

ANDERSON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

INVOLVING THE LEXINGTON CHRISTIAN ACADEMY  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE SPIRITUAL  
FORMATION OF ITS STUDENTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY STUDIES PROGRAM  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
JOHN D. ECKELBARGER

ANDERSON, INDIANA  
JANUARY, 2009

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation provides, through faith-based, community, and educational research, an overview of a project designed to inform the Christian community of the biblical foundation and evidence for modeling faith and mentoring youth. Although the Christian school offers an environment designed by nature to be based on biblical principles, there is no guarantee that the students who complete their Christian school experience will be fully equipped to face the challenges of post-high school living from a biblical worldview. Thus, the Lexington Christian Academy Junior High School faculty has collaborated to create a model to spiritually mentor its students.

Deuteronomy six provides the foundation on which the model stands. Affirmations that God requires the primary place in the believer's life defines the intentional daily walk of the Christian. This call to obedience requires sharing the story of faith with youth. Mentoring, thus, requires consistency to impress students, which results in the establishment of a classroom environment that stimulates interaction and provides examples of the faithful Christian lifestyle. A review of literature reveals young people in contemporary American culture are faced with a variety of influences that have an effect on the way teens view life and the lifestyle they choose. Research also indicates that teachers have a role as mentors and models based on a commitment to Christ, influence on students, and the amount of time spent with students on a daily basis. Therefore, every word and action has the potential to inspire students in Christian faith.

With this in mind, the four component model reveals indicators of teacher behavior, biblical expectations, and classroom outcomes. Teacher and student evaluations have revealed evidence that students have been influenced by their teachers

and led to the development of components for accountability to further strengthen the role of teachers as mentors. Teachers through natural and spiritual gifting embody this model uniquely, while the model clarifies the teachers' callings and responsibilities, provides guidance for desired behavior, and stimulates reflection and evaluation of their roles in fulfilling this mission.