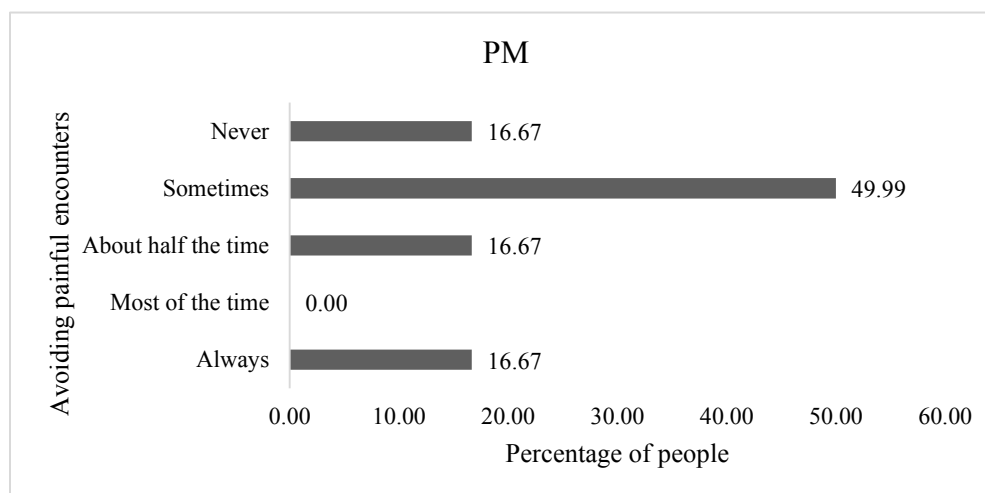
Table 2.8, The length of time hurts last



The findings show that 67% of PM have experienced hurts that have not remain long in their lives. The finding show that many PM handles their hurts well by not allowing them to last a long time (Table 2.8). Those who have never experienced hurts that have remained are 17%. While another 17% of PM have experienced hurts that have remained extremely long.

Table 2.9, Past pain that became a part of one's present life

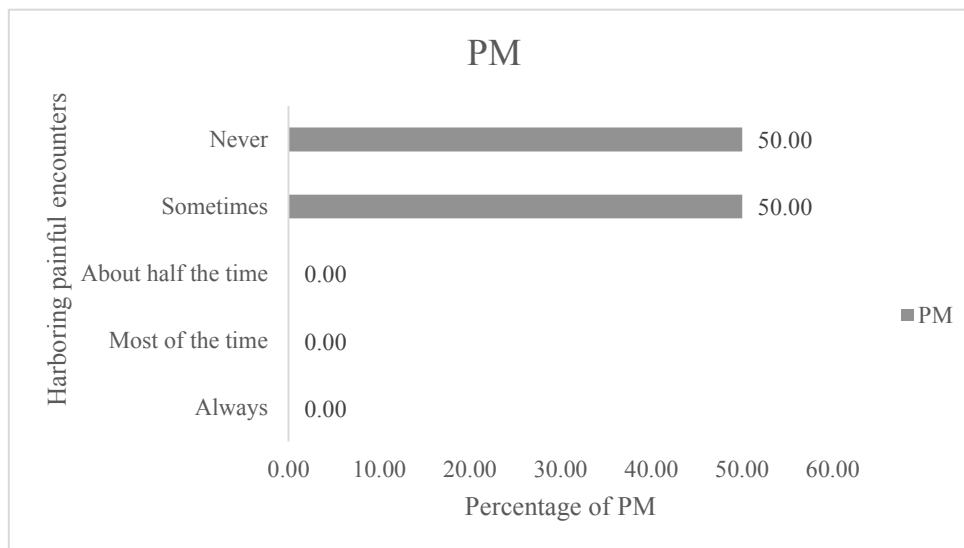
The findings have revealed that painful experiences from the past have not been a problem for 50% of PM. Among PM 50% have never allowed their painful experiences to become a part of their present life. The lives of 33% of PM reveal that their past hurts have reigned in their current life. For 17% of PM, the findings showed that most of the time hurts which occurred in their past still reign in their present life.

Table 2.10, Avoid painful encounters

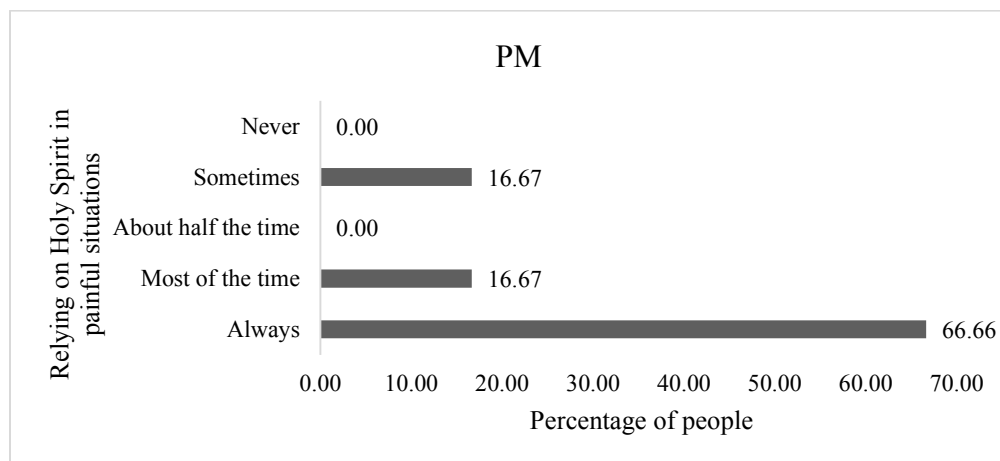
Among PM 17% have experiences in which they avoided unpleasant encounters that occurred in their lives. About half the time another 17% of PM have tried to avoid

their painful situations. The findings reveal that half of PM have sought to avoid painful situations they have encountered in the church. The lifestyle of 17% of PM surveyed reflects their ability to deal with and not avoid painful situations they encounter. Among PM surveyed, 17% have never allowed painful encounters to remain in the heart.

Table 2.11, Harboring Painful Encounters in the Heart

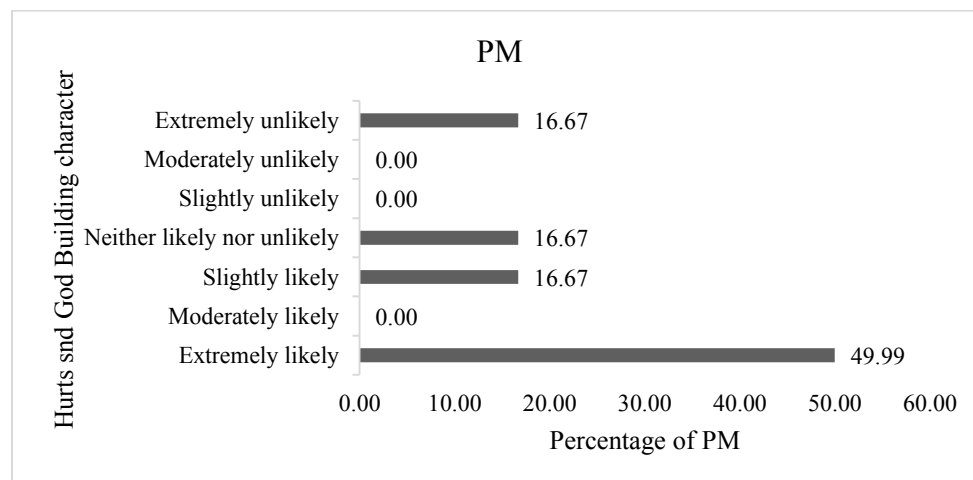


According to the findings, 50% of PM sometimes allow troublesome situations that have caused their pain to remain in the heart, and 50% never permit the residue of painful situations to linger in the heart. Allowing painful encounters to stay in the heart has caused excruciating results. Isaac experienced an encounter in which he did not want to be comforted after he had experienced hurt.

Table 2.12, Relying on the Holy Spirit when handling painful situations

Reliance on the Holy Spirit has always been a priority for 67% of PM when needing words of wisdom to deal with painful circumstances. It is evident that 17% of PM rely on the Holy Spirit most of the time, while another 17% sometimes depend on the Holy Spirit when needing wise words to handle their situation (Table 2.12). The average of 34% of PM has trouble relying on the Holy Spirit in troubling circumstances.

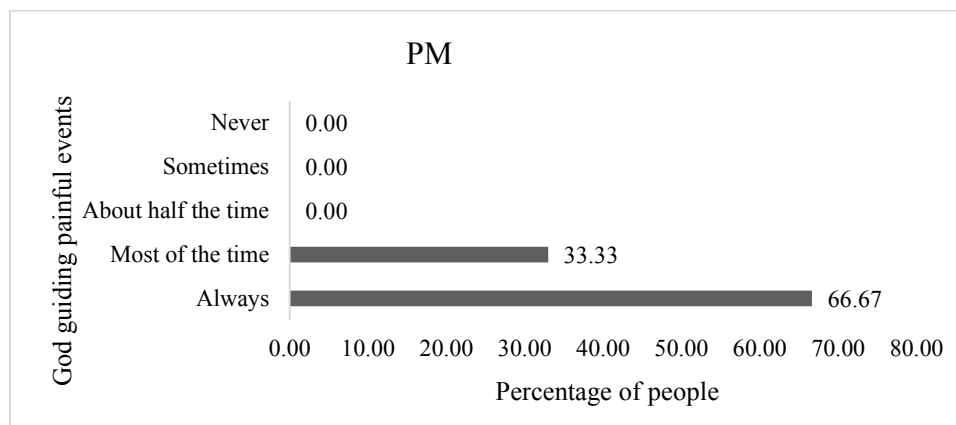
When troublesome situations happen, some have made rash decisions without considering any implications for what they have done until it is too late. It seems that Esau had forgotten that he attempted to sell his birthright for food. To dealing with his desire for food to fill his hunger, Esau offering his birthright to his brother for a bowl of lentil (Gen. 25:29-34). Esau was distraught when his brother received the blessing (Gen. 27:30-32). Esau set out to cause harm to his brother. Christians who do not rely on the Holy Spirit to handle hurts will cause harm to others. Many Christians have fallen into the trap of have not regarded the things of God and have caused the ministry to suffer.

Table 2.13, Hurts used by God to build character

The findings show the number of PM whose hurts have been used to develop character in their lives. The finding reveals that 50% of PM has allowed God the opportunity to work in their lives through tough situations. Allowing God to work through tough situations reveal the discipline one's life displays. Jacob faced lies, deceit and false rumors which came as an attempt to damage his character.³²⁷ Jacob continued to allow God the opportunity to work in his life, even though some of his experiences in life resulted in hurts.³²⁸ Through God's discipline, Jacob's life conformed to God's ways so that he would know how to respond when faced with painful encounters. Knowing how to react to painful encounters in a goodly way would not cause damage to his character.

³²⁷ Rubietta, 268.

³²⁸ Aaron Früh, *The Forgotten Blessing: Ancient Words that Heal Generational Wounds* (Grand Rapids MI: Chosen Books, 2006), 69.

Table 2.14. God guiding painful events in life

Among 33% of members, the hand of God has been the guiding source of their encounters with painful situations. The findings reveal that the hand of God is always guiding the painful events in the lives of 67% of PM. When one allows God to guide the painful events in their lives, one's life conformed to the image of God. One has allowed the discipline work of God to develop from an inner disposition in one's heart just as Jesus has promised (Acts 1:8). This spiritual disposition does not only involve the heart but the nature of one's heart soul and mind.³²⁹ Through the spiritual disposition, one knows God and knows one's interior.³³⁰ The result of the painful events that one has encountered proves that the word of God is effective in changing lives. A glimpse of the effectiveness of ministry was revealed through the encounters where God has been guiding extreme events that happened in the lives of 67% of PM. When a person allows God to guide the painful events of their life, through their painful encounters, there is an opportunity to experience growth.³³¹ The findings reveal that for 33% of PM the hand of

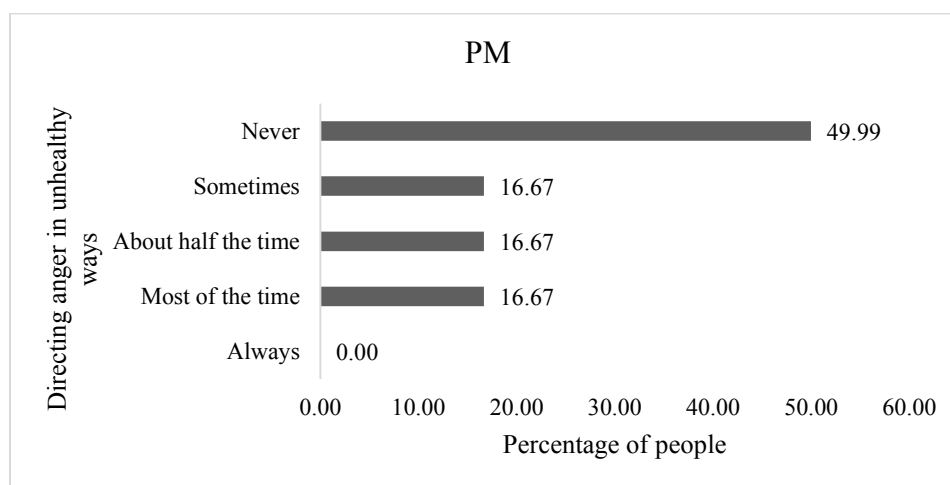
³²⁹ Scazzero and Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, 57.

³³⁰ Scazzero and Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, 57

³³¹ Polley, 1-194.

God has guided the painful events of their lives. It is this 33% who know what it is like to allow God to enter into their painful confrontations and guide their hearts as they encounter towards others.

Table 2.15, Anger channeled in unhealthy ways



The findings reveal that 50% of PM surveyed have never allowed their anger to be channeled in the wrong way in their experience as a member of this AAC. Out of those surveyed, 16% of PM have either most of the time, half of the time, or sometimes allowed anger to be channeled in unhealthy ways in their lives while they were a member of this AAC. The biblical-theological review referred to anger as something that Christians have been exhorted to rid their being of, by not allowing it to remain in one's heart (Eph. 4: 31-32).

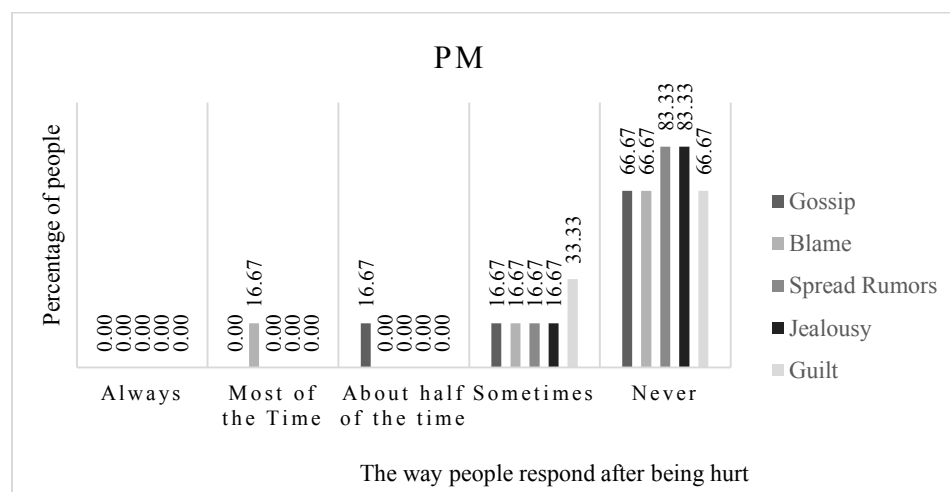
Literature research has revealed that anger is one of the causes of low self-esteem among young people, and has caused some young people to commit crimes of violence.³³² All anger does not always lead to crimes of violence because all anger is not sin or is bad. Anger will manifest out of sin in some instances. Sin will also turn into

³³² Quill, 10.

anger in some situations depending on how long one allows sin to crouch at the door of one's heart (Gen. 4:7). When anger remains in the heart one is capable of hurting others because they have allowed their anger to get out of control.³³³

People will experience hurts when anger has been allowed to get out of control. Out of control anger is anger channeled in unhealthy ways. Anger channeled in unhealthy ways have resulted in damaging results to others (Eph.4:26). Anger can impact the body of Christ in destructive ways when channeled in unhealthy ways towards others. When anger is channeled in unhealthy ways most of the time in one's life, the damages to a ministry could be devastating. While 16% of PM have channeled anger in unhealthy ways, this indicates a lack of effectiveness in ministry.

Table 2.16, Blame, rumors, guilt, gossip, and jealousy



The findings reveal that 34% of PM had responded by blaming the church or others when they experienced hurt. Some PM had reverted to gossiping about the church or others when they experienced hurts. Others PM had experienced guilt when they encountered hurt in the church. PM who have spread rumors and became jealous, gossip,

³³³ Goleman, 158.

or blamed others are at 16% for each.

The literature review has shown that passive-aggressive behaviors which are active in an organization causes damaging to that organization. Passive-aggressive tactics are operative in the church through anger stubbornness, hostility, or intentional failure to do one's assigned task.³³⁴ Passive-aggressive behaviors have been expressed through gossip, dirty looks and giving one the silent treatment.³³⁵ These behaviors impact the minister causing failure in relationships and in the ministry. Passive-aggressive behaviors could result in the destruction of a church when blame and rumors are present. One should never underestimate the extent of damage a mind could do when passive-aggressive behaviors are active.

Biblical-theological research has revealed that these are some of the underlying currents that are used to destroy a ministry or hinder it in some way. The Serpent attempted to destroy the Lord's work through Adam and Eve. Shame, fear, and guilt were at the center of the serpent's deception.³³⁶ Guilt causes one to feel responsible for the wrong caused in one's life or to another being through wrong actions. Eve blamed the serpent because of deception (Gen. 3:13). When people blame others or the church for their hurts, they not only blame them for their past disappointments, but they will continue to blame others for the present failures as well.³³⁷

Blame is an ongoing resentment and bitterness. Blame becomes a part of ongoing bitterness and resentment because someone else is believed to be at fault for one's

³³⁴ Quill, 18.

³³⁵ Quill, 18.

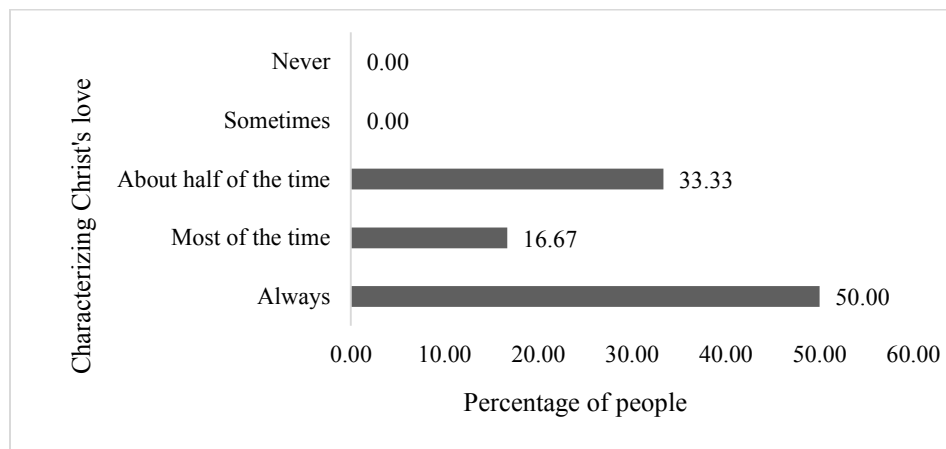
³³⁶ Deffinbaugh, Krell and Leston, 21.

³³⁷ Colbert, 127.

hurts.³³⁸ Ongoing bitterness becomes rooted in one's heart. An ongoing bitterness causes damage to those who hurt because of the tactics hurled at them through blame. Blame impacts the ministry when time is spent arguing about who is to blame for current and past failures. Those who cast blame impact the ministry when blame is cast out as a way of taking down the ministry.

The findings reveal that Christians have responded to their hurts by blame, gossip, jealousy, spreading rumors, and feeling guilt (Table 2:16). The biblical-theological and literature research has revealed that the actions of those who uses passive-aggressive tactics to handle their hurts cause damage to others. Passive-aggressive tactics that operate in the church damages the ministry.

Table 2.17 Characterizing Christ's love in one's life



The findings reveal that 50% of PM always reflect the self-sacrificing love of Christ in their lives. The average among those who have some areas where the love of Christ may not be reflected is 50% of PM. To have the self-sacrificing love of Christ in one's life is essential to the Christian walk and life (1 John 4:16). Adoration for God rid one's being of the deeds of the flesh (Col. 3:5; 8). The self-sacrificing love of Christ

³³⁸ Colbert, 127.

allows fear to diminish and faith to develop in the lives of God's people (1 John 4:18). The love of Christ is present in the lives of Christians who are serious about leaving behind the things of the world and following Christ wholeheartedly.

Summary

The findings reveal the hurts that has taken place in the lives of the members of this AAC. The biblical and literature research has added clarity to these conclusions. The findings are representative of this local AAC. The CM and PM took part in the survey which revealed the hurts that happened in this AAC. Although hurts occurred in this local AAC, the findings also reveal that various factors can influence hurts. Influences that are operative in the lives of God's people causes damage when people respond in ways that are contrary to the will of God.

The PM survey results revealed that 17% of PM are aware of their hurts (Table 2.3). Another 17% recognize their hurt that others had caused (Table 2.4). Moving ahead of God when doing the work of the Lord has been problematic for 33% of CM (Table 2.5). Among PM 67% tends to move ahead of God when doing the Lord's work at one point or another. During their encounter with hurt 33% of PM do not always move ahead of God. Any activity that causes one to go ahead of God's plan can cause hurts.

One must recognize that going ahead of God will cause problems for the church. Many PM faced hurts that prevented them from going forward in ministry (Table 2.7). Painful encounters that prevent PM from going forward in ministry are due to hurts that occurred in the lives of PM (Table 2.7). Another seventeen percent of PM were wounded. Although seventeen percent seems to be a small number of individuals, that small percent could be devastating to a church when hurts happen (Table 2.7). An indication that hurts

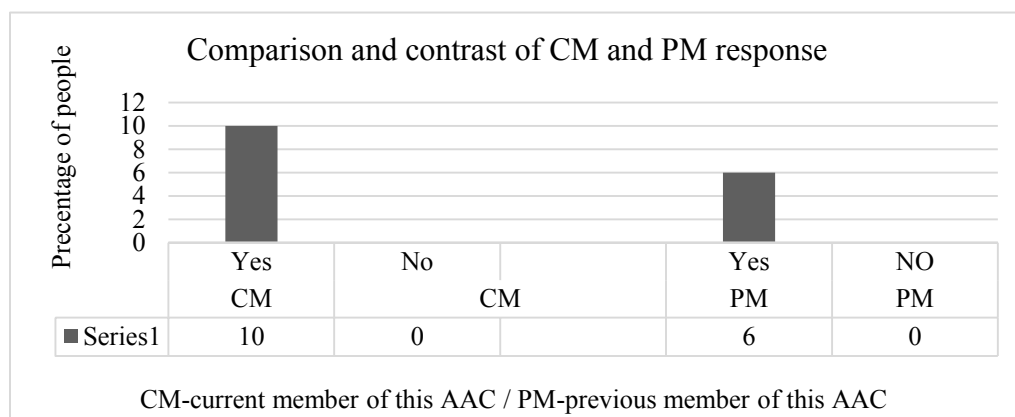
that allowed to grow old and has not received the care needed for healing, become problematic for a ministry.

Pain in one’s personal life can hinder a ministry or prevent one from moving forward (Table 2.7, 2.9). PM has proven that when pain occurs, it can last a long time (Table 2.8, 2.11). Pain that has been avoided or not dealt with will cause devastation (Table 2.10, 2.15). Many PM faced hurts that prevented them from going forward in ministry due to hurts in their lives (Table 2.7). the ministry suffers when people are not able to do the work of the ministry because they have been hurt and have not dealt with the cause of their pain.

Heeding God’s voice has been problematic for some PM. The reason for some hurts that occurred among PM has been the result of not heeding God’s voice. Although 33% of PM are committed to heeding God’s voice, 67% of PM admit that they struggle with this area of their spiritual life (Table 2.6).

Comparison of Surveys

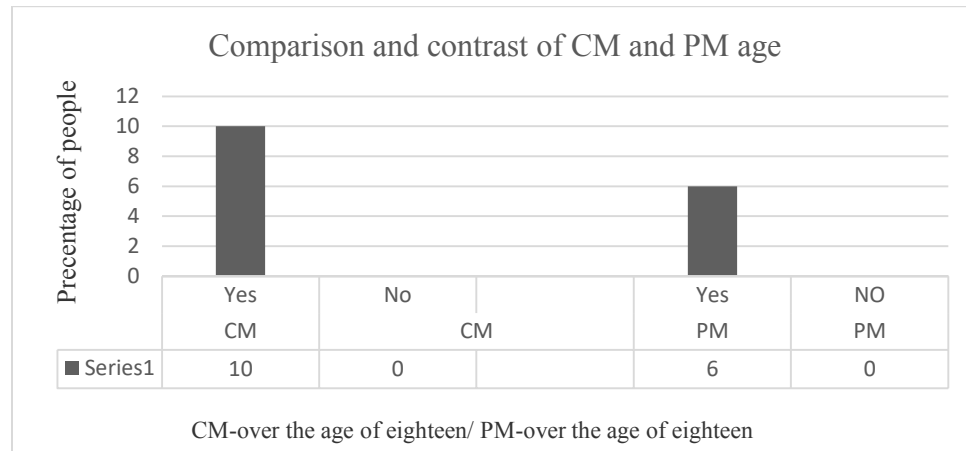
Table 1.1 and 2.1, Number of CM and PM who took survey



The CM and PM comparison show that there were ten CM and six PM who took the survey. The variation in the number of participants shows there was more CM taking

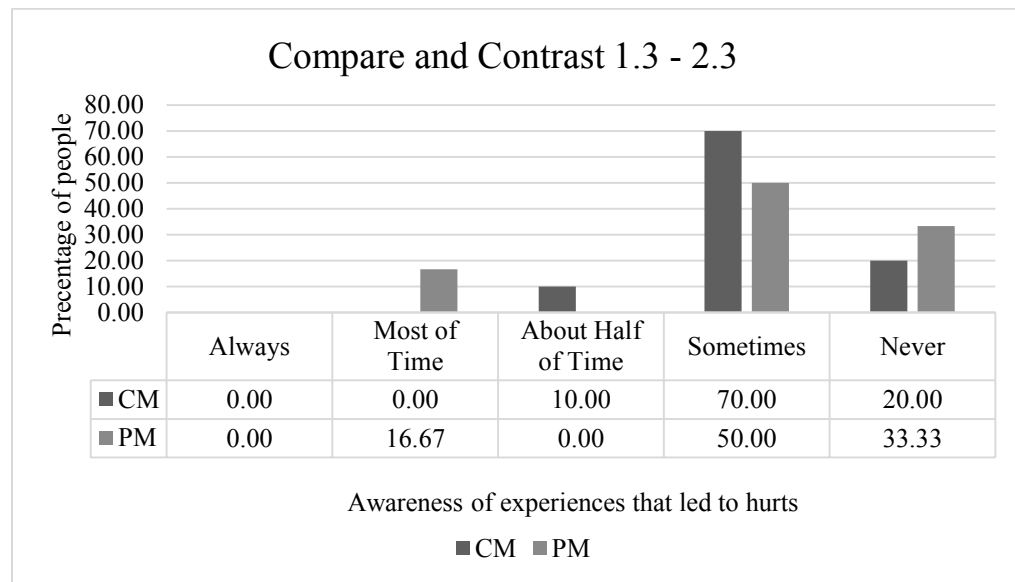
the survey than PM.

Table 1.2 and 2.2. CM and PM age comparison



The chart reveals that both CM and PM are 18 years old or older. The chart shows a variation in the number of PM and CM who took the survey.

Table 1.3 and 2.3. Awareness of experiences

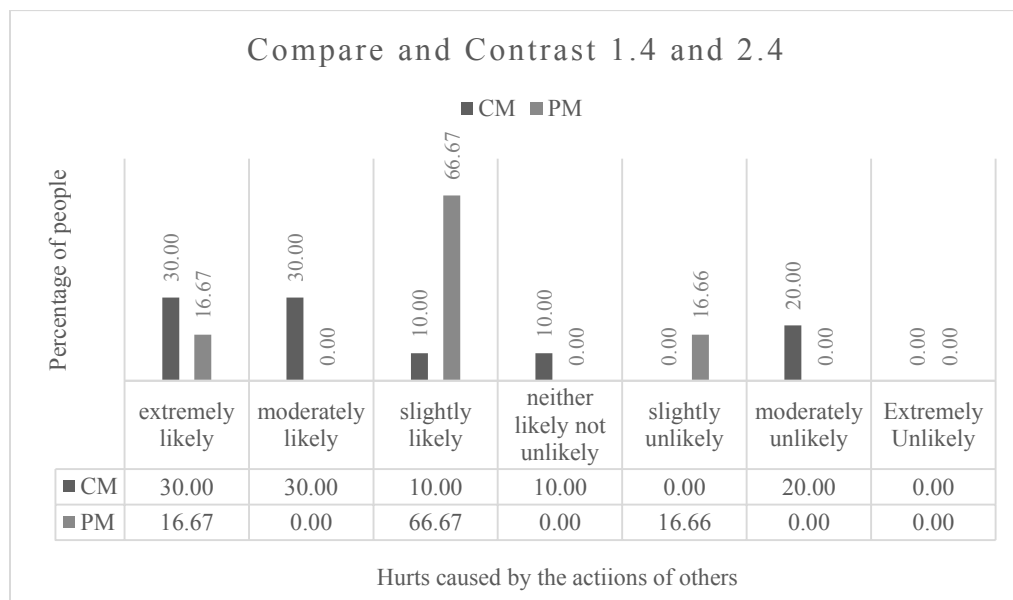


In comparing CM and PM findings from the studies, show that 70% of CM in comparison to 50% of PM recognize their experiences in the church have sometimes resulted in hurts (Table 1.3; 2.3). The findings show that among CM ten percent

acknowledge that their experience led to hurts about half of the time compared to 17% of PM who admitted that their experiences resulted in hurts most of the time. The experiences that resulted in hurts are high among CM than in PM according to the findings (Table 1.3; 2.3).

Among CM 20% were aware that their experiences have never resulted in hurts, while 33% of PM were mindful of the fact that their experiences have never resulted in hurts. This comparison is slightly higher in PM than CM. The findings show that more people are aware that their experiences in the church have led to hurts compared to those who know that their experiences in the church have never resulted in hurts. It is important to understand that an average of 80% of CM in this AAC compared to 67% of PM are aware that their experiences within the church have resulted in hurts to some degree.

Table 1.4 and 2.4 Hurts resulting from actions of others

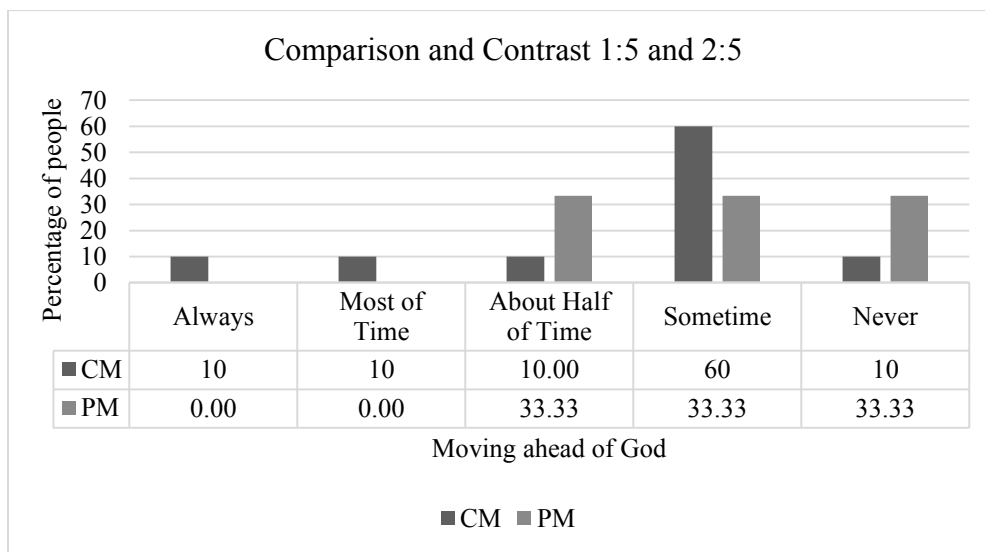


According to the findings, 30% of CM compared to 17% of PM have extremely likely experienced hurt by the decisions of another member. The actions of some CM have caused hurt to another 30% of CM. The comparison between those who have

probably encountered hurt by the actions of others in the church is ten percent of CM compared to 67% of PM. Among CM and PM who have to some degree experienced hurts that were the results of the actions of others in the church, the percentage is higher among PM compared to CM.

An average of 100% of PM to some degree have experienced hurts that were the result of the actions of others. There was 83% of CM who have had the same experience. Only 17% of CM have not experienced hurts due to the actions of others. Understanding the actions of others was necessary for understanding hurts within this AAC. While the feasibility of hurts being high among CM and PM, the likelihood of those who have not experienced hurts due to the actions of others within the church is slightly unlikely among 17% of PM and moderately unlikely among 20% of CM.

Table 1.5 and 2.5. Moving ahead of God in doing His will



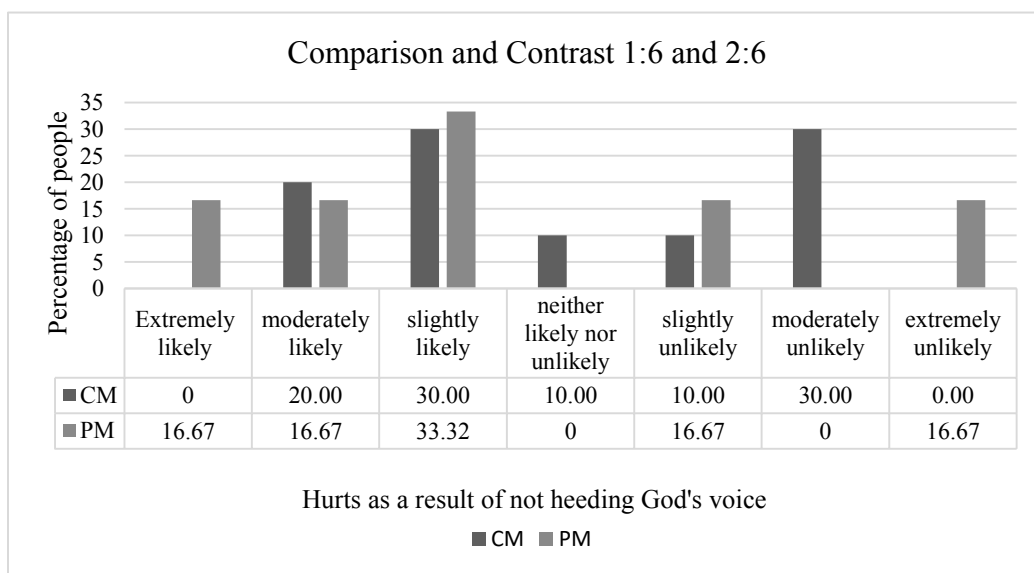
It is important to understand the struggle that Christians have in doing God's will to understand one way that hurts have occurred within the body of Christ. Striving to do God's will tends to be a struggle when it comes to allowing God to lead. Among CM ten

percent have always moved ahead of God when doing his will. Among those who have attempted to go ahead of God while doing God’s work are 33% of PM.

Among CM ten percent compared to 33% of PM have tried to do the will of the Lord, having left God out of the picture. Among those who have never sought to do God’s work without allowing God to take part in the process are ten percent of CM and 33% of PM.

Among CM and PM, a 23% difference reveals those who attempt to move ahead of God when doing His work. Among CM there is ten percent who try to do God’s work without Him compared to PM who do not show a number in this area. PM reveal a higher percent among those who never attempt to do God’s work without Him. A 23% difference shows among ten percent of CM and 33% of PM who never try to do God’s will without Him being in the process. An average of 20% of CM compared to 66% of PM have sought to do the will of God by moving ahead of Him. The number is higher among PM than CM of those who try to do God’s will by moving ahead of Him.

Table 1.6 and 2.6. Not heeding God’s voice

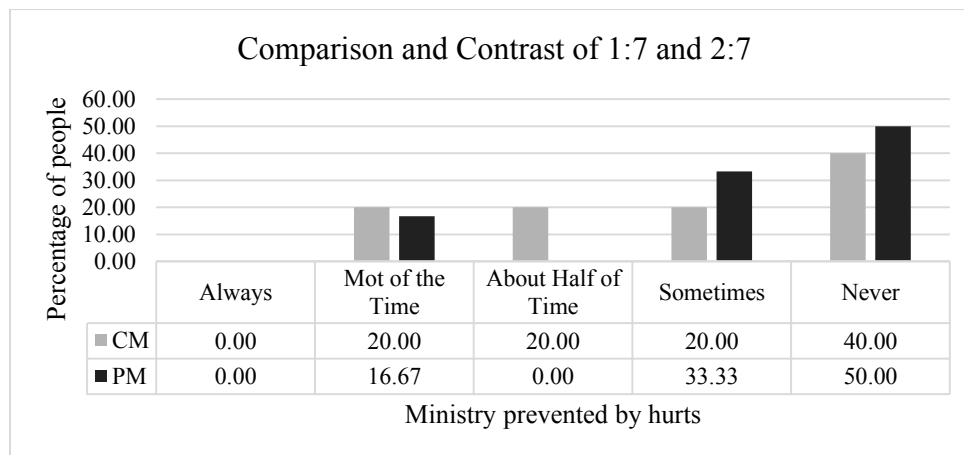


It is important to understand how not heeding God's voice is related to hurts encountered in this AAC. The likelihood of hurts being the result of not heeding God's voice is extremely likely in 16% of PM. It is moderately likely that 16% of PM compared to 20% of CM have experienced hurts due to not heeding the voice of God. It is slightly likely that 30% of CM compared to 33% of PM have experienced hurts due to not heeding God's voice. The likelihood of hurts being the cause of not heeding God's voice are close in comparison among CM and PM.

Among CM, ten percent have not encountered hurts from not being attentive to the voice of God. There is ten percent of CM compared to 17% of PM whose experiences have not led to hurts. Among the CM 30% have moderately unlikely experienced hurts that resulted from not regarding the voice of the Lord, in contrast to 17% of PM

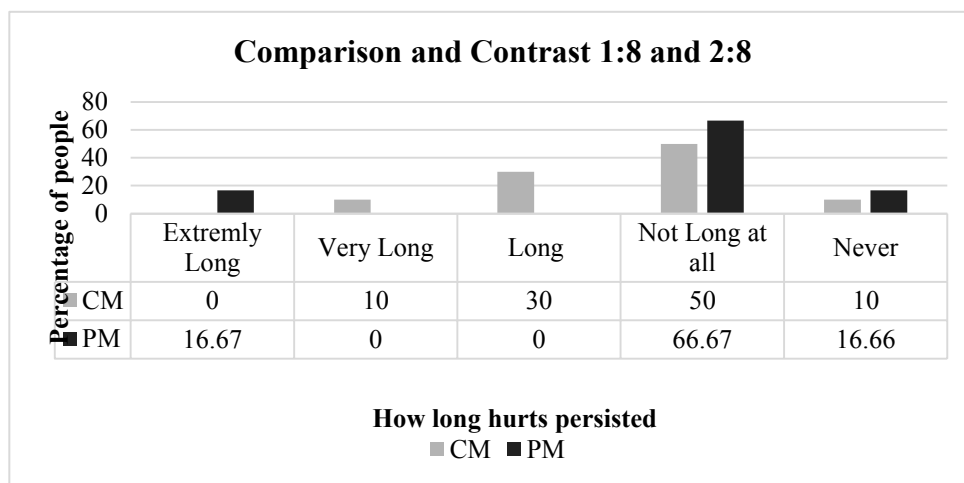
An average of the likelihood that hurts occurred due to not heeding God's voice is approximately 50% among CM and 65% among PM. The probability of hurts being unlikely the cause of not heeding God's voice among 40% of CM in comparison to 33% of PM. The likelihood of hurts occurring is greater than them not occurring both CM and PM.

Table 1.7 and 2.7 Ministry prevented by hurts



Most of the time 20% of CM and 17% of PM have delayed moving forward in ministry because of their experience with painful situations within the church. There is 20% of CM compared to 33% of PM who have sometimes experienced hurts that prevented them from doing ministry. Painful experiences within the church have never hindered the ministry of 50% of PM compared to 40% of CM. About half of the time CM experiences have prevented 20% of members from doing ministry. The number of Christians hindered from active ministry due to painful encounters in their lives are 50% of PM and 60% of CM. A difference of ten percent more PM were hindered than CM from moving forward in active ministry due to hurts.

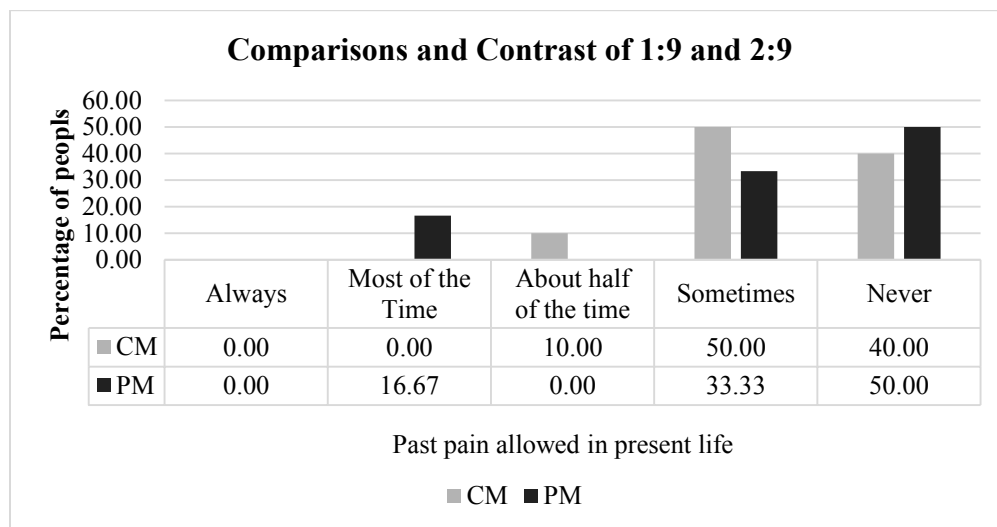
Table 1.8 and 2.8, Length of time hurts lasted



Those who have experienced hurts that have not remained long are 66% of PM compared to 50% of CM. Those who never allow their experience with pain to linger in the heart are 17% of PM compared to ten percent of CM. A contrast of CM and PM is that ten percent of CM do not allow their pain to stay long while 17% of PM allow their pain to last for extreme lengths of time. Among CM 30% allow the residue of painful situations to get stuck in their heart. According to 16% of CM the residue of painful

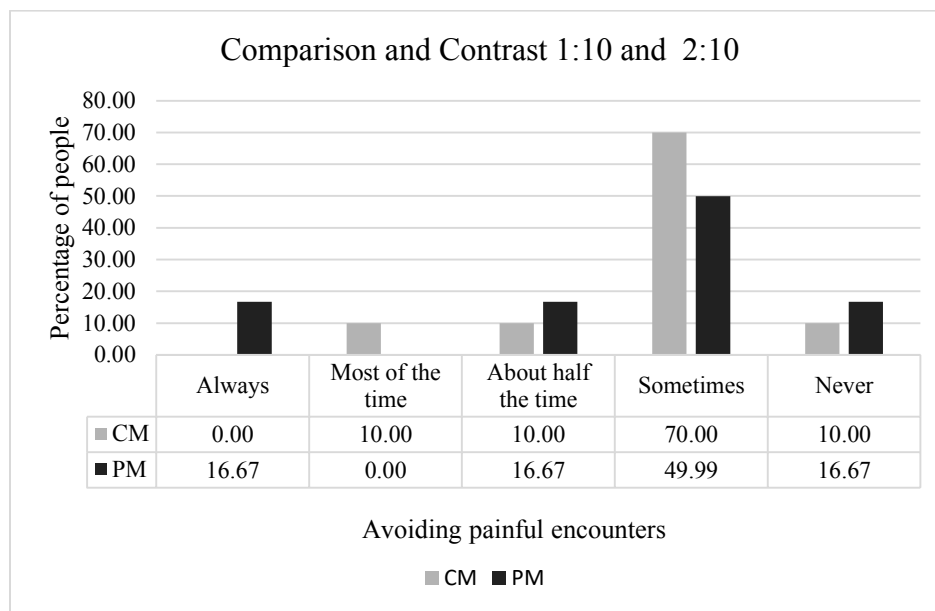
situations has not remained in their heart for extreme lengths of time (Table 1.8; 2.8).

Table 1.9 and 2.9, Past pain and present living



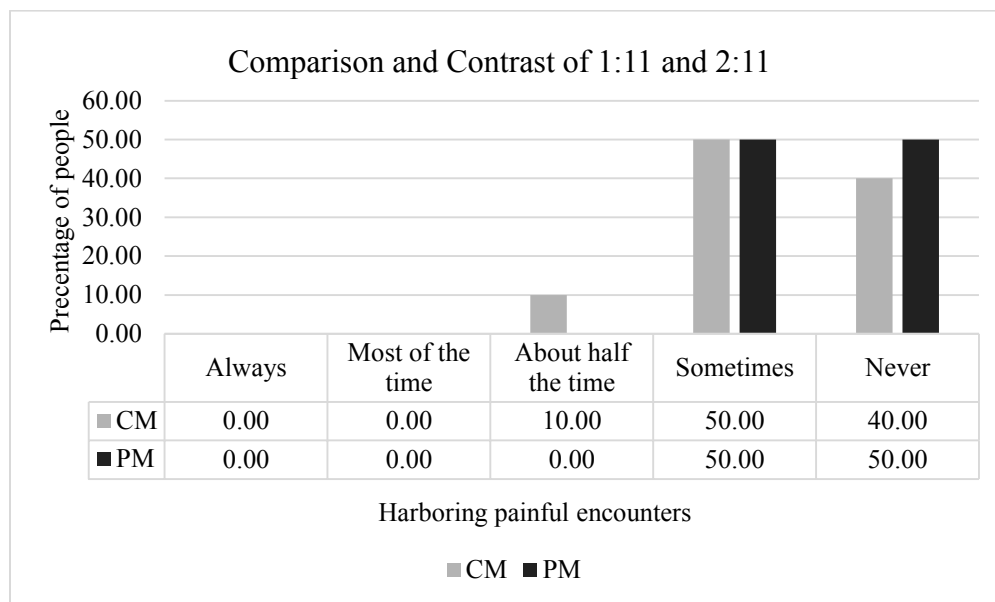
Pain in the lives of 50% of CM compared to the pain in the lives of 33% of PM have sometimes become a part of their present lives. The difference between CM and PM are that CM have a higher average for allowing past hurts to penetrate the present life. The average is 17% greater among CM than that of PM who allow the hurts from past confrontations to disturb present life (1.9; 2.9).

The average is higher in PM compared to CM who never allow painful situations from their past to become a part of their current life. CM are among 40% while PM is among 50% who never allow painful residue from previous hurts to enter their current situations. The differences between CM and PM are that most of the time, 17% of PM allow their pain to become part of their current situation, while ten percent of CM allow painful situations to become a part of their life about half of the time.

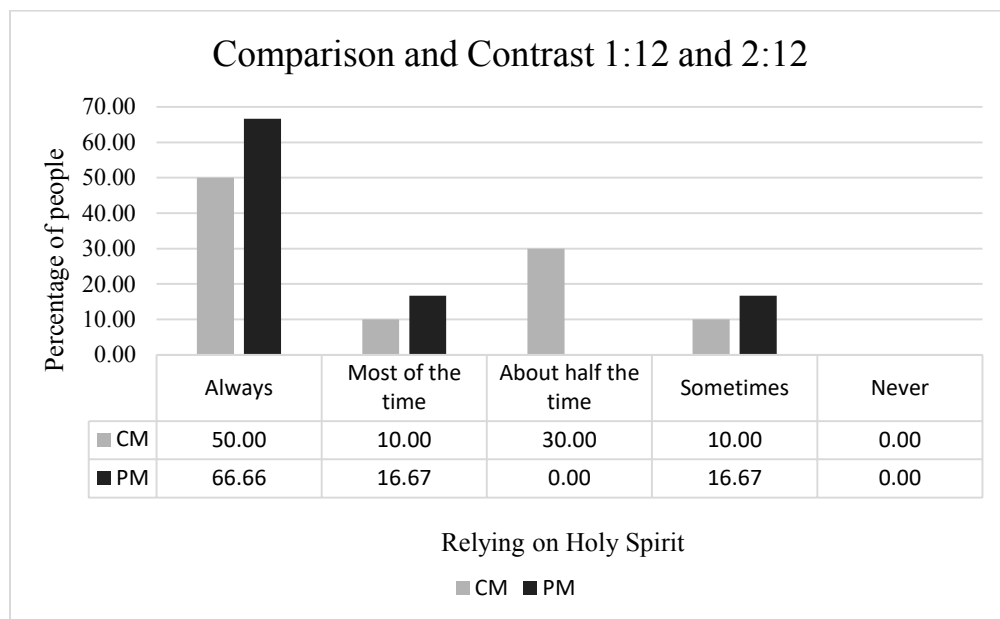
Table 1.10 and 2.10, Avoiding painful encounters

The greatest percentage among CM and PM are among those who have sometimes tried to avoid dealing with painful situations they have faced in the church. This avoidance of painful encounters is present in 70% of CM and 50% of PM. There is a 20% difference in CM compared to PM who sometimes avoid their painful encounters. About half of the time ten percent of CM in comparison to 17% of PM have tried avoiding their painful encounters. Those who never avoid their painful encounters are ten percent of CM and 17% of PM.

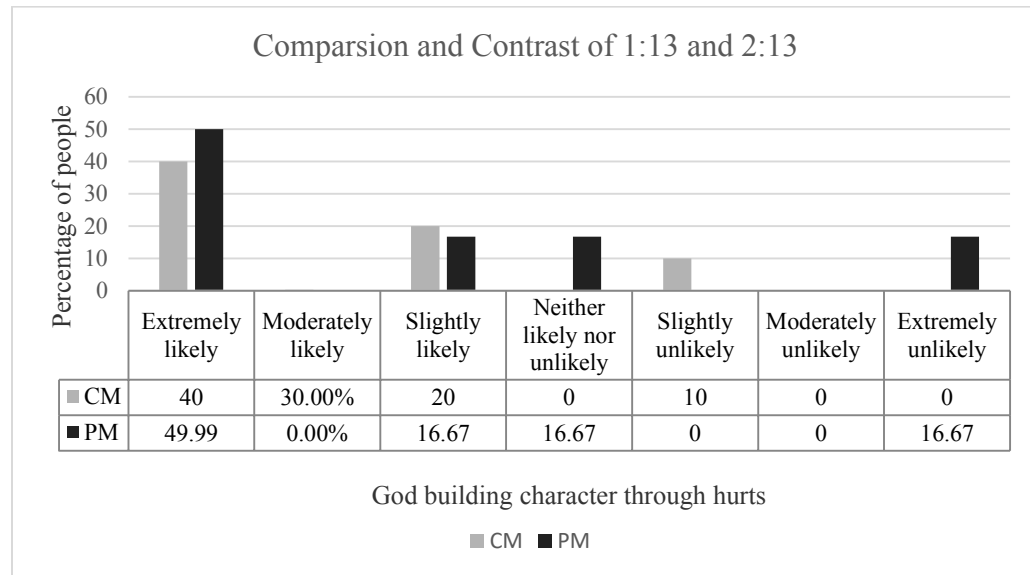
Another ten percent have avoided dealing with their painful encounters. While 17% have sometimes avoided dealing with painful situations, they have encountered among members of the church. Among those who never avoid painful experiences they have encountered in the church are ten percent. The difference between CM and PM are, 17% of CM try to avoid painful encounters most of the time, and 16% of PM try to avoid their painful encounters.

Table 1.11 and PM 1.11, Harboring painful encounters in the heart

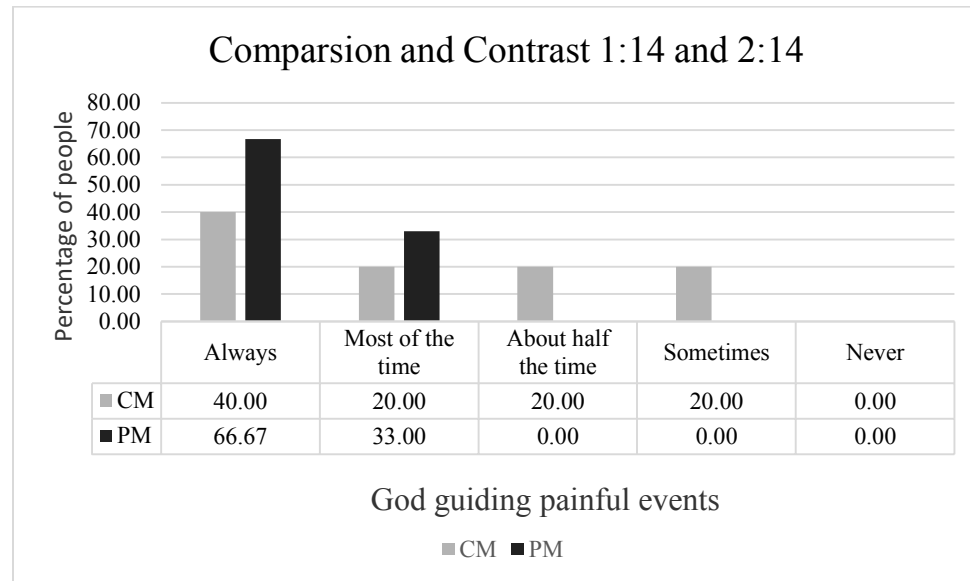
CM and PM tied at 59% each among participants who sometimes allow painful encounters to remain in the heart. A comparison of 50% of CM who never allow painful situations to stay in the heart, is higher than the forty percent of PM who do not allow the things that have caused pain to linger in their heart. The differences between CM and PM are that pain is allowed to disturb the hearts of ten percent of PM while ten percent of CM choose not to allow painful encounters to remain in the heart. The comparison rate is that approximately 75% percent of the time CM will have encounters where their heart is free from hurts related to painful experiences, compared to 65% of PM whose hearts were free of hurts that result from painful experiences.

Table 1.12 and 2.12, Relying on the Holy Spirit

Relying on the Holy Spirit for wise words to handle tough situations is essential for the Christian life. For CM the distribution falls in four areas of the charts. Where 30% of CM rely on the Holy Spirit, PM distribution are at zero percent. The differences among PM are higher than CM in the three other areas of relying on the Holy Spirit. For example, 67% of PM compared to 50% of CM depend on the Holy Spirit for wise choices. Among PM 17% rely on the Holy Spirit most of the time while another 17% sometimes rely on the Holy Spirit. Among CM ten percent are guided by the Holy Spirit most of the time where another ten percent sometimes rely on the Holy Spirit. The difference of seven percent among CM and PM who at times rely on the Holy Spirit for wise words to handle tough situations.

Table 1.13 and 2.13. Hurts used by God to building character

According to the findings, it is extremely likely that God has used the hurts of 50% of PM in comparison to that of 40% of CM to build character in their lives. It is also extremely unlikely that God has used the hurts of 16% of CM compared to a slight unlikeliness of using the hurts of PM. The difference among CM and PM is that CM stand alone in that thirty percent of members hurts have likely been used to build character in their lives by God. In comparison to the slight likelihood that 17% of PM compared to 20% of CM have slightly likely had their hurts used by God as a character building mechanism. It is important to understand that those who allow the hand of God to interact in the painful events of their life also recognize their hurts have been utilized by God to build their character.

Table 1.14 and 2.14, Hand of God guiding painful events in life

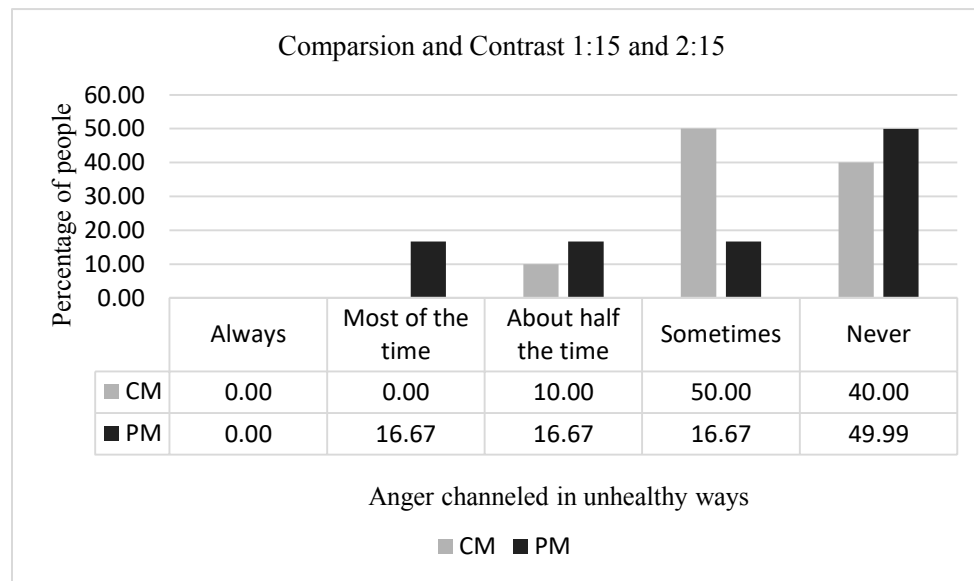
There are two areas where PM have allowed the hand of God to guide the painful courses of their lives. Some PM has either, always or most of the time, allowed God to guide them through the painful events they encountered in life. CM are categorized among these two areas as well. Among 67% of PM, the hand of God has always guided the painful events in their lives. Comparing 40% of CM to that of 67% of PM the average is lower for CM.

There is a 27% difference between PM and CM who allow God to guide the painful courses of one's life. The remainder 33% of PM allow the hand of God to guide the painful courses of their life most of the time. While most of the time 20% of CM allow God to guide their painful events in life. The difference between PM and CM is another thirteen percent of PM allowed the hand of God to guide them through the course of extreme incidents (Table 1.14; 2.14). The findings reveal that an average of 40% of PM have allowed God's guidance when painful events have surfaced in their lives.

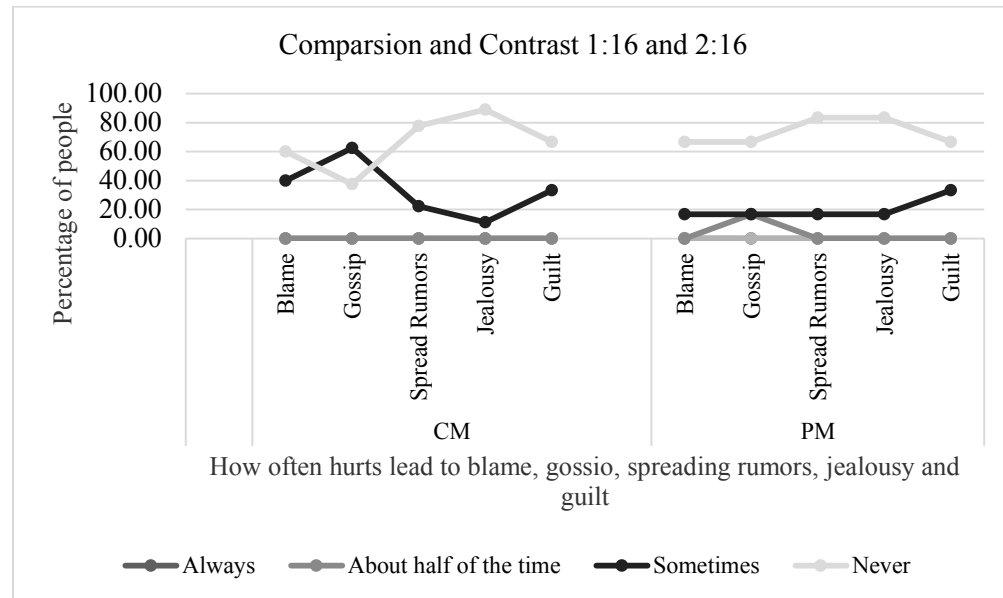
CM are categorized among two other areas where PM do not have any

percentages on the charts. The 40% difference among PM and CM are revealed in these two categories among CM. Among 20% of CM God is sometimes allowed to guide their painful events, and another 20% allows God to guide most of the time when they have experienced painful events in life.

Table 1.15 and 2.15, Anger channeled in unhealthy ways



The area where CM and PM are close is that 40% of CM and 50% of PM never channel their anger in unhealthy ways when they have encountered unpleasant situations in the church. The next area of comparison is among 50% of CM and 16% of PM; who sometimes channeled anger in unhealthy ways. Anger channeled in unhealthy ways among ten percent of CM and 17% of PM about half of the time. Moreover, the area where PM stand alone is that 17% of PM channel anger in unhealthy ways most of the time.

Table 1.16 and 2.16. Blame, gossip, rumors, guilt, and jealousy

In comparison to how CM and PM respond to others and the church, 17% of PM compared to 40% of CM have sometimes responded in blaming other or the church when they have experienced hurts. Sometimes 17% of PM and 62% of CM had responded by gossiping when they encountered hurts.

Among 22% of CM compared to 17% of PM spreading rumors revealed how they react when hurt. Among CM eleven percent have responded in jealous ways while 16% of PM have shown jealous towards others. Both 33% of CM and 33% of PM have felt guilt when they have encountered hurts within the church. The only difference in that of PM is that another 17% have responded most of the time by gossiping when they have encountered hurts.

Among CM and PM, those who never respond when hurt by blame is 67% of PM and 60% of CM. Those who never respond by gossiping are 67% of PM and 37% of CM. Among those who never respond by spreading rumors when hurt is 83% of PM and 77% of CM. Those who experienced guilt when they have encountered hurts in the church are

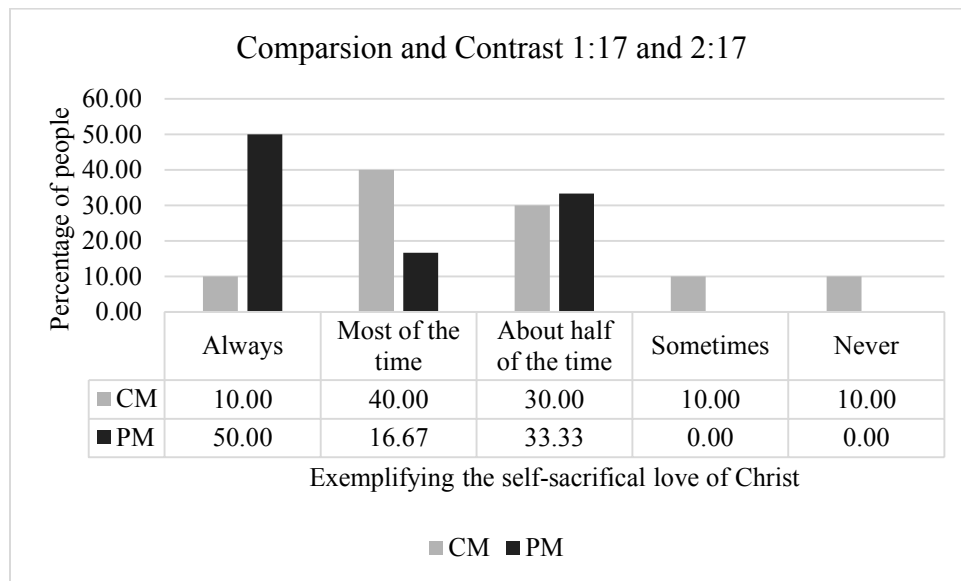
67% of PM and 67% of CM.

CM are among those who revert to blame at 40%, gossip at 63%, and guilt at 33% as means to handle their hurts. For PM 17% sometimes revert to blame and most of the time at another 17% of PM revert to blaming. PM tie in blame and gossip in that sometimes 17% of PM and most of the time another 17% of PM reverts to gossip to handle their hurts.

Among 34% of PM revert to blaming, while another 34% revert 1.16; 2.16) to spreading rumors, and 33% are among those who have experienced guilt when they have encountered unpleasant situations in the church (Table 1.16; 2.16). The comparison sheds light on that fact that among CM and PM blame, gossip and guilt are the experiences of each when they have encountered hurts within the church.

The difference in comparing spreading rumors are 17% of PM to 22% of CM who revert to spreading rumors when hurt. For jealousy, the difference in comparison is 16% of PM, and eleven percent of CM have experienced jealousy. The comparison signifies that the ways in which some PM and CM handle their hurts are the same, through blame, gossip, and guilt.

In comparing those who never respond to the church or other are among 60% of CM never gossip, 77% of CM never spread rumors, and 89% of CM do not become jealous when they experience hurts. In comparison CM to PM 83% of PM never spread rumors, 83% of PM never become jealous, and a three-way tie of 67% of PM never blame, gossip, or have felt guilt due to hurts the encountered in the church. Spreading rumors and becoming jealous are two areas that CM and PM do not revert to for handling their pain.

Table 1.17 and 2.17, Characterizing Christ's love in one's life

The love of Christ characterized in the life of the believer is significant to the church and the ministry. The unselfish love of Christ is essential for the life of the believer as well. Among CM and PM, the love of Christ characterized in the lives of 50% of CM in contrast to ten percent of CM having Christ's love reflected in their life. Most of the time 40% of CM characterizes the unselfish love of Christ in their lives. Most of the time 17% of PM characterizes the unselfish love of Christ in their lives. A difference of 40% of CM characterizes Christ love in their lives most of the time, whereas 50% of PM always characterizes the love of Christ in their lives. There is 33% of CM and PM who characterizes the love of Christ in their lives. There is ten percent of CM who sometimes characterizes the love of Christ in their lives. There is another ten percent of CM who struggle with exemplifying the love of Christ in their lives.

Summary

The results of the CM and PM comparisons revealed that both CM and PM encountered hurts as members of this AAC. Church hurts had occurred within this AAC.

Those who hurt have at times reverted to passive-aggressive behaviors to handle their hurts. The biblical-theological, literature, findings and interviews reveal that people have reverted to passive-aggressive behaviors for one reason or another. Some revert to these behaviors to hurt those whom they feel is responsible for the pain one has encountered. This attitude is a pay it back attitude. Others revert to these behaviors to handle the hurts that they have faced in their lives. When one respond to their hurt, the heart is crying out for help.

When the heart cries out the person who was wounded reacts to their pain by gossiping about the church or others. Some individuals react by showing anger when their heart cries. They may respond by allowing their anger to manifest in unhealthy ways. The findings have revealed that due to hurts CM have spread rumors and have chosen to gossip about the church and others (Table 1.16, 3.16).

The church must recognize the cry of the heart. When the church fails to acknowledge the cry of the heart, the damage is inevitable and will occur among God's people. Gossip and rumors are a clear indication that something has gone wrong in the church or someone had caused a problem. The presence of gossip and the spreading of rumors is an indication of the hearts cry due to hurts one has encountered.

Some Christians who encounter hurts revert to passive-aggressive behaviors to handle their hurts. When passive-aggressive behaviors are present in a church, these are warning signs that hurt have taken place. It is important for the church to recognize these signs to help those who are experiencing hurts to recover from the wounds they have sustained. It is also important to understand the underlying cause of any wound that has occurred to prevent that wound from reoccurring. The interviews helped uncover the

cause of hurts within this AAC.

Interviews

The interviews provided insight into the project. It was necessary to conduct the interviews to understanding the underlying cause of hurts within this AAC. The interviews added depth to the survey and helped clarify some of the things that contributed to the hurts within this AAC. Interviews added to the qualitative nature of the research project and proved to be an asset to the project and this AAC. The interview data was then summarized and added to the research project.

Personal Challenges of Members that Led to Hurts within the Ministry

The interviews were from three CM and PM of this local AAC. The interviews revealed that hurts had occurred within this AAC. Personal challenges that led to hurts for members of this AAC were due to family matters within and without the church. Some personal challenges that resulted in hurts within this AAC among members were due to the carelessness of the membership concerning those who were experiencing hurt. When people experienced personal challenges in the ministry, they wanted to know that the people of God cared for them. When care and support were not available to them, they felt disappointed.

Christians who experience a loss within the family want to know that others in the body of Christ are supportive. When the support goes lacking, the wounds becomes greater. The absents of support reveals that the care and compassion of Christ are missing in the church. At times members of the body who are hurting may contribute to this lack. Those who have experienced hurt at times fail to recognize the importance of their service to the body of Christ. They have used their wound as an excuse to slack at the

expense of the ministry. When members fail to utilize their gifts in the ministry, one can recognize the hurts that are present in their lives. They have not failed to utilize their gifts because they do not want to serve. People fail to utilize their gifts due to the hurts they have encountered in the ministry. The task of the pastoral caregivers understands the needs of those who hurt and connect them with persons with common problems.³³⁹ One to provide support for those whom experience hurts and necessary help is through pastoral care.

For another member of this AAC, the hurt came when those who should have had the best interest of those in ministry at heart failed to do so. Hurts have caused personal and physical challenges in the lives of some members. These hurts caused some members to experience physical challenge that was disruptive to the church and members.

The Bible tells of the Samaritan who came along and ministered to the need of a man who was wounded and left for dead (Luke 10:30-35). Those who passed by the man lying on the road to Jericho should have stopped and ministered to his pain. Instead, they passed by as if he was not there. The story about the certain Samaritan allows Christians to see how they can be attentive to the needs of those who hurt. Christians should seek ways to connect the wounded with those who can address their hurts. When one connects to a counselor, the counselor must be a person of empathy who can help the hurting person understand their problem. Empathy involves putting oneself in the other person's shoes by doing so the counselor can understand the feelings of the counselee.³⁴⁰ Those in the body of Christ must take on the attitude of the good Samaritan to heal church hurts.

³³⁹ Gerkin, 151.

³⁴⁰ Wimberly, *Prayer in Counseling*, 39.

How Members Contributed to the Hurts of Those within the Ministry

Some hurts that occurred in this AAC caused other members of this AAC to experience pain. Hurts happen in the church when a person is seeking help or assistance asks a question to obtain support but have felt wounded. Christians seeking such help have felt that the one attempting to render their service does not want to answer their question. The actions and attitude of the individual rendering their service reveal they do not want to help. Christians sensed that something was wrong and tried to avoid the person whom they sought for help.

People, who sense that one does not care or is not concerned with their needs will respond with a kind of payback attitude. They avoid the person who sought to render help because of the attitude in which they responded to the one needing help. Avoiding the other person becomes the means for handling the situation. This attitude causes the individual to experience how it feels to have someone not care. A lack of concern caused the person who experienced this hurt to respond with avoidance.

Members of the body of Christ have wounded other members. Christians who do not know how to communicate causes other Christian to experience hurt. People acknowledge they were hurt when other members talk to them in a harsh tone or by using harsh words. Hurts happened when Christians are not considerate of the words that they use to speak to other members. Failures in ministry occur when communication becomes a problem.³⁴¹ Christians must be concerned with how they communicate with each other. The interviews revealed that the way in which people talks to someone else is important. When a Christian speak in a harsh way to another Christian, it chills the atmosphere. The

³⁴¹ Baldoni, 3.

person who sought an answer to their question was wounded. They now look for ways to evade the other individual. When they see the other individual, they do what is necessary to avoid the other person.

Hurts Members Experienced within the Ministry Setting

He interviews revealed that hurts experienced within the ministry setting came by way of dishonesty and lack of dedication. The interviews showed that distrust led to the hurts encountered within the leadership. Members encountered hurts that affected their families, finances, the way in which members viewed the role of those in ministry, and the choices members should be entitled to make. Deceit caused the hurts that members encountered which led to family pains. Deceit causes one to operate outside of God's will. The findings revealed the extinct in which PM and CM of this AAC operated outside of God's will (Tables 1.5, 2.5, 3.5).

Deceit was one of the impediments that caused pain in Isaac's family when Rebecca attempted to obtain the blessing for her son, Jacob (Gen27:5-17). Rebekah operated outside of God's will to get the blessing (Gen.27:5-17). Operating outside of the will of God will inevitably lead to hurts in one's life. When people get wounded in the church, a failure happens in the ministry. Disappointment in the ministry or church occurs when people suffer due to false rumors and innuendos. False rumors happened in Jacob's life as an effort of others to damage his character.³⁴² These false rumors came in Jacob's life at a time in which he prospered at the hand of God (Gen. 30:25-27). When God prospers His people, at times other have reverted to false rumors, to caused them harm.

³⁴² Rubietta, 268.

The interviews revealed that those experiencing harm have chosen not to allow the hurts from false rumors that were spread in the church to damage their character. These individuals recognize the importance of allowing God in the healing process and giving Him access to guide their hurt. Through their encounter with the pain they experienced, these individuals acknowledge the ability they have to help another who needs healing from their wounds. They recognize the capability one has in extending one's arms to those who are hurting while embracing their own hurts. This individual can extend their arms to the wounded while attending to their own needs. The ability to handle one's encounter with pain reveals the love of God flowing through those who embrace their hurts and allow room for others to heal.

Hurts also came through false rumors and innuendos spoken against persons in ministry. People have spread false rumors in an attempt to destroy the character of those in the ministry. When these false rumors occurred, those in leadership stood firm in their calling. The findings revealed that the causes of hurts in this AAC came by way of false rumors (Table 1.16, 2.16, 3.16). False rumors also are the cause of others experiencing hurts.

The Cause of Hurts within this AAC

The interview revealed that false rumors were the cause of hurts in the lives of those in leadership within this AAC. A lack of support was the cause of hurts for members of this AAC. When a ministry reveals that there is a lack of support, those in the ministry should be concerned. People within the church want to feel they have the support of their church when experiencing difficult encounters in their lives. According to the interviews, gossip deceit and innuendos were the cause of hurts within this AAC.

Summary

Through the theological and literature review, the researcher came to a better understanding of the hurts that this AAC has encountered. Through the biblical-theological, literature review, and surveys, the researcher incorporated the materials studied and researched into the next steps of the research. The surveys shed light on the degree to which hurts have impacted the lives of those within this AAC and those who were previous members. The researcher studied the research materials for understanding as to how to develop the seven principles.

The next step the researcher developed a set of principles to guide this local AAC through its process of addressing past hurt. The researcher sought guidance from the Holy Spirit through prayer for developing the seven principles. The seven principles were also designed to help this AAC return to its idea of effective ministry.

The researcher generated ideas from the surveys and sought to develop those ideas into the seven principles for helping this AAC find healing and at the same time, do effective ministry. The biblical-theological and literature research was utilized to assist in developing the principles. The set of principles were developed based on the surveys of those within this AAC. The researcher developed the principles with this AAC in mind, and to clarify the idea of effective ministry based on the survey results of this AAC. The development of the seven principles led the researcher to incorporate the principles in the research project.

Seven Principles for Effective Ministry for a Hurting Congregation

For Christians, fellowship with one another is a form of worship. Gathering together for worship service is a kind of commitment. This AAC has an opportunity to do

something that it has never done before; the chance to heal from hurts that reside within her midst. The following seven principles are principles designed with this local AAC at heart. The commitment of those who remains as members of this AAC is important to the healing of the wounds which remain within this AAC.

Principle Number One

Principle number one: The principle of love recognizes the need to hold each other accountable while supporting each other's need to be healed. In the book of Genesis, after Adam and Eve made a decision that went against God's principles, the result of their actions brought about hard consequences. The choice Adam and Eve made to disobey God's voice brought about pain in their lives (Gen. 3:6; 15-18). Their wrong actions caused separation from God and caused them an expedite expedition from the Garden that God designed for their habitation. The findings from the survey, reveals that some hurts among CM were due to not hearing God's voice (Table 1:6). Just as in the case of Adam and Eve, not hearing God's voice caused them to follow the wrong advice. Once Adam and Eve followed the wrong advice, the course they were on led to hurts. When God's people fail to heed His voice, they deny God in the process. They deny their participation in wrong actions.

Their inappropriate actions did not diminish God's love for His creatures. Instead, God's plan involved restoration and redemption. Restoration and redemption were possible because of God's love. God calls his creation to love Him with all of one's heart, mind, soul, and strength. Moreover, to extend love to one's neighbor as one would love oneself (Mark 12:30).

Support also comes to those who are experiencing pain due to no fault of their

own. People experience encounters in their lives that have led to church hurts because they did not receive the support that they believed was due. The interviews revealed that a lack of support when it is needed have resulted in hurts to God's people.

It is important that the people of God's learn how to love.³⁴³ God's desire is that his people would come to know Him in a greater way. God's plan for His people was a plan of restoration and healing which leads to wholeness. Members of the body of Christ must recognize the need to hold others accountable for their wrong actions. Holding one accountable also requires the need to support those who acknowledge their wrong as they seek restoration. The body of Christ must support those who need help in their time of distress. Accountability and restoration are effective ministry practices for helping one return to wholeness. Restoration is one way to activate the effective ministry of the church.

Principle Number Two

Principle number two: Christians must be willing to unmask their hurt to the right people for healing to happen. Many Christians within the church have chosen to cover their hurts or avoid situations that have caused their hurts. Principle number two calls for Christians to deal with their hurts by first exposing them. The story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 tells of a certain man who was wounded when he fell among thieves. This certain man was stripped, wounded and left half dead (Luke 10:31-35). People who are wounded at the hands of others may suffer a lot of hurts. Members of this AAC experienced hurts at the hands of those who should have cared for them (Table 1:4).

Those who should have cared for this certain man passed by leaving him wounded. Along came a Samaritan who had compassion on him and saw that he got the

³⁴³ Rick Warren. *Purpose Driven Live* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 123.

care that was needed to heal his wounds. It takes the compassionate to care for the wounds of others. It is important that those who have been hurt by the church do not suffer alone, but find the help of compassionate shoulders of Christ to help in the healing process. Church hurts caused some Christians to gossip, spread false rumors and even spread rumors that have led to damaging results (Table 1:16).

Instead of spreading rumors, the healing process begins by teaming with compassionate people who strive to see the healing process come to reality. The Good Samaritan teamed with someone who could make healing a reality in the life of the certain man who was wounded and left for dead. Principle number two hopes to make that reality in the lives of those who were injured. The people of God must “seize the moment” to help those who were injured.³⁴⁴ Helping the wounded heal becomes one’s duty to the wounded. One’s obligation to help the injured heal is effective ministry when healing takes place in the church.

Principle Number Three

Principle Number Three: Proclaim the word of God with the power to change lives (1 Cor. 2:4). Healing begins with change. Those who were hurt are in need of having their hurts healed. Those who hurt others needs healing from the tendencies that are active in one’s being to render hurts. Therefore, believers should charge one another to choose words that are profitable and not allow unprofitable conversation such as gossip and rumors to ruin one’s life.

Change is inevitably something which must happen in the lives of those who confess to be followers of Christ. Unless the word of God penetrates the heart, the mind

³⁴⁴ Warren, 259.

will remain in its secular state. According to the findings, the Self-sacrificing love of Christ was not exemplified in the lives of some who professed to be Christians (Table 1:18). The unsaved and saved are in need of having the word of God penetrate their heart in productive ways.

Inner transformation takes place when the word of God penetrates one's heart. Nouwen refers to this inner transformation as spiritual formation.³⁴⁵ The word of God brings about change in the lives of God's people through the proclamation of the gospel with power and when the word is not diminished to fit the occasion. The apostle Paul said, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerity, supposing to add afflictions to my bonds. However, the other of love, knowing that [he was] set for the defense of the gospel" (Phil 1:16-18). Paul took a stand for the gospel to magnify Christ in and through his life.

The atmosphere created for healing to occur when one proclaims the word of God with power. The word of God is just that powerful (Heb. 4:12). The love of Christ reflects in and through one's life as one draws nearer to Christ. Life change brings one closer to God and closer to the believer as well. Life change allows room for people to handle differences of opinions. Proclaiming the Scripture in the power of the Spirit will result in life change. When one receives the proclamation of the word of God, one can live according to the word which prepares one to live in the Spirit.

In one's private life, believers should make every effort to present themselves approved unto God, as God's unashamed workman who rightly divides the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). The preached word and lived out word will reveal the glory of God

³⁴⁵ Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*,

wherever hurts have occurred. Those who are strong in the faith will have the strength indeed to help those who are weak become strong in the faith. God sends His word out empty to accomplish what He desires, and the purpose for which he sends it, and it would not return void of what it was sent out to accomplish (Isaiah 55:11). The gospel reveals the effectiveness of the word preached in the power of the Spirit because it activates the power of God in one's way of life.

Principle Number Four

Christians must recognize the condition that they are in, and do something about it (Psalms 139:14). Principle number four calls for Christians, to not only recognize when they are hurt but to do something about their hurts. According to the findings, many Christians are aware of experiences that led to their hurts, but they fail to do anything about them (Table 1:3). According to the findings, many Christians have allowed their hurts to linger for a long time (Table 1: 9). For the word of the Lord ask the question, "Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship, persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? Recognizing that one's hurts have the potential to bring about separation from God and other believers should inspire Christians to do something about their condition.

Being aware of one's condition will help Christians become aware of whom they are considering their relationship with Christ. The word of the Lord says, "I will praise you, for I am fearfully, and wonderfully made, marvelous are your works, and that my soul knows very well" (Psalms 139:14). Christians must not allow their hurts to overcome who they are in Christ, but who they are in Christ must overcome the pain that resides within. For 1 John 5:4-5 says, "For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the

world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith (KJV).” One must believe that they can do something about their hurts, and not just allow them to become past pains, which enters into one’s present life whenever there is a need call upon them (Table 1:10).

Principle Number Five

Be willing to heed the voice of the Lord and seek the guidance of His hand (Proverbs 3:5-6). For it is easy to be hurt and wants to be healed of one’s pain. It is easy to want God’s help and never attempt to do what is required to obtain His help. The findings revealed that some CM have gone through painful events in which they have not sought direction from God to help them through their hurts (Table 1:15). One must seek the Lord’s guidance through the painful events of life (Table 1:15) Christians must “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thine ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).” Christians must be willing to acknowledge God in one’s hurts and be open and attentive to hearing the voice of the Lord concerning one’s pain.

One can recognize the voice of the Lord when He speaks. Having too many things crowd one’s heart or having much pain and seeking other ways to deal with one’s pain will prevent one from hearing or heeding the voice of the Lord (Finding 1:6). Christians must allow God to be the Lord of their total being and allow Him to be in the center of their activities. Effective ministry takes place where God is at the heart of all of one’s activities; this is evident when one hears and follows the voice of the Lord.

Principle Number Six

Rely on the Holy Spirit and open one’s heart to Him (Acts 1:8). Principle number

six calls for Christians to depend on the Holy Spirit and open one's heart to Him. Jesus told the disciples that they were to tarry in Jerusalem until they had received the Spirit's power. He knew that they needed the Holy Spirit power to do His will. Jesus knew that without the strength of the Holy Spirit the disciples could not do the task that he had called them to do. It is important for Christians to open their hearts to the Holy Spirit and to rely on Him.

Hurts occur in the church because many Christians attempt to do God's work without Him (Table 1:5). Hurts take place because Christians do not rely on the Holy Spirit in their effort to do God's will. Jesus called the disciples to tarry until they received the gift of the Spirit. Through prayer and the study of the word, one can open one's heart to the Holy Spirit.

Christians must take the time to be still, hear the Spirit's voice, and utilize the Spirit's power from within to heal their hurts. The disciples knew how important prayer was, they were on one accord when they prayed, and the manifestation of the Spirit was present and came upon each them (Acts 2:1-4). The disciples prayed on one accord, and the Spirit's power was available to help with decisions they needed help with (Acts 1:18). Those who are hurting in the church needs the power of the Spirit in operation on their behalf. It is not just for those who are hurting to pray, but the church must pray and begin to open its heart to the Holy Spirit so that healing can take place in her midst. The effective ministry resumes through the demonstration of the Spirit power which reveals the healing of church hurts.

Principle Number Seven

Be willing to let go of one's Hurts (Luke 23:34a). The findings showed that many

Christians are not exempt from hurts that occur in the church. Some hurts that happen in the church have lasted for some time, while other have not lasted long at all. Hurts have even caused harm to others. Hurts hinder many of God's people from moving forward in ministry. Some hurts caused God's people to respond in various ways. Principle number seven calls the Christian to surrender to God and let go of one's hurts by releasing them to God. The findings show that many hurts needed consideration during the writing phase of the principles.

While writing the seventh principle, the researcher envisioned the image of Jesus on the cross with his hands stretched wide. The sound echoing through the hills of Calvary, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34a). The sweet sound of surrender, letting go, releasing, and forgiving. Forgiving those who have caused pain and harm, and in the midst gaining freedom from the grip of pain and hurts. Jesus did just that; He forgave those who caused His pain and gained freedom from the grip of sin and death. God's people must be willing to let go of their hurts and release them to God and find the freedom of Christ's forgiveness and the love to forgive those who has caused harm. Effective ministry is in practice when God's people have let go of their hurts and have found freedom from its pain,

Summary

The study reveals that hurts occurred in this AAC. Through the surveys and interviews hurts seen. The interviews also revealed the cause of hurts within this AAC. The cause of hurts was due to a lack of concern for those who was experiencing a crisis. The lack of concern has been revealed through the hurts within this AAC. The cause of hurts also included rumors, innuendos, and false accusations against those within the

body. When false rumors, innuendos or false accusations occur, hurts are inevitably present. Rumors and innuendos are also ways that reveal that hurts have occurred even if the person hurting has not been made known. Another way those who hurt attacks the body or individual to cause pain is through rumors.

Upon completing the seven principles, a set was given to the remaining leaders of this assembly to gain their insight into these principles. The set of seven principles were developed to help this AAC heal, and return to effective ministry. The researcher developed the principles with the perspective of healing in mind. The researcher developed the principles from the standpoint of healing to help this hurting congregation find healing and resume to doing effective ministry. The effective ministry resumes through the healing process for this AAC through the seven principles. The development of the principles took shape based on This AAC view of effective ministry from the results of the survey. The researcher incorporated the biblical-theological and literature research along with the findings into the developing and enhancing the principles.

CHAPTER SIX: EVALUATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research led to the development of a set of principles that will be utilized to help this AAC return to health and practical ministry based on the survey. The researcher hoped to develop the principles with the AAC in mind as well as practical ministry.

Strengths of the Research Project

One of the strengths of the research project is that the research dealt with an area of ministry that tends to be uncomfortable for many people. Some individuals shy away from dealing with hurts. It was important that the congregation was willing to participate in this research. It was also important that the pastor had given permission for the research project to be done considering the nature of the project. That in itself is a great strength for the project. The participants of this AAC willingness to participate in this project and deal with their hurts is commendable and is a great strength.

Another strength of the project is that it provided a platform for this AAC to begin healing from hurts uncovered through research. A benefit of the research material is that it provides this AAC with a tool for understanding her current situation. It provides a tool that can be implemented to help this AAC find healing and strength through the seven principles.

The survey method was an asset it provided information that would have remained undisclosed to this AAC. Another strength of the project was that not only was CM of this AAC surveyed but also PM of this AAC. The surveys provided insight into how some of the hurts that CM and PM dealt with were similar. The comparison of CM

and PM findings are that they reveal the similarities between the hurts they experienced as members of this AAC. The survey's findings clarified that hurts had occurred in this AAC. The research also clarified that some of the hurts that had taken place had lasted for a long time. The interviews also proved to be a strength to the project. The interviews revealed the cause of hurts that existed within this AAC.

The biblical-theological and related literature seem to be another strength for understanding hurts and how hurts led people to respond in a variety of ways. The research strength also came through understanding that hurts are not always a one-way street, but church hurts are universal in that they can begin at any place, with one person and spread in different directions. Hurts can start with a group of individuals and affect another person. Hurts do not just affect the one who hurts, but a variety of people have been hurt just by one selfish action or incident.

Weaknesses of the Research Project

One of the weaknesses of the project is that the researcher hopes that the seven principles can be utilized to help this congregation find healing. Another weakness for the project is due to the possible change in leadership, may impact the implementation of the seven principles. One weakness of the project was the tool used to do the surveys. Not fully understanding the tool caused delays in setting up and administering the surveys. One weakness is that there is so much to learn it is possible that the research questions could have gone deeper to understand more about what caused the hurts within this AAC.

A weakness of the project was also the interviews. The interviews could have been an even greater strength had there been more interviews. Another weakness for the project is that the project may not be implemented to help this AAC due to the change in

leadership. A weak point of the project was the choice of using the survey as a preferred method of research. The survey method proved to be an asset to the project; the project could improve through using more interviews. A weak point of the project was the sample size, although the sample size and research community were equal in number the sample size was small.

Deviation from the Project Design

Identification of modifications from the project design included the original QRD method of research. The project included the original method of interviews which proved to be an asset to this project. The original method of research included interviews and surveys of only this AAC. Deviation from this approach of only surveying this AAC and utilizing the inquiry method to survey the PM of this AAC was insightful. The surveys provided an opportunity to compare and contrast the findings of CM and PM to understand the hurts that occurred within this AAC. The deviation from the project design also called for a second survey.

A second survey was put in place to survey PM of this AAC. The researcher preferred the surveys due to the turnaround time for collecting data, and the various changes that had occurred within this assembly. The survey method was preferred due to the dwindling in size of the congregation as well. The current membership has dropped in membership to a total of eleven members which includes the researcher. The researcher did not participate in taking the survey. The method of inquiry was also preferred because it provided a way in which members of this assembly could contribute to the research in an anonymous way.

Deviations from the project design also included the comparison and contrast of

data from CM and of PM or those who were members of this AAC in the past. The survey method was used to gain insight into what hurts were in this local AAC through comparison and contrasting the information between CM and PM which was not a part of the original plan. The comparison and contrast gave insight into the long-lasting hurts within this AAC.

Changes to the Research Project

As the researcher reflects on the research project the changes made would reflect how the research tool could be used to provide a smoother transition from the research project. The researcher would gain a better understanding of the tool utilized for the research project. The researcher would probably change the length of the surveys, even though each question was beneficial to the project.

Deference of the Project Methods

The project through an online survey utilized the qualitative method. Qualitative research is research that is designed to gain an understanding of underlying motives, opinions, or reasons that are the cause of a phenomenon. Understanding this phenomenon in the setting in which it has occurred is essential to the study. The biblical and literature review helps in understanding how QRD and Grounded Theory (GT) works. QED contributes to understanding the cause or the underlying tendencies to a phenomenon that has already taken place. Take for instance the woman at the well (John 4). If one were to understand her story in real life, they would enter into the community and study her everyday activities, how she live. One would choose the QRD method in which they would go about studying her life, whether, interview, observation, or a variety of other ways. Through the study utilizing the QRD method and GT, one would be able to

understand why she was seen in the heat of the day drawing water. The Samaritan woman was not interacting with others in her Community. One would begin to understand the underlying causes to the way in which she lived.

QRD and the biblical and literature research provided the framework for conducting this research. The phenomenon studied was church hurts or past hurts and the impact of those hurts on an organization. The qualitative method provided the framework for understanding hurt within this local AAC. Through the method of survey, participants provided insight into the research project, by providing understanding into the feasibility of an occurrence that exist in this local AAC.

GT is the study of a phenomenon in an event in its setting. GT allows the study of this local AAC to be conducted through surveys to understand the phenomenon or the feasibility of a phenomenon within this AAC.

Through QRD the survey method was utilized to identify hurts within this AAC. The researcher used the questionnaire method for surveying the current population to determine the likelihood of hurts within this congregation. The survey methods provide an anonymous platform for collecting data from within this AAC. The anonymous survey provides the participant with a platform in which they can be honest and open regarding their experiences within this local AAC.

The data was collected through Qualtrics the online survey. The database provided a reliable source for collecting and storing the inquiry information. Through Qualtrics survey the participants answered a series of questions derived from the biblical and literature research dealing with hurts. Participants recorded their answers through Qualtrics online survey platform. Answers given by each participant provided insight into

the phenomenon within this local AAC.

Implementation

The implementation stage of the seven principles has taken place. It is hopeful that the implementation process will begin upon with the new changes. The researcher was hopeful in implementing the principles through a series of messages. Developing each principle into a sermon in which the researcher will preach was the goal for applying the principles. Due to changes made in leadership the process of applying the principles may change.

Overall Findings: Discussion of Material and Integration of Data

The research began with the theological and literature research to understand hurts in the church and how those hurts impact others or the ministry. Through the theological and literature review, the research revealed much about hurts. Although Christians experience hurts in the church, their experiences at times are the result of hurts caused by members of the body of Christ (Table 1:4; 2:5).

The biblical-theological research has revealed that hurts occurred in similar ways in the lives of God's people throughout the Bible (Gen.3:24; 27:41; 37:34-35; 40:20; John 4). Related literature has also revealed that people get hurt when their children refuse to mind, when others ignore them, or when another person is just critical.¹ Hurts happen in the church due to a variety of things that cause hurts.

Christians experience hurts because of the actions of others. The person causing the hurt may be dealing with a variety of stuff that is the cause of one's hurts.

Documentation shows that among youth, anger leads to hurts, because of low self-

¹ Stephen Mansfield, *Healing Your Church Hurt: What to Do When You Still Love God but Has Been Wounded by His People* (Austin, TX: Tyndale House Publishers, INC., 2010), 8.

esteem.² When unresolved anger gets stuck in one's heart it flaws one's character, and damages others.³ Anger in this way becomes a destructive force. There are times when people who are angry will attack others in subtle, indirect passive ways, causing harm to them.⁴ At times passive-aggressive behaviors reveal anger. Passive-aggressive behaviors have caused harm to Christians in the church when people gossip and spread rumors about the church or other. Spreading rumors and gossip have caused people to get angry. Destructive anger causes character flaws in the lives of God's people.

The findings have revealed that Some Christians have reverted to these passive-aggressive ways when they have experienced hurts in the church (Table 1:17; 2:17). The implications for ministry is that Christians one should strive to live God's way instead of reverting to passive-aggressive ways to handle their hurts. When Christians revert to the ways of the world to handle their hurts, non-Christians will refuse to accept the very God that the Christians serve. Christians who display such behaviors then come under attack because of the character defects that are present in their lives.

Another implication for this is that the church can learn something from understanding passive-aggressive behaviors and how they work within the ministry not just to respond to others in a negative way but to attack the ministry from inside. The literature research made this clear in the statement, "Never underestimate the power of the mind to disempower."⁵ John P Kotter and Dan S. Cohen, allows one to understand

² Quill, 10.

³ Stanley, 64.

⁴ Quill, 18.

⁵ John P. Kotter and Dan S. Cohen, *The Heart of Change: Real Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations* (Boston, MA: Howard Business School Publishing, 2002), 112.

the power and ability of the mind to destroy or disempower.

Many Christians are aware of experiences which have resulted in hurts in their lives (Table 1.3; 2.4). At two different times in life, Jacob's experiences were different. The Book of Genesis give details of Jacob's life during a season when Jacob's pain was so unbearable that he did not want any comfort from his wound (Gen. 37:34). The wounds caused by the hands of Jacob's sons brought a painful experience into Jacob's life (Gen.37:34-35).

During another season of his life, Jacob recognized that God was at work through the painful experiences that he encountered with Laban and his sons (Gen. 31:1). He recognized the hand of God guiding his life. Jacob's life reveals areas where opportunities for growth and maturity occurred. Polley refers to the hurts that people encounter by saying that at times those hurts causes one to by-pass the opportunity for growth.⁶ One will miss the opportunities for growth when one does not allow God to guide the painful events in one's life.

The findings show that God has worked through the lives of some CM and PM by guiding the painful events of one's life (Table 1:14; 2:14). During the season in Jacob's life when God was building character, it seemed as if Jacob would never finish working for Laban and obtain the promise to marry Rachel God build character even in our waiting, and waiting takes patience and faith. When God is building character in one's life, hurts may come, but they will not remain.

The findings reveal the imperfections in the lives of God's people (Table 1:17;

⁶ Kenneth Polley, "Avoiding Division within a Church: A Proactive Approach for Identifying Sources of Conflict and Creating a Healthy Ministry Environment" (DMin thesis, Bethel University, St. Paul, MN, May 2015), p. 1-59 accessed August 15, 2016.

2:17). Imperfections or character defect are those things that tend to blemish the outer being from a spiritual perspective. The findings reveal that some CM and PM have reverted to behaviors that tend to damage one's appearance. Christians who have experienced hurts have reverted to some of the same tactics that have caused their hurts (Table 1:17; 2:17). According to relevant literature, these passive tactics are called behaviors.⁷

The findings clarified some ways in which hurts have impacted this AAC. Moving ahead of God's plan when doing God's will tend to be a hindrance for this AAC (Table 1:5). The findings reveal the extent in which this AAC has operated outside of God's will (Table 1:5). Moving ahead of God's plan has been seen in the Bible through the lives of God's people as well. Rebekah tried to obtain the blessing for Jacob by operating outside of God's will through deceit (Gen. 27:5-19). Jacob moved ahead of God's plan by posing as Esau to obtain a blessing (Gen. 27:14-24). Esau when he learned that Jacob had obtained the blessing Moved out of God's will and thought to cause harm to Jacob (Gen. 27:41-46). Moving ahead of God in any attempt to do His will places one outside of the will of God. Hurts occur in the lives of God's people when they do take things upon themselves and claim that they are doing work for God.

The findings attest to the way Christians respond when hurt as revealed in biblical-theological, and related literature. As the researcher brings the study together, the findings continue to reveal what the biblical-theological and literature review has disclosed. God's people are constantly experiencing pain because of hurts in their lives. Church hurts have been known to occur at the hands of other Christians. Christians are among those who have allowed anger to manifest in unhealthy ways. Those who gossip,

⁷ Quill, 18.

spread rumors because of their hurt are among Christians who have caused church hurts.

The implication for the church is that when people have experienced church hurts they revert to the damaging behaviors to deal with their pain. An indication to the church that those who are hurting or those who have experienced hurts are not handling that hurts in the way that God's word requires.

There are times when hurt takes place when one fails to heed God's voice. The implications for ministry is that when Christians are not heeding the voice of the Lord, the church has set herself in positions to cause hurts to anyone who comes through her doors. The implications for ministry is that is that those who enters the church that is in that state will fail to be transformed by the gospel. The research revealed that hurts had occurred in this AAC. Moreover, some of the hurts had lasted for extended periods of time. The research showed that people responded to their hurts according to the way in which the literature research revealed

The challenges to the findings as it relates to ministry are that hurts are one thing that people are not too open with revealing. This research project helped this AAC with being open and honest, although it came through the survey method. The challenge is to assist members of this congregation heal without making them feel uncomfortable. Another challenge is how this congregation would respond to healing due to change in leadership in the very new future? Another challenge is how to get new leadership to enter the healing process with a hurting congregation.

Although there are a variety of ways that hurts happen, the Findings makes it clear that hurts occurred in this AAC (Table 1:4). The biblical text reveals experiences that led to hurts by others, in the life of Euodia and Syntyche (Phil.4:2). Esau and Jacob

experienced pain that resulted in hurts as well (Gen. 27:30-32). One can understand the hurts that impacted this AAC (Table 1:2, 1:3).

The biblical theological and related literature provided guidance into the research project. The biblical research provided insight into hurts that helped the researcher grasp an understanding of how hurts began. The research gave clarity on the cause of certain hurts and how hurts affected others. The findings also brought clarity to the impact hurts have on the ministry due to the hurts people encountered. Upon doing the research, the findings revealed that there were hurts within the AAC.

Through the surveys, the findings showed that not only CM were affected by hurts, but PM was also affected by hurts as well. The biblical-theological research gave insight into the results of the CM and PM. The research show that hurts had taken place and at times had lasted for long periods of times in the lives of God's people due to hurts they have encountered (Table 1:17). Jacob had an experience in wounds was so painful that he did not think that he would be relieved of his pain (Gen37:32-34).

Some people have experienced hurts that caused unbearable pain in their lives. Pain that tends to be unbearable cause a separation between those who should care for one another. Just as in Jacob's life, he did not want to be comforted by his family when he experienced pain. The implications for the church is the church must help those who are hurting experience the love of Christ so Christ's love can penetrate the pains that seem so unbearable.

There was ten percent of CM who had carried their hurts for a very long time. Moreover, thirty percent of CM allowed their hurts to linger for a long time. There are times when Christians have allowed their hurts to last because others have hurt them.

When a person has been hurt by another and does not handle their hurts in a proper manner, those hurts will grow old.

When people allow their hurts to linger, their hurts will eventually turn into old wounds that continue to reap havoc in one's life. One's outer actions would reflect the pain that one has allowed residing within their soul. An example found in the book of Genesis when Jacob received news that the wild beast had killed his son, Jacob's inner being was disturbed (Gen. 37:18-36). The personal hurt caused an outer action in Jacob's life. Jacob tore his robe signifying the depth in which the hurt touched his inner being.⁸ Although at the time Jacob unknowingly suffered at the hands of his sons, his inner being experienced pain.

Hurts have occurred because CM have experienced harm at the hands of others, but those hurts continue when CM have chosen to allow their pain to remain. Jacob had prepared to allow his pain to carry him into death where he would abide with his son (Gen. 37:35). At this point, the findings reveal that CM have chosen to allow their pain to remain and some carry that pain into their present life (Table 1.10). The pain stays in one's life because they have allowed the residue of those hurts to stay in their heart (Table 1:12).

Jacob was aware of his pain but chose to let his pain linger; he vowed that he would go down to the grave to his son (Gen. 37:35). Pain in this way allows the inner being to remain in a disturbed state. The havoc that these wounds create causes a disturbance in one's immediate surroundings. The exposure of one's immediate surroundings to the effects of one's pain impacts one's friends, family, and the church.

The biblical research revealed how Jacob wanted to carry his hurts throughout life

⁸ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 42.

because they seemed so unbearable (Gen. 37:35). When hurts have taken place in the church, some have hidden their hurts allowing them to persist. At times this cause people to not give their best to the ministry. When people are not giving their best to the ministry, there may be underlying causes why. The literature research shows that when some people hurt they turn to passive-aggressive behaviors. When people revert to passive-aggressive behaviors, they do not do the best that they can in ministry.

Due to their hurts, some people revert to secular behaviors. They may gossip or spread rumors. These are forms of passive-aggressive behaviors. The biblical-theological and literature review along with the survey findings are unanimous in showing that when people hurt, some have turned to gossip, or spreading rumors against others or the church. When people spread rumors or gossip, it may not be clear why they are doing so. The findings have revealed that due to hurts CM have spread rumors and have chosen to gossip about the church and others.

The implication for the church is when rumors and gossip are present within a ministry there is an indication that hurts are present. The church must be intentional in hearing the wounds of those who are hurting through the actions and words that they speak. Old wounds can impact a person's present life in negative ways. The research findings reveal that a significant percent of CM and PM have been affected by sometimes allowing their pains to penetrate their current life. The Samaritan woman was an example of a person who allowed their past pains to remain in her present life (John 4). The past pains caused problems in her daily way of living. Her present situation caused separation from her community, as her past pains affected her way of life. Those who experience church hurts are affected by the pain that remains in their lives. The Samaritan woman

was an example of how hurts have allowed some Christians to separate because of painful situations that they have encountered in life.

The biblical-theological and literature research along with the findings of surveys helped the researcher understand hurts. The research gave clarity into how there are underlying causes to hurts. The research also made it clear what some of those root causes were. All three data sources were unanimous in showing that when hurts occur, they may not last long at all and there are times that they may last for years. The research shows that not all people respond in the same way when they were hurt. Although people get hurt, some choose to handle their hurts in goodly ways. The research also shows that not all people respond to their wounds and allow them to last a long time. Some hurts do not last long at all. The research also revealed that some Christians experienced were not the result of hurts in the church.

Conclusions

The biblical and theological and literature review has helped with understanding the hurts in the lives of members of this AAC. The research provides understanding into the chaos that this AAC has experienced and opens the opportunity for something to be done to help those who are hurting or have experienced hurts. The biblical-theological, literature research and findings have revealed that people have struggled with things in their personal lives which cause hurts or damage their character. It was important to gain an understanding of hurts through the biblical-theological and literary materials to understand how those who hurt impact others and the organization.

The theological and literature research provided the framework for understanding hurt in this AAC. The surveys added to the framework for understanding these hurts. The

survey taken by this AAC added to that framework by provided insight into the hurts that occurred in this AAC. This AAC was surveyed to determine if hurts were a part of the chaos that continues in her midst. According to the findings, hurts has caused much pain to this AAC.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RESEARCHERS PERSONAL INSIGHT AND GROWTH

The researcher personal reflections from this research have brought an appreciation for doing research. The nature of the project and having worked on a project that deals with so much pain has caused the researcher prayer life to be strengthened. Throughout the project, there were some occasions when the researcher had to stop and pray. The project has been one where many prayers were needed. The researcher's prayer life is one area that God has strengthened through this project. There were many occasions where the researcher were guided to prayer concerning the nature of the project. Prayer throughout the project has also helped the researcher not to forget the importance of prayer for those who are hurting.

As the researcher reflects on the project and the CM findings, the thought of the pain that began in the book of Genesis with Adam and Eve, continues in the lives of God's people every day. The pain caused by church hurts continues when the people of God fails to live life God's way. Church hurts happen when one's heart is out of tune with God. When one fail to allow God to deal with the inner being, hurts will occur. Prayer is needed, to deal with one's inner being continually. The CM findings revealed people tend to have their lives together but inside the inner man needs much prayer for the Holy Spirit can work in the heart.

The researcher has experienced many situations during this project where the pull to pray and minister to someone who was hurting seemed to be demanding. At times the researcher day was filled with the pain that others have experienced. God has been at

work in the researcher's life bringing understanding to those pains. The researcher has experienced many opportunities to minister to co-workers and people who have experienced hurts. Some hurts have continued day after day. Those who walk in tune with God experience hurts. Learning how to handle one's hurts are one's duty as a follower of Christ. When Christians live out their duty as followers of Christ, they will not contribute to hurts. Christians would be able to point others to the remedy needed to heal their hurts.

Moreover, yet God continues to allow the researcher to reach to help those whom experience hurts. When things get tough, the research has provided the researcher a focus in dealing with the hurts one encounter, to remember Jesus' arms that are open wide calling out to all who have experienced pain. One's duty to the hurting is to show loving compassion from one's heart. Whether one is experiencing pain at the moment or not, God has called each one to love.

The theological and literature research brought an amazing reality to mind upon studying and researching. There were times that it seemed that the research would not end, but would continue forever. The research brought an appreciation for studying and provided insight into research that the researcher hopes to use again.

Due to the research of the subject matter, the researcher has gained an even greater appreciation for those hurt within the church. A friend once said, "When you look at a person, you cannot tell if they are hurting or not." Before this research, the researcher had uncertainties on when a person had experiences hurts. Through the research, those doubts were made clear. One's observation of a person may not reveal if that person has experienced church hurts. Daily people mask their hurt through their actions by

responding in negative ways. The research has helped the researcher gain insight into this area of study on hurts. There are times when one can recognize that a person has experienced church hurt due to the actions revealed in one's life.

The researcher has always had a desire to help individuals who have left the church. The researcher's desire has been to understand why they left and to reach out and assist them in their return. The researcher has a greater desire to help God's people who have been leaving churches across the nation. The researcher has often come across individuals who have left the church because of church hurts. Once while working at a fitness club, a young man once asked how he could get a job? The information given him helped him to get hired. This young man continued the conversation, and the topic of research was brought up. The researcher mentioned the project on hurts only to find that the young man was among those who experienced church hurts. During the conversation, the young man stated that he had recently left his church for the very reason, church hurt. Through researching this topic of hurts, the researcher has gained a desire to help those who experience church hurt. Helping people find restoration is essential to the life of the researcher.

An area of personal growth comes through the theological and literature review but also through the surveys as well. Upon doing the research, the researcher has gained insight into an area of research that has brought understanding and concern for people who get hurt in the church. This research project has given the researcher a way of understanding how to understand the hurts that are in plain view. Understanding how to see things in plain view is one way of hearing one's heart cry out of the hurts that one has encountered.

The project has given the researcher insight into the problem of hurts, and what hurts are and helped to understand the cause of hurts within this AAC. As the researcher reflected on the project, the idea of hurts in the church was clearer. Those who experienced hurts within this AAC were hindered from moving forward in ministry. Once the people of God are not able to go forth in ministry, the ministry suffers or is wounded. The people of God are not able to go forth due to hurts that have been allowed to linger and grow old. When old wounds persist, people respond in a variety of ways. They respond through passive-aggressive means to handle the hurts they have encountered. People respond to anger and revert to violent means as a way to handle their wounds. Christians have turned to the hand of God to guide their painful confrontations.

There are times when people get hurt and the impediments that caused their wound lingers causing their wounds to grow. The longer the wound lingers without care the more damage is done to those in the presence of the one hurting, and the more the church suffers. The effectiveness of the ministry is hindered, due to the hurts. The underlying cause of all that has happened may be as simple as a lack of care or concern, or false rumors being spread, false accusations against another of God's persons. The failure to hear the heart's cry when one is spreading false rumors and gossiping leads to more hurt. The effectiveness of the ministry goes lacking. For the effectiveness of ministry to return to the church, old wounds must receive healing.

The researcher has gained knowledge concerning hurts from the study. The researcher has also gained some understanding of the subject matter. The project enhanced the researcher's life in that the researcher gained an appreciation for research because research has shown another way of understanding the problems and hurts of

people. Research helps add meaning and understanding to those hurts and helps one find a solution to the pains people encountered. This project has added to the researcher's appreciation for research and writing and hopefully, will enhance that in a better way.

The researchers own personal growth has strengthened through the personal struggles with seeing family members struggle with their pains. This project has brought a deeper desire and needs for continual prayer in the researcher's life. This desire and the necessity of prayer extends to family, church family and people encountered each daily who struggle with hurts.

How This Project Could Benefit the Wider Community

This research project could benefit the community as a whole because it could help further the study and research into this area of study and enhance that study for the community as a whole. The research sheds light on areas of church hurt that occurs in many churches. The research also shed light on ways that church hurts occur. It also brings understanding into how church hurts is not just one person hurting, but a community of Christians who has been affected by a single wound.

The research could benefit the wider community through developing and utilizing strategies that would fit a larger congregation and develop a strategic plan for action to benefit the larger congregation. The tool used for doing research can be enhanced to fit the congregation needing assistance with hurts. The researcher does not claim to know everything about church hurts and believes that the project can be built upon and enhanced.

The research may also benefit the wider community in that it may shed light on situations where congregations are shrinking, or the reason why the deterioration may be

unknown. The project is a resource that can be utilized and built upon to help churches look at church hurts an option to uncovering the deterioration that occurs in some churches. It may be a resource that can be utilized to help uncover the possibility that hurts may have occurred.

The principles may be beneficial because they may help the wider community look into utilizing this kind of tool to help people who are hurting in their congregation. The research has brought awareness to mind, concerning hurt. One never know what another person has gone through or is experiencing. In the midst of pain, someone somewhere will find the source of their healing and the remedy to heal one's wounds when love reflects through the Christian's life from the heart.

APPENDIX A: CM AND PM SURVEY

Appendix A: CM and PM Survey

Q1. Are you a member of this local assembly or have been within the past year?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q2. Are you eighteen years of age or older?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q3. How often have your experiences resulted in hurts that you are aware of?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q4. How likely have you experienced hurts that were due to the actions of others?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Moderately likely (2)
- Slightly likely (3)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- Slightly unlikely (5)
- Moderately unlikely (6)
- Extremely unlikely (7)

Q5. How often have you attempted to do God's will by moving ahead of God's plan?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q6. How likely have you experienced hurts by not heeding God's voice?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Moderately likely (2)
- Slightly likely (3)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- Slightly unlikely (5)
- Moderately unlikely (6)
- Extremely unlikely (7)

Q7. How often have experiences with painful situations prevented you from moving forward in ministry?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q8. If you have experienced any hurts, how long have those hurts persisted?

- Extremely long (1)
- Very long (2)
- Long (3)
- not long at all (4)
- never (5)

Q9. How often have you allowed painful situations from your past to become a part of your present life?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q10. How often have you tried to avoid dealing with painful situations that you have encountered?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q11 How often do you allow things that have caused you pain to remain in your heart?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q12 How often do you rely on the Holy Spirit when needing wise words to handle painful situations?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q13 How likely has God used your hurts to build character in your life?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Moderately likely (2)
- Slightly likely (3)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- Slightly unlikely (5)
- Moderately unlikely (6)
- Extremely unlikely (7)

Q14 How often have you allowed the hand of God to guide the painful events of your life?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q 15 If you have been angry, how often have you channeled anger in unhealthy ways?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q 16. How often have hurts caused you to respond to others or the church through:

	always (1)	Most of the time (2)	About half the time (3)	Someti mes (4)	Never (5)
Blame? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gossip? (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spreading Rumors (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jealousy (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guilt? (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q17. How often does your life characterize the self-sacrificing love of Christ?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS

Appendix B: Interview Questions Asked of Interview Participants

Would you share your story on hurts encountered within this AAC or the ministry setting?

1. What are some situations, challenges, or problems that occurred in ministry that has contributed to hurts in your life?
2. What are some personal challenges that you have experienced that have led to hurts in your life as a member of this AAC?
3. Considering your experience in this AAC, will you share some things that other members have done that contributed to your hurts?
4. Share your story as a member of this AAC, what would you say led to hurts you experienced within the ministry setting?
5. How has hurts within the church affected your life and what could be done to help you overcome these hurts?

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Appendix C: Consent Form for Participating in Research

This study is one which involves research. The purpose of this research is to learn what church hurts are and the underlying cause of hurts in ministry. This research will also help in the understanding of how to move a church towards effective ministry. This project will help the researcher learn how to conduct research as well.

You have been selected to participate in this survey to understand hurts and the cause of hurts in this local AAC. You have been chosen to participate in this survey because your voice is important to this study. If you decide to participate, any information obtained through this study that can identify you through surveys or interviews will remain confidential. In written reports or publications, no one will be identifiable based on his or her involvement in the research related to this study. The data collected will not be released to anyone for any reason.

The data collected through the Qualtrics online surveys, will only be analyzed by the researcher using the Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Once the analysis is complete, an interpretation will be made of the data. The information from this survey will be used in a written report as combined data (or a collection of data).

The method of study will be survey and interviews. The researcher will decide the procedure to be followed, including the purposes and how long it will take. Any inconveniences reasonably to be expected, the estimated time required as well as any inconvenience for participation will be explained.

Your decision to participate or not will not affect your future relationship with myself, Bethel Seminar or this local AAC in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without ramifications. You will be offered a copy of this form to keep. If you decide to participate, your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and are consenting to participate in this study. You may withdraw at any time without consequences after signing this form. Should you choose to discontinue participation in this survey, please let me know!

Signature of witness when appropriate

Participant signature and date

Signature of Researcher

Consent Form for Participating in Online Surveys

To all Online Participants,

A student at Bethel Seminary is requesting our assistance in a research project as part of an academic study. You have received this survey as a previous member of this local AAC. Your voice in this study is important. The research seeks to understand hurts within this local AAC, the cause of those hurts and how to help this congregation resume to doing effective ministry. By taking this survey, our agreement is that information obtained through these surveys and interviews will remain anonymous. Any information collected in this survey that can identify you will be kept confidential.

The research will not identify any participants in any written reports made. The analysis of this data will be done by the researcher using tools for analyzing this type of survey material. Qualtrics online survey platform and Microsoft spreadsheet are the tools for collecting data and analyzing data. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your relationship with myself, Bethel Seminary, or this local AAC in any way. If you decide not to participate, you are free to discontinue your participation at any time during this survey. Keep this email consent form as a copy of your signed consent to this inquiry and this agreement. Thanks for taking the time to participate in this survey.

Thanks,

The Researcher

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