A STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

AT THE FAITH TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH,

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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A Project

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by

Donald Lee Sharp

December 2011

APPROVAL SHEET

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Read and Approved by:

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T. Vaughn Walker (Faculty Supervisor)

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Adam Greenway

Date _____

To my wife, Lurlie,

who is my constant source of encouragement

and to the devoted members of the

Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois

who strive to live out the Great Commission

in their everyday walk of life

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PREFACE

Despite the fact that this project is in my name, I cannot take sole responsibility for its completion, I am indebted to T. Vaughn Walker, who has served both as a role model and instructor. Also, James Donahue, my confidant and consultant who helped as I struggled with ideas, preparation, and direction. Prayers and encouragement came from the saints of Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, which I have been privileged to serve as pastor since 1964. This process has been stimulating and challenging. It also has been a journey of countless trials and errors, all too numerous to name.

I realize this accomplishment is the result of standing on the shoulders of men who have gone before me, especially my beloved mother, Phoebe, who was never able to complete an elementary education, however, planted a seed of faith and hope that has kept me focused; I was for her, Timothy. "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also" (2 Tim 1:5).

There is another woman, my wife, Lurlie, who has prayed and continues to pray both with and for me. She has been by my side helping in making difficult decisions, making sacrifices, and always ready with words of encouragement. This became quite evident when I was assailed by health issues and she would not me give up. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life" (Prov 31:10-12 AV).

Most of all I give God the glory and his son Jesus who made the greatest sacrifice at Calvary for my redemption and salvation, which I take seriously and

personally. As the apostle said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain" (1 Cor 15:10 AV).

<div align="right">Donald L. Sharp</div>

Chicago, Illinois

December 2011

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop a strategy for strengthening African American families at the Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois.

Goals

This project sought to accomplish four goals. These goals served as the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to select 25 families of the church that served as the focus group. The second goal was to identify, equip, and train the focus group on how to address multigenerational issues. The third goal was to construct a family discipleship process that enabled families to better understand the biblical Christian family's responsibilities. The fourth goal was to develop a working definition of family-driven faith, and how to implement this as a core value in the church. These four goals were selected in order to further enable this church to continue implementation of both its adopted mission statement and vision.

Context

The Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church is located on the southeast side of the city of Chicago in a community known as Avalon Park, less than five miles from the University of Chicago, ten miles from downtown Chicago, and less than five miles from Hammond, Indiana.

Chicago's citizens have played significant roles locally, nationally, and worldwide. Some are: Mayor Anton Cermak (1873-1933) who was fatally wounded in

1933 as a result of a failed attempt to assassination attempt on President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt; Richard J. Daley (1902-1976) who served as mayor for 21 years, was the undisputed Democratic boss of the city, and played a major role in his support in the election of John F. Kennedy, this nation's first Roman Catholic president. In the field of entertainment are Michael Jordan and Oprah Winfrey. Harold Washington (1922-1987) was the first African American elected as mayor of Chicago. Carol Moseley Braun, born 1947, was the first African American woman elected to the United States Senate. Barack Obama was elected as president of the United States in 2008, the first African American to hold this office. Robert Abbott (1870-1940), founded *The Chicago Defender* newspaper in 1905, which became the most widely, circulated African American newspaper, which became a voice opposing racial segregation and Jim Crow laws. John H. Johnson (1918-2005) was founder of the Johnson Publishing Company that published *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. Elijah Muhammad (1873-1958) was born Elijah Robert Poole, the son of a Georgia Baptist lay preacher, founder of The Nation of Islam, was eventually succeeded by Louis Farrakhan. Thomas Dorsey (1899-1993) was known as the "father of black gospel music." Mahalia Jackson (1911-1972) was known as the "Queen of Gospel music." Joseph H. Jackson (1905-1960) was the longest serving president of the National Baptist Convention and served as pastor of the historic Olivet Baptist Church the city's oldest African American Baptist church, 1850.   Stephen John Thurston, born 1952-, president of the National Baptist Convention of America, serves as pastor of the New Covenant Baptist church since 1979. Jesse Jackson, born 1941-, known as a civil rights leader, Baptist minister and founder of operation PUSH.[1]

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[1]The DuSable Museum [on-line]; accessed 15 October 2011; available from http://www.dusablemuseum.org/; Internet. Wikipedia, "History of African Americans in Chicago" [on-line]; accessed 15 October 2011; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/History_of_African_Americans_in_Chicago; Internet.

Chicago is noted for its communities. It must be take into consideration that all communities are neighborhoods but not all neighborhoods are community areas. With the passing of time different communities may form within the community to create neighborhoods. The Avalon community is serviced by two elementary schools, one high school, and one newly built library. There are thirteen churches of various sizes and denominations. Six of these churches, Avalon Park Community United Church of Christ, St. Felicitas Roman Catholic, Messiah St. Bartholomew Episcopal, Southlawn United Methodist, Zion Lutheran, and Faith Tabernacle meet monthly to address the various community issues, fellowship, and annual events such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

This community may be described as stable urban that underwent racial transition, from white to Black, during the decade of 1960 to 1970. According to the United States census, the demographic composition shifted from that of largely German, Irish, and Swedish immigrants to middle-class African Americans. Tables 1 and 2 will delineate some of the composition of this community.

Table 1. Demographics of the Avalon Park Community.

Total Population	11,147
Female	55.99%
Male	43.43%
Race	
Black	97.34%
Other	1.68%
White	0.98%
Age	
Under 5	6.15%
19-May	20.69%
20-24	5.25%
25-34	11.90%
35-64	39.64%
65 and older	16.36%

The majority of this community's population is of the 35-64 age groups. When the census figures were released for 2010, it showed an older group that has now aged. Some older populations tend to pose unique issues, and have a greater demand for social services, health care, and access to public transportation. Other demographic changes resulting from and aging population are living arrangements, and changing family composition resulting in women being heads of households due to the fact that life expectancy for women is greater in this age group than men. These pose greater challenges to those churches in this community.

Table 2. Educational attainment, income, and households
(Institute for Housing Studies, www.ihs.depaul.edu)

Education Attainment (25 years and older)	1990	2000	Number	Percent
No high school diploma	1,734	1,494	-240	-14%
High school diploma	1,985	1,647	-338	-17%
Some college or no degree	1,989	2,301	312	16%
Associate degree	540	448	-92	-17%
Bachelor's degree	881	1,093	212	24%
Graduate or professional degree	691	542	-149	-22%
Income				
Median family income	$51,568	$52,745	$1,177	2%
Median household income	$44,935	$44,344	-$5.91	-1%
Household by type				
Average household size	2.96	2.74	-0.22	-7%
Average family size	3.39	3.3	-0.09	-3%

A brief history of the Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church may be found in Charles Chaney's book, *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century*:

The second man I want you to meet is Don Sharp. He is the pastor of Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, on South Cornell Avenue in Chicago. He began to hold weekly Bible studies in the homes of friends in 1964. The fellowship was so good that somebody said, 'Why don't we start a church?' He talked with his pastor about it and received a somewhat reluctant permission. In August, the group organized into a church and with twelve members. Don said, 'Nobody helped us. We didn't begin with a mission status. Boom! We were just a church—sink or swim.' For five years they met in what had been a warehouse. Then they began to rent space form the Cornell Avenue Baptist Church of Chicago. Faith Tabernacle began its worship service at noon. Later the two Sunday schools were combined. Still later, Cornell Avenue Baptist Church relocated in the Hyde Park Community, and Faith Tabernacle purchased the building. (Chaney 1991, 223)

In 1969, the church voted to affiliate with the Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association becoming the first African American church to affiliate with it and the Illinois Baptist State Association (Dillow 1996, 517).

This student has served as pastor of the church since its organization in 1964, following the traditions of many African American pastors, serving one church for long periods of time. It is not uncommon in the African American community to have long-tenured pastors, which differs from other communities. Some factors that may contribute to this is that the pastor serves over an extended period of years and becomes an extended member of the families, nurturing them through various issue such as sickness, death, birth of children, and baptizing them, just to name a few, in other words walking with them from the cradle to the grave. There is also a vicarious identity with the pastor and the role he plays as leader, as he is seen fulfilling his prophetic role, challenging members to live out their faith commitment. Thom S. Rainer in his book *High Expectations* writes,

The average tenure of a Southern Baptist pastor is just over two years. For all churches in the United States, the tenure is only slightly better at three years. . . . Faith Tabernacle has transitioned to higher expectations because of the congregation's trust level of its pastor. Pastor Sharp has led the church through many changes, and the church has followed its leader who has been pastor for over thirty-three years. (Rainer 1999, 13)

Of course with any lengthy tenure there are negative factors. Some factors may be burn out, stress, a sense failure, and the possible erosion of a support base. Lyle Schaller, in a work titled *How Big?,* after serving as a consultant made this observation, "This church has a cadre of dedicated skilled, determined, future-oriented, and outreach-

conscious volunteers. This may rank as the number one asset. This volunteer group

includes a relatively large proportion of adult males" (Schaller 1992, 2). These

volunteers to whom Schaller refers to are indeed the backbone of the church's other

programs that includes an after school tutorial program which averages thirty students,

grades two through twelve. Sunday worship services are provided to two nursing homes.

The church also supports a senior citizen network group that serves as an advocate for

Senior citizens, providing them with information and other useful information.

Perhaps one of the significant challenges the church undertook was that of

purchasing a 26-unit apartment building located about five miles from the church, which

needed renovating. This story was chronicled in the January 1997 of *Chicago*, a local

magazine.

> "I looked at the building and thought, God be with them," says Alex Kotlowitz,
> author of *There Are No Children Here*! "I thought they'd never get it done."
> Nevertheless, Sharp rose to the challenge. He formed the not-for-profit Faith
> Tabernacle Housing Corporation, which acquired the building and using $78,000
> from the Chicago Community Loan Fund as seed money, put together a partnership
> of banks, government agencies, and private donors that implemented a $2-million
> rehab. The restoration was completed in March 1995. (Benner 1997, 49)

After acquiring the building, the church established an after-school tutorial

program for the children of the building, which consisted of computer literacy training

that was made available also for the adults.

In 1997, the church began the F.A.I.T.H. program, which is an acronym for

feeding, assisting, inspiring, teaching, and helping. Each Wednesday bible studies are

taught, followed by a hot meal, and groceries are given to those who live in the

community, the average attendance is 125. The church does not receive any government

subsidies for this program. The church's annual budget is $255,000, which does not

include designated offerings that are given to support this program, scholarships for

college students, a tutorial program, and benevolence.

The neighborhood in which the church is located has, over the past years,

experienced several factors that have affected the church's growth. Initially the majority

of the church's membership lived in the community, who either walked or were within a

few minutes drive to the church. Slowly there was a shift of movement to the

surrounding suburbs. In addition, other factors included death of long-standing members

known as pioneers, the exodus of children who left home for school or jobs in other

cities, and those joining churches closer to their new homes. In 2001, the church

acquired additional property adjacent to the building that will enable it to build in the

future, and all outstanding debt has been retired.

In 1991 the church voted to adopt the following vision and mission statements:

Being Empowered by God, It shall be the vision of the Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church to meet the holistic needs of all persons both within the church and the global Community through servant leadership.

Under the anointing and authority of God, the Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church will assess and respond to the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of all people. To this end we will utilize all available resources by developing, implementing and facilitating programs and ministries that will transform lives and structures both locally and worldwide.

Included with these statements the following may be found as a part of the

church's covenant:

That we celebrate the fact that God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual and that all we have and are, we owe to God. As believers, we have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in our possessions. We are, therefore, under obligation to serve God with our time, our gift or gifts and our material possessions. We recognize that everything we have been given is for the glory of God, for helping others, and for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. According to the Scriptures, as believers in Jesus Christ, we will contribute of our means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally.

It was necessary that the church not only adopt these mission statements but

use them as a means of identifying who the church is. Its purpose for being in the

community was upon the following passages and scripture:

And the Lord answered me, and said, write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. (Hab 2:1-3)

Where there is no vision, the people perish. (Prov 29:18)

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel

to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

A brief profile of the community as reported by the Precept Group, Inc. whose source was the US Census Bureau that covers a 2.1 mile radius of the church.

Currently there are 174,734 persons residing in the defined area. This represents a decrease of 14,458 or 7.6% since 1990. During the same period of time, the US as a whole grew by 23.3%. Between 2011 and 2015, the population is projected to decrease by 2.9%. During the same period, the US population is projected to grow by 5.1%. The lifestyle diversity in the area is *somewhat low* with 19 of the 50 US lifestyles segments represented. The top individual segment is *struggling Urban Diversity representing* 37.8% of all households. Based on the total number of different groups present, the racial/ethnic diversity is *somewhat low*. The largest age group in terms of numbers is *Survivors* (age 29-49) comprised of 48,279 persons or 27.6% of the total population in the area. *Silents* (age 68 to 85) make up 9.7% of the population. The area can be described as *extremely non-traditional* due to the below average presence of married persons and two-parent families. Based upon the number of years completed and college enrollment, the overall education level in the area is *very low*. While 76.6% of the population aged 25 and over have graduated from high school as compared to the national average of 80.4%, college graduates account for 17.6% of those over 25 in the area verses 24.4% in the US Concerns which are likely to exceed the national average include: *Neighborhood Gangs, Racial/Ethnic Prejudice, Affordable Housing, Neighborhood Crime and Safety, Social Injustice* and *Abusive Relationships.* Overall, the likely faith involvement level and preference for historic Christian religious affiliations is *somewhat high* when compared to national average. Based upon the average household income of $46,056 per year and the likely contribution behavior in the area, the overall religious potential can be described as *very low*. (percept.info)

These statistics present several challenges to the church both now and in the coming years. Given the economic situation, the potential for any viable programs that the church may want to embark on which requires additional paid staff personnel is challenging. However, there is the potential for physical growth due to the fact there is openness towards the gospel.

Historically, the Black church has played and continues to play a major role serving as the moral, social, and religious conscience of the African American community. Consequently, the Black church, born out of its Biblical foundation has served also as a repository of the culture for a people who were forced to adapt and make necessary adjustments in a new land, a new environment, and culture due to slavery. Noted historian and educator Robert Franklin in his perspective on the Black church wrote,

The black church has been and continues to function as the hub of civil society and

remains the center of social life in many black communities. It was the community's source of aid and philanthropy, a center for learning and literacy, a zone for political education and mobilization, an organizer of financial capital, and keeper of a collective cultural memory. During the relief efforts after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, we say the nation's local congregations engage in rapid-response life-saving activity that prevents an even greater tragedy. (Franklin 2007, 108)

There are numerous accounts of the significant role the Black church has

played. William E. Montgomery gives his perspective:

The church helped to perpetuate the sense of group identity that had characterized slave and free black culture through the first half of the nineteenth century. The existence of a unique culture, derived from African as well as European sources, set African Americans apart from the whites among whom they lived. In slave religion, one finds many examples of African retentions blended with Christian beliefs and practices. Although the strength of African religious beliefs had weakened considerably by the late nineteenth century, they remained evident in many black churches long after the coming of freedom and continued to contribute to a unique African-American culture. (Montgomery 1993, xii)

With changing demographics and shifting values, the church has to define

more clearly the importance of Christian family values with greater emphasis on a

biblical faith that highlights the importance of faith, fellowship, and family relationships.

Because the church is a faith community, ministry to the family must be rooted in

scripture and its theology, which informs and defines God's expectation for healthy

family life. Johnny B. Hill in his book *Multidimensional Ministry for Today's Black*

Family wrote,

Many churches were established as either individual families or clusters of families coming together with the creative passion for fellowship, faith, and mutual sharing. Indeed, the church and the black family have been constant companions and have in fact, modeled each other throughout history. The beauty and power of the black family may be attributed to this reality. By strengthening many churches were established as either individual families or clusters of families, the church, as well as the wider community is also strengthened. (Hill 2007, 2)

Definitions and Limitations

The following definitions were used for the purpose of this project:

African American/black/Negro(s), *colored*. There is no hyphen; it may be used

as both an adjective and as a noun. African Americans from the time of slavery to the

present have undergone several racial classifications. In many of the chronicles and

quotations used in this paper there are various terms and spellings that may be found

depending on the dates and author's intent and purpose..

Acculturation. The process by which culture is transformed due to the massive adoption of culture traits from another society.

Assimilation. The absorption of an individual or minority group of people into another society or group. This is achieved by learning and adopting the cultural traditions of the society to which assimilation occurs.

Biological families. A fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children.

Blended families. A blended family or reconstituted family in which one or both members of the couple have children from a previous relationship, specifically referred to as stepmother or stepfather.

Consanguinity. A close relation or connection.

Community. A community may be defined as those individuals who have a shared sense of values and mores that serve as a model of behavior expectations.

Core values. The fundamental values that provide the basis for social behavior in society. They are what people believe is desirable or offensive, appropriate or inappropriate, and correct or incorrect.

Cultural anthropology. The study of contemporary and recent historical cultures. The focus is on social, organization, culture change, economic and political systems, and religion.

Cultural relativity. May be defined as that principle in which an individual's beliefs and activities should be understood in terms of his or her own culture.

Diffusion. The movement of cultural traits and ideas from one society or ethnic group to another. While the form of a trait may be transmitted to another society, the original meaning may not.

Fictive kin. A socially recognized link between individuals that are unrelated by

either birth or marriage, however, their relationship may take on the characteristics of family.

        Multigenerational households. Where three or more generations live together.

        Weltanschauung (worldview). A set of feelings and basic attitudes about the world and may have a determinate influence on our behavior, both verbal and non-verbal (www.anthro.palomar.edu).

Research Methodology

        The object of this project was to ascertain information from members of the Faith Tabernacle Baptist church regarding their understanding of godly family values, mores, and behavior. Twenty-four members of the congregation represented a cross-section constituting 25 percent of adults consisting of married couples ages 25-40, single parents as head of households that are either divorced or never married, single parents living with family, blended , trans-generational families, and married couples 40 and older.

        The participants were asked to attend a fifteen-week seminar conducted by the researcher. After agreeing and signing the Agreement to Participate Document they were given a preliminary test with the purpose of ascertaining the composition of the focus group. The results are included in chapter 4. Each participant completed a pre-test and was given a syllabus that contained an outline of the subjects to be covered. Upon conclusion of the fifteen weeks a post-test was given which was followed by an evaluation of the pre and post-test results followed by group discussions focusing on what future ministries and programs should be implemented in accomplishing the stated goals and objectives that would have a greater impact on families in the church. Several topics were identified. (1) How the church can better reach African American males. If the church is to become more effective something must be done to increase the number of African American males not just in attending worship but to become involved in

meaningful ministries. (2) Nurturing marriages. One of the roles of the church is seen as encouraging and maintaining trust and compatibility in marriages. It is the responsibility of the church to make opportunities for couples to come together and learn how to build and maintain unity which is both sacred and vital. (3) Parent-teen relationships. Counseling can be beneficial for both parents and their children, especially the critical teen-age development. Families that turn to counseling provided by the church can find fulfillment as they seek the wisdom of God through his Word. (4).Single parent households. Single parent households represent the majority population of this church. Whatever the circumstances, single parents have needs and the church must develop programs and ministries that will make a difference. The group concluded that with the development and implementation of programs that will addressed the stated goals, this will not be a panacea for those who are members of this church.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The basic foundation for this paper as it addresses the African American family is the Word of God. Scripture is about the interpretation of workable solutions of marriage and the family. It is through a biblical foundation that enables God to teach the believer to see the world as He sees it and to see things as they exist in relations to Him. God's Word is relevant across time, in all places, and to all people, regardless of race and ethnic heritage. The moral implications are apparent in the fact that if humans are to love God, then they must love other humans that are also His creation. "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35 NIV).

Man Made in the Image of God

Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, And over all the creatures that move along the ground,' So god created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:26-27 NIV)

Every religion and culture throughout time has developed myths, legends, and stories depicting their views regarding the creation of humanity. However, the Judeo-Christian account is one that is most widely read, studied, and analyzed, and it plays a major role in describing the beginning of the universe, earth, and humanity. This account portrays God as creating the universe *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, which the writer of Hebrews describes: "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what is visible" (Heb 11:3 NIV).

The book of Genesis gives an account of the beginning of humanity, sin, salvation, punishment, and redemption. In Genesis 2:7, God did something for Adam that

he did for none of his other creations. After forming man from the dust of the ground, he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. This "breath of life" represents an intimacy with God, which Job describes, "But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty that gives him understanding" (Job 32:8 NIV).

Made in the image of God means man had the capacity to commune with God, and it is a likeness morally. Man was created in righteousness and in perfect innocence, which was a reflection of God's holiness. Genesis 1:31 states, God saw all that he had made, and it was very good (NIV). Man was created for fellowship in the Garden of Eden, and his primary relationship was with God (Gen 3:8). Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden (NIV). Prior to this, Adam and Eve did not have to hide themselves from the presence of God. Prior to this man had fellowship and shared in goodness with God. The importance of a proper understanding of the *imago Dei* can hardly be overstated. The answer given to the imago-inquiry soon becomes determinative for the entire gamut of doctrinal affirmation (Baker's Dictionary of Theology 1960, 339).

Over periods of time, in numerous volumes and theologies, several interpretations have been postulated on the theological doctrine of *imago Dei.* There are three commonly held views of this doctrine: substantive, relational, and functional. Several modern theologians, Jürgen Moltmann, Karl Barth, and Millard J. Erickson, to name a few, have emerged whose writings have impacted views on this subject. Millard J. Erickson, former president of the Evangelical Theological Society and former Dean of the Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, writes,

> The substantive view holds to the idea that there is some substantial characteristics of the human race that is like God. Some may argue that we are a mirror image of God's essential nature. Other substantive views suggest a spiritual commonality with God, god being a spirit and not having a physical body. . . . John Calvin and Martin Luther agreed that something of the image was lost at the fall but that fragments of it remained in some form or another. The relational view argues that

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one must be in a relationship with God in order to possess the 'image' of God. Those who hold to the relational image agree that humankind possess the ability to reason as a substantive trait, but they argue that it is in a relationship with God that the true image is made evident. Later theologians like Karl Barth and Emil Brunner argue that it is our ability to establish and maintain complex and intricate relationships that make us like God. For example, in humans the created order of male and female is intended to culminate in spiritual as well as physical unions, reflecting the nature and image of God. Since other creatures do not form such explicitly referential relationships, these theologians see this ability as uniquely representing the imago dei in humans. The third view know as functional differs from the previous two in that the image of God imprinted on us resides in function rather than in form or relationship, this function being primarily our task of ruling over earth. Genesis 1:26 peaks of humankind being made in the image of God and given the function of naming and ruling over the fish of the sea and the animals on land, reflecting God's rule over all the universe, ourselves included. This view sees this function of dominion as best expressing the imago dei, or our likeness to God. (Erickson 1994, 498-510)

In the October 2009 issue of *SBC Life* Don Dunavant stated,

That we are created in the image of God says something awesome about God in His creative purposes. It also says something wonderful about the uniqueness of humans in God's grand design. But what does it mean? The theological challenge in *imago Dei* is the fact that the Bible does not define explicitly what it means that humanity is made in the image of God.

Three authors provide helpful theological direction for us. Wayne Grudem pointed out that the words used in Genesis 1:26-27, 'image' (*tselem)* and 'likeness' (*demut)* in the Hebrew 'refer to something that is similar but not identical to the thing that it represents or is the 'image' of.' Therefore, Genesis 1:26, 'would have meant to the original readers, 'Let us make man to be *like* us and to *represent* us.'' Bruce Ware noted that 'the image of God in man involves God's creation of divine representation (images of God) who, in carrying out God's designated responsibilities.' Anthony Hoekema wrote that the image of God 'describes not just something that man *has*, but something man *is*.' Building on these observations, a theological construct for *imago Dei* begins to crystallize. (Dunavant 2009, 6)

Additionally, Anthony A. Hoekema, (1913-1988), who served as professor of

Systematic Theology Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan wrote,

The Old Testament does not say much about the image of God. In fact, the concept is dealt with explicitly in only three passages, all of them from the Book of Genesis: 1:26-28; 5:1-3; and 9:6. One could also think of Psalm 8 as describing what man's creation in God's image means, but the phrase 'image of God' is not found there. The first chapter of Genesis teaches the uniqueness of the creation of man. Here we read that, while God created each animal 'according to his kind' (vv. 21, 24, 25), only man was created in God's image and likeness (vv. 26-27). (Hoekema 1986, 11)

In Genesis 1:31, God, after completing all that he had done, called it good; this

included man. Therefore man was created in righteousness, perfect innocence, and

fellowship with God, to bring glory to God reflecting his holiness. He was created as a

rational being, with the ability of making choices, god or bad. This is something no other

earthly creation could do.

Charles Sherlock, in his book *The Doctrine of Humanity*, wrote,

> Let me emphasize once more that nowhere are we told precisely what the image of
> God *is*. Rather, we have shown to us something of what it means to be made in the
> image of God. We are given a dynamic model of what being made in the image of
> God *involves,* not a static picture of its essence. It entails being called, as members
> of the human race. Thus the image of God can be seen only as we live it out, both
> as persons in community, and as individual people, and in both respects as those
> who are to grow up into the life of God. (Sherlock 1996, 41)

The psalmist David, in poetic fashion, describes the nature and essence of man

by declaring, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou

visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him

with glory and honour" (Ps 8:4-5 AV). His psalm of praise echoes the thought of a man

that had contemplated the awesomeness of God and the characteristics of man his crowning

creation. Here the writer describes the unique and distinctive relationship man has with

his Creator. It is God and God alone who can endow his creation with glory and honor,

and establishes his order in being made a little lower than the heavenly host.

This psalm is also found in the New Testament by the writer of the book of

Hebrews:

> It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are
> speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: 'What is man that you
> are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little
> lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything
> under his feet.' In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject
> to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus,
> who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor
> because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for
> everyone. (Heb 2:5-9 NIV)

Peter J. Gentry, professor of Old Testament at The Southern Baptist

Theological Seminary gives his perspective in *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*

and wrote the following concerning man being made in the image of God:

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Man *is* the divine image. As servant-king and son of God mankind will mediate God's rule to the creation in the context of a covenant relationship with God on the one hand and the earth on the other. Hence the concept of the kingdom of God is found on the first page of Scripture. (SBTJ 2008, 28)

In the same article Gentry writes, "Thus the image is both physical and yet goes far beyond being merely physical. This is an interpretation that allows for the physical aspect of 'image' but results in an emphasis such that the character of humans in ruling the world is what represents God" (SBJT 2008, 32).

The *IVP Women*'*s Bible Commentary* states,

The preposition *in* in the phrase 'in the image' merits some reflection. The Hebrew prepositional prefix *bet* is sometimes translated into English as 'in,' sometimes as 'as.' The context suggests which the preferred rendering is. Translation of the preposition *bet* with 'in' has given rise to speculation about what particular quality of humans beings reflect the deity, and a long tradition in the history of interpretation of this text equates our ability to reason with our Godlikeness. This interpretation has harmed women in that stereotypically men were considered rational and spiritual and women were considered emotional and physical. (Kroeger and Evans 2002, 3)

God also provided for human fellowship and love in a very special and intimate way. Before He created Eve He said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him" (Gen 2:18). He then made Eve out of a bone taken from Adam (Gen 2:21-24), a fact which Jesus used in His debate with the Pharisees to uphold the sanctity of marriage and the intimacy of love within the marriage relationship. One's viewpoint plays significantly in the understanding of the roles, which men, women, husbands, and wives are to play, and in turn how they relate to each other socially and economically. Basically, God created men and women together as image bearers (Gen 1:26-7). Men are not superior by nature on the other hand; women are not inferior by nature. They are equal but not identical.

Man being made in the image and likeness of God is an indication that both man and woman are to be God's representation on earth both having dominion and stewardship over all of God's creation. Subsequently, all human beings are made in God's image, therefore, being created in the image of God is seen as a covenant, a commitment, and a

relationship. It is both a covenant and relational in the sense of a relationship between the God as the Creator and the creation, man and woman, husband and wife, parents and children, and the community of faith. It is a covenant because it is significantly biblically, both for the church and family. Peter J. Gentry wrote on the subject of the significance of man being made in the image of God:

> Given the normal meaning of 'image' and 'likeness' in the cultural and linguistic setting of Old Testament and the ancient Near East, 'likeness' specifies a relationship between God and humans such that *adam* can be described as the sin of God, and 'image' describes a relationship between God and humans such that *adam* can be described as a servant king. Although both terms specify the divine-human relationship, the first focuses on the human in relation to God and the second focuses on the human in relation to the world. (SBJT 2008, 28-29)

Theological Perspective of the Family

The best theological basis for understanding how families are to function is found in God's relationship as parent to Israel and groom to the church as bride that includes covenant, grace, empowering, and intimacy. Furthermore, faith formation must be a cooperative effort between the home and congregation as the church gives leadership. When this takes place, parents become better in articulating godly theological understandings of their biblically prescribed roles:

> Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. (Deut 6:4-7 NLT)

This passage of scripture plays a significant role in defining the relationship between Yahweh and Israel it is a definite statement that Jesus quoted as part of his Great Commandment. The *Shema* in verse 4 begins with a very significant doctrinal statement which is foundational, "Listen, O Israel!" In verses 5 through 7 are, love, guidance, and education. The first begins with a call for a passionate total love of God, with heart, soul, and strength.

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The New American Commentary's on this vital theological statement wrote the following.

> The depth and breadth of that expectation is elaborated upon the fact that it encompasses the heart, soul, and strength of God's people, here viewed collectively as a covenant partner. The heart (*leb*), in Old Testament anthropology, is the seat of the intellect, and considered to be equivalent to be the mind or rational part of humankind. The 'soul' (better, 'being' or 'essential person' in line with commonly accepted understanding of Hebrew *nepes)* refers to the invisible part of the individual, the person qua person including will and sensibilities. The strength (*me od*) is, of course the physical side with all its functions and capacities. The word occurs only here and in 2 Kings 23:25 as a noun with nonadverbial nuance, and even here the notion is basically that of "muchness." That is, Israel must love God with all its essence and expression. (Merrill 1994, 65)

Israel, during this premonarchical period, was in the process of developing from a nomadic people to that of a nation-state; from a group of loosely knit tribes to a monarchy. In its early history, the family was the primary means of educating youth. Children learned through informal participation in the life of the family. Not only were the people called to love God, but to teach his Word to their children, and their children, and upon reaching adulthood, they must pass this teaching on to their children.

Each generation had the responsibility and obligation to impart the knowledge of God's law to the next: "But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren" (Deut 4:9 NLT).

> For he issued his laws to Jacob; he gave his instructions to Israel. He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children, so the next generation might know them even the children not yet born and they in turn will teach their own children. So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands. (Pss 78:5-7 NLT)

Perry G. Downs, professor of educational ministries at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, wrote in *Teaching for Spiritual Growth*,

> The Old Testament continually emphasizes the father's responsibility to provide religious training for his sons (Exod 10:2; 12:26; 13:8; Deut 6:20ff.). Given the restricted responsibilities for women in that culture, the mother was to teach the girls. But it was the mother who provided the primary moral education for the children and began the rudiments of their formal education (Prov 1:8; 6:20). In this sense there

was a true partnership between the parents, as both had responsibility for educating the children in the home. (Downs 1994, 24)

It must be noted that in Deuteronomy 6:7 which reads, "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you sit down and when you get up." Moses employs the pronoun "you" in this case is the second person masculine, therefore he was speaking expressly to the father. The book of Proverbs contains several instructions regarding the parent's responsibility to their children, and words of caution and warnings. "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Prov 22:6 NIV). We also find words of wisdom from a caring father to his son "My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity" (Prov 3:1-2 NIV). The Proverbs further indicate that a key to parents in directing their children is through purposeful instruction on such things as listening to wisdom (2:2), seeking discernment (2:3), understanding the fear of the Lord (2:5), recalling parent's teachings (3:1), and gaining insight (4:1). This may become habitual and a basic way of family life when parents give instructions and when children retain the words of teaching (Prov 4:1-4).

According to the NIV Application Commentary, the admonitions found in the Proverbs are a means by which God is seen as disciplining and correcting. "Moreover, that discipline is the sign of love, love like a father for his son. Of course, it is the love of parent for child that is expressed in the language of the time and the ancient genre of wisdom instruction" (Koptak 2003, 132). Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians:

> Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise); That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Eph 6:1-4 AV)

Ray S. Anderson, author of *The Shape of Practical Theology*, cites Herbert Anderson's perspective: "A theology for the family begins by exploring general theological principles—order, change, uniqueness, mutuality, justice, forgiveness,

diversity—in order to understand first of all what it means to be live in a family"

(Anderson 2001, 258).

In the fifth commandment, God commands that parents are to be honored, which is significant since it is found in the basic underpinning that governs an orderly society. As Brian W. Grant in his book *The Social Structure of Christian Families* wrote,

> The cohesiveness of these family groups was critical to survival, producing (at least in part) a reverent attention to the nature of familial authority. There is a lengthy Jewish tradition of commentary on the commandment to 'honor thy father and mother,' the center of Jewish family ethics. Gerald Blidstein has distilled this tradition into four major affirmations: (1) Parents are co-creators with God; (2) Gratitude for that creation is a moral requirement and in turn humanizes the grateful; (3) Parental authority is a necessary structuring force in human community; and (4) Reverence toward parents is a natural response to the above. (Grant 2000, 14)

So ingrained was the notion of family cohesiveness and order that the book of Deuteronomy gives an approach in dealing with an unruly child, which places emphasis on the importance of both family order and structure—otherwise their society would be in constant turmoil and upheaval:

> If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, this our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear. (Deut 21:18-21 AV)

As severe as this punishment seems to be, the *New Bible Commentary* gives a perspective and possible rationale for this drastic that is based on the fact that no matter how complex a society's laws and demands may seem, the family, it structure and function is of paramount importance. Leo G. Perdue, professor of Hebrew Bible at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, one of the authors of the book, *Families in Ancient Israel*, in his contributing article titled, "The Household, Old Testament Theology, and Contemporary Hermeneutics" wrote,

> The household in the Bible occupies a central place in Old Testament theology and ethics. Much of what the Old Testament says about the character and especially the

activity of God is shaped by discourse concerning the family. And much of what the Old Testament says about human morality concerns behavior within the context of the household. Indeed, the household of ancient Israel was one of two major social institutions that shaped theological reflection and discourse in the Old Testament and the subsequent formation of its theological tradition. (Perdue 1997 225-226)

The notion of passing from one generation to another regarding the glory and majesty of God was mandated is promulgated throughout Scripture. Each generation is commanded to tell of God's power, promises building on the covenant future that is not just a set of rules but a lifestyle:

> This apparent unnatural law aims to stress the responsibility of parents to maintain the covenant. Indeed, it fell to parents, in principle, to initiate legal action against a son who threatened the well-being of the whole community because of his defiance of the covenant standards. (Carson et al. 2004, 219)

It is in the following psalm that a continuation of the prevailing theme is seen in which the parents have the responsibility of a love of God, teaching their children about their history so that it may be passed on to those yet unborn. It focuses on the power and wonder of God and the necessity of building for a covenant future:

> Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare the to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. (Pss 78: 1-8 AV)

The Bible is one of covenants and commitments; it is here we find the notion of authority, mutual submission, and interdependence. The covenant or testament is a central, unifying theme in Scripture. The godly family realizes that God's word in both the Old and New Testament (Covenant) is the most powerful source from which they are able to teach the significance of God's grace, providing its members the significance of those historical, and personal values. "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will

confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers" (Gen 17:1 NIV).

In the Old Testament there are many covenants made between God and men. To better understand the Bible as God's Word accurately there must be a familiarization with the concept of covenant. Those covenants God made with various persons were based on the fact that God would do His part when the human requirements stipulated that the covenant was met. Following are several covenants: Covenant with Creation Genesis 1-3; Covenant with Noah Genesis 6-9; Covenant with Abraham; Genesis 12, 15, 17; Mosaic Covenant; Exodus 19"3b-8; 20-24; Covenant with David 2 Samuel 7; Psalm 89; New Covenant Jeremiah 31-34; Ezekiel 33-39-29. It is through Abraham and his obedience to God that we are led to understand the significance and importance of being covenant people which culminated with Jesus as the New Covenant. Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56 NIV). So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever (Heb 9:11-12 NLT).

Anderson and Guernsey wrote,

Genesis 2:24 places human existence within an order of co-humanity as the necessary and, therefore, logical result of the development of persons through the parent-child relationship. The parenting relationship is thus informed by the covenant-partnership relationship from which it derives its goals and ends. Considered pragmatically, parenting may well be a desirable end. From the perspective of covenant, however, it is not a means to an end but the end itself. (Anderson and Guernsey 1986, 40)

When David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, he reminded the people of God's covenant and their commitment to remember the covenant forever—the commitment he made to a thousand generations. This is the covenant he made with

Abraham and the oath he swore to Isaac. He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree and to the

people of Israel as a never-ending covenant (1 Chr 16:15-18 NLT).

It is through Abraham and his obedience to God that faithfulness and obedience

are exemplified with an understanding in the significance and importance of being

covenant people that culminated with Jesus as the New Covenant. "Your father rejoiced

at the thought of seeing my day, he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56 NIV).

Rituals, customs, and traditions play a very significant role in all religions,

cultures, and society. They serve as a means of maintaining stability, order, mores, and

values that are to be passed from one generation to another. Marriage, which was

sanctioned and ordained by God, is foundational in the family and community of faith.

Pierce and Groothuis give their viewpoint concerning marriage:

> The point of Genesis 2:24 about the man's leaving his father and mother and cleaving
> to his wife is not to indicate that ancient Israel was originally matriarchal nor to
> justify the institution of marriage (which is assumed in the Bible), nor to suggest
> patriarchy in view of the man's initiating process. Rather, it is to observe that
> marriage achieves a reunion of what God had divided in the creation of the woman.
> That is by using the flesh of the man to create the woman, God created a division that
> is restored when the two become one flesh again. Thus the woman was taken from
> the man's body when God created her and the man reunites the two when he joins
> with her in marriage. (Pierce and Groothuis 2005, 88)

The writer of the Proverbs gives a glowing view of the attributes that are found

in a virtuous wife, who is considerate of the needy, and plays a significant economic role

in the lives of her husband, children, and community. Lastly, she is a positive role model

and a godly woman, which are necessary ingredients for a stable family. "Train up a child

in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6, AV).

Essentially this is found in the mandate in Proverbs 22:6. The Jews believed

and taught that Yahweh is God and nothing was more important than the rearing of their

children in godliness. Some people have taken this verse to be a promise from God when

in actuality it is a principle to follow. This verse is not providing a guarantee, but a

principle; a guideline for parents to follow as they raise their children. It may be that

children will depart from the Lord for a time, but the teachings will never depart from them. The Old Testament was God's training ground for His people and an opportunity for them to develop godly habits in their homes, in their relationships with people, and in their worship of God (Blackaby and Blackaby 2009, 20).

The Hebrew word for "train" is used in conjunction with a ritual of dedication. As a verb, "train up" is closely associated with the word Hanukkah, the name of the Jewish Feast of Rededication. Therefore, to "train up" means to dedicate. It is a mandate for parents to ensure that the child is properly educated regarding the norms, values, and rituals associated with serving the God of their forefathers, and is prepared for future responsibilities (Denton 1971, 89).

Stanley M. Horton in his article "Train A Child (Chanokh)" wrote,

> The Hebrew word *Chanokh,* translates 'train' is used as a verb in only three other passages in the Bible. Deuteronomy 20:5 uses it of dedication of a new house. . . . . Based on this use of *Chanokh,* it seems that training a child involves dedicating a child to the Lord and raising that child in such a way that the child will enjoy the house of God and the things of God. Later, Hebrew used this same concept concerning encouraging a child to cultivate a task for the things of God. (enrichmentjournal.ag.org 1999)

In present-day Judaism, this may be seen in the ritual of the Bar Mitzvah. Prior to this ritual, the parents were responsible for the child's adherence to Jewish law and tradition. Now, however, they become responsible for following Jewish ritual law, tradition, and ethics, and are privileged to participate in all areas of Jewish community life.

The Role of the Church Today

Family structure and responsibility in the New Testament is no different from that of the Old Testament. The emphasis is on worshiping the God of the Old Testament, who has now sent his Son Jesus as redeemer for all, as the prophet Isaiah had foretold. It is here that the Law has come under the dominion of agape love. This love is between the Father and the Son, and it includes but also transcends all forms of love known to

humanity. It includes the love of a father and mother, a brother and sister, a husband and wife. This love is demonstrated in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son: a recalcitrant son and a loving and forgiving father. It is in this parable that Jesus introduces the concept of a heavenly father who loves unconditionally, who loves a people when they are less deserving of this or have done nothing to earn it.

Rodney Clapp's analysis of the challenge that the church faces today is profound and prophetic when he states,

> Thus the family structures and customs found in the Bible, so unlike our own, force us to be creatively faithful. They will not allow us to anoint the nineteenth century bourgeois family by casually reading into the biblical text. They do not offer universal formulas about how to practice Christian family. They push us to search for and be true to the underlying theological truths, truths about who God is and what God hopes for creation, truths revealed in the story of Israel and Jesus. (Clapp 1993, 155)

In Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, he admonishes the fathers not to provoke their children in such a way that they will not respond to the love of God. They are instead to train and instruct them in the ways of the Lord:

> Paul seems to expect fathers to take an active role in bringing up children. It is probably a Western preoccupation with the value of monetary rewards in the workplace versus the devalued role of parenthood that has often relegated looking after the children as purely the woman's task. This is not specified in Scriptures, and there would be warrant for the responsibility of both parents in that the normal pattern God shows for family units is of wife, husband, and children; not absent-fathering. However, this verse is not advocating that it is the father's sole job to discipline and instruct children, rather than mothers. Paul is dealing with a problem the fathers may specifically have had. He is encouraging them to take a more active part. (Powell 2002, 706)

Not only did Paul address both the role and expectation of fathers as heads of the family, he also wrote about the expectation of husbands and wives. In his letter to the church at Ephesus he not just addressing a theological doctrine, but he is explaining the significance of cohesiveness of family structure and behavior based on mutual submission:

> Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as

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the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. (Eph 5:21-33 AV)

Peter's address to wives is seen as both a wife's Christian role and behavior resulting in winning their husband to Christ. Essentially, the underlying principle and intent of his message is that if a wife is married to an unsaved husband her demeanor and lifestyle should be of such a nature that that husband will be won to the Lord:

In the same way, you wives should yield to your husbands. Then, if some husbands do not obey God's teaching, they will be persuaded to believe without anyone's saying a word to them. They will be persuaded by the way their wives live. Your husbands will see the pure lives you live with your respect for God. (1 Pet 3:1-2 NCV)

The issue of authority and submission as it relates to wives in the Christian family is significant, especially in Western society, in light of the emergence in the past years of various theological movements such as: liberation theology (which developed in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, focusing on liberation of the oppressed); black theology, whose noted proponent is James Cone; and the feminist theological movement, which surfaced in the feminist movement during the late 1960s. One proponent of the feminist movement, Serene Jones, president of Union Theological Seminary, in the book *Horizons in Feminist Theology* writes,

Although focusing on a collection of writings, feminist theory also includes the conversations of women that bring these texts to life. She further describes feminist theory as a collection of critical texts and a conversation—and not as a discrete academic field. Feminist theory is not limited to a particular discipline but takes place in almost every department of the university (in government policy offices as well as in national women's organizations and the local Bible-study groups). What do these texts and conversations share? A number of ideas mark their common aspirations, although they may not always live up to them. First they share a common

goal, namely, the liberation of women. This goal makes these works 'feminist': they struggle against the oppression of women and for their empowerment. This commitment is not abstract: it is grounded in political movements that seek change. For the earliest feminist theorists, this mean standing in service to the 'womens' movement. (Jones 1997, 35)

Considerable discussion has centered on Paul's usa of the word submit in his letter to the Ephesian church in chapters 5 and 6, which raises the question if Paul was offering a notion of being culturally insensitive regarding women and their role both in the church and at home. There is no questioning of the fact that Paul indeed utilized and supported the significant role women played in the church. Calvin J. Roetzel, Professor of Religious Studies at Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, in his book, *The Letters of Paul* gives his perspective on Paul's intent and purpose:

It is likely that Paul was neither a chauvinist nor a liberationist but something in between. . . . So in Paul we find a mixture of the subversion of traditional hierarchical patterns as well as their reinforcement. It would be remarkable indeed if Paul did not reflect some of the prejudice, superstition, and bias of his own time. The question is, how much should we worry about Paul's cultural views? Does his unconsidered prejudice against women vitiate his views on Jesus and on other important questions of life? (Roetzel 1998, 188-189)

Wayne Grudem, Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary in Scottsdale, Arizona, in his article found in the book *Building Strong Families*, listed eleven biblical references on the subject of submission:

Jesus was subject ('obedient') to the authority of his parents (Luke 2:51); Demons were 'subject to' the disciples (Luke 10:17; it is clear that the meaning 'be considerate of, be thoughtful toward' cannot fit here for the demons were certainly not considerate of or thoughtful toward the disciples!); Citizens are to be 'subject to' the governing authorities (Rom. 13:1, 5; see also Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13); The universe is 'in subjection' to Christ (1 Cor. 15:27; see also Eph. 1:22); Angels and other spiritual beings are 'subject to' Christ (1 Pet. 3:22); Christ is 'subject to' God the Father (1 Cor. 15:28); Church members are to be 'subject to' the elders in the church (1 Pet. 5:5); Wives are told to be 'subject to' their husbands (Eph. 5:22, 24; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18); The church is 'subject to' Christ (Eph. 5:24); Servants are to be 'subject to' their masters (Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18); Christians are to be 'subject to' God (Heb 12:9; James 4:7). (Grudem 2002, 53)

Grudem an exponent of the view known as complementarian writes that the biblical picture is one that emphasizes equality and differences and unity at the same time:

Parallel to the equality and differences among the members of the Trinity, within a complementarian view men and women are equal in value but have different roles. Within marriage, a husband will manifest loving, humble headship, and a wife will manifest intelligent, joyful submission to her husband's leadership. Children will be loved and cared for and valued, and they will be raised with both discipline and love. Children will respect the authority of their parents, but their parents will respect the dignity of children as having equal value because they are persons created in the image of God. Within the family, there will be a division of responsibilities in which the husband is primarily responsible to lead, provide for, and protect his family. The wife, on the other hand, will be primarily responsible to help her husband by managing the household and nurturing the children, though both husband and wife will often participate willingly in helping the other person with his or her area of primary responsibility. (Grudem 2006, 76)

In today's culture, any discussion regarding the role of women that includes the word submission produces intense reactions. All Scripture needs to be understood in the context of what was said, and the prevailing accepted cultural norms at that time. Biblical submission is a mark of equality rather than inequality.

Submitting to another person is an often misunderstood concept. It does not mean becoming a doormat. Christ, at whose name "every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil 2:10), submitted his will to the Father, and we honor Christ by following his example. In submitting to God, there is a greater willingness to obey his commands, consequently a submission to others. In a marriage relationship both husband and wife are called to submit to one another. For the husband, this means putting aside his own interests in order to care for his wife. Submission is rarely a problem in homes where both partners have a strong relationship with Christ and where each is concerned for the (well-being) of the other. But real spiritual leadership involves service. Just as Christ served the disciples, even to the point of washing their feet, so the husband is to serve his wife

Don S. Browning wrote,

Liberals avoid Ephesians 5 for fear it may be used to justify 'patriarchal' teachings. Christian conservatives gravitate toward the Ephesians passage and others like it (e.g., Col 3:18 and 1 Pet 3:1). Many conservatives, though not all, see in these passages a divinely sanctioned family plan—a benevolent-love paternalism—that husbands and fathers should exercise with faithful responsibility, and wives and children should accept in loving obedience. Although these passages—as liberals and

feminists charge—reflect a modified patriarchy, all parties miss how these passages challenge the models of male authority typical of the Greco-Roman world, which was the social and cultural context of early Christianity. (Browning 2007, 78-79).

With the emergence of the New Testament church, the notion of household, or *oikos*, takes on significant importance and function. On three occasions there are accounts of Paul baptizing entire households. One is the jailer's family—the story is described in Acts 16:29-34; the jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the Word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house (NIV). At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family. The second occasion was in the household of Stephanas:

> You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it. I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition. (1 Cor 16:15-18 NIV).

The third baptism event was in the household of Lydia,

> On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. (Acts 16:13-15 NIV)

It is noteworthy that the role of women is significant in the growth and development in the early church. Paul commends Timothy for his unbridled faith, which he credits to his grandmother Lois and his Jewish mother Eunice. It is believed that his father was a Gentile and unbeliever; therefore, these two women were left with the

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responsibility of guaranteeing that this young man was taught the rudiments of the faith. Apollos was discipled by Priscilla and Aquila, a husband and wife team who had befriended Paul. Paul introduces Phoebe to the church at Rome identifying her as a servant (deacon) in the church at Cenchrea and Phoebe, which Paul refers to in his letter to the church at Rome: "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me." Romans 16:1-2 (NIV)

It is in the context of the Christian family be it blended, extended, or biological, where training must takes place regarding the Christian principles of behavior. Respect, sharing, integrity, prayer, and honesty are taught as the highest values. When this takes place, the community will be impacted and transformed.

There is a substantive correlation between teaching parents the skills necessary for productive family living, and nurturing their children's faith—resulting in their becoming co-laborers with the church in the role of evangelism and discipleship Much has been written about the family and church as the means by which families are nurtured and taught. The early believers that were empowered by the Holy Spirit proclaimed with an unquenchable devotion their love for each other as the family of God. They spent quality time teaching and being taught. They faithfully lived out the notion of fellowship or *koinonia*. On a daily basis they engaged each other and those with whom they came in contact in the temple courts, going house to house as they continually taught and proclaimed the Good News (or gospel) of the resurrected Jesus who is the Messiah.

Diana Garland, Dean of the Baylor University's School of Social Work, has worked extensively with churches in their development of family and community ministries. She writes,

> I propose that family ministry will be better defined if we begin with a functional
> family definition as the ideal to which we strive. Followers of Christ are not to be

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bound by the structures of legally recognized or biological based relationships. Rather, family relationships are defined by relationship processes—loving one another, being faithful to the same Lord, and adopting one another as brothers and sisters in the household of faith. (Garland 1999, 50)

Jesus, who was adopted by Joseph, said very little regarding family structure and function. The Bible does give some views on Jesus' concept of family. Mark 3:31-35 is written,

> Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, 'Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.' Who are my mother and brothers? He asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother. (NIV)

He identifies family as those who are doing the will of God. In John 19:25-27 he charges John with the responsibility of caring for his mother Mary:

> Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Dear woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Throughout scripture, especially in the Old Testament, various types of families are found: single parent heads of household, adopted, blended, and extended.

There has been little change in these various family groups over the years. Paul makes several references of the family of God in his writings, however, the church's role is not to replace the family. Even though it is often referred to as a family of faith, there is a difference between a community of faith and the family. These roles should not be confused, but should complement each other.

The greatest challenge the church faces today is that of educating families on how to distinguish the secular view of family, marriage, and morals, from that of biblical doctrines and teachings. It is the church's responsibility to nurture families, especially fathers and mothers, as they train and educate their children as they mature in the faith. Paul wrote, "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him

who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Eph 4:15-16 NIV).

Mark Holmen wrote,

> I believe it is time for the church to rescue families. Further, I believe that this can only happen by reestablishing the home as the primary place where faith is nurtured. For the past several decades, the Church has poured time, energy, and resources into creating and implementing entertaining and educational programs. Yet these programs have done very little to equip parents to pass on faith to their children. Worse, the Church has created a drop-off mentality that has enabled parents to abdicate their faith-nurturing responsibility. (Holmen 2007, 12)

In view of the fact that the church today faces a paradigm shift in ethical, moral, ideological, and a changing worldview, it must continue to instill in the minds and hearts of its members the importance of building godly homes on the foundation of the teachings of Jesus. Thom Rainer in an article written July 23, 2010 states,

> The dominate attitude of this huge generation toward Christianity will be largely indifferent. Only 13 percent of the Millennials rank any type of spiritual matter as important to their lives. They are not angry at churches and Christians. They simply ignore us because they do not deem us as meaningful or relevant. (Rainer 2010, majtrends.html)

Just as the trinity models the fact that God is seen in a relationship with self, Jesus prayed that his disciples may be one as he and the Father were one. Therefore, the church is family, charged with the responsibility of keeping the principles of a godly family vibrant. As a result of a survey conducted in 2005 by Thom Rainer concluded that those in the age group of 16 through 29 were more skeptical of and resistant to Christianity than those of the same age group a decade ago (Lifeway Research 2009). These would be understood to be relationships characterized by faithfulness and loyal love, obedience and trust—exactly the character of relationships specified by covenants after the fall. In this sense the divine image entails a covenant relationship between God and humans on the one hand, and between humans. This poses significant challenges, issues, and problems for the church and family today.

This project focuses on an urban African American church in Chicago, Illinois. Consideration was given to the significant factors challenging this segment of America's population. In the development of any new ministry as this project proposes, the church has to keep its core values but expand its outreach to a period of transition and transformation and still be prophetic and progressive, serving both the congregants and community. This task required, as a matter of first priority, careful determination of mission priorities and the mobilization of resources for implementation. The goals articulated activities must be carried out in recognition of the fact that many of the problems affecting the lives of individuals in negative ways are systemic, and can be dealt with only at that level. This effort inevitably must involve members of the core team to be totally committed to their assignment. This church must also evaluate how it will address major demographic changes in the community and the declining rate of marriages. While the drop in marriage rates and changes in attitudes towards marriage are realities for all American racial groups, they are particularly acute in the African American community as this paper has documented. This raises another question that this project must address and that is: What about homes? The pervasive absence of normal family nurture and discipline cannot be taken lightly. It probably affects the nature of ministry more than any other fact. Homes are often functioning at cross purposes in the kind of character development necessary for leadership; the Church can never fully take the places of mothers and fathers.

Living in a time of cultural change presents a huge opportunity for this church to rethink and reevaluate its core values of its faith and how to articulate this to others. The challenge is twofold. First, there is the need to be able to explain the church's faith and show its positive impact on life today, and promote the value of godly family values.

The competence of this project is primarily expressed through its nurturing function in worship, preaching, and teaching. This nurturing function flourishes as the

members of the congregation become caregivers, mediators, and active participants in the community as set forth in its mission and vision statements. Another aspect of this project is that the church sees itself as developing the kind of fellowship that succeeds itself from generation to generation as it constantly seeks to do God's will through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 3

THE THEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL, CULTURAL,
AND SOCIOLOGICAL SUPPORT

The Biblical Family

The biblical idea for the family may be seen as a gathering of individuals that

are related by kinship, marriage, or adoption that provides love, companionship,

nurturing, and support for one another. The center of this group is the covenant marriage

relationship of one man and one woman who are committed to remain together for life.

> Covenant partnership, then, is a divinely determined order or existence for human
> beings. Genesis 2:24 places human existence within an order of cohumanity as the
> necessary and, therefore, logical result of the development of persons through the
> parent/child relation. The parenting relation is thus informed by the covenant/
> partnership relationship, from which it derives its goals and ends. (Anderson and
> Guernsey 1985, 40)

God's plan for the family may be seen as a strong marriage relationship being

the nucleus of an extended family network and community. The primary goal of a godly

family is that of raising their children and teaching moral values, virtues, and behaviors

that are associated with worshiping and serving God. Education begins at birth and it is

the parent or parents who are the first teachers. Scripture teaches: "Train up a child in the

way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6).

Deirdre J. Good wrote,

> There is no word in Greek or Hebrew that exactly corresponds to the modern word
> 'family;' the closest Greek word, *oikia,* or *oikos,* means variously household or
> house, like *bet* in Hebrew, which similarly means house and can be used for
> household in the sense of family lineage. Two other Hebrew words used for related
> groups of people are *toldot* and *mishpachah,* generations and clan or tribe. (Good
> 2006, 13)

Of course in the Old Testament there are several portraits of family groups.

There is for instance polygamy when Jacob married two sisters, Leah and Rachel (Gen

29). However, in viewing the New Testament, neither Jesus nor the writers condoned such practice. Matthew and Luke portray the story of a young woman Mary, and her husband Joseph faced with the dilemma of becoming a family under unusual circumstances.

> Matthew's account of Jesus' birth highlights the protecting role of Joseph, whereas in Luke's account Joseph is known only as the husband of Mary and descendant of David. In Matthew, Joseph receives the dream that will save the child and his mother from Herod's massacre of the children . . . That he recognizes a child born to him means that he brings the Holy Family into being. He models the care of a *paterfamilias* for those in his household. (Good 2006, 44)

The gospels give little regarding the role Joseph played in the life of Jesus. Joseph is present as the baby Jesus is brought to the Temple in Jerusalem in keeping with the Law. In Luke's account, Jesus at the age of twelve accompanies his parents to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. After discovering that Jesus was not with them after returning home, they found him in the Temple sitting with the teachers listening and asking questions, it is Mary who admonishes him, not Joseph:

> When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.' (Luke 2:42-48 NIV)

It is in John's 2:1-11 that Jesus performs his first miracle of turning water into wine, which he performs at the request of his mother. Verse 11 gives the significance of this miracle: "This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee." He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him. It is a wedding celebration that could be seen as God's affirmation of marriage. In Luke 4, Jesus returns home, attends synagogue, and reads Isaiah's prophecy concerning the poor and the oppressed. Those in attendance are described as being amazed by his wisdom and respond

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with the declaration, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they say.

The apostle Paul, missionary, church planter, and prolific writer of the New Testament tells nothing about his parents, or relatives, except that his father was of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil 3:5) and a Pharisee (Acts 23:6). He does, however, have a great deal to say about marriage, family, and parental responsibility. For some writers the idea or tradition of a nuclear family, which is held as the model for family life, is not seen throughout the bible. Rodney Clapp writes,

> The traditional family is not a family lifted out of the Bible's patriarchal period, its United Kingdom period, or any other period. Though certainly presented with reference to the Bible (and in some ways true to it), it is instead a family lifted out of nineteenth-century industrialized Europe and North America. (Clapp 1993, 13).

Clapp later states,

> There is nothing about family, simply as a collection of spouses and offspring that makes its members Christian. Instead, families and individuals gain a distinctive Christian identity through their participation in the church and its story. In the church we are 'born again' and resocialized as a peculiar people whose lives would make no sense if the God of Israel and Jesus Christ were not living and true. (Clapp 1993, 84)

The African American Family Anthropology

Many historians of African American history agree that prior to the trans-Atlantic slave trade family structures existed in many tribes in West Africa. African families were tightly organized in extended family units through either tribes or clans. Marriages involved contractual agreements between families, and in some cases with the approval of the leader or leaders of the tribe or clan. Many West African families traced their ancestral lineage not through their fathers but their mothers. In this family model, the mothers' brothers were accorded the same respect as a father; and maternal cousins were regarded as siblings.

The emergence of the transatlantic slave served as a destabilizing factor in the lives and family structure of the captured Africans. Brought to a strange land, environment, and culture, deprived of their original names, language, and culture, these

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slaves were able to maintain a sense of family that had been nurtured over hundreds of years in their West African homeland:

> The uprooting of negros and the transportation of them to an alien land undoubtedly had a shattering effect upon their lives. In destroying their traditions, cultures, and in breaking up their social organization, slavery deprived them of their accustomed orientation toward the world. Contrary to early misconceptions and still popularly held beliefs concerning the primitiveness of African religion, the peoples from which the slaves were drawn possessed developed systems of religious beliefs concerning their place in nature and society. (Lincoln 1994, 17)

While reliable empirical data and statistics are not available to either confirm or refute the hypothesis of African cultural relativity, and how much was developed in the new environment is still the subject of discussion. Proponents of the cultural relativist school maintain that enslavement did not destroy all components of traditional African foundations of family functioning. For these scholars, the African American family represented a continuing fountain of strength and endurance that was built on its West African cultural heritage and religious practices.

Perhaps the significant stabilizing factor during slavery was the black family. Because of the nature of the work performed in slavery, some slaveholders often allowed their slaves to live in family cabins, and observe family connections. Many did this for simple economic reasons, and to make it easier to control the slaves. Whatever the reasons, slaves took advantage of the opportunity to use the family environment as a refuge and source of cultural endurance.

The "extended family network" in which most slaves lived emerged principally as a way of coping with the separation of family members. Children from a slave marriage became the property of the slaveholder who owned the enslaved mother. In many cases, slaveholders placed a child left behind by a parent's death or recent sale, or those children recently purchased from slave traders, with a functioning slave family. Parents tried to name their children after family members, usually a father, uncle, or grandfather who lived elsewhere or aunts or grandmothers who had died or had been sold

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off the plantation. Later on, when some slaves began using surnames, they tended to take the names of the slaveholder who had originally owned them or their parents.

It was not until the mid-eighteenth century that large numbers of Africans began converting to Christianity. This took place during the religious revival movement that swept over the English colonies, known as the Second Great Awakening. Those white slaveholders who embraced this evangelical Christianity allowed blacks to attend white churches as long as the enslaved Christians sat apart from them and took communion at separate tables and were baptized separately as well.

Although many enslaved Africans were church members and usually attended the churches of their owners, many more practiced their own version of Christianity out of sight of whites. Gathering in brush arbors after dark, black Christians sang, danced, shouted, and clapped to the preaching of black ministers. Their version of Christianity, which they embraced, emphasized the story of Moses through sermons and songs about the deliverance of God's chosen people from bondage. Speaking of his black soldiers, white Union Army Commander Thomas Wentworth Higginson remarked in 1864,

> There is no part of the Bible with which they are so familiar as the story of the deliverance of Israel. Moses is their ideal of all that is high, and noble, and perfect in man. I think they have been accustomed to regard Christ not so much in the light of a spiritual Deliverer, as that of a second Moses who would eventually lead them out of their prison-house of bondage. (Callahan 2006, 94)

The emergence of the Black church is considered to be the single most important factor in the life of African Americans. It is totally American in its origin that was born out of slavery with some underpinnings of African heritage and customs. The Black church emerged as the embodiment of African American life, giving slaves a sense of identity, worth, and value, to a people who were forced to carve out a new culture and identity. The Black church can be compared to the emergence of the synagogue during the Jews Babylonian captivity that became more than a place of worship; it was the embodiment of Jewish culture and heritage. William Montgomery writes,

Church meetings were not breaks in the routine of daily life but integral parts of everyday existence. Mary White Ovington, one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, placed the local church in perspective when she wrote, 'It was not church, a place away from the world, that a boy or girl visited occasionally in busy life, but a part of home.' (Montgomery 1993, 255)

The Black church became the center of education, both religious and secular, as well as the center of social life and a means by which ethical, moral, and social values were taught, reinforced, and transmitted from one generation to the next. Education also carried an important religious significance; it provided slaves with access to the Bible, which they regarded as the ultimate source of knowledge and understanding. They wanted to read God's Word and found solace in its good news of grace, redemption, and freedom.

Many Black churches in the South served as economic vehicles for their community, creating black schools and colleges. The Black church behaved as an extended family network system mainly because there was no other entity available. The extended family support system of African Americans has been an ongoing pattern from slavery to present day social activities and functions. Harriette Pipes McAdoo states,

The presence of fictive kin (nonrelatives who are as close and involved in the family as blood relatives) is common. Religious and church activities reinforce this pattern. In many cases, warm church involvement erases the line between family and friends. The church and the extended family become one and the same. Shared functions include the socializing of children, the rearing of unrelated children, and the sharing of resources when times are difficult. (McAdoo 2007, 98)

It would be a mistake to overlook the significant function the Black church has played and continues to play in the life of both its members and the African American community. The unique theology of the Black church that emerged regarding the family gave significant authority unlike any other entity in the African American community. Taylor, Jackson, and Chatters contend,

One can point to the fact that communities promote a sense of role clarity, by developing a broadly consensual understanding of what healthy families are like and what positive family role performance entails. Expressions of approval from coreligionists or clergy may help to convince an individual that he or she is (or can

become) a good parent, a good spouse, and a godson or daughter. (Taylor, Jackson, and Chatters, eds. 1997, 128)

Many historians point out the fact that black churches provided connection and legitimization of family relationships when recognition was not available or recognized in the larger society. The Black church and Black family have always drawn on each other for mutual support and nurturing. Diana Garland states that "the black church also legitimized the informal marriages of many former slaves, demanded marital fidelity, and designated programs to foster male leadership in the family." (Garland 1999, 102)

Historian W. E. B. DuBois, upon observing black churches in his travels through the South made the following observation:

At the same time this social, intellectual, and economic centre is a religious centre of great power. Depravity, Sin, Redemption, Heaven, Hell, and Damnation are preached twice a Sunday with much fervor, and revivals take place every year after the crops are laid by; and few indeed of the community have the hardihood to withstand conversion. Back of this more formal religion, the Church stands as a real conserver of morals, strengthener of family life, and the final authority on what is Good and Right. (Du Bois 1903, 150)

Careful attention must be given to the fact that the African American church is not a monolithic entity, it is diverse and exercises a degree of authority both with its members and to some extent the surrounding community. Local autonomy is the foundational structure particularly for black Baptist churches, which they occasionally employed even during slavery. Mechal Sobel identified a situation that took place in Norfolk, Virginia.

The Norfolk First Baptist Church functioned as an independent black church without open opposition from 1816 to 1838. Suddenly, in 1839, when the church had over 400 black members, its white pastor, James Mitchell, was brought up before the white Portsmouth Association on undisclosed charges. The association demanded that the blacks choose a new white pastor, but the black church quietly defied the ruling and continued to meet with Mitchell for another nine years. (Sobel 1979, 201)

The Black church is diverse, yet there is a thread of commonality that may be found in many congregations. The Bible is seen as the central source of authority. For

millions of Black Americans it is a means that provides an insight to a loving, caring, and compassionate God.

Each ethnic and racial group that embraces Christianity filters the Bible through their cultural lens. In the case of the Black church, certain passages of scripture bring an interpretation that is applicable to their cultural understanding. The prophet Amos' call for justice to roll on like a river and righteousness like a mighty stream, (Amos 5:24) is seen as a call to action for fairness, equity in a society which may be viewed as insensitive to those who are disenfranchised.

Many members in Black churches are able to resonate with Luke's account of the Good Samaritan as found in the book of Luke.

> A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,'' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have. 'Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.' Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise.' (Luke 10:30-37 NIV).

This parable of Jesus is seen as the breaking down of racial and ethnic barriers, which is common to members of the Black church. While this parable is not exclusive to the Black church, these are some of the stories from Scripture, told many times that form a foundation for the church as it defines its role and purpose both in the community and in the everyday lives of its members.

T. Vaughn Walker, professor of Black Church Studies at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote the following in his analysis of the Black church:

> When one analyzes the multi-dimensional role of the black or African American church plays in society, no simple definition or conclusions emerge. Much of the scholarship generated concerning the black church has tended to over-simplify or misinterpret this last institution outside of the family that remains influential in all

arenas of African-American life. One finds an expression of the black Christian religious heritage in practically every community in this country, regardless of its population or location. (SBJT 52, 1997)

On the eve of the American Civil War, approximately 4 million enslaved African Americans lived in the southern region of the United States of America. The vast majority of these former slaves elected to remain on the plantations of their former slave masters since their basic knowledge was that of farming. Most croppers worked under the close direction of the landlord, who marketed the crop and kept accounts. From this the share was deducted the debt to the landlord. High interest charges, emphasis on production of a single cash crop, slipshod accounting, and chronic cropper irresponsibility were among the abuses of the system. With the emergence of mechanized farming this system was no longer viable, resulting in displaced workers seeking other type of employment.

It is believed by many historians that never in the history of the United States had it experienced such a tremendous internal migration as blacks moving from the South to the North. Many moved to Northern cities with little formal education and skills, which could best be utilized in a rural environment. However, for many, this was their exodus to a land flowing with milk and money.

It has been stated that for every action there is a reaction. This was the case for the rural church; those who remained were charged with the responsibility of keeping the doors open in face of dwindling memberships and a changing economic environment, resulting in a shift in the family makeup. Migration also had, in effect, resulted in absentee pastors. Many of these itinerant pastors joined the great migration in search of greener pastures either serving as bi-vocational pastors or selected to serve in larger congregations. This of course impacted the rural church. In the book *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, the authors state,

> Rural church members seldom receive the kind of pastoral attention normally expected in other churches such as counseling, pastoral visits, and community leadership, but in spite of the dearth of conventional pastoral services and the impact

of out-migration, studies show that very few rural churches closed their doors without a protracted struggle. (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, 96-97)

This great migration was a mixed blessing. Employment was plentiful in Northern cities; however the dilemma for many, especially the African American men, was that of leaving families behind with the intention of sending for them once a financial footing was secured and for others, family ties were severed.

Assimilation and adjustment into the already established northern Black churches was somewhat difficult for these transplanted Black Southerners. Transition and adjustment both on the part of the Northern African American churches and the transplanted arrivals at times was difficult. Wallace Best in his writing states,

> The development of a dynamic and pluralistic African American religious scene epitomized the Great Migration's impact in Chicago. Everything about this scene was undergoing steady and often unstable augmentation, from the site of sacred space to the means and the music of worship to the very nature of church work. Attempts to reach southern migrants and to attend to their religious tastes generated phenomenal shifts in the notion of church work. (Best 2005, 72)

If a church was not found that resembled the church they left "back home," one was planted, which gave rise to storefront churches. These churches were mostly independent Baptist churches and Pentecostal, which were smaller and comprised mostly of families. The pastors were bi-vocational with little or no formal theological education. Some of these churches would grow into larger and prominent congregations, moving to a larger facility.

Challenges Facing the Black Church

The Black church in this paper is defined as the body of people who identify themselves as Christians, and whose purpose is to focus on family-related issues of covenant, commitment, worship, and marriage enrichment:

> Most Black churches are conglomerations of family networks. Family networks which do not 'naturally' overlap with one another are brought hold networks and isolated individuals together by church activities . . . . Churches are linchpins which serve as master links among family networks, household networks and isolated individuals. In sum churches function as a web of life of welfare service for family network and individuals. (Staples 238, 1999)

Historically, the church for African Americans was the family, not just symbolically, but in a real vicarious way in that it epitomized hope and a deep-rooted spirituality of inclusion. The black family as an inclusive community is historically an adoptionist community. The inclusion into membership was the saving of a sinner and thereby becoming a member in the family of God included the grafting into the entire reality of that church a new family member who, in turn, became a full participant in the life and customs of that church. Even a cursory glance at the state of the Black church reveals a noble and historic institution wrestling with its identity; struggling with being attractive while remaining authentic, and grappling with the challenges and reality of the dawning of a new day, a new age, and a possible paradigm shift that it faces.

The Black church today addresses a myriad of issues, and significant challenges, although, they are not limited to any racial or ethnic congregation. Some of these challenges greatly affect and impact how effective the black church can be in reaching and developing godly Christian families. Some of the challenges that must be addressed are represented in the following statistics. According to their book, *African American Family Life*, in 2002, the writers found that fewer than 40 percent of Black children in the United States lived with both biological parents. Between 1970 and 2000, the percentage of Africans who had never been married increased from 36 percent to 45 percent among men and from 28 percent to 42 percent among women and now exceeds the proportion currently married. In 2000, one in nine African American children lived in their grandparent's household, and in two thirds of the cases the great-grandparent was the principle provider (McLoyd, Hill, Dodge 2005, 90-92)

Other factors, which have tremendous impact on families and churches, are the growing African American United States prison population. The Pew Foundation released a report of their findings dated February 28, 2008, which stated in part:

A close examination of the most recent U. S. Department of Justice data (2006) found that while one in 30 men between the ages of 20 and 34 are behind bars, the figure is

one in nine for black males in that age group. Men are still roughly 13 times more likely to be incarcerated, but the female population is expanding at a far brisker pace. For black women in their mid-to-late 30s, the incarceration rate also has hit the one-in-100 mark. In addition, one in every 53 adults in their 20s is behind bars; the rate for those over 55 is one in 837. (Liptak 2008, pewcenteronthe states.org)

In another of their published articles on African Americans the Pew Research Organization published the following results of a survey they conducted. While the US is generally considered a highly religious nation, African Americans are markedly more religious on a variety of measures than the US population as a whole, including a level of affiliation with a regular attendance at religious services, frequency of prayer, and religious importance in life:

> Compared with other racial and ethnic groups, African Americans are among the most likely to report a formal religious affiliation, with fully 87% of African Americans describing themselves as belonging to one religious group or another . . . More than half of African American (53%) report attending religious services at least once a week, more than three-in-four (76%) say they pray on at least a daily basis and nearly nine-in-ten (88%) indicate they are absolutely certain that God exists. (Pew Research 2009, pewresearch.org)

Observing these figures, there would appear to be a polarity between beliefs and behaviors in the African American community, which is not uniquely an African American problem. The possible contributing factors could be economics, social and political. One of Wallace Smith's approaches is through economics. Ministry to black families must make the foundation of its holistic approach aggressive work in the area of economic development. To be healthy, every family needs steady income, quality housing, and access to effective educational institutions (Smith 1985, 91).

African American families are multifaceted. There is no one size fits all in the area of reaching and helping families understand the significant roles they must portray in building healthy family ministries and congregations. This must not be relegated and defined as a strictly social issue, but must be seen as one with spiritual implications and ramifications. The crux of this issue is what role does and should the church play in the lives of its families. In their article "The Church and the Family Crisis," Don and Carol Browning wrote,

Only families are responsible for providing the security, stability, financial resources, stimulation and commitment necessary to raise highly dependent human infants to adulthood. Furthermore, families are the primary carriers of the traditions, narratives, values and the initial education necessary to raise children to be conscientious citizens and members in the kingdom. . . . For this reason, we should be cautious about using the metaphor of family for the church. The church has family like qualities, but it is not a family. (Browning and Browning 1991, 746-49)

Randy Stinson states,

When congregations fail to conform to God's Word in every area, it becomes easy to let husbands and fathers off the hook, to embrace ministry models that do not hold parents accountable for the discipleship of their children, or to allow the church's many programs to fragment families instead of unifying them. (Stinson 2009, 3)

Whereas it would be difficult to find any church leader that would disagree with Stinson's statement, there are several factors to be considered. The majority of publications, seminars, and conferences about church growth and development materials are far and few that emphasizes the importance of holding parents accountable for the spiritual development of their children. There is a sizeable vacuum in this area; some churches are designing or redesigning their methods or programs that they feel would enhance family ministries.

Voddie Baucham, who serves as preaching pastor of the Grace Family Baptist Church in Spring, Texas, opposes age segmented ministries and wrote,

While I believe the vast majority of those who shepherd segregated portions of congregations are well meaning and would never presume to replace parents in their biblical role, I believe the modern American practice of systematic age segregation goes beyond the biblical mandate . . . I believe the church's emphasis ought to be on equipping parents to disciple their children instead of doing it on their behalf." (Baucham 2007, 178-79).

In summarizing Baucham's beliefs, he gives what he believes are three basic flaws with the present day systematic age segregation ministries found in many churches. The first being that it is not Scriptural. He states,

You can't go to the Bible and come away with this 'young adults,' 'medium adults,' 'married' you can't go to the Scriptures and come away with that kind of segregation as a church model; the second is this kind of age segregation has proven to be detrimental to the biblical model of family discipleship and the third is he believes it hasn't worked. We're losing young people at a rate of somewhere between 70 to 80 percent by the end of their freshman year in college. (Baucham 2007, 183)

He further believes that with age-segmented ministries families will stop catechizing their own children resulting in the possibility of youth groups developing their own distinctive expressions of a Christian community that is disconnected from the faith of their mothers and fathers. Other factors that should be included in family-integrated ministries are devotional practices in homes that promote positive assessment of the quality of family life and a reinforcement of those scriptures passages that offer a sense of purpose of those Christian values that center on loving and caring for the needs of others.

While Baucham's thesis has merits that must not be dismissed as the church faces shifting paradigms, historically, the Black church has always considered young people as potential leaders in the church. They may be assigned various roles such as working with older "seasoned" members, such as ushers, deacons, junior and youth or young adult choirs, even setting aside a particular Sunday designated as "Youth Day" encouraging the young people to actively participate in the worship service.

Among the many challenges the African American church faces today, none is evident as the role of the pastor. Unlike other ethnic groups in America, the African American pastor has and continues to play many roles. He is in many cases seen as both an integral and extended member of the family. Permission is given to him unlike any other person in the social strata of African American culture. This is especially evident in today's changing environment. Women, more than ever, play an increasing role in the life of the church. Many are single; either divorced or never married, and heads of households.

With the absence of a male figure, some turn to the one male figure that is representative of a positive role model especially for their sons. It is often their pastor. These pastors are expected to play the role not only of pastor but also of teacher of biblical standards and values. The problem in this kind of arrangement is that the pastor perhaps unknowingly becomes an enabler, thereby releasing the parent from the responsibility of

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teaching their child at home the basic biblical fundaments other than making sure they

learn their speech for the churches annual Easter and Christmas program. Just as it is the

responsibility of the parent to prepare their child for secular education they are equally

responsibly to train and prepare their child at home for a godly life.

T. Vaughn Walker provides prophetic insight that the Black church must address

if it is to be more effective in its ministry to families and the community in which it serves:

> As a result of the devastating conditions becoming more evident in the black
> community, the black church is being challenged to expand its involvement in all
> aspects of black family life. The black church of the twenty-first century needs to be
> informed and innovative in empowering families through a variety of means, such as
> economic growth, community networking, grant writing, entrepreneurship, political
> astuteness, educational support, and various group ministries. (Walker 1997, 57)

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR STRENGTHENING
AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

The goal of this project is to develop a means of transitioning the Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois, to a strong family discipleship and mentoring program utilizing Biblical principles. The first step was to identify families that represented 15 percent of the church's membership to serve as a focus group. The goal of this focus group was that of training and equipping other families in the church with the necessary tools resulting in the development of a family discipleship model.

The length of this project was fifteen weeks. The initial meeting, which was week 1, involved the presentation of the Agreement to Participate document, an explanation of the project, syllabus distribution that outlined the 12 seminars, and completion of the preliminary questionnaire containing eight questions. The results as presented below.

In summarizing the composition of the focus group, based on their response to the eight questions, a majority of the participants as young people attended church on a regular basis in Baptist churches with either a parent or another member of the family such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle. A majority lived in homes in which no weekly bible study was conducted. Fifty percent of the group grew up in homes that consisted of both parents. The next largest groups were those that grew up in a single parent as head of household. The majority of the group grew up in urban areas. Their present family makeup was evenly divided between that of being a nuclear family and single parent as head of household.

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This information corresponds with figures provided by the United States census:

> The number of single adult households is almost equal to the number of households of married couples and their children. The increase in the number of US families maintained by women alone has been one of the major changes in family composition. That proportion has been much higher among blacks than whites for many years, but the number of white women who are the sole heads of households is now increasing more rapidly. (US Census Bureau 2007, census.gov)

In week 2 of this project the pre-test was administered. The results and statistics of the pre-test are found in tables A1 and A2. The seminar topics were developed with the intent of including biblical, theological, and historical information that are pertinent to the goals of this project. Following is a brief synopsis of each seminar.

Seminar Summaries

Seminar 1: Made in the Image of God-Week 3

God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Gen 1:27, NLT). The issue of being made in the image of God is very important. The reasoning is the fact that our understanding of being made in the image of God plays a significant role on how we relate to others as well as how we come to understand ourselves. Bruce Demarest wrote,

> The implications of human persons created in the image of God are immense for theology, psychology, ministry, and Christian living. Ramifications of the image embrace issues of human dignity and value, personal and social ethics, relations between the sexes, the solidarity of the human family . . . and racial justice. (Demarest 2005, 141)

There are other implications that can be drawn upon and applicaple to that of being made in the image of God they are: (1) Being made in the image of God does not mean that humans are divine. God is the creator, we are the created beings. (2) Humans have a special place of dignity and responsibility that is not shared by any of God's

creation. The breath that was breathed into Adam, as found in Genesis 3:7, is used only of human beings not animals. Only humans are accorded the position as described by the psalmist: "what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet" (Pss 8:4-6, NIV). (3) Even after The Fall, humans still possess the image of God. (4) Being created in the image of God means that we are responsible and accountable to God because He is worthy of devotion, love, loyalty, and service.

Seminar 2: The Bible and
Marriage-Week 4

It is interesting to note that the Bible opens and closes with scenes of the marriage. The first marriage is between Adam and Eve. The last marriage is between Christ and His Bride. A marriage union not only fills the need for companionship, but it enables a man and a woman to become fuller, more complete persons. The way God chose to create the first bride is most significant. Unlike the rest of creation and of man himself, God formed Eve not from "the dust of the ground" (Gen 2:7) but from the very man who was to become her husband, by utilizing one of his ribs (Gen 2:21). The manner in which God created Adam and Eve reveals God's design that there should be male and female; each of them needs the other for self-fulfillment. Each of them should accept his or her sexual and functional roles as given by God. This means that efforts to promote sexual or functional role interchangeability between men and women represent a violation of the role distinctions established by God at creation. True completeness and self-realization can be found not by transcending our sexual or functional roles but rather by fulfilling our different and yet complementary roles.

Marriage is God's idea for his creation beginning with the fact that God created humanity: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him;

male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27 NIV). Marriage is a relational union of one

male and one female joined as husband and wife. The marriage relationship requires

mutual deference one to another: "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For

the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which

he is the Savior" (Eph 5:21).

Looking again at the Bible, marriage is seen as a sacred covenant that allows

two people to be perfectly joined in all areas of life, from the physical to the spiritual.

While romantic love is certainly a part of marriage, it is not the kind of love that bonds

the marriage in covenant. Only the love of Christ can do that. Covenant as defined by

the scriptures is a solemn and binding relationship, which is meant to last for a lifetime.

The notion of "covenant" is essential in marriage, the family, and in the lives

of all Believers. *The Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* defines covenant as:

> The act of God in freely establishing a mutually binding relationship with humankind.
> Through the covenant, God bestows blessings on humans in conditional and
> unconditional terms. Conditionally, God blesses humans as they obey the terms of
> the covenant. Unconditionally, God bestows blessings on humans regardless of
> their obedience to the terms of the covenant. God made covenants with Noah,
> Abraham, Moses, and David. But above all, God has fulfilled these covenants and
> has inaugurated the New Covenant in Christ, which is for all people who trust in
> him. (Heb 9:15, 27-28).

Covenant theology is the system of theology that centers on God as a

covenant-making God and may be seen as the history of creation. Covenant theology

asserts that prior to the Fall, God made a covenant of works with Adam as the

representative of all humankind. In response to Adam's disobedience, God established a

New Covenant through the second Adam, Jesus Christ. Those who place their faith in

Christ come under the benefit of this New Covenant of Grace. The peoples' apostasy was

characterized by an atmosphere of general covenant breaking (Logos Bible).

In Malachi's time divorce was a real problem that had become a central issue

in sins of the people. Thus God declared, "I hate divorce" (Mal 2:16 NIV). When a man

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and a woman make the commitment to be married, they are joined in that commitment,

bound in that covenant relationship, by God who instituted marriage from the beginning:

> 'Haven't you read,' he replied, 'that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate. (Matt 19:4-6 NIV)

The husband is expected to play a significant role as spiritual leader and by

God's design, serves as priest of the family leading as worship leader for his family

initiate prayer with his wife and children, not only at meals but at all times. There are

several roles and responsibilities of the husband: (1) He must be a man who hears clearly

the word of God, so that he might faithfully pass it on to his wife and children. (2) A

husband should find himself wrestling with the issues raised in Scripture and should

determine for his wife and family what is right and true. (3) He must faithfully proclaim

the truth of God. Quite possibly some Christian men may feel a sense of inadequacy and

uncertainly regarding the bible and thereby defer to the pastor or Sunday School teachers

for fulfilling this role, thereby they abandon any attempt to lead their wives and family in

any kind of informal study of Scripture.

Jack and Judith Balswick in their book *The Family* wrote,

> Assimilation in marriage, where the personhood of one spouse is given up, is not what God intended. Christian marriage is more like accommodation, where two separate people each maintain a distinct personhood but choose to come together in a unity and oneness of meaning and service. . . . A marriage in which one partner; the husband or the wife is asked to give up his or her personhood for the sake of the other denies God's expression in and through that unique member of the creation. . . . The teaching on equality made in the image of God is being neglected whenever husbands and wives do not listen respectively and thoughtfully to each other's viewpoints, or do not value the wisdom that might be arrived at differently and expressed differently from the other person, or do not value the other person's different gifts and preferences as much as their own. (Balswick and Balswick 2007, 82)

Seminar 3: The Bible and Family-Week 5

In order to obtain a better understanding of the Bible and family it is necessary

to examine the basic foundation that is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

> Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

There are several significant things that can be found in this passage of Scripture known as the Shema: (1) to love God to the fullest, with one's complete heart, soul, and resources. (2) to seriously consider the Word of God and His commandments, (3) to teach the Word of God and speak about His commandments to our children on a daily basis, (4) to bind the Word of God both internally and externally.

Jim Burns, the author of *Confident Parenting* wrote,

> Parents are to impress the faith that God has placed in their life into their lives. It's all about transference. With all of the great children and youth programs with a number of our churches today, many parents allow churches to 'take the wheel' when it comes to their kids' spiritual development, while they take a more passive role. We can easily become convinced that it's the church's job to help our kids grow spiritually, not ours. According to the Shema, God specifically places the responsibility for nurturing a child's spiritual development on the parent or parents—not the church! There is a corporate responsibility we share with the church in raising our kids, yet the church should be viewed as a partner to parents not a replacement of parental responsibility for transmission of faith to their children. (Burns 2007, 55)

The main function of a family in the Bible is that of building strong relationships with each other. This was substantiated by the way members of a family treated their neighbors and the strangers that they met. Within the family unit, there is protection and nurturing. Family members share a special relationship as they offer unconditional love, honor, and respect to each other. Diana R. Garland in her book *Family Ministry* wrote,

> The Old and New Testaments encompass quite a menagerie of family structures— husbands and wives (including husbands with more than one wife), adoptive families, single-parent families, friends who are family, and on and on. Obviously, to say that a family structure occurs in Scripture does not mean it is an 'ideal.' . . . What is important is not being a member of the 'right' kind of family but rather

living in 'righteous ways' within whatever state of family relationships we find ourselves (1 Cor 7:10-24). (Garland 1999, 25)

**Seminar 4: The Anthropology and
Sociology of the African American
Family during Slavery-Week 6**

During slavery, the black family remained a principal base for social interaction and affiliation in an attempt to maintain a system of family cohesion. Colonial and state laws considered slaves as property and commodities, therefore, not legal persons who could enter into a marriage contract. When slavery ended in this country, the vast majority of African Americans could not legally marry. Some enslaved people lived in nuclear families with a mother, father, and children. In these cases each family member belonged to the same owner. Others lived in near-nuclear families in which the father had a different owner than the mother and children. A father might live several miles away on a distant plantation and walk, usually on Wednesday nights and Saturday evenings, to see his family as his obligation to provide labor for an owner took precedence over his personal needs.

Many sociologists contend that family traditions in Western Africa served as the model for family life during the period of slavery. The family lives that Africans brought to the American colonies as slaves retained some of the same qualities. Nevertheless, the biological father was responsible for ensuring physical and psychological well-being. In West Africa, ties to a common female ancestor bound members of a clan to one another. Indentured servants brought this template of family life, with its mores, customs, and beliefs to the New World, and retained them during the long period of slavery to pass on to their children. The kinship system that slaves developed was built around a what sociologists describe as consanguinial kin which is defined as individuals related by common descent from the same individual

(britannica.com). This extended kinship network played a particularly important role in helping slaves adapt to family breakup.

Whenever children were sold to neighboring plantations, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins often took on the functions of parents. When blood relatives were not present, strangers cared for and protected children. Slave parents taught their children to call all adult slaves "aunt" or "uncle," and to refer to younger slaves as "sister" or "brother." In this way, slave culture taught young people that they were members of a broader community in which all slaves, whether related or not, had mutual obligations. This was vividly portrayed in the historic television movie Roots.

Historian Herbert Gutman, whose research on African American families during and after slavery, provides an assessment of the African American family. He chronicles how the family survived and showed how it was able to maintain certain cultural values:

> Most of slaves lived in families, which were headed by father (or mother). A lot of marriages lasted as usual for a long time (for 30 or more years). The father was respected in the family circle, and the new-born boys were very often named for their fathers. Marriages were under the 'protection' of the society family community. This community supported other kinds of family relationships. Young members of family from their childhood were taught to respect the older persons. (Gutman 1976, 142)

**Seminar 5: The Emergence and Role
of the Black Church-Week 7**

In understanding the significant role the Black has played and continues to play is to compare it with the emergence of the synagogue in Jewish life. This institution was born out of necessity and, like the black church, served as a gathering place for prayer, study, and socializing.

Black slaves established and relied heavily on their churches. Until the reconstruction era, black churches in the south were very rare. There were a few sympathetic whites, however, who helped establish churches for the black slaves. The

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Black Church was instrumental in creating a society where blacks came together to share their Christian beliefs with one another. It also gave blacks a sense of hope in their miserable lives: one day they will spend eternity with God. This renewed hope gave African American communities the strength to cope with the cruel treatment they received from their white masters and white communities. The emergence of the Black church served as a means by which the emerging post-Civil War black population was able to gain mutual support and nurturing. T. Vaughn Walker's description of the role of the Black church wrote,

> The black church has always provided the moral and ethical leadership for the African American community. The black church modeled empowerment before the term was used in its present context. It was (and is) the black church that provided hope for the hopeless, faith for the faithless, joy and celebration in the midst of much pain and degradation. (SBJT 1997, 52)

It was the Black church that solemnized marriages, demanded marital fidelity, and designated programs to foster male leadership. Mechal Sobel's research on the Black church led her to the following:

> In using the churches as their 'courts,' blacks found a new institution that was concerned with adultery and other transgressions as the African communities had been. Concern with adultery was not an imposition of white values, although the definition of adultery was. Blacks were not only 'charged' with social transgression; they also turned to the church for guidance and approval. (Sobel 1979, 231)

No other area of black life received a higher priority from black churches than education. Despite the fact that teaching a slave to read and write was illegal during slavery, one of the most persistent desires of the slaves was to be educated. For many slaves education was tied to their religion, a coveted doorway to the faith and its promises. Sunday Schools were often the first places where black people made contact with the educational process, first hearing, then memorizing, and finally, learning to read Bible stories.

Noted black historian C. Eric Lincoln in his analysis of the Black church wrote,

Beyond its purely religious function, as a critical as that function has been, the black church in its historical role as lyceum, conservatory, forum, social service center, political academy and financial institution, has been and is for black America the mother of our culture, the champion of our freedom, the hallmark of our civilization. (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990, 19)

Another major role the black church played in the lives of its members was empowering many members, especially the men, with roles of prominence and esteem in the church that otherwise they could not, or were prohibited from portraying in the dominant social environment.

Seminar 6: The Anthropology and Sociology
of the African American Family
Post Slavery-Week 8

For the first decades following slavery, blacks were severely limited in where they could work or live. Whites who coveted the old status quo had great success in limiting black access to power and wealth. Family and kinship in general became extremely important to ex-slaves as they claimed their relatives and brought home their cousins and uncles and sisters from their old masters. They drew upon their understanding of the ties and obligations between children and parents, and between husbands and wives. Even while emancipation changed their conditions, fictive kinship was a way of claiming people as part of a family. The growing link between claiming kin and claiming family provided new options and new protections for a lot of freed people in the South, especially children and married women. In their book *Long Memory: The Black Experience in America*, Mary F. Berry and John W. Blassingame wrote,

One of the most important sources of black family tradition was the antebellum free Negro community. Although haunted by poverty, the free black family was nevertheless strong. It was especially crucial in the socialization of children. Black children imbibed important lessons from their parents. As industrious and earnest Christians, parents stressed morality, the value of labor and education, and racial uplift. They held family devotional services and regularly took their children to church. (Berry and Blassingame 1982, 33)

For some scholars and writers there is a notion that the experience of slavery had weakened the value of marriage as an institution among Black Americans. Harriett

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Pipes McAdoo wrote,

> At the end of the Civil War, freedmen searched frantically for family members separated by slavery. Some wrote the Freedman's Bureau seeking assistance in locating loved ones. One man who had moved to Pittsburgh in the antebellum period asked the Bureau in Greenville, South Carolina, to help him find his parents. Some freed slaves, not knowing where to turn or what to do simply got on the road and begin to search for their wives, husbands, or children. . . . In those early years following emancipation, nothing was more poignant than the sight of separated families attempting to reestablish their relationship. The institution of slavery had not destroyed the black family. (McAdoo 2007, 4)

Herbert Gutman concluded that between the years of 1855 and 1870, in the 14 black communities he studied, no fewer than 70 percent and as many as 90 percent of the households contained a husband and wife or just a father. This led him to conclude that most post-Civil War black families lived in double-headed households (Gutman 1976, 65).

Seminar 7: The Emergence and Role of the Black Community-Week 9

Numerous writers have studied and written about the emergence of the black community and its culture. James Deotis Roberts in his book *Roots of a Black Future* gives his version,

> Emancipation destroyed the modus vivendi established between the races during slavery. The many intimate and sympathetic ties between the races were severed. . . . A black folk culture developed which had its peculiar social organization and values. (Roberts 1980, 27)

In order to explore the emergence and role of the Black community a working definition of culture is necessary. Culture is defined as the

> shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while alos distinguishing those of another group. (CARLA, carla.umn.culture.html)

Any student of the Black community must begin with an understanding that the Black community is neither monolithic nor homogeneous, and never has been from the days of slavery to the present. There are indeed similarities in the various African

American communities, yet there are many different and distinctive manifestations of

Black culture, such as music, art, and religious beliefs, just to name a few.

> Personal and social development took refuge under the umbrella of the Black Church. Burial societies, insurance companies, and business enterprises of every stripe frequently began in the church. The free Black churches of an earlier day served as models. By the turn of the century, Black churches were playing a dominant role in the total life of freedmen as has no other institution to date. (Walker 1979, 20)

Black migration played a significant role in the making of African American history and its culture as a uniquely total American experience. The mass movement of blacks from the rural South to Northern cities brought those cultural trappings that developed during slavery and were passed from one generation to another. Some of those cultural trappings were worship, music, storytelling, and the creation of care-giving institutions.

Historians, sociologists, and students both past and present of African Americans continue to analyze, study, and write about the impact African American culture plays in the life of America. A case in point is made in the following statement by Alonzo Johnson and Paul Jersild, "Understandably, African Americans have never fully assembled into the majority culture. Yet their religious life has exerted its impact upon that culture, bringing a unique gift of experiential religion" (Johnson and Jersild 1996, 140).

Quite possibly, the transition from a rural environment to that of urban has played a significant role in changes of the African American family over the years. Nicholas Lemann in his book *The Promise Land*, defines this migration as significantly important:

> Between 1910 and 1970, six and a half million black Americans moved from the South to the North; five million of them moved after 1940, during the time of mechanization of cotton farming. The black migration was one of the largest and most rapid internal movement of people in history, perhaps the greatest not caused by the immediate threat of execution or starvation. (Lemann 1991. 4)

**Seminar 8: The Emergence and Role of
the African-American Pastor-Week 10**

To understand the black preachers' status among African Americans, one must understand how the black preacher has played the role of double agent or dual interpreter. Simply put, black preachers are socially bilingual. Their ability to communicate across racial lines and the cultural expectation that they do so has given them the ability to portray the roles of priest and prophet. Since all forms of organized social functions were forbidden among the slaves, the black pastor played an important role. The black pastor among the slaves was more than a leader; he was able to exercise his gifts, which consisted of his understanding of scripture and an ability to communicate this knowledge to the slaves. This leadership was recognized by the congregation and the white masters were willing to concede to him this role among the slaves. As they listened to readings and biblical stories, slaves developed their own interpretations of the Scriptures and found inspiration in stories of deliverance, such as the Exodus out of Egypt.

The culture, which gave birth to the role of the African American pastor, not only expected but demanded him to meet the needs of the individual, family, and his community at every level of existence including spiritual, physical, or financial in nature. This was possibly driven by the black church's understanding of the declarative statement made by Jesus as he identified his purpose, role, and mission:

> The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:1-19 AV)

Cleophus LaRue, in his assessment of the African American congregation, wrote,

> Typically, African American congregations view the preachers as special representatives of God, or even more, as manifestations of the divine presence and thus worthy of great reverence and admiration. Black congregations tend to bestow great authority upon their preachers, and their preachers, in turn, feel a certain freedom to say and do what they wish while preaching the gospel. (LaRue 2000, 12)

Seminar 9: The African American
Family Today-Week 11

In the African American culture generally one may find greater emphasis is

placed on ties to a network of kin that can extend over more than one household,

extended kin, such as the grandparents, parents, and children. Also there is a distinctive

corollary between those families that attend and are involved in the church as opposed to

those who do not. Robert B. Hill, regarding the African American family, wrote, "Many

studies revealed that a strong religious orientation and spirituality are major contributors

to enhancing the resilience of African American individuals and families" (Hill 1999,

150).

Nevertheless, African American families today face significant challenges.

According to Oscar Barbarin, professor of the School of Social Work at the University of

North Carolina,

> Fifty-six percent of African American children are born into families where the
> mother is not married to the biological father. In 1998, single women headed 54
> percent of African American households. In 1998, 41 percent of African American
> men and 37 percent of African American women over 18 had never married. In
> 1998, 1.4 million African American children (12 percent) lived in their grandparents
> home (either with or without their parents). Older children, especially females, are
> often pressed into helping their mother with the care of the household. These
> responsibilities are both a source of maturation and strain for these siblings.
> (Barbarin 2002, uncsocialwork.edu)

The African American family also faces the complexities involved in

confronting the male population. The Kiser Family Foundation reported,

> The 4.5 million African American men ages 15 to 29 represent 14 percent of the US
> male population of that age and 12 percent of all African Americans in the US.
> Their high rates of death, incarceration, and unemployment, and relatively low
> levels of college graduation rates raise concerns for African American families and
> the nation's economy. (Kiser Family Foundation 2006, kff.org)

The shift from a somewhat cohesive and even tightly knit community to one

where anonymity seemingly is the norm significantly altered the makeup of the African

American family. With the transition from an agrarian culture to a highly industrial one,

long work hours and women being introduced into the workforce were contributing

factors that played a significant role and greatly impacted the African American family. Many of these newly transplanted families were not able to create or re-create the kind of networks, and kin they were familiar with.

Authors Joanne M. Martin and Elmer P. Martin in their book *The Helping Tradition in the Black Family and Community* cite what they believe are the changing values in today's African American families:

> The decline of the black helping tradition has been partly the result of the changing values of Blacks. As Blacks have struggled to survive big city life, black people have taken on values that call for 'me first' instead of the 'we first' law of traditional Africa. For it is not uncommon to hear the phrase, 'you have to look out for number 1' throughout the black community nowadays. . . . The street ideology on the other hand, if allowed to go unchecked, will continue to have a detrimental effect on the African-American family. . . . This street ideology helps to account for the high teenage pregnancy rate, crime rate, and drug trafficking that occurs in the black community. (Martin and Martin 1978, 89)

**Seminar 10: Intergenerational Issues
and Today's African American
Families-Week 12**

Diverse family forms such as single-parent households and blended family units have changed the family landscape. When combined with the emergence of intergenerational family responsibilities, society expects the family system to be competent and resilient in the face of these challenges. Partly in response to and partly as a cause of these structural changes, attitudes towards the family have also shifted. Many important family values regarding marriage and divorce, childbearing, and childrearing, and the duties and responsibilities of husbands and wives have changed. In addition, values closely related to the family have been transformed. For example, views on and practices relating to sexual behavior are different now than during previous generations.

Tom W. Smith in his article "The Emerging 21st Century American Family" wrote the following,

> Major changes in family structure and values feed off of each other. Structural changes lead to the reassessment of traditional values and the growth of values more in tune with current conditions. Likewise, changes in values facilitate the

development of new forms of social organization and the growth of those forms most consistent with the emerging values. The structural and value changes reinforce one another so that social transformations are sped along and replace older forms and viewpoints. Several prime examples of this mutual process of social change apply to the contemporary, American family. The basic structure of the family has been reshaped and family values and related attitudes have also undergone paradigmatic shifts. Collectively the alterations mark the replacement of traditional family types and family values with the emerging, modern family types and a new set of family values. (Smith 1999, emergfamily.com)

When people are raised in different time periods, their values and perceptions of the world can be quite different, thereby leading to difficulties in understanding one another. In the past, extended families often lived within the same home or very close to each other; however, this does not occur as frequently today. Because of this gap in understanding between generations it is important to find links between younger and older generations.

The ways in which parents, fathers and mothers, convey messages about manhood, womanhood, parenting, learning, schooling, and persisting are part of a difficult communicative mechanism that may be affected by people and factors outside the family.

Seminar 11: The Paradigm Shift and the Black Church-Week 13

Steven Covey in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* defines paradigm:

Originally a scientific term, and is more commonly used today to mean a model, theory, perception, assumption, or frame of reference. In a more general sense, it's the way we 'see' the world—not in terms of our visual sense of sight, but in terms of perceiving, understanding, and interpreting. (Covey 2004, 35)

Paradigm shifts are a constant, however, it must be noted that change and transition are not the same. Change may be situational, that is, what happens to you. Transitions are psychological and take place internally. Managing transition involves helping people through three phases: letting go of the old ways and identity, going through the in between time when the old is gone but the new is not fully operational, and

finally, coming out of the transition and making a new beginning. Unless transition does

not take place, change is just a rearrangement of the furniture.

Some issues that both the Black church and its families must address are

paradigm shifts that are affecting family living situations, rules and procedures. Some of

these shifts may be seen in intergenerational communication, and the changing

transmission of values that may be seen as mothers and grandmothers with different levels

of acculturation will disagree over child rearing issues. Bryan Hayes in *Shift* wrote,

> People make decisions in the moment based on how they feel, not on a standard of
> truth greater than themselves. The value of individual rights in the family now
> outweighs the authority God gives to parents. . . . Often, fathers view their lives as
> their own, not calculating the domino effect of poor choices on their wives and
> children. Although the culture and the religious community talk about pro-family
> and youth-loving society, practices often don't support these claims. Most of the
> structures of daily life actually pull families apart. . . . The tragedy, unless
> something changes, is that today's children will live a warped, individualistic, self-
> serving form of Christianity. They will make decisions based on feelings rather
> than truth. They will embrace all philosophies and religions as equally true. They
> will teach their children to do the same. And eventually, as life goes by the
> influence of Christianity in our culture will grow dim and silent. (Haynes 2009, 29)

A Barna study conducted in 2009 compared the faith belief of African

American in 2009 to that of 1994:

> Blacks today are more likely than they were in the early 1990s to believe that the
> principles taught in the Bible are totally accurate; to say that their religious faith is
> very important in their life; to have a biblically orthodox understanding of the nature
> of God; and to be born again. They are also less likely to strongly affirm that Satan
> is symbolic, not real; and to contend that a good person can earn his/her way into
> Heaven. The measure that had not changed was the sense of personal responsibility
> to discuss their beliefs with others. Three of the five behavioral measures that were
> evaluated both recently and 15 years ago showed substantial change. Those efforts
> included an increase in the proportion of African-Americans who have made a
> personally important commitment to Christ, church attendance, and Bible reading.
> . . . Modern black families have required church attendance by children; including
> older ones, this is because of the belief that within the extended family of religion,
> children receive 'moral education, positive group identity and personal worth,
> morality, and rituals providing unity—glue that welded families and communities to
> each other.' (www.barna.org/barna-update/article 13)

Yet there are still other problems confronting the contemporary black church.

Quite possibly this may be the first time in African American history, especially in the

urban areas, that a generation of young people is emerging who do not know the history

and legacy of the Black church. Therefore this generation would be unable to pass on those traditions, cultural values, and norms held by previous generations that were viewed as sacrosanct

What can the black church do in the face of the current challenges facing African American youth? This includes such problems as teenage pregnancies and high incarceration rates among black men and women. Robert M. Franklin poses his solution to this question in his book *Crisis In The Village*:

> I would submit that all of us should be addressing the topic of reviving a culture of healthy relationships and restore an ethic of commitment to our village. Healthy relationships that lead to healthy marriages, parenting, children, and families are the building blocks of a healthy society. If our children and families are not well, larger and exceedingly expensive crises in the public arena will result, including higher rates of school delinquency and drop out, crime, suicide, incarceration, emotional illness, and substance additions. (Franklin 2007, 46)

Lawrence H. Williams in his article "The Influence of the Black Church on Parenting" wrote,

> Indeed, Berry and Blassingame were correct in referring to the family and church as 'enduring institutions.' They both have long legacies surviving slavery and being present in the 21st century. And the same can be said in relation to the black family. Unlike the black family, the black church has been so successful in recent years that it has become primarily a middle class institution. In other words, its contemporary success has led to its present day failure, especially among the poor. . . . Here, fifty years since the Brown decision, for a number of reasons, the dream of an integrated American society is one that is still deferred, and the black church is, at least for many adults, still the most important organization in the black community. This means that it remains as a major symbol of the super-extended family. At the broadest level, it still stands as a symbol of the best hope for nurturing and reinvigorating children and youth. (Williams 2009, 62)

Seminar 12: The Family
Driven Faith-Week 14

Strengthening the black family must be seen as involving home and church. When rules are followed at home they are followed in church. The church assists the family in the development of the child's morals and godly values. If there is no reciprocal relationship between the home and family, there will be a break down in all facets of family life.

Don S. Browning co-authored an essay with his wife Carol addressing the issue of family values. They wrote,

> Liberals tend to use psychology and the social sciences to adapt to changing family trends. They are likely to believe that these changes cannot be stopped and that the right combination of governmental and therapeutic intervention can at least cut their losses. Religious liberals, under the influence of the social sciences, see family ministries as helping individuals adapt to family disruption rather than finding ways to prevent it. They emphasize a supportive and nonjudgemental ministry to the divorced, to single parents, to lonely children, and to tension-filled stepfamilies so they all can do better. . . . They have little to say, however to young people, premarital couples, and young married couples about how to prepare concretely for enduring marriages and parenthood in our changing world. (Browning 2007,79)

Parental involvement therefore, is vitally significant and important as parents and the church revisit the original blueprint found in the Shema for the sake of present and future generations. George Barna in his book *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* wrote,

> . . . most born-again adults have little understanding of genuine worship. Most believers think of worship as an event they attend, a type of music that relates to faith matters or a practice that primarily provides personal benefit. To be spiritually whole, children need a mature believer who will help them discover the awesome reality of authentically and intimately connecting with God by providing what He deserves demands and delights in—heartfelt worship. This practice goes far beyond attending weekly events. Young people must come to understand their lives as a constant exercise of worship. Practicing and enjoying presence, while maintaining a respect and awe for who He is, is one of the enormous challenges we face in raising children. (Barna 2003, 72)

Parents have to understand the significance of developing an effective model for strengthening families based on Deuteronomy 6: 7: "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." The church on the other hand cannot abdicate its role as nurturer as it works with its families in teaching and reminding parents of their role as spiritual caregivers. This must include the process of faith development that involves the church as well as the family be it nuclear, single parent, blended, or extended.

The success of the strategy to strengthen the churches' families, must be predicated on enabling each generation bringing their unique strengths to the process by

recognizing the roles of youth, middle generations, and elders in the church that have assumed the responsibility of being caregivers. The strength of this strategy also must continue to promote the importance of the African American family by undergirding and enhancing the quality of life of godly families.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF STRENGTHENING
AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES OF THE
FAITH TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH

Most Americans would say that family is the most meaningful part of their life. But what does family look like today? Family can mean all kinds of things in America. Over time, virtually every aspect of American family life has undergone far-reaching transformations. The family's roles and functions, organizational structure, demographic characteristics, emotional dynamics, and childrearing practices have changed profoundly. A chronological approach to family history underscores the ways that shifts in social values and worldviews and have transformed the most intimate aspects of American life. Churches are facing an erosion of ethical and moral values that have been held sacrosanct for years. This paradigm shift has made a deleterious impact on families of every economic, social, and ethnic group. African American families and the Black church are no exception. Some would suggest that given the racial disparity of African Americans the impact is even greater.

Historically the Black church has played a vital role in educating young people and parents about the importance and significance of marriage and the consequences of childbearing outside of marriage, especially by teenagers. If the church desires to be an effective change agent it must evaluate programs and ministries on a regular basis and be prepared to address the shifting paradigms which are dynamic rather than static. The church's focus must be on how it can enrich godly families providing them with insight, inspiration, and information.

When Jesus chose to identify his mission and ministry he selected the profound words of the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18).

The church must be in the position of making recommendations for change and improvement that focus on personnel preparation and implementing models of effective godly family practices. Failure to do so will result in stagnation, mediocrity, loss of a progressive vision, complicity, and a turning inward as opposed to ministries that focus on outreach.

Summary of Goals

In chapter 1 of this project, four goals were presented explaining the anticipated outcome of this project and the impact it would have on members of the Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois, an African American congregation on the city's Southeast side of the city, which has been in existence since 1964.

The first goal was to engage 25 representative families that would serve as the focus group. This group was representative of those various type families that comprise the congregation. The initial meeting consisted of introducing the purpose of the project and giving each person an opportunity to introduce themselves to others in the group, which gave some an opportunity to spend informal time with other members.

The second goal was to identify, equip, and train the focus group on how to address multigenerational issues. Family relationships across several generations have become increasingly important in American society as they are increasingly diverse in structure and in function. On any given Sunday, churches may find several generational groups living in the same household having different values, dressing differently, thinking

differently, and often have difficulty in communicating with each other. A contributing factor is the emergence of what is known as the communication age, which has ushered in the cell phone, texting, internet, and social networking, each giving rise to a unique language genre. It is encumbered that both the pastor and leaders of the church acknowledge the result of the shifts in generational influence and leadership. This new environment and culture means necessary adjustments must be made in worship styles, preaching, and musical taste, just to name a few. Although the Gospel has not changed, both the pastor and church leadership must act as a catalyst to assist and enable families in bridging the gap in the area of multigenerational communication.

The third goal was to construct a family discipleship process that would enable families to understand the biblical Christian family's responsibilities better. One thing that is eminently clear is the fact that the Christian family exists to serve as a model and to share God's grace in order others may come to know Jesus as both Savior and Lord in the context of the family. There must be a strong tie between godly families and the church; each has to complement and support the other. By making God the highest priority each day, parents are able to teach their children those precepts regarding biblical doctrine, relationship, service, life, salvation, redemption, and God's plan for their lives. When discipleship is practiced in the home, families will have an excellent evangelistic opportunity in reaching out to others as they see the love of God exemplified through them.

The fourth goal was to develop a working definition of family-driven faith, and how to implement this as a core value in the church thereby enabling the entire family to become aware of God's presence in everyday life. Perhaps the initial question is how does family religious involvement benefit children, teens, and adults, and strengthen the family. How do families practice their faith at home? What are the core family faith practices? Why not begin with the reading of scriptures at breakfast? Also, during the week spend quality

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time that is devoted exclusively to prayer; not just for the family but for the community, the country, and the world. Psalms 78:4-6 states,

> We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might and the wonders that he has done. He established a decree in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children.

Evaluation of the Project

In further summarizing this project, its primary purpose is to develop a strategy to strengthen and raise the consciousness of each family member of this church. Emphasis was placed on both the importance and significance that men and women are created in the image of a relational God, and they can only discover their true selves in relationship with God and others. Without question, the key to a better understanding of the significance of the role a godly family has to play is found in Deuteronomy 6:5 that declares, "Love God, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got!" Personal spiritual growth toward maturity is directly related to the family context because the family is the most important set of relationships that God has given. In Ephesians 6:1-4 Paul writes,

> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'--which is the first commandment with a promise—'that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.' Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

The strength of this project was characterized as raising an awareness of the need for the church to develop both short-term and long-range objectives and goals that begin with the understanding that God created the first family with Adam as its head and Eve as his helpmate. Adam and Eve became the first family and the origin of all the other families on earth. Adam, the male, was responsible for the decisions made in the family. When he made wise decisions his family prospered. When he chose to disobey God's rules his family and all the families originating from him were seriously impacted.

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One thing that became quite clear for the focus group during this process was the acknowledgment of the fact that the primary role of godly parents is the teaching of moral values. The Bible teaches that it is the father's responsibility to teach his children, by instruction and example, truth from the Bible and how to apply it practically in daily life. Training up children in the way they should go is not simply imparting knowledge, but it is also through practical demonstration.

While acknowledging the fact that marriage is God's plan for the family, ideally children need the influence of both a father and mother for healthy development in life and Christian relationships. This church has to acknowledge the fact that there are other types of families that exist in the body and the local church's role should be a place for single parents that are heads of household, blended families, and multigenerational families. It is expected that the church will provide the necessary resources enabling these families to also be able to carry out the biblical principles for healthy godly family lives.

There was an obvious generational gap that arose as some members told stories of what it meant to be community, such as living in segregated Southern communities. One positive aspect of the segregated community was the sense of *koinonia*. Older members of the community could chastise or even discipline the children even though they were not biological family. Deference to adults was expected and there was an expectation of upholding ethical, moral, and good behavior. For some of the younger members of the focus team, these were probably stories they had heard but not experienced, therefore their sense of community was different.

Some of the weaknesses in this project were the withdrawal of three members and the inability of some to follow through in assignments, participate in group discussions, and attend, mainly due to conflict with work. It was interesting to note that on both the pre-test and the post-test some of the questions were not answered. It would have been interesting to

find out why there was no response. Unfortunately, this question was not raised. It was interesting that several in the group were reluctant to engage in dialogue and expected me to do most of the lecturing, which provided the majority of the conversation. Because of this, several of the seminars were monologues as opposed to dialogues. Quite possibly this may be the result of the tradition found in many African American churches to defer to the pastor as the sole authority. For some in the group, sharing particular matters regarding their failures made them feel vulnerable. The sharing of failure in marriages and broken relationships is rarely discussed in unfamiliar surroundings such as the focus group. Towards the end of the program, however, there appeared to be some movement towards more openness.

It must be noted that this project is not a panacea in addressing the complexities of the various type families that comprise the membership of the Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church. In the overall assessment we began with an understanding of what the goals and objectives were. Goals therefore were what the project desired to accomplish and the objectives were the steps needed to get there.

Goals Revisited

The fundamental purpose of this project was accomplished. This purpose was that of engaging the focus group in addressing the needs of families in this church. The four goals of this project were (1) engage 25 representative families that would serve as the focus group; (2) identify, equip, and train the focus group on how to address multigenerational issues; (3) construct a family discipleship process that would enable families to better understand the biblical Christian family's responsibilities; (4) develop a working definition of family-driven faith, and how to implement this as a core value in the church thereby enabling the entire family to become aware of God's presence in everyday life.

Goal 1, that of selecting 25 families of the church to serve as the focus group was accomplished. Goal 2, which was to identify, equip, and trainthe focus group in identifying

and addressing multigenerational issues through seminars was met. Goal 3 was to construct a family discipleship process and model enabling families to have a better understanding of the biblical Christian family's responsibility. This goal was partially met insofar as recommending subjects and seminars with the purpose of constructing a discipleship process to allow families to have a better understanding of the biblical expectations of Christian families. There was a good understanding by the group, but designing a process was not completed. Goal 4 was the development of a working definition of a family-driven faith ministry and it was that family faith ministry equips parents to be the primary faith role models that provide opportunities for families to practice their faith together.

Strength and Weakness

The strength of the project lay in the fact that it was conscious-raising because it set the stage for further discussion in affirming positive godly, holistic values for families in development of their faith. This project assisted families in the church to help develop programs that will address their spiritual needs with an understanding that they are God's instrument in His plan of redemption. This project provided mutual support for the adult head of each participating family through nurturing and promoting the embracing of weekly Bible reflections utilizing God's will for each family. The leader of each family was taught how to reflect on the status of their family as they accomplish the goals they set in relation to the goals and objectives of this project.

Some weakness of the project were that too much was spent in the discussion of various subjects of the seminars and that concrete and measurable objectives were not formulated until the last session. The structure of the program did not lend itself to small group dynamics that involved problem solving solutions to the various needs of accomplishing the overall goal of this project and consideration of building into each session an opportunity for objective views on each seminar.

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What I Would Do Differently

The core group purpose was that of equipping other members of the church, so more time should have been allocated to the principles of leadership. Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr, in their book *Leading Congregational Change* wrote,

> In today's context leaders cannot depend on tradition for many insights. The current setting for ministry demands continuous learning. Entire congregations must develop the capacity to adjust their way of life by learning new competencies. Leaders play a critical role in acquiring these new skills. (Herrington, Bonem and Furr 2000, 95)

Equipping the core group would, in effect, equip a better understanding of the significance of the role in which they are being asked to serve: as catalyst and change agents.

Another area that should have been covered was the significance of volunteerism. The majority of the church's ministries are conducted by volunteers; therefore more time should have been allocated to this area. Marlene Wilson wrote,

> Not everyone will preach, teach, or sing in the choir. But all Christians are supposed to be doing something that fits within their unique blend of abilities, skills, and passions. It's really not optional. Priesthood is all about doing something as well as believing something. (Wilson 2004, 11)

Another subject that could have been included in this project is that church activities must essentially be evangelistic in nature and purpose. All ministries, programs, and activities must be evangelistic. Robert E. Coleman, in his book *The Master Plan of Evangelism* wrote,

> Concern at this point immediately focuses the need for a well-thought-through strategy of movement day by day in terms of the long range goal. We must know how a course of action fits into the overall plan God has for our lives if it is to thrill our souls with a sense of destiny. This is true of any particular procedure or technique employed to propagate the gospel. . . . So everything we do must have a purpose. (Coleman 1972, 20)

Lastly, emphasis must be placed on the realization that these participants are expected to be teachers not just in a classroom setting but by lifestyle. Findley B. Edge in his book *Teaching for Results* stated,

> . . . it is not enough for an individual to learn information about religion, valuable as this is. It is not enough for the individual to learn Bible facts, valuable as these are. It is not enough for the individual to engage in a discussion in which ideas are enlarged and horizons expanded, valuable as this is. It is not even enough for the individual to develop certain habits which have religious significance, valuable as they are. In spiritual learning the individual must come to meet God! (Edge 1995, 230)

Theological Reflection

The response to theological reflections regarding this project is not based on any new revelation regarding God being immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign, and faithful, just to name a few of His attributes. However, in the fourscore plus 7 years of serving as pastor all that much of what has been gleaned from this project has underscored and reinforced my limited knowledge of God. The psalmist David wrote, "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered" (Ps 40:5 AV).

God is indeed supreme and He is not subject to any power or law which could be conceived as superior to or other than Him. There is no question that the church, the ecclesia, is indeed the people of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus that is expected to be both the salt and light in the community and the world. In addition to being salt and light we are to let his love guide us. Scripture tells, "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10 NIV).

Jesus has empowered his church to be his witness as they assemble for worship, as they move in the marketplaces of life, on their jobs, and in the community. The people of God are to bring reality, significance, and meaning to be made in God's image: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created them" (Gen 1:27 AV). This coexistence is part of being made in the image of God and it is through God's Word that lives are ordered and have a sense of direction both individually and as families. This just barely scratches the surface of what I have not just learned about God, His church, and His Word through this project, but further cemented my love for Him.

Personal Reflection

Several people that I have met helped me to have a better understanding of pain, suffering, joys, and times of celebration. Most of all I do not take God's blessings for granted. The apostle Paul wrote,

> It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:11-13 NIV)

The church has played a major role in the life of this writer from that of a layperson to the present role as pastor, husband, father, grandfather, and an African American male. During this sojourn numerous events and changes have taken place, far too many to enumerate. It is now 54 years since acknowledging a calling to preach, which is a road filled with many mile markers that have become spiritual building blocks in my life, and this project has been another one for which I am grateful. I will use the experiences that I have gained from this project as a continuum of spiritual growth and development that will be passed on to future generations.

APPENDIX

EVALUATION OF THE FAITH TABERNACLE FOCUS GROUP

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to Strengthen African American Families in the Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois. This research is being conducted by, Donald L. Sharp In this research, you will be asked to participate in 12 seminars, and 2 pre/post- test. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential,* and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.* By your completion of this activity, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Survey of the Focus Group

1. Did you attend church while growing up?
    23 Yes

2. How often did you attend church while growing up?
    19 Every Sunday
    4 Not often
    1 Seldom

3. If you attended church while growing up, what was the denomination?
    19 Baptist
    2 AME
    2 Several
    1 Catholic

4. Who did you attend church with?
    6 Parents
    7 Parent
    12 Family member

5. Did your family conduct a weekly home Bible study?
    7 Yes
    17 No

6. Which of the following best describes the type family in which you were raised?
    12 Nuclear
    7   Single parent
    2   Blended
    3   Extended

7. What area did you grow up?
    3   Rural
    3   Small town
    18 Urban

8. Which is your present family group?
    10 Nuclear
    4   Extended
    1   Blended
    9   Single parent

Pre-Seminary Questionnaire with Results

Please circle your response in each statement which corresponds to your opinion or belief.

1= Strongly Disagree
2=Disagree
3=Somewhat Disagree
4=Somewhat Agree
5=Agree
6=Strongly Agree

1. Local churches are spiritual households that include family units that should be cared for and strengthened to fulfill their God ordained roles.
    Strongly Agree 15; Agree; 6

2. All Believers are to be equipped for spiritual ministry and growth through family-based ministry that produces godly families
    Strongly Agree 10; Agree 9; Somewhat Agree 1; Agree 1

3. The church's responsibility is that of nurturing fathers and mothers by providing them with the necessary tools in order that they may train their families to fulfill the Great Commission.
    Strongly Agree 12; Agree 9

4. The parent is the primary Christian educator in the church, and the family is the God-ordained institution for faith-building in children and youth for the passing of faith from one generation to the next.
    Strongly Agree 10; Agree7; Disagree 2

5. It is the church's sole responsibility to conduct Bible study classes.
    Strongly Agree 1; Agree 2; Somewhat Agree 4; Somewhat Agree1; Disagree 6; Strongly Disagree 7

6. In healthy families commitment is essential in nurturing relationships. The parents take responsibility for their children's upbringing, assuming the primary role in the children's spiritual and moral development.
   Strongly Agree 15; Agree 5; Strongly Disagree 1

7. In healthy families all members commit to being accountable for their own behavior, thereby developing a clear sense of identity as godly families
   Strongly Agree 13; Agree 6; Somewhat Agree 2

8. It is the church's primary responsibility to provide a practical family function of positive role models for young people, both male and female.
   Strongly Agree 6; Agree 6; Somewhat Agree 3; Somewhat Disagree 2; Disagree 3; Strongly Agree 1

9. One of the church's roles is that of involving itself in every area of Black family life: economic, social, educational, and cultural.
   Strongly Agree 7; Agree 10; Somewhat Agree 2; Disagree 1; Strongly Disagree 1

10. In healthy godly families the marriage is centered or, in the case of single parents, they provide members with a sense of nurturing and a stable biblical foundation.
    Strongly Agree 7; Agree 10; Somewhat Agree 3; Strongly Agree 1

11. The pastor/minister is the spiritual leader of the congregation, who reminds the congregation of God's call to be in relationship with one another.
    Strongly Agree 13; Agree 6; Somewhat Agree 1; Strongly agree 1

12. The pastor/minister is a change agent, who empowers the congregation to minister to one another, thereby setting the tone, enabling the congregation to become the caring family of God.
    Strongly Agree10; Agree 8; Strongly Disagree 2

13. Family worship is important because it brings the family closer to God, teaches the family both children and adults the values of nurturing their faith.
    Strongly Agree 15; Agree 4; Somewhat Agree1; Strongly Agree 1

14. Children should be encouraged to decide their religious views on their own.
    Strongly Agree 2; Agree 5; Somewhat Disagree 3; Disagree 4; Strongly Disagree 6

15. Parents should encourage their children to accept their faith.
    Strongly Agree 5; Agree 10; Agree 2; Disagree 3; Strongly Disagree 1

16. The church should carefully examine and develop ministries and programs that nurtures and meet the needs of single-parent households.
    Strongly Agree 12; Agree 7; Somewhat Agree 1; Somewhat Disagree 1

17. The church should carefully examine and develop ministries and programs that are tailored to meet the needs of couples in the church.
    Strongly Agree 10; Agree 8; Somewhat Agree 1; Somewhat Disagree 1

18. The church should carefully examine and develop ministries and programs that are tailored to meet the needs of urban African American non-traditional, etc., extended family units, multigenerational.
    Somewhat Agree 6; Agree 12; Disagree 2; Strongly Disagree 1

19. The church should carefully examine and develop ministries and programs that are tailored to meet the needs of urban African American adults who are "parenting" their grandchildren.
    Strongly Agree 9; Agree 8; Somewhat Agree 2; Somewhat Disagree 1

20. The church should carefully examine and develop ministries and programs that are tailored to strengthen marriages.
    Strongly Agree 15; Agree 5; Somewhat Disagree

Table A1. Statistics of pre-seminar, April 21, 2001

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	0%	0%	0%	0%	28.6%	71.4%
2	0%	0%	4.8%	4.8%	42.8%	47.6%
3	0%	0%	0%	0%	42.8%	57%
4	0%	10%	0%	0%	37%	53%
5	33.3%	28.6%	4.8%	19%	9.5%	4.8%
6	4.8%	0%	0%	0%	23.8%	71.4%
7	0%	0%	0%	9.5%	28.5%	61.2%
8	5%	14.2%	9.5%	14.2%	28.5%	28.5%
9	4.8%	4.8%	0%	9.5%	47.6%	33.3%
10	4.8%	0%	0%	14.3%	47.6%	33.3%
11	4.8%	0%	0%	4.8%	28.5%	61.9%
12	10%	0%	0%	0%	40%	50%
13	4.8%	0%	0%	4.8%	19%	71%
14	30%	20%	0%	15%	25%	10%
15	4%	14%	0%	10%	48%	24%
16	0%	0%	5%	5%	33%	57%
17	0%	0%	5%	5%	40%	50%
18	5%	10%	0%	0%	57%	28%
19	0%	0%	5%	10%	40%	45%
20	0%	0%	5%	0%	24%	71%

Post-Seminar Questionnaire with Results

Please circle your response in each statement which corresponds to your opinion or belief.

1= Strongly Disagree
2= Disagree
3=Somewhat Disagree
4=Somewhat Agree
5=Agree
6=Strongly Agree

1. Local churches are spiritual households that include family units that should be cared for and strengthened to fulfill their God ordained roles.
   Strongly Agree 13; Agree 5; Somewhat Agree 1

2. All Believers are to be equipped for spiritual ministry and growth through family based ministry that produce godly families.
   Strongly Agree 9; Agree 3; Somewhat Agree 2; Somewhat Disagree 2; Disagree 1; Strongly Disagree 1

3. The church's responsibility is that of nurturing fathers and mothers by providing them with the necessary tools in order that they may train their families to fulfill the Great Commission.
   Strongly Agree 9; Agree 5; Somewhat Agree 5

4. The parent is the primary Christian educator in the church, and the family is the God-ordained institution for faith building in children and youth for the passing of faith from one generation to the next.
   Strongly Agree 9; Agree 5;Somewhat Agree 2; Somewhat Disagree 2

5. It is the church's sole responsibility to conduct Bible study classes.
   Strongly Agree 1; Agree 2 Somewhat Agree 4; Somewhat Disagree 1; Disagree 6; Strongly Disagree 7

6. In healthy families commitment is essential in nurturing relationships. The parents take responsibility for their children's upbringing, assuming the primary role in the children's spiritual and moral development.
   Strongly Agree 15; Agree 5; Strongly Disagree 1

7. In healthy families all members commit to being accountable for their own behavior, thereby developing a clear sense of identity as godly families.
   Strongly Agree 13; Agree 6; Somewhat Agree 2

8. It is the church's primary responsibility to provide a practical family function of positive role models for young people, both male and female.
   Strongly Agree 6; Agree 6; Somewhat Agree 2; Disagree 3; Strongly Disagree 1

9. One of the church's roles is that of involving itself in every area of Black family life, economic, social, educational, and cultural.
   Strongly Agree 7; Agree 10; Somewhat 2; Disagree 1; Strongly Disagree 1

10. In healthy godly families the marriage is centered or, in the case of single parents, they provide members with a sense of nurturing and a stable biblical foundation.
       Strongly Agree 7; Agree 10; Somewhat Agree 3; Strongly Disagree 1

11. The pastor/minister is the spiritual leader of the congregation, who reminds the congregation of God's call to be in relationship with one another.
       Strongly Agree 13; Agree 6; Somewhat Agree 1; Strongly Disagree 1

12. The pastor/minister is a change agent, who empowers the congregation to minister to one another, thereby setting the tone, enabling the congregation to become the caring family of God.
       Strongly Agree 10; Agree 8; Strongly Disagree 2

13. Family worship is important because it brings the family closer to God, teaches the family both children and adults the value of nurturing their faith.
       Strongly Agree 15; Agree 4; Somewhat Agree 1; Strongly Disagree 1

14. Children should be encouraged to decide their religious views on their own.
       Strongly Agree 2; Agree 5; Somewhat Agree 3; Disagree 4; Strongly Disagree 6

15. Parents should encourage their children to accept their faith.
       Strongly Agree 5; Agree 10; Somewhat Agree 2; Disagree 3; Strongly Disagree 1

16. The church should carefully examine and develop ministries and programs that nurtures and meet the needs of single-parent households.
       Strongly Agree 12; Agree 7; Somewhat Agree 1; Somewhat Disagree 1

17. The church should carefully examine and develop ministries and programs that are tailored to meet the needs of couples in the church.
       Strongly Agree 10; Agree 8; Somewhat Agree 1; Somewhat Disagree 1

18. The church should carefully examine and develop ministries and programs that are tailored to meet the needs of urban African American non-traditional, etc., extended family units, multigenerational.
       Strongly Agree 6; Agree 12; Disagree 2; Strongly Disagree 1

19. The church should carefully examine and develop ministries and programs that are tailored to meet the needs of urban African American adults who are "parenting" their grandchildren.
       Strongly Agree 9; Agree 8; Somewhat Agree 2; Somewhat Disagree 1

20. The church should carefully examine and develop ministries and programs that are tailored to strengthen marriages.
       Strongly Agree 15; Agree 5; Somewhat Disagree 1

21. In light of what you have read during this seminar, what 3 recommendations would you include in how to strengthen families in this church?

Table A2. Statistics of post-seminar July 7, 2011

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	71%
2	5.5%	5.5%	11.1%	11.1%	16.6	50%
3	0%	0%	0%	25%	25%	50%
4	0%	0%	11%	11%	28%	50%
5	33%	44%	5%	11%	6%	0%
6	0%	0%	0%	6%	26%	68%
7	0%	6%	0%	10%	37%	47%
8	5%	5%	17%	39%	17%	17%
9	0%	5%	5%	21%	48%	21%
10	0%	0%	0%	11%	63%	26%
11	0%	0%	0%	5%	32%	63%
12	0%	0%	0%	5%	32%	63%
13	0%	0%	0%	0%	26%	74%
14	21%	10%	16%	21%	16%	16%
15	6%	21%	6%	33%	17%	17%
16	0%	0%	0%	11%	39%	50%
17	0%	0%	0%	5%	39%	56%
18	0%	0%	0%	26%	21%	53%
19	0%	6%	6%	12%	29%	47%
20	0%	0%	0%	0%	21%	79%

Recommendations from the Focus Group

In the last meeting, after reviewing the results of pre and post-seminar questionnaire, the focus group made the following recommendations at the church's annual business meeting: (1) Family night at the church with activities centered around the family; (2) more Sunday morning messages regarding prayer and bible study for families; (3) encourage family bible study; (4) the role of the family for single parents; (5) conduct seminars on what a healthy godly family looks like for the church and community; (6) conduct sex education classes at the church; (7) provide marriage counseling resources for the members of the church and the surrounding community; (8) workshops seminars on parenting, financial services, and more ministries directed at single parents and relationship with the opposite sex; (9) encourage children to serve in the church and community.

Evaluation of the Project

This project was a learning experience both for me and the focus group. As a result, a certain synergy and challenge emerged. The future effect and impact of this project unfortunately will not be immediately realized. As the focus group met, one thing that became clear was the reluctance of the younger single heads of households to participate in certain aspect of the discussion in terms of giving their input. Some seemingly, would defer to the older women, resulting in some one-sided discussions and conversations, which had to be curbed by me. Some of the men seemingly deferred to others and would respond only when asked a question directly. The seminar that seemingly engaged many of the group members was being made in the image of God. This seminar involved issues such as if we all are indeed made in the image of God, how then are we able to explain injustice, racism, war, other social issues that rise out of sin, Black history, and the rising dilemma confronting families facing generational issues and shifting ethical and moral values.

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ABSTRACT

A STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES
AT THE FAITH TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH,
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Donald Lee Sharp, D.Ed.Min
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. T.Vaughn Walker

The purpose of this research project was that of developing a strategy to serve

as a model for strengthening families of the Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, an African

American church on the city of Chicago's Southeast side.

Chapter 1 gives an introduction of the goals, context, rationale, and purpose of

the project.

Chapter 2 addresses biblical and theological issues concerning the godly family.

Chapter 3 places emphasis on the significance and structure of the African

American family.

Chapter 4 explains the process used in implementing this project and gives a

step by step analysis and evaluation of the project during the required fifteen week period

Chapter 5 evaluates the project's overall successes and shortcomings.

VITA

Donald Lee Sharp

PERSONAL
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