

Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary

**Understanding African American Preaching: The Style, Culture, and Rationale
for the Worship Experience and the Value for Education**

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ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING AFRICAN AMERICAN PREACHING: THE STYLE, CULTURE, AND RATIONALE FOR THE WORSHIP EXPERIENCE AND THE VALUE FOR EDUCATION

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Preaching is an oratorical method for sharing the biblical text, which God uses to affect the lives of people for His glory. In the context of the African-American culture, preaching highlights differences between the rationales of the practical approaches of African-American and other styles of preaching.

This project will examine fundamentals of African-American preaching as well as its dynamics while focusing on African-American traditions in a critical and creative manner. It will provide insights for training associate ministers at Faith United Missionary Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. The research utilizes a single method research approach, utilizing surveys of pastors and church members to determine whether the preaching ministry of associate ministers is effective and whether education is necessary. The overall significance of this study is to provide an understanding of the importance of education for the preaching ministry of the church, especially in the African-American church.

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to those who have meant so much to me in this endeavor. First, I want give thanks to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who called me into His service as a servant. Next, to my father Harry Zimmerman Sr. and my brother Ricky Alexander Zimmerman, you did not get to see this day, but I know that you are with me. What you gave to me as a father and brother are words of wisdom for serving others, which I cherish. To two young men whom I will forever love with all my heart, my sons Brandon Gregory Zimmerman and Bradford Harry Zimmerman, you are an inspiration in life despite challenges you faced which you never used as a crutch. Your dedication has always been my inspiration and for that I greatly admire and love who you are and will become. To my mother Gloria J. Zimmerman your undying prayers when my life was on destruction mode kept me when I could not see the path for my life. My sisters, Wendy Levon Burkins, Angelia Z. Fersner, and Brenda Z. Terry, with whom God so wisely blessed me, your love, support, and encouragement during the writing of this project will always be in my heart. I also want to dedicate this to my professor whose expertise has meant so much. Dr. Kevin L. King Sr. and to my mentor, friend, and pastor, Dr. T.Vaughn Walker. Your friendship and wisdom is invaluable. Finally to my heart, my friend, my help meet, and my support system, my darling Wife, Christina J. Zimmerman. You have seen the nights of frustration and the nights of writer bloc, and the tiredness when it seemed like I could not go on. You have been there through the thick and thin and for that I thank God for your support, your wisdom, your heart, and your love as this project is as much a part of you as it is of me. Thank you.

In His Grace

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Chapter 1

Introduction

While growing up in an African-American church, I have experienced the highs and lows of black preaching. It had become evident that through their preaching, there were a number of ministers who demonstrated a lack of formal training. This prompted me to illuminate and validate the necessity for education in ministry for the associate minister. It is my hope that this thesis brings recognition to the importance of homiletical training, in particular for the ministers of my church, Faith United Missionary Baptist Church. My argument is that with the lack of education, the ministry and preaching of associate ministers will be less effective due to unsuccessful attempts to interpret and teach biblical principles and doctrines. In evaluating the effectiveness of their preaching, this researcher will survey two different segments of the church. The first segment will consist of 25 pastors who will provide an assessment of their associate ministers. The second segment will consist of four (4) churches in which 25 members of each church will provide an assessment of their associate ministers.

Black preachers must demonstrate an understanding of the uniqueness of black preaching, which is an essential quality. As Henry Mitchel says, this greater understanding of the roots and strengths of black preaching has wrought marvelous correction in three major areas of thought: 1) facts, truth, and the unbiased reporting of history; 2) improved black self-esteem, especially healthy spiritual self-esteem before God; and 3) marvelous improvement in communication skills, as African Traditional Religion's (A.T.R.'s) highly developed rhetoric and oratory have been accepted and effectively adapted into Christian worship.¹ Cleophus LaRue

¹ Henry R. Mitchell, *Black Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990),

says that understanding the power of black preaching in this most profound sense is necessary to identify and describe this deeply embedded biblical hermeneutic that is at the heart of their sacred story and serves as the template that governs their interpretation of scripture.² When the backdrop of all of this is put together and understood, then specific needs and concerns are exposed for the preacher to address. The late Samuel D. Proctor preacher emeritus of Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York stated that what preachers should take seriously are some of the reports that they happen to hear about other preachers' sermons: reports such as, "I listened hard, but I really could not follow." "I heard the subject, but then I heard no more about it." "That text I love, but what on earth was the preacher doing with it last Sunday?" "I thought that sermon would never end. It kept circling round and round and finally ran out of gas."³ He continues, "Given the burden that rests on the preacher, and the heavy freight that the Sunday sermon must carry, there ought to be a constructive way of discussing its preparation with candor and charity. That any exercise as important as preaching deserves care and penetrating scrutiny, an endless search for an evaluative instrument, and a strategy for continuous improvement."⁴ Proctor says that when one is called to preach he is called by God, set apart, and acknowledged by the church as God's special agent.⁵ However, there should be a responsibility on the part of those who have been called to make preparation for carrying out that task effectively.

Peter Adams in *Speaking God's Words* reminds is that like Paul's ministry, ours should honor God. He goes on to say that Paul speaks of Christian ministry in terms of being a minister

² Cleophus J. LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 3.

³ Samuel D. Proctor, *The Certain Sound of the Trumpet: Crafting a Sermon of Authority* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1994), 1.

⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁵ Ibid., 6.

of the new covenant and of the reconciliation which God has achieved in Christ. He is not only concern with ministry but also with its style. He says;

As servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, through affliction, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonment, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger, by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as imposters and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see- we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything. (6:4-10)⁶

Statement of the Problem

Many books have been penned on how to preach, thus providing an unlimited source of information for helping one to prepare for and learn the craft of preaching. But there are those in the African-American pulpit, as Cleophus LaRue points out, who have learned the craft primarily through emulation of accomplished preachers whom they have come to admire.⁷ However, he explains that obviously the preacher's overall ministry is strengthened when he or she has been exposed in a formal way to biblical studies, church history, theology, and practical theology. Such study makes for a more grounded preacher, and it creates in the person of the preacher an enhanced capacity for theological vision and discernment.⁸

The purpose of this project is to provide evidence through a survey study of the value of education and to encourage the ministers of my church and others to understand their need for homiletical training and the values it lends to the worship experience.

⁶ Peter Adams, *Speaking God's Word* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1996), 81.

⁷ Cleophus LaRue, *I Believe I'll Testify: The Art of African American Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Know Press, 2011), 28.

⁸ Ibid., 30.

Statement of Limitations

Because of constraints placed on this study, it does not allow for an extensive investigation. This dissertation is limited in scope to the ethnicity of the author and his received homiletical training. It will focus particularly on the effectiveness of the lack of formal training of associate ministers like those at my church, Faith United Missionary Baptist Church. It will not deal with the dynamics of how to preach or preaching styles but will be limited to those issues related to the lack of homiletical training. It will deliberately focus on the necessity and the value of pursuing homiletic classes or study and gaining a deeper understanding of the unique culture of individuals called to preach and to be effective in the context in which they will preach. Charles V. Hamilton notes in his book, *The Black Preacher in America*, that several black dominations, churches, and ministers have for some time voiced deep concern and advises the ministry leaders to be highly educated, without sacrificing their commitment to spirituality. In fact, they have felt that the former helps to articulate and pursue the latter more efficiently and intelligently.⁹

Theoretical Basis for the Project

In the words of James H. Harris, preaching is the most important act that the preacher performs. It is at the center of the black church and its worship experience. It is also first and foremost a theological act, because it interprets the meaning of God and Jesus Christ for the believing community. Understanding this influence can help shape the black pulpit and better serve the African-American student in understanding the necessity of homiletical training for church ministry. Harris goes on to say that preaching must be relevant to the needs of the

⁹ Charles Hamilton, *The Black Preacher in America* (New York: William Morrow, 1972), 92.

parishioners, addressing issues of life and death as well as social and political questions. It needs to be grounded in the biblical text and the transforming message of Jesus.¹⁰ Craig A. Loscalzo talks from *Apologetic Preaching; Proclaiming Christ to a Postmodern World* that the pastor and the parishioner reflect the angst of today's preaching situation. He says we live and preach between times. The dogmatism of the modern era's pulpit has given way to ambivalence in pulpits of the modern era. In the presence of political correctness on one side and the fear of sounding like a rabid fundamentalist on the other, preachers skulk from their studies to the pulpit, wide-eyed and confused, like children facing their first day in school. The children fear appears warranted, for they will truly enter an unknown world. But preachers cannot hide behind such childlike apprehension, because we have been to the pulpits before, and the fear we face is often he says, of our own making.¹¹

Statement of Methodology

Research for this dissertation began by utilizing surveys to determine how effective the preaching of associates are and whether or not they are relating and interpreting Scripture effectively. The methodology for this research includes the surveying of 25 pastors and 25 members from four separate churches for a total of 100 members. This data will provide an assessment of the pastors and church members' responses to the questions, which are related to their associate ministers. From the use of the data collected, the surveys will be interpreted to determine views on the importance of whether homiletical training impacts the preaching

¹⁰ James H. Harris, *Preaching Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 1.

¹¹ Craig A. Loscalzo, *Apologetic Preaching; Proclaiming Christ to a Postmodern World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 11-12.

practices of ministers. Hopefully, this research will yield an insightful understanding of the need for education for associate ministers who practice the skill of preaching and teaching.

Literature Review

Books

The Heart of Black Preaching by Cleophus J. LaRue is a book that is significant to the African-American preacher in that it helps the student of preaching to understand the shortfalls of homiletical training in Euro-American seminaries. It delves into the dynamics of black biblical hermeneutics and helps express the fundamental components and distinctiveness of black preaching. LaRue uses African-American preachers and their sermons to highlight their hermeneutics and power in contemporary African-American preaching.¹²

I Believe I'll Testify by Cleophus J. LaRue reflects on the communicative power, imaginative insights, joyful celebration, and unabashed hopefulness that is heard in black churches. It discusses the problem of the disconnect in preaching classes in seminaries and divinity schools throughout America and our inability to engage one another to the enrichment of all, and what is being taught by white homileticians.¹³

Born to Preach: Essays in Honor of the Ministry of Henry & Ella Mitchell, edited by Samuel K. Roberts, delves into the ministry of Henry and Ella Mitchell, which draws attention onto the contexts of preaching in the African-American culture. It deals with all the spiritual vestures of the African-American preacher and his task in leading the local flock.¹⁴

¹² LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching*, 1999.

¹³ LaRue, *I Believe I'll Testify*, 2011.

¹⁴ Samuel K. Roberts, *Born to Preach; In Honor of the Ministry of Henry & Ella Mitchell* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2000).

Black Preaching the Recovery of a Powerful Art by Henry H. Mitchell exposes the peculiarity of black preaching. He gets into the preacher's culture and history and the how and why of his preaching style and tradition. Taking a more serious approach, there is a look into the training of black preachers and what studies were related to their educational posture in the white seminaries. He demonstrates through this book that the black culture and its preaching style are vital for the empowerment of black congregations and have much to offer the preaching methods of all preachers.¹⁵

They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God by Frank A. Thomas is a unique book in that it addresses the role of celebration in preaching in the African-American culture and the issues that are unique in designing sermons for celebration. Thomas peeps into the dynamics, theology, design, and guidelines for preaching in this context. He stresses what the black preacher encounters as he prepares to preach. The book is reinforced with practical applications that can be used in the development of the sermons.¹⁶

The Black Preacher in America by Charles V. Hamilton is an in-depth portrait of noted black preachers whose work defines the preacher, the man, and the journey to the pulpit.¹⁷

Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans by Albert J. Raboteau traces the African-American plight from the shores of Africa across the Atlantic Ocean to the American colonies and the bondage of slavery. From this horror, the history of African-American religion exemplifies the diverse cultures and religious tradition, which was forcibly transported to America by slaves, retaining the customs even as they were converted to Christianity. Raboteau

¹⁵ Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Preaching the Recovery of a Powerful Art* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

¹⁶ Frank A. Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1997).

¹⁷ Charles V. Hamilton, *The Black Preacher in America* (New York: William Morrow, 1972).

takes us through the backwoods of religion among the slaves and the illegal meetings called “brush arbors” (shelters of cut branches, also called “hush harbors”) to the steps of the first black churches. He guides the reader through the struggles of the African-American preacher, depicting the beginning of black theology and their interpretative process of Scripture.¹⁸

Preaching Liberation by James H. Harris does a great job of summarizing the preaching aspects of liberation within the African-American preaching context. Harris uses this book in an effort to develop a liberation and transformation homiletic that uses the black church experience with Scripture as the foundation for addressing the reality of oppression while simultaneously explicating a methodology that has applicability for all who endeavors to preach the gospel.¹⁹

Varieties of African American Religious Experience by²⁰ Anthony B. Pinn is an excellent source on experiencing the religious cultures of the African-American religious experience content. Pinn addresses a variety of historical traditions such as Yoruba religious practices (attention to the *orisha* or deities), Voodoo (Vodou), Islam, and humanism. This book helps to give focus to the substance to the African-American preaching content and helps in providing answers to the how and why of their theological and homiletical theory of preaching.

We Have Been Believers by James H. Evans Jr. is an excellent book on understanding the theological reflection that is central to the African-American church. Evans makes us aware that black theology differs from traditional theology in much the same way that African-American Christianity differs from the Christianity of Europe and the North Atlantic. He invites us to

¹⁸ Albert J. Raboteau, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁹ James H. Harris, *Preaching Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

²⁰ Anthony Pinn, *Varieties of African American Religious Experience* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1998).

experience the inherited philosophical heritage of people of African descent and their distinctive religious sensibility while being introduced to North Atlantic Christianity. Because there was no real precedent for the experience of people of Africa descent, they created distinctive ways of conceptualizing and speaking about their ultimate concerns. The book's vision is to introduce to scholars, church leaders, and a new generation of readers to the theological and cultural currents that gave rise to the concerns of great transformation within African society in general and the black community in particular. It also shows how the generally conservative character of the black Church, both culturally and theologically, were overlooked both in religious studies and by many cultural commentators.²¹

Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family by Cain Hope Felder reflects on the significance of the Bible for blacks especially in relations to religion and the church.²²

Shoes That Fit Our Feet by Dwight N. Hopkins is a book about exploring the theological lessons of an indigenous black source. It focuses on slave religion as the plumb line for black church theology. The question it poses is how black theology evolved. Hopkins also focuses on what got the African-American church started. How did the African-American church cultivate in a land inundated with white theological heresy? Here, on the one hand stood a white male, symbolizing theological degrees, recognized Christian ordination, patriarchy, racial privilege, economic power, and Satan, while on the other stood Uncle Silas, who was poor, black, unlettered, and a child of God. For Uncle Silas and the slave, the debate revolved around the nature of God's liberation, the nature of the inbreaking of God's kingdom. Above all, Yahweh brought freedom. The African-American church begins in slavery; slave religion

²¹ James H. Evans Jr, *We Have Been Believers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

²² Cain Hope Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989).

provides the first source for a constructive statement on a black theology of liberation. White preachers attempted to undermine the pressing theological queries of the Uncle Silases by bastardizing Jesus' promises of salvation. For African Americans and the Uncle Silases, the ultimate goal of Jesus' liberation movement by necessity must lead to freedom because the very beings of Jesus are freedom.²³

Black Church in the African American Experience by C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya shows that as the only stable and coherent institutional area to emerge from slavery, black churches were not only dominant in their communities, but they also became the womb of black culture and a number of major social institutions. While the social processes of migration, urbanization, and differentiation have diminished aspects of this centrality and dominance, black churches have continued their interactions within the spheres of politics, economics, education, and culture so that only a partial differentiation occurs and not a complete separation.²⁴

Black Theology: A Documentary History - Volume One: 1966-1979 by James H. Cone & Gayraud S. Wilmore says that without question, the goal of liberation governs the theological foundation of black theology. James H. Cone defines liberation as the struggle for political, social, and economic justice. The human resistance expressed politically went hand in hand with African-American theological notions of a culture of resistance. This book helps to provide an understanding of slaves, and how they understood their created being through the lens of liberation. They defined, affirmed, and carved out an appropriate way of life, a culture of resistance that provided them with an ethic of survival in the grip of white supremacy. He noted

²³ Dwight W. Hopkins, *Shoes That Fit Our Feet* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993).

²⁴ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in The African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).

how white theologians condemningly preached against survival activities on the slaves' part as the work of the Anti-Christ and hence, as anti-Christian beliefs.²⁵

Handbook of Contemporary Preaching by Michael Duduit is a book that lays out the insights, the methods and the experience of celebrated teachers and preachers of our day. He uses various writers to take us through the journey of preaching through the lives of great preachers of the church. He investigates the lives of such preachers as Chrysostom, Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, and John Calvin. We are able to experience this journey of these preachers through the insights of Calvin Miller, R. Albert Mohler Jr., Joel Gregory and a list of other outstanding preachers and teachers of preaching. The book takes and walks you through a history of preaching and land you on preaching methods and finally bringing you to meet and greet with the text in which then you become acquainted with the sermon and presenting it. When you⁷ have finished this part of the journey it will not be over until you have looked upon the special concerns in Contemporary Preaching.²⁶

Think by John Piper gets into the whole person with this book by delving into the most sacred part of the human anatomy. The mind. A place where our misguided affections can easily take us away from glorifying God. This is a book that will help you think about thinking with its richly deep biblical structure. This book will help one to think about what is really important and what really matters in life.²⁷

The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation by Grant R. Osborne is a must for all that truly want to have a better handle on Scripture. From its

²⁵ James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Theology A Documentary History; Volume Two; 1980-1992* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998).

²⁶ Michael Diduit, *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992).

²⁷ John Piper, *Think* (Wheaton: Crossway Publishers, 2010).

beginnings, Grant Osborne introduces one to the importance of hermeneutics and where one lines up in the process of interpretation. He takes us through the inroads of grammar, genre analysis, methodology, and biblical examples to help solidify a proper understanding of the task of interpretation. It is a hard read but if one can take the time and move through it methodically it will yield an abundance of fruit for the labor.²⁸

Doctrine That Dances; Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life by Robert Smith Jr. is a small book but has powerful information. Dr. Smith is about the doctrine of the church and from this book, he helps us gain a handle on doctrinal understanding, which helps to prepare the preacher for preaching. He reminds us of the hard and disciplined work that goes into the task of preaching and that preachers must not evade it. This is a book that preachers need to give a little kick now and then when it comes to the mission of what it is they do.²⁹

African American Religious Thoughts an Anthology by Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude Jr. Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude Jr. who writes this anthology to take the reader on a journey of the African-American religious studies. They investigated and analyzed a wide variety of data of the religions of persons of African descent. Cone wanted to translate the insights of the prophetic black church tradition and show how African-American religious studies could be configured where black ministers could substantively intervene and minimize the suffering in black communities.³⁰

²⁸ Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IVP Academic, 2006).

²⁹ Robert Smith Jr., *Doctrine That Dances* (Nashville, B & H Academic, 2008).

³⁰ Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude Jr., *African American Religious Thought* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Apologetic Preaching; Proclaiming Christ to a Postmodern World, by Craig A. Loscalzo takes a look at the postmodern world today and addresses how preachers are to approach the pulpits. He emphasizes that no longer can preachers mount their pulpits in a careless manner. He asks the question as to how can preachers preach about godly behavior when people appear oblivious to moral moorings? He reminds us that we are competing against an array of competing spiritual experiences that are beckoning.³¹

Scripture

There are many imperatives in the Bible to proclaim the Word.³² Second Timothy 4:2 reads, “Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season.” This command reveals that we should be prepared to give an account of the gospel whenever and wherever called upon.

2 Tim 3:16 – “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” This verse lends credibility for the use of Scripture.

2 Tim 4:5 – “And they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist.” Here again the purpose for proclaiming the rightful Word of God are that there are some who only want to hear what sounds good and for no other reason. Historically, African Americans were a people who relied deeply on the truth of Scripture.

Ezekiel 2:3-7 – “You shall speak My Words to them whether they hear or whether refuse, for they are rebellious.” This verse reveals that God is not bias, the Word is for everyone.

³¹ Craig A. Loscalzo, *Apologetic Preaching: Proclaiming Christ in a Postmodern World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

³² All Scripture quotations used in this dissertation will be from The English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Jeremiah 11:6 – “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying; Hear the Words of this covenant and do them.’” God has specific instructions for His people of which they are to obey.

Isaiah 58:1 – “Cry aloud, spares not; Lift up your voice. Like a trumpet declare to my people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins.” The Lord is saying that we should tell this throughout all the land. We are purposed for the calling of this honorable task. As such, to carry out this task one must be trained.

Jonah 3: 2 – “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.” This was a task so formidable in that Jonah had to go before the people with the message of God and call out to those of Nineveh, so it is for the African-American preacher. He has to carry the message to the people and call out to them in their wickedness.

Mark 13:10 – “And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.” This verse clearly denotes that the gospel should be proclaimed to all. Sermons of slave preachers reminded the people that the Deliverer had already come in Jesus the Christ, who dwelled in their midst and could be called upon by faith.

2 Corinthians 5:20 – “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” With urgency we should proclaim the message of God. This verse reveals the urgency and seriousness of the gospel of Christ. Jesus took twelve men under his care and taught them how they were to carry out the task of reaching the world. “Follow Me; said Jesus to the fisherman of Bethsaida and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19). These words show that the Founder of the faith desired not only to have preachers but to have men around Him whom He might train to make disciples of others; to cast the net of divine truth into the sea of the world; and to land on the

shores of the divine kingdom a great multitude of believing souls both because of words and actions. We can see that He affected supreme importance to that part of His work, which consisted in training the twelve.

Hebrews 3:7– Therefore as the Holy Spirit says, “Today if you hear His voice; do not hardened your hearts as in the rebellion on the day of testing in the wilderness.” Here we are to open our hearts to heed and hear what thus says the Lord as our lives are guided by His words.

2 Peter 1:19-21 – “And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart. Knowing this first of all that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the will of God.” We are given the fact that Scripture was not the hearsay or the thoughts of man but the Word of God passed down from God to men.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I have also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures. That He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.” A most important part of the gospel that preachers are called to their service in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:12 – “For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.” Paul is acknowledging that the Word of God he has received was not by man but through the revelation of God.

Joshua 1:8 – “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success.” As God

spoke to Joshua, it is this that he speaks to us in that this Book of the Law is meant for all to follow.

Articles

“African American Religion in the United States of America: An Interpretative Essay” by Charles H. Long – This essay addresses the problematical nature of the meaning of religion as it is related to the formation and destiny of peoples of African descent in the United States. Moving beyond a narrow understanding of the nature of religion as expressed in much of black theology, for example, this essay proposes a thick and complex depiction of religion in the African-American context through recognition of its relationship to the contact and conquest that marked the modern world.³³

“Some Distinctive of Black Preaching: From Whooping to Call and Response,”³⁴ by T. Allen Bethel. Bethel, talks about the black preaching style and its distinctiveness and when one does not have the necessary study to understand the homiletical principles that they would not be able to undertake the noted features of and homiletical principles including whooping of Black preaching.

“The African American Sermon as a Teaching Tool,”³⁵ by Sandidge C. O’Neal. He discusses the lack of clarity during preaching and the frustration that members feel and how churches can no longer tolerate because of such. He hones in on the fact that the preacher must

³³ Charles H. Long, “African American Religion in the United States of America: An Interpretative Essay,” *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 7, no. 1, (2003): 11-27.

³⁴ Allen T. Bethel, “Some Distinctives of Black Preaching: from Whooping to Call and Response,” *Cultural Encounters* 7, no. 2 (2001): 67-70, accessed November 29, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

³⁵ Sandidge C. O’Neal, “The African-American Sermon as a Teaching Tool,” *The Journal of Religious Thought* 59-60, no. 1-1 (2006): 29-44, accessed November 29, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

assume the responsibility to preach the Word by making sure that the sermon is no longer filled with emotional clichés, with false teaching caused by a lack of knowledge, and with words that simply make members of the congregation get excited because of the preacher's popularity.

“Preaching as an Act of Spirit: The Homiletical Theory of Howard Thurman,”³⁶ by Patrick Clayborn. Clayborn looks into the homiletics of Howard Thurman and his understanding of worship. He realized that the act of worship is the highest act of celebration of the human spirit. He continues in that Thurman bases his thought on the assumption that the contributions of every person in a worship service are equally significant regardless of that person's leadership status. Thurman feels that the sermon is intimately connected to the worship service and that, in like manner to the service, the sermon must support the human spirit in its great quest for meaning, for significance, and for intentional living.

“Martin Luther King Jr's Preaching as a Resource for Preachers,”³⁷ by Richard Lischer. Every preacher who has heard the “I Have a Dream” speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, dreams of the day that they may be able to preach like that. Lischer uses Dr. King's example as a resource to all who preach because he fully and unreservedly embraced God's Word in its spoken form as his vocation and allowed it to shape his ministry in the world. He wants this to point preachers to the higher goal as King, which is to move the listener to a profound change of heart and behavior.

³⁶ Patrick Clayborn, “Preaching as an act of Spirit: the homiletical theory of Howard Thurman,” *Homiletic Online* 35, no. 1 2010, accessed November 29, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

³⁷ Richard Lischer, “Martin Luther King, Jr's Preaching as a Resource for Preachers,” *Journal For Preachers* 23, no. 3 (2000): 18-22, accessed November 29, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

“African American Preaching: The Future of a Rich Tradition” by Henry H. Mitchell³⁸.

Mitchell reminds preachers in this article of the absence of formal training during the days of slavery and the tools that were used to serve black preachers. It is a reminder of the source of the power of the recovery of a rich preaching tradition of the black church.

³⁸ Henry H. Mitchell, “African-American Preaching: The Future of a Rich Tradition,” *Interpretation* 51, no. 4 (1997): 371-383, accessed November 29, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

Chapter 2

Biblical and Theological Foundation: Biblical Mandate to Preach

Proverbs 16:1-3 reveals, “The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirit. Commit your works to the LORD and your plans will be established.” Further, Proverbs 16:9 says, “The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.” This message from the book of Proverbs reminds preachers that the preparation of the heart is left to mankind and that in fulfilling their role in the pulpit, wisdom is the principle thing. Therefore, “Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight” (Prov. 4:7). Clearly, study and preparation for ministry is essential for being effective as a preacher in the pulpit. This premise is based on the Word of God, which is the foundation of all evangelical churches.

According to the dictionary, wisdom means “knowledge of what is true or right; scholarly knowledge or learning.”³⁹ The wisdom of African-American preaching flows from the theology on which it is built. It is a theology that was developed from the African-American religious experience. Commenting on the history of the religion of African Americans, Gayraud S. Wilmore writes in his book, *African American Religious Studies, An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, that religion has always been a vital part of black life in both Africa and in the United States.⁴⁰ Religion has been defined as the thought, belief, and practice concerned with the ultimate question of life.⁴¹ Preachers who lack wisdom and an understanding of the theology that governs the principles of their messages are forced to preach presumed thoughts, which are gathered from

³⁹ Dictionary.com, s.v. “wisdom,” accessed November 29, 2015, <http://www.dictionary.com>.

⁴⁰ Gayraud S. Wilmore, *African American Religious Studies, an Interdisciplinary Anthology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

their own preconceived notions. This method risks the deliverance of a sermon that is devoid of meaning and that fail to connect to the lives of listeners. The writer of Proverbs says it well, “How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver (Prov. 16:16).” This discussion, therefore, considers the theological underpinnings of preaching while examining the historical and cultural nature of African-American preaching to determine how theological foundations have been influenced by nuisances and other attitudes of the African-American culture and experience.

The Theological Foundation for Black Preaching

W.A. Criswell says in *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors*, that it is still written in the Bible, “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). There is no ministry under heaven so worthwhile, so vitally needed, so God-blessed as that of preaching the gospel.⁴² Knowledgeable homelitericians provide a number of theological foundations for preaching and its praxis. Some of the theological foundations are reflections of sources such as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. John Wesley believed there were four different sources that undergird theology. They are Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

For United Methodists, Scripture is considered the primary source and standard for Christian doctrine. Tradition is experience and the witness of development and growth of faith through the past centuries and in many nations and cultures. Experience is the individual's understanding and appropriating of the faith in the light of his or her own life. Through reason the individual Christian brings to bear on the Christian faith discerning and cogent thought.⁴³

Many of those foundations intersect along the same lines with black theology providing a distinctive adherence to the culture of African Americans. Many believe that there are

⁴² W.A. Criswell, *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 27.

⁴³ Alan K. Waltz, *A Dictionary for United Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), accessed December 12, 2015, <http://www.umc.org>.

theological foundations, which are uniquely specific to black preaching. Assistant professor, Bruce L. Fields asks pointed questions in his book *Introducing Black Theology* related to black theology. He asks, “Isn’t there just theology? Is it really necessary to speak of ‘black theology,’ and even so if we do, should we then speak of ‘Asian theology,’ ‘Native American theology,’ and so forth?”⁴⁴ Fields contends that those who asks these questions assume that “social, cultural, and religious factors do not affect theological formulation” and that “racial factors should not influence the development of theology.” Therefore, theological foundations for black preaching is double-stranded with concepts of standard Christian theology and with concepts of theology that reflect a culture that has been shaped by difficult exclusivity from the general American society.

Albert J. Raboteau writes that the challenge of history to faith is to demonstrate to believers the historicity of their religious doctrines and institutions. He carefully explains that history mounts a powerful critique against any religion’s tendency to present a triumphalist myth of itself as a timeless, universalist institution preserving an unchanging deposit of doctrine transcending time and desperate cultures.⁴⁵ Here he displays the fact that education is the acquiring of knowledge and the wisdom with which to use it properly. Preaching demands that the preacher know the word being preached and that he preaches the word as it was originally inspired. Because our lives are not yet complete and our skills of interpretation are fallible, interpretations of events will always be biased, but that does not negate the influence of the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁴ Bruce L. Fields, *Black Theology: Three Crucial Questions for the Evangelical Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 11.

⁴⁵ Albert J. Raboteau, *A Fire in The Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 5.

Dale P. Andrews in his book *Practical Theology For Black Churches*, noted that the primary task for the Black preacher is the revelation of God's interest and activity in the hearer's immediate lives. This task becomes an adventure in the exploration of Scripture and its applications to black life. The process of interpretation therefore recreates a sacred story in African American life. Going on to say that Black preachers translate learned language and concepts not only into devout commentaries but also into images and metaphors that are familiar to black life. Consequently, black churches have established a religious cultural tradition in which the congregation prefers the use of imagery and concrete visions in preaching, as opposed to learned abstractions.⁴⁶ The black preacher presents and interprets biblical stories into the language and experiences of black people. A black hermeneutic guides this process by interpreting the Bible in terms that can be readily grasped and applied. The ministry and mission of black churches have been grounded in the story of God's involvement in humanity. God's activity in human history on behalf of the oppressed and disadvantaged constitutes the formative properties of a black hermeneutic. The primary task for the black preacher then is the revelation of God's interests and activity in the hearers' immediate lives. In 2 Timothy 4:2 Paul exhorts the preacher to "Preach the Word." This task becomes an adventure in the exploration of Scripture and its application in black life. The process of interpretation therefore recreates a sacred story in African American life.⁴⁷ Dr. Tom Schreiner says 2 Peter 1:19-21 reminds preachers "And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your

⁴⁶ Dale Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 19.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁸

Dr. Cleophus LaRue says that to get at the heart of Black preaching, one has to understand the interconnectedness between scriptural texts and African American life experiences. While it is true that most black theologizing takes place in the pulpit, it is also true that a certain type of experiential brooding occurs in the embryonic stage of the sermon prior to the actual exegesis of the text, this deliberate, subliminal musing is an essential ingredient in the creation of the black sermon. Since Scripture is never interpreted in a vacuum, Scripture and the life experience of blacks always stand in a figure/ground relationship to one another. LaRue goes on to say that Scripture and experience interact and play off one another, each impacting the other in a complex interweaving that is difficult to trace and even more difficult to unravel.⁴⁹

Alfonzo W. Fullwood takes an in depth look into preaching through his dissertation "A Study of Gardner C. Taylor's Theology of Preaching as a Decisive Factor Shaping His Theory of Preaching: Implications for Homiletical Pedagogy" by reminding us that the New Testament Scriptures continue the tradition of preaching, marking the birth of Christian preaching with John the Baptist and the advent of Jesus. Jesus announced and carried out his preaching purpose; he preached the gospel of the kingdom of God to release the captives. He enlisted others and deployed them into the world also to preach the kingdom of God (Matt 28:20; Mark 16:7; Luke 9:2,60). Paul stated that hearing the gospel through preaching elicits faith (Rom 10:17). In

⁴⁸ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* Vol. 37, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 318.

⁴⁹ Cleophus J. LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 13-14.

evoking faith, through the foolishness of preaching, God saves the believer (1 Cor 1:21). Paul also instructed Timothy to be ready to preach the Word with an aim to “reprove, rebuke, and exhort” with sound teaching (2 Tim 4:2). Scripture reveals that the purpose of preaching is to lead persons in Christ. Beyond the redemption element, Scripture also has an instructive, moral, an ethical dimension that informs preaching. While Scripture contains no specific homiletical instructions for preaching, there are homiletical implications for preaching.⁵⁰

The Centrality of the Christian Theology

Generally stated, the purpose of preaching is to proclaim biblical truths so that humankind is given an opportunity to receive eternal life and be spiritually transformed.⁵¹ Preaching and its purpose, like all evangelical church disciplines and functions, is undergirded by biblical theology. Peter Adam, principal of Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia, presents three theological foundations of preaching: 1) the belief that God has spoken; 2) it is written; and 3) preach the Word.⁵¹ While John Stott names five foundations that undergirds preaching: 1) a conviction about God; 2) a conviction about Scripture; 3) a conviction about the church; 4) a conviction about the pastorate; and 5) a conviction about preaching.⁵² Adam and Stott offer similar foundations related to God, the Bible, and preaching; however, Stott presented two additional ones, the church and the pastorate, which he felt were essential. The fact of this similarity provides evidence that the lens through which we view our faith is not disjointed and

⁵⁰ Alfonzo W. Fullwood, “A Study of Gardner C. Taylors Theology of Preaching as a Decisive Factor Shaping His Theory of Preaching: Implications for Homiletical Pedagogy” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 15.

⁵¹ Peter Adams, *Speaking God's Word; A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1996), 37.

⁵² John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1982), 93-115.

happenstance but coherent and strong enough to keep Christians on a godly and biblical path. Each of these foundations provide support and credibility to homiletics and its practice in the church. Leaders of the Christian faith, like Adam and Stott, establish a framework on which preachers should build their sermons. The theological elements as presented by them are the major tenets and foundation not only for black preaching but for all evangelical preaching.

Also foundational for black preaching is black theology, which grew out of the African-American experience. Slavery and racial discrimination created a need to overcome these social injustices, and black theology was a response to that need. Bruce Fields says, “Black theology involves the process of formulating theology from the perspective of an oppressed people. It seeks to interpret the gospel of Jesus Christ against the backdrop of historical and contemporary racism.”⁶ However, Cleophus J. LaRue makes the point that black theology should not be pursued at the expense of the broader theological foundation. He said:

Affirmations about God from theologians whose point of departure is the black religious experience, as well as understandings of God derived from historical and traditional understandings of the faith, must be taught concomitantly. Together, they are ideal places to begin a quest for black understandings of the sovereign God.

Therefore, black theology without foundational theology in the African-American pulpit can be an egregious mistake that could impact the effectiveness of preaching. African-American theology includes a marriage of the two. With this, the theological backdrop of African-American preaching brings hope from the dilemmas of life. That hope is multiplied and more penetrating when a black preacher has an understanding of the theological treatise and can preach with clarity the hope of what God is offering. It is within this backdrop that this author would like associate ministers like those at Faith United Missionary Baptist Church to draw upon and understand the necessity of educating for ministry. Clara H. Scott pinned the words to this

hymn that so reverberate learning: “Open my eyes that I may see, glimpses of truth thy hast for me. Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now I wait for thee ready my God, thy will to see.”⁵³

The Importance of the Study of Theology in the Black Church

Study is the foundation that helps to build the platform on which the Word of God is grounded and established. The ground work of African-American theology and preaching began its mark from the shores of Africa to the brush harbors of the slave plantations to the pulpits of the African-American church. Preachers who have a sense of this grounding from studies are better able to relate this to whom he is preaching. As Scripture say, “The man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17).⁵⁴ It is vital for preachers to have a solid footing of the word they are held accounted to deliver. Haddon Robinson asks, “Do you, as a preacher, endeavor to bend your thought to the Scriptures or do you use the Scriptures to support your thoughts?”⁵⁵ He goes on to say that ministers can proclaim anything in a stain glass voice at 11:30 on Sunday morning following the singing of hymns, yet when they fail to preach the Scriptures, they abandon their authority. No longer do they confront their hearers with a word from God. That is why he says that most modern preaching evokes little more than a wide yawn. God is not in it.⁵⁶

The sermon should not be something that is hit-or-miss or comes from a preconceived thought that sounds good and can easily bring about a shout or amen. Paul says in 2 Timothy to

⁵³ Clara H. Scott, *The New National Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1977), 129.

⁵⁴ New King James Version.

⁵⁵ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2001), 22.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

rightly divide the Word of truth. The Word needs a stable foundation. This platform was established a long time ago and preachers who are called to this sacred task need to understand from whence it comes. Our forefathers brought with them an inherit theology of preaching through the exposure of their lives. From this backdrop preaching was formulated and delivered with a historical and theological foundation.

God and Black Preaching

All of the doctrines of the Christian faith, as outlined in systematic theology, emanate from God. He created the world and sovereignly sustains what He has created and its inhabitants, including humankind. Therefore for black preaching to be effective, black preachers must have an understanding of the nature of God. But what are features of the doctrine of God that undergird preaching in general? Peter Adam presents one aspect of God as foundational to preaching. He says we have a God who has spoken. He alludes to the general and special revelation of God through nature and through His Word. Since preachers are called to speak God's Word, Adam further says, "The basis for any true human speaking for God is that God is a speaking God. Any human ministry of the Word depends on a God who is not silent."⁵⁷

While Stott agrees that God has spoken, he also believes that God is a God of action. Stott says God revealed more of Himself in redemption than creation, which God spoke into existence. He says, "For when man rebelled against his Creator, instead of destroying him God planned a rescue mission, whose outworking is central to human history."⁵⁸ The redeeming of

⁵⁷ Adams, *Speaking God's Word*, 15.

⁵⁸ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 94.

humankind is an action that preachers must embrace for it is the biblical story that God wants shared with everyone.

There are many more attributes of God, such as holiness, love, sovereignty, and omniscience, which should be embraced by black preachers. However, it is within the attributes of God as One who speaks and One who acts, which are housed the substance from which the words of black preachers are spoken. Historically, African Americans tend to seek to know God on a personal level, rather than just knowing about Him. The conditions of slavery and discrimination created an urgency for relief from their distresses. These conditions also created a faith within the hearts of blacks that made God real and brought Him close. They recognized that God was their only hope. That God revealed truths to them as opposed to learning those truths from someone else was important because of the nature of their day-to-day lives. Professor of worship and music, Melva Wilson Costen, says that what mattered in their relationship with God is that “one seeks to know God through God’s revelational activity in one’s own life.”⁵⁹

Because of the cultural experiences of African Americans, which include slavery, segregation, and inequality in societal institutions, black preachers and black congregants understand and have also experienced God as a God of action. African Americans ascribe to God credit for delivering them from discriminating and often degrading cultural experiences. They believe that it was only by God’s divine intervention that they were delivered from slavery. Like the Israelites who were miraculously delivered from the hand of the Pharaoh by God, blacks believe that they, too, were delivered from the cruel chains of slavery by God. They also believe that God actively works in their lives individually. Black church members have received strength from preachers who would say, “God is a heart-fixer and a mind-regulator. He is the One who

⁵⁹ Melva Wilson Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 20.

binds the broken heart and eases the pain of the afflicted. He rescued me from the gates of hell and restored my soul to his bosom.”⁶⁰ Cleophus LaRue says blacks truly believe that God is for them. Blacks as a whole believe that God is good to them and good for them. He contends that blacks embraced God only when they were able to “make the connection between God’s power and their servile situation in life.”⁶¹ James Harris in his book *Preaching Liberation*, said that religion was the nucleus of slave culture, and at the center of religion were the slave preacher and his message of freedom – often and indirect, but always expressing a yearning to be free.⁶²

The Importance of the Study of God in the Black Church

Building and having an understanding of this theological precept about God was the major theme of African-American preaching. There were many who despite having no education, could preach from this discourse. The foundation from which African Americans obtained this art to preaching came from as Professor Cleophus LaRue says, primarily from emulation of accomplished preachers whom they have come to admire. To emulate he says, is not to copy but rather to set a standard of achievement by which one gauges one’s own preaching ability and advancement.⁶³

However, today’s culture need to receive a message that speaks to their plight. African-American preaching has always responded to the questions raised in life circumstances. Like King Zedekiah, African Americans, in their plight, have continued to ask, “Is there any word

⁶⁰ This is one of the old church sayings common among the early black worshipers; God is a heart fixer and a mind regulator.

⁶¹ Cleophus J. LaRue, *I Believe I’ll Testify* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 60.

⁶² James H. Harris, *Preaching Liberation* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1995), 39.

⁶³ LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching*, 28.

from the Lord” (Jeremiah 37:17, KJV) that addresses our particular conditions, needs, and aspirations? Practical theology responds in the affirmative through the preached Word.⁶⁴

The preaching of African Americans is a distinctive style all its own. Cleophus LaRue stated in his book *The Heart of Black Preaching* that “the reason for the distinctive power of black preaching lies deeper, resting finally in the soul of black Christian experience, that is in the way that African Americans have come, in the refining fires of history, to understand the character of God and the ways God works through Scripture and sermon in their lives today.”⁶⁵ Therefore, the success of understanding the scriptures will depend on how skillful the preachers are in reading. Jack Kuhatschek from the book *Applying The Bible* says that misdiagnosing the problems of defining the author’s intentions is not merely a target you aim for but rather the reason for reading scriptures. He continues by expounding the views of defining your purposes of reading the Bible. Whereby, studying and applying the Bible is like entering a time machine. We cross barriers of time, language, culture, and geography.⁶⁶

Ian Pitts Watson states that if we can correctly understand what preaching is, then we can better understand why it should be done and how. From this backdrop as it relates to the biblical and theological foundation for African American preachers who have no training it will help give a more suitable mission of the preaching task as it relates to their training.⁶⁷

When the foundation of preaching lack substance the preaching becomes like marshmallows, soft and fluffy. Therefore the preacher who has no understanding of the biblical

⁶⁴ Olin P. Moyd, *The Sacred Art: Preaching and Theology in the African American Tradition* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1995), 11-12.

⁶⁵ LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching*, 1.

⁶⁶ Jack Kuhatschek, *Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1990).

⁶⁷ Ian Pitts Watson, *A Primer for Preachers* (Ada: Baker Publishing Group, 1986), 38.

and theological foundation of the preaching event is left with facts but without substance.

According to William E.B. Dubois in *Souls of Black Folk*, “The preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil.” Their main purposes was to make people feel good about themselves in spite of the cruel realities of their lives and about their prospects for salvation at some time in the future.⁶⁸

When African American preachers understand the role they hold within the church and the importance of the message they bring to the people along with the makeup of the sermon they will hopefully preach with a clearer understanding of what and why they do what they do. Understanding the characteristics of African American preaching will introduce reasons for learning to apply God’s Word. On this point, it will give the framework of clear purpose without denying the position of the Holy Spirit.

African American preachers have a unique style of preaching that is so different. Many wonder what is this intriguing style and where did it come from. When discussing the characteristic of the black preaching one begin to traverse the oceans of times and the past of slavery. Black preaching brings with it a long history. Although many books have been written on African American preaching. The choice is an area that has intrigued many because of its style, makeup, content, culture and history. Henry Mitchell in *Black Preaching, The Recovery of a Powerful Art*, stated, “The uniqueness of the Black experience in America is so important to the understanding of Black preaching.”⁶⁹ When the Black pulpit tradition is understood,

⁶⁸ William Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African American Church in the South 1865-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 308.

⁶⁹ Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 12.

homiletical teachings, culture, style, content and structure, the yield will be more meaningful.⁷⁰ .

John W. Blassingame in his book *The Slave Community* says that religion and culture are so intermingled that they are often treated as one and the same.⁷¹

The Bible and Black Preaching

The Bible is the central resource of the evangelical Christian faith and contains the words of God spoken from the mouths of human beings.⁷² Therefore, the Bible is foundational to preachers who are called to speak God's Word so that people will believe in God and become followers of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the study of the Word of God through formal education is essential for preaching to be effective. Further, John Stott says, "we cannot handle Scripture adequately in the pulpit if our doctrine of Scripture is inadequate."⁷³ Preachers must be educated to embrace God's Word as is, without personal subjective interpretation or eisegesis that distorts its stories and truths.

Along with the Bible as foundational for preaching is the acceptance that God still speaks through His Word today. Though the Bible was written for first century Christians, its truths are timeless. "Scripture is far more than a collection of ancient documents in which the words of God are preserved," says Stott.⁷⁴ If the preacher's sermon does not properly exegete biblical

⁷⁰ Ibid., 8.

⁷¹ James H. Harris, *Preaching Liberation* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1995), 40.

⁷² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 49.

⁷³ John R.W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 99.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 100.

truths and provide appropriate application, then the lives of those who are listening will not be touched and changed.

Professor of preaching and worship, Stephen Farris, believes that the preacher must take the reality of God speaking through His Word seriously. He adds that “such a person must also take seriously the fact that the church has always claimed that God speaks through the Bible.... The preacher, then, must go to the Scripture expecting that God will speak through its words.”⁷⁵

LaRue says, “Black congregants, by and large, go to church to hear the preacher expound on the written Word, and they don’t really get a feel for the sermon until they hear the Scriptures or sense some connection between the Scriptures and what the preacher is saying.”⁷⁶ Therefore, it can be said that the Bible is intricately tied to black preaching.

Preach the Word as Foundational to Preaching

Ministers who have been called to preach stand before a congregation of people to deliver a message from the Word of God. There is no other authority from which the preacher of God must speak. Preaching the Word, therefore, is foundational to preaching. A clear understanding about the nature of preaching from the Bible strengthens the necessity of preaching the word as foundational. Seminary instructor, Donald L. Hamilton says:

The biblical concept of preaching is centered in one word from the Old Testament and four from the New Testament. ... The Old Testament word is *naba*, which translated into English means “prophesy;” it is used over 110 times. In the New Testament, we find *kerusso* (“to proclaim,” about 60 times), *euangelizo* (“to declare good news,” 50 times), *kataggello* (“to tell thoroughly,” 17 times), and *didasko* (“to teach,” 97 times).⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Stephen Farris, *Preaching That Matters: The Bible and Our Lives* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 4.

⁷⁶ LaRue, *I Believe I’ll Testify*, 57.

⁷⁷ Donald L. Hamilton, *Homiletical Handbook* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 10-11.

These words guide the preacher's message to be loyal to the truths of the Bible. Though other sources are used to help accentuate, illustrate, and apply the message, its truths must be anchored in the Bible.

As mentioned above in this paper, the Bible is essential to black preaching. The black preacher's message from the Word of God, however, is shaped primarily by personal and cultural experiences. Essentially, as a direct result of oppression, black preachers "derive from Scriptures a central truth that there is a God of infinite power who can be trusted to act mightily on their behalf."⁷⁸ Hughes Oliphant Old says that an amazing amount of black preaching consists of profound events from the Bible such as the Exodus, when God delivered the Israelites from slavery. Historically, these stories were preached over and over again because of the resemblances to cultural experiences.⁷⁹ LaRue says, "Black preachers have historically been noted for its strong biblical content."⁸⁰

The Call

Dr. Stephen Olford from *Anointed Expository Preaching*, gives a very clear view of the call to preach. He states that all Christians are "called ones," This basic "call" is to Christ as Lord and Savior (Eph. 1:18; 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1; 2 Pet. 1:10). But God also calls with a view to "good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10 NIV). Included in the "good works" is the call to preach. The call of Moses (Exod. 3:4-22), of Samuel (1 Sam. 3:4), of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-10), and in the New Testament, the call of the disciples (Mark 3:13-19), of Paul (Rom.1:1; 1Cor.1:1; Gal. 1:15), and of Barnabas (Acts 13:2) are all good examples.

⁷⁸ LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching*, 14-15.

⁷⁹ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of Scripture in the Worship of the Christian Church*, Volume 7, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.2010), 358.

⁸⁰ LaRue, *I Believe I'll Testify*, 61.

He goes on to say that the call to preach must not be confused with the desire to serve as an elder or deacon (see 1 Tim.3:1), even though the very desire (if noble) is “inspired by God’s Spirit.” The call to preach must not be conditioned by the need for the gospel, even though we are commanded to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:35). This goes against the grain of much modern thinking. But in our Lord’s Day none of the twelve volunteered to follow Christ. They completed no forms. On the contrary, it was the magnetic authority of the Lord which compelled them... For the disciples, the call was the verbal command of the Lord. The call to preach must not be controlled by the church, even though the elders of a local church are expected to confirm the call (1 Tm. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). In the final analysis, the call to preach is the sovereign initiative of God in the life and experience of the one who is predestinated to fulfil that role.⁸¹

In Practical Theology for Black Churches by Dale Andrews, he discusses the call of the African American preacher by discussing the probability of where they started. He says that although black preaching can be traced to the late colonial period, the first influx of black preachers probably came from those house slaves who worked closest to the slaveholders. During slavery, the most effective way he says to gain any education was access to white social networks. This exposure was frequently experienced in the slaveholder’s home and travels. These experiences served slaves in developing perhaps their first leaders. The question of the preacher’s formal training only influences the manner of activism. Many early black preachers were typically those who acquired reading skills or some level of primary education. Whether through apprenticeship or tutoring, black preachers were mostly self-taught until college or seminary training became available.

⁸¹ Stephen Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing, 1998), 8.

However, he said that early generations of black preachers started predominately in apprenticeship positions under more mature preachers. This tradition prevails today. God was held certainly as the primary teacher. But the call to ministry and the gifts of preaching were developed in apprenticed positions or on- the- job training. The subsequent generations of preachers have advanced this mentoring model of training. As reading skills grew, training became more and more entrenched in white teachings and culture. Since scholarship on the integrity of black culture was scarce at best, black cultures became increasingly judged as lacking intellect and sophistication.⁸²

Warren W. Wiersbe speaks to preachers from the book *Changing Lives Through Preaching and Worship*, edited by Marshall Shelley by saying If God has called you, then He has given you what you need to do the job. You may not have all that others have, or all you wish you had, but you have what God wants you to have. Accept it, be faithful to use it, and in due time God will give you more. Give yourself time to discover and develop your gifts. Accept nothing as a handicap. Turn it over to God and let him make a useful tool out of it. After all, that's what he did with Paul's thorn in the flesh.⁸³

James Forbes rightly describes the person who preaches in his book *The Holy Spirit and Preaching* by saying that the person who preaches the gospel makes a statement about the Holy Spirit just by entering the pulpit. Even before the first word is uttered, presuppositions and definitions from across the centuries speak volumes about the spirit-led event to be experienced by the preacher and the community of worshipers. The preaching event itself without reference

⁸² Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 21.

⁸³ Marshall Shelley, editor, *Changing Lives Through Preaching and Worship* (Nashville: Moorings, 1995), 12.

to specific texts and themes – is a living, breathing, flesh and blood expression of the theology of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴

Dr. Jerry Sutton in his book *A Primer on Biblical Preaching*, points us to the importance of Scripture by reminding us of who we are in 2 Corinthians 5:11 Paul says, “We are ambassadors for Christ.” While every Christian in a sense is an ambassador for Christ, the pastor must be keenly aware that he represents Jesus Christ in this world. As such, we have no liberty to craft our own agenda but must represent our Lord as He demands. When Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:23 that he has delivered to the believers what he has received from Christ, he is providing a perfect example of our task as an ambassador. We represent Christ’s interests, not our own⁸⁵

African American preachers are unique in that when they receive the call to preach. This call is outwardly announced before the congregation. They then do an initial sermon before a congregation who then determines to license them. Most of the first generation of freedman preachers who heard this call upon their lives were uneducated-even in scriptural principles. Charles V. Hamilton talks from *The Black Preacher in America*, that there are two situations for the call of ministry; standards for licensing ministers and the tradition of the call to the ministry.” He stated that the standards for being licensed to preach were and are lower than those to practice other professions such as law, medicine, dentistry and teaching. He goes on by saying that this has not motivated some prospective ministers to put as much emphasis on formal

⁸⁴ James Forbes, *The Holy Spirit & Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 19.

⁸⁵ Jerry Sutton, *A Primer for on Biblical Preaching* (Bloomington: Cross Books, 2011), 141.

training as would normally be the case.⁸⁶ W.C. Daniels commenting from *The Black Preacher in America* says;

Because of the low standards for licensing ministers as compared with the standards for licensing men in other professions, the candidates for the ministry are not as easily convinced of the necessity for thorough preparation as are the candidates for professions with higher licensing requirements.⁸⁷

Hamilton goes on to state that several black dominations, churches and ministers have for some time voiced a deep concern that the ministry should be highly educated, without sacrificing its commitment to spirituality.⁸⁸ Samuel D. Proctor in *The Certain Sound of the Trumpet: Crafting a Sermon of Authority*, says that “given the burden that rests on the preacher, and the heavy freight that the Sunday sermon must carry, there ought to be a constructive way of discussing its preparation with candor and charity. Further, any exercise as important as preaching deserves careful and penetrating scrutiny, and endless search for an evaluative instrument, and a strategy for continuous improvement.”⁸⁹ Acts 18:24, through the example of Apollos, who was learned and eloquent in speech and had come to a knowledge of Jesus, still needed help by Aquila and Priscilla to explain to him the way of God more accurately. Through this action it stresses the importance of ministers furthering their study for this sacred task. Haddon Robinson make a marked statement in *Biblical Preaching: The Development and*

⁸⁶ Charles V. Hamilton, *The Black Preacher in America* (New York: William Morrow, 1972), 89.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 89.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 92.

⁸⁹ Samuel D. Proctor, *The Certain Sound of the Trumpet: Crafting a Sermon of Authority* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1994), 2.

Delivery of Expository Preaching, “by saying, “its one thing not to know, but another thing not to know what you don’t know.”⁹⁰

One of the ministers of the church was given a chance to preach in which he chose a text from 1 Corinthians and preceded to read the text. After given an introduction he began to speak on political issues. From this viewpoint he had already steered away from the matter of the text and was just trying to preach from whatever came to mind. After about fifteen minutes of this he returned to the text and began to fix the scripture to match his thought on the issue. In the thirty five minutes of rambling about the political climate of the day and the issues of the flag there was nothing that could be taken away from what the Biblical author had to say about what he wanted the preacher to take from the text.

Biblical Mandate to Preach

The Bible contains historical narratives about God’s work on the earth to redeem sinful humankind. In the beginning when God created the world, He walked and talked directly with people, but then sin entered the world and all of that changed. Sin marred the relationship between God and humankind because God as a holy God, cannot dwell with sinful people. But God did not give up on us. Immediately, He initiated a redemptive plan so that sin could be defeated and the relationship between God and humankind could be restored.

The redemptive plan that God initiated is a plan of salvation, which is a message about God’s love for the world and the people in it. But most importantly, it is about the work of God incarnate, Jesus Christ, on the cross, who hung, bled, died, was buried, and rose again. People who hear and believe this message will be restored to a right relationship with God and live with

⁹⁰ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 61.

Him for eternity. For the message to do its work, it must be shared so that those who hear it will have opportunity to be saved. In Romans 10:9-14, Paul explains this process:

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? (ESV)

Scripture clearly provides evidence that preaching is a God-ordained biblical mandate, and it is a means by which the salvation message is to be communicated. This chapter will provide an overview of the scriptural texts that supports the mandate to preach God's Word. It will begin with a presentation of the presence of preaching in the Old Testament as well as some of the biblical characters who preached. Then this chapter will conclude with a presentation of the practice of preaching in the New Testament in response to the mandate of Jesus. Dennis E. Johnson brings a fresh take to the Biblical mandate to preach from his Book *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* by sharing Paul's comment in his own ministry in Colossians 1:24-2:7:

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up that is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you

with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.⁹¹

It is evident Johnson says, that Paul is reflecting on his task as a preacher. He speaks of his responsibility before God to “make the word of God fully known,” to disclose among the Gentiles the once-hidden- but –now- revealed mystery of Christ, in short, to “proclaim” Christ.

Preaching in the Old Testament

Scott M. Gibson gives us clear insight into our need to preach the Old Testament through his book titled *Preaching The Old Testament*, by saying that whether it is a family with its roots, a building and its foundation, or any historical event – what precedes and comes before are of immense significance. The modern disdain for history deprives us of connectedness and leaves us in a cut-flower isolation. He says we need our Old Testament. He goes on by saying we need to preach the Old Testament because it is the Inspired Anticipation of Jesus Christ the Messiah.⁹²

Preaching was demonstrated during the earliest times of the Old Testament period. God spoke to Moses and asked him to deliver messages to the people. Moses gave the Israelites God’s commands and instructions for how they were to live and serve Him. God raised up Moses for this work, then near the end of his service to God, Moses said to the people, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen” (Deut. 18:15). As a prophet, Moses gave the Israelites countless warnings about their propensity to sin. As a prophet, he understood that it was necessary to keep

⁹¹ Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ From All The Scriptures* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2007), 62-63.

⁹² Scott M. Gibson, *Preaching the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 172,174.

God's laws and instructions before them to marshal obedience to God. God wanted a holy people to love and bless and protect, but it was not to be. The Israelites went their own way, which was the way of sin. Therefore, God continued to send His messengers, prophets, to preach repentance and judgment to His people. Donald L. Hamilton says:

The prophets were spokespersons for God. This was basic to their reason for being. Sometimes their message did deal with foretelling the future, but their message was always the message of God, that is, forthtelling. Further, the messages were always delivered with a sense of authority that left little question about their orientation.⁹³

It's clear from the Old Testament that God had provided messages that needed to be shared and preached by His prophets. Old Testament prophets were holy "men [who] spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). Their major task was to call God's people back to Him. Their preaching was not a feel-good sermon. Most of the time their messages warned of the consequences of their sin, but always with call to repentance and restoration. Some of the time, their message presented God's plan for His kingdom in the future. The heart of their message was God's promise of a Messiah, Jesus Christ and the culmination of God's redemptive plan.

One important prophet of the Old Testament was the prophet Isaiah.

The expectation of Messiah is so strong in Isaiah, that Jerome *ad Paulinum* calls his book not a prophecy, but the gospel. He is not so much a prophet as an evangelist... The second part [of Isaiah] addressed to the faithful elect; whereas the first part, addressed the whole people and dwells on Messiah's glory, the antidote to the fears which then filled the people.⁹⁴

Other prophets included Jeremiah, who preached warnings to God's people that they did not believe or receive; Ezekiel, who preached judgment to the Israelites prior to the fall of Jerusalem

⁹³ Hamilton, *Homiletical Handbook*, 65.

⁹⁴ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), 505.

as well as Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, and others whose messages and stories are recorded in their respective books in the Old Testament.

So Gibson asks the question of where does this leaves us in regard to the Old Testament? He says that not only does the Old Testament contain building blocks which form the structural footings of our grand doctrines and theology, but suffusing and permeating the whole id the person and presence of the Savior. Thus, indeed, the gospel was announced in advanced to Abraham (Gal. 3:8). Jesus clearly affirmed that the Scriptures “testify about me” (John 5:39) and to the two disciples on the read to Emmaus “beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:27).⁹⁵

Preaching in the New Testament

John the Baptist’s message of repentance was the first message recorded in the New Testament. As the forerunner, who prepared the way for Jesus, John’s message was simple; he preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:2). The earthly ministry of Jesus began a short time following John’s first encounter with Jesus. It was a memorable encountered that was recorded in three of the gospels (Matt. 3:13, Mark 1:9, Luke 3:21). From there, Jesus began to preach and minister to the people. He declared, the Spirit “has anointed me to preach good news” (Luke 4:18).

Preaching or spreading the good news was also the specific work to which He called His disciples. For three years, Jesus trained them to follow in His footsteps, spreading the gospel story of redemption. His final mandate to them was to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20).

⁹⁵ Gibson, *Preaching the Old Testament*, 174.

It is clear that the apostles obeyed Jesus' mandate and preached the good news to the people who had not been converted (Acts 5:42, 8:35, and 11:20). Their message was simple; they preached about Jesus Christ, the One who could save them and change their lives. About this divinely-appointed methodology Peter said to Cornelius, "And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42). Peter's first message was to the crowd at Pentecost. First, Peter told the people that the Spirit-caused tongues are a fulfillment of Scripture and a sign that the "last days" had begun and people can be saved (Acts 2:16-21). He continued to share about Jesus as a man of God who performed "mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him" (Acts 2:22). Yet, He was "crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it" (Acts 2:23-24). The people believed Peter's message and about 3,000 people were saved and baptized that day (Acts 2:41).

Peter and the disciples continued this methodology of making disciples by exhorting subsequent disciples to follow the same strategy. One such person who took up the mandate to preach the gospel was the Apostle Paul. Paul said that he was commissioned to preach the gospel (Rom. 1:1). God called Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:15-16). He traveled to various cities around Jerusalem and delivered sermons while on three different missionary journeys. John B. Polhill said:

On the first journey occurs the speech at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41). It was to the Jews and "God-fearers." On the second journey, Paul's major address was to the pagan philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:22-31). On his third missionary journey, Paul's main sermon was to the Christian elders at Miletus (20:18-35).⁹⁶

⁹⁶ John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999), 88.

Primarily, Paul preached a message that was centered on Jesus, which he stated well in First Corinthians. He said:

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

The gospel that Paul preached was about Jesus Christ, specifically his death and resurrection, and the good news that people can be saved through Jesus. Just like Jesus, Paul preached about salvation, repentance and faith. Paul also preached about the death and resurrection of Christ. George Ladd says, “the message of Paul is essentially the same as that of Jesus: that in the person and mission of Jesus, God has visited human beings to bring them the messianic salvation.”⁹⁷

Finally in anticipation of his imminent execution, the apostle Paul gave young Timothy the following exhortation, “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season” (2 Tim. 4:1-2). Timothy was commanded by Paul to preach, and the content of what he was to preach was very specific; he was to preach “the Word.”

Preachers in the New Testament set the standard for today’s preachers. They are to preach according to the Word. It is the message of Jesus, His life, death, and resurrection. It is a mandate that must be fulfilled by those who are called until Jesus comes again.

To do this with effectiveness, preachers of today are finding that education is becoming a must. Congregations are more educated and expect to have preachers who are able to demonstrate the same. 1 Tim 4:16, “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them,

⁹⁷ George Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 453.

for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” A wise Scripture Spurgeon gives to ministers from *Lectures to My Students*, that in setting the standards for ministry that every workman knows the necessity of keeping his tools in a good state of repair. He says that if the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength.” If the workman lose the edge from his adze, he knows that there will be a greater draught upon his energies, or his work will be badly done.⁹⁸ He says that ministers who want to do the job of preaching then they must train their vocal powers, if they want to think with their own brain and feel with their own heart, then they must educate their intellectual and emotional faculties.

⁹⁸ C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 7.

Chapter 3

Analysis of Findings

Assessing the Need for Education in Ministry

Charles V. Hamilton makes note in *The Black Preacher in America* that two of the greatest compliments one can pay a black preacher are that he “knows his Bible” and he “can really preach.” His knowledge of the lessons in the Bible need not come from formal training: in fact, a few ministers, usually elderly virtually boasts of the fact that they “never had a day of real schooling.” This was as much a boast about self-dependency and the ability to overcome obstacles as it was clearly an attempt to show an absence of any inferiority complex as a result of having little formal education. However, as Hamilton noted for the most part a large percentage of black ministers, especially the younger one, feel it is essential to have some formal seminary training. The reasons he gave behind this attitude was that much can be learned from such study and without it weakens one’s ability to be an effective preacher.⁹⁹

Take a closer look at your surroundings the next time you take a seat in a church pew. You may notice an abundance of designer shoes, ties, blouses, sport coats and even jeans filling space in the nation’s houses of worship. The members of the congregation donning the apparel aren’t just showing off their Sunday best at services—they are likely among the country’s most educated people who make up a large percentage of the church-going population.

The American Sociological Association recently presented a study that reveals a decline in attendance by less-educated Americans, but consistent attendance by those with a college degree.¹⁰⁰ It is because of such that ministers now should, as Paul encouraged Titus, hold firm to

⁹⁹ Hamilton, *The Black Preacher in America*, 187.

¹⁰⁰ Terry Trahan, Jr., “Church Congregations Getting Smarter,” *The Weekly*, August 25, 2011, accessed October 28, 2015, http://www.houmaweekly.com/feature/2011/church_congregations_getting_smarter.html.

the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instructions in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.¹⁰¹

In 2 Timothy 2:15-16, Paul said, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth, avoid irrelevant babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness.” These are words that resonate with this researcher because congregants are becoming more educated, and when attending church, they want someone with experience that speaks to their level of knowledge—one that rightly handles the word of truth. This by no means says that one who does not have formal seminary training cannot rightly handle the word of truth; it just means that with formal training, it would greatly help in explaining and interpreting theological principles imbedded within the Word of God. There are some ministers who have been gifted with insight as to explaining the text. Sherard Burns, preacher, church planter, lecturer and co-founder of the Black Alliance for Reformed Theology (BART), in an on-line paper titled “The Need for an Educated Black Clergy” writes:

If pastors within the African-American church are going to effectively lead and shepherd the flock of God into the 21st century, these men would do well to be educated...with the changing tides of society and the enormous gap that separates “generational churching” ... or the ways in which the Black church has worshipped or “had church” over the years. While we must give respect to our history, we are challenged to consider that the way we used to “do church” a generation ago may not be the way to do it today. The is increasingly apparent as we witness the overall rise in education among African-Americans...with this increase in education comes an increase in expectation...In other words, shall we expect some measure of intellectual competency from our doctors, lawyers, and politicians (occasionally) but excuse the minister from his academic responsibility? God forbid.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Titus 1:9.

¹⁰² Adair T. Lummis, “Heart and Head in Reaching Pastors of Black Churches,” Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Association for the Sociology of Religion, Montreal, August 2006, accessed November 10, 2015, http://hrr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/lummis_article5.html.

Assessing the Need for the Education of Associate Ministers

Associates in ministry represents the Exodus 17:12 of the gospel in which they are the Hur and Aaron to their pastor. When Moses' hand grew tired, they were the ones who held up his arms so that the mission could be accomplished. It is that on which the associates are to reflect when carrying out the task of the preaching ministry. If they have not availed themselves to prepare for the task to which God has called them, the ministry can be filled with irrelevant babble. They should have purity of motives with an understanding of the reasons they are preaching, specifically evaluating continually does it fulfill a need for being in the pulpit. *In Lectures to My Students*, Charles H. Spurgeon gives the example of Michael Angelo who understood so well the value of his tools and that to carry out his task and be effective as an artist, he needed to understand which tools were needed at the right time. Spurgeon also gives the illustration of God's grace in that God can work with the faultiest kind of instrumentality, as He does when he occasionally makes very foolish preaching useful in conversion. But as Spurgeon warns, we must act as His plainer dispensations instructs us; and one of the facts which is clear enough is this, that the Lord usually adapts means to ends from which the plain lesson is, that we shall be likely to accomplish most when we are in the best spiritual condition; or in other words, we shall usually do our Lord's work best when our gifts and graces are in good order, we shall do worst when they are most out of trim.¹⁰³ Lewis Sperry Chafer reported to have said that if he were a young man preparing for the ministry, he would want about 10 years of preparation for

¹⁰³ Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 7.

every year of service. So important that this man hold formal education as a basis for proclaiming and teaching the Word of God.¹⁰⁴

Those fitting for the task of preaching must seek to avail themselves of the tools necessary to fulfill their mandate. To fulfill their calling requires specific knowledge and skills, which cannot be attained through imitation or emulation. To know the Bible beyond a superficial level requires more than just the reading it. This requirement can best be met with some type of education. Education as Gary Bredfeldt remarks in his book, *Creative Bible Teaching*, is based on the assumption that what is learned in the classroom can and should be applied outside the classroom.¹⁰⁵ Education is fundamental for the profession to which we are called. Therefore, ministers as well as other professionals must avail themselves to properly prepare for the profession for which they are involved. However, there are many in ministry who feel that the knowledge of the Bible will provide the necessary needs to be effective in proclaiming the gospel ministry.

Assessing the Educational Needs of Congregants

The church in the twenty-first century is becoming more educated. Many of the congregants have bachelors, masters, graduates or post graduate degrees and are expecting more from their leaders and associates. A study by the American Sociological Association reveals that there is a decline in attendance at churches of those who are less educated as opposed to those who possess a college degree or beyond. According to the study, monthly church attendance by those who have high school diplomas or some college credit has dropped from 50 percent to 37

¹⁰⁴ Lewis Sperry Chafer was an American theologian, who founded and served as the first president of Dallas Theological Seminary and was an influential proponent of Christian Dispensationalism in the early 20th century.

¹⁰⁵ Lawrence O. Richards and Gary Bredfeldt, *Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1998), 113.

percent. Attendance by those who never completed high school fell from 38 percent to 23 percent. Meanwhile, the percentage of educated citizens who hold at least a bachelor's degree dropped the least, from 50 percent to 46 percent. In a nation that once valued dressing up on Sundays to spend an hour in worship, the numbers point toward a trend away from tradition.¹⁰⁶ Therefore with this kind of decline and incline, people are looking for more from their leaders. The church is constantly faced with challenges, and they need those who will give themselves to study and the application of the knowledge that helps them to meet those challenges. The Bible reveals in Ephesians 4:11-12 that, "And, he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelist, the shepherds and teachers. To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. To equip the saints for the work of ministry, to prepare them and give them the tools they would need to build up men, women, boys and girls for the body of Christ." Acts 20:28 further encourages the minister to "pay careful attention to yourselves and to all, the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer to care for the church of God which He obtained with His own blood" (ESV). An admonishment to put oneself in position to carefully be prepared for the task of caring for the church and her people. To do this in a manner that is essential is through exhaustive study, spiritual development, and spiritual transformation.

Assessing the Educational Needs for Preaching

An associate minister who wants to preach the Word of God must be committed to God's truth. If there is a stumbling block whereas they are finding themselves lacking, the Bible exhorts in James 1:5 that "if any lacks wisdom, let Him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." Here the Bible speaks of wisdom that is given by God. Wisdom that is not gained by one's own personal opinion, perception, philosophy, or one's own

¹⁰⁶ Trahan, "Church Congregations Getting Smarter."

thoughts but by the learning that God provides in however ways which may be. It is given that those who are assigned the task that God commends can carry out that assignment effectively. When a minister becomes acquainted with the teachings of historical Bible teachers, they become acquainted with an array of teachings that have been passed down through ages of biblical history. If anyone who proclaims the gospel message of Jesus Christ proclaims it with the understanding that they are not in need of any outside educational study, they become as Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, says about Ephesians 4:14, “Not knowing the doctrine of the bible, the child of God will be, even when sincere, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every word of doctrine by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive the many well-meaning believers who are drawn into modern cults and heresies being sufficient proof.” On the other hand, the divine purpose is that the servant of Christ shall be fully equipped to preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.¹⁰⁷

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the need for the education of associate ministers within the context of the church. It is the position of this researcher that associate ministers like other professional positions require formal education in order to be effective in their responsibilities and to be effective in fulfilling the needs of the congregants to whom they are responsible to lead and teach.

Compilation Protocols

¹⁰⁷ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2014), 13-14.

The data in this study was compiled through the use of a questionnaire or survey, which was developed by this researcher. The survey was distributed among 25 individual pastors along 25 members of 4 different churches. However, due to a slow or nil response to the surveys, the sample for this study consisted of six pastors and members of three congregations. Demographic data are limited and used only for identification purposes. The first four questions on the survey solicited the current ministry position, age, marital status, and highest level of education of those taking the survey.

The survey consisted of 16 questions. Each question solicited a response of highly, adequately, somewhat, or not at all, and each response was given a numeral value, highly = 4, adequately = 3, somewhat = 2, and not at all = 1. The first 12 questions were designed to draw upon opinions about the effectiveness of the associate minister, question 13 solicited an opinion about the effectiveness of the church in training for ministry, question 14 solicited an opinion about whether formal education was necessary for ministers, question 15 solicited an opinion about the overall opinion of the associate minister's preaching, and question 16 solicited an opinion about what was missing from the preaching ministry. Question 16 was the only question in the survey that veered from the response format. Instead, the optional answers were lack of education, lack of training, lack of understanding the congregation, other, or there is nothing missing at all. (See Appendix B.)

Statistical Tools

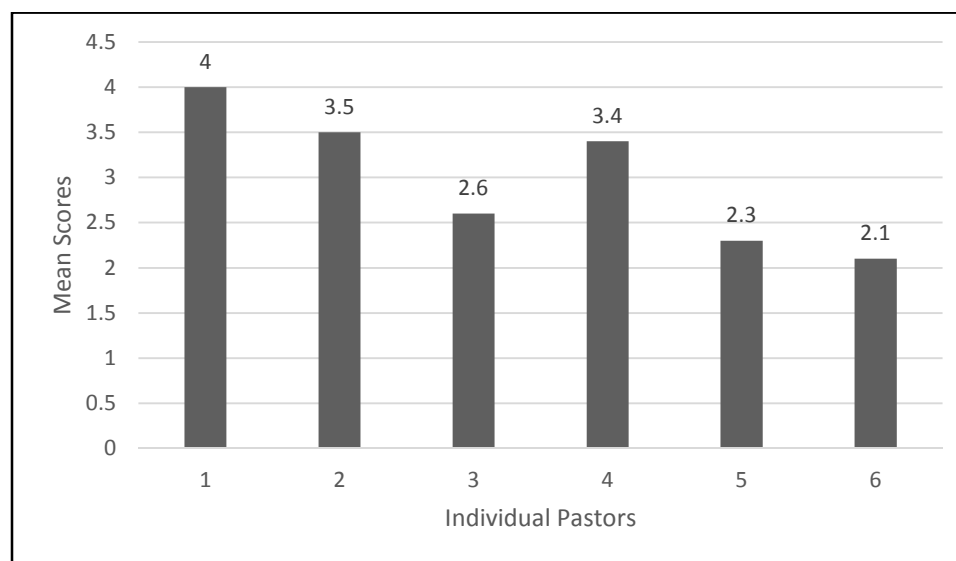
The measurement for determining whether education is necessary for the associate minister position in the church is based on the responses of pastors and church members to a survey developed specifically for this study. Only descriptive statistics was used in the study to help this researcher organize, describe, and draw a conclusion on the data. This research

measured the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation of the each pastor and each church group. Responses for questions 1-12 were organized and described first and then questions 13-16 were organized and described individually.

Senior Pastor Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Questions 1-12

The pastor's group consisted of six (6) pastors. Two (2) were between the ages of 65-75, three (3) were between the ages of 45-64, and one (1) was between the ages of 20-44. The mean score for each pastor for questions 1-12 is presented in Chart 1.

Chart 1. Mean score for each pastor



Among the six pastors that returned surveys, pastor one responded that the ministry of their associates was highly effective, and pastors two and four responded that the preaching of the associate ministers was better than adequate. This indicated that these senior pastors had confidence in their associate ministers to execute the duties of the role successfully and to effectively fulfill their calling as preachers. However, pastors three, five, and six responded that their associate ministers were a little better than somewhat effective in successfully fulfilling

their role. None of the pastors indicated they were not satisfied at all with the work of the associate minister. A highly effective response indicates complete satisfaction with the work of the associate. An adequate response indicates the associate minister's work is satisfactory or acceptable for meeting the needs of the ministry, however, there is room for improvement. A somewhat response indicates there is a small bit of satisfaction with the associate's work in ministry.

The mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for questions 1-12 of the senior pastor group are presented in Table 1. The mean score is 2.9 and the median and mode scores are 3. Based on these scores, the senior pastor group as a whole have indicated that the associate minister is adequately effective in fulfilling the responsibilities of his or her calling. The standard deviation score of .7 indicate that the scores are close in range.

Table 1. Senior Pastor Group stats

<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Std. dev.</i>
6	2.9	3	3	.7

Senior Pastor Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Questions 13-15

Questions 13-15 asked the overall opinion of the church's effectiveness in ministry training, the necessity of education for the associate minister, and the favorability of the associate minister's preaching.

Question 13: Is the church effective in training for ministry?

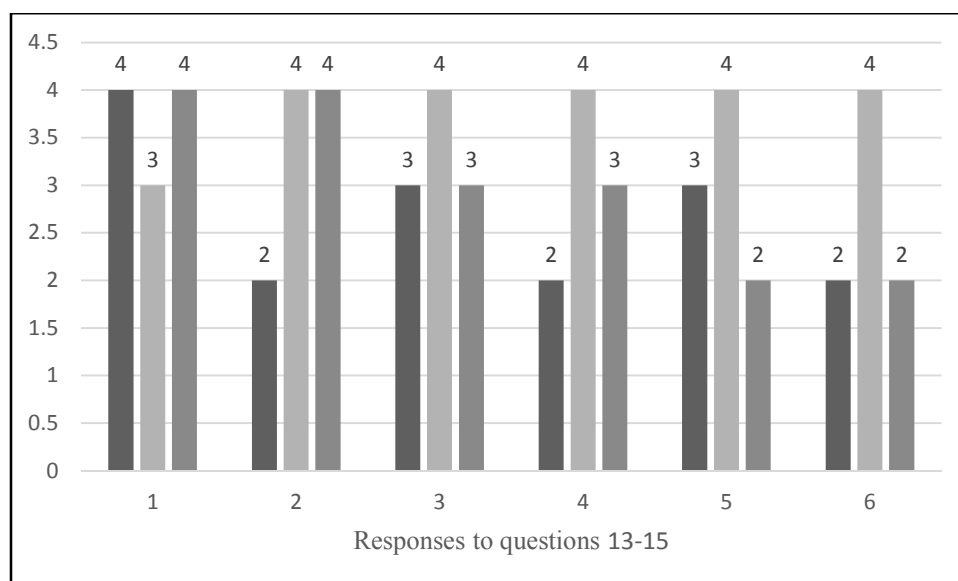
Question 14: Do you think it necessary for ministers to have education for ministry?

Question 15: What is the overall opinion of your associate minister's preaching?

For Question 13, Pastor one indicated that the church was highly effective in training ministers for ministry; Pastor three indicated that the church was adequately effective; and

Pastors 2, 4, and 6 indicated that the church is somewhat effective. For Question 14, Pastor one indicated that it is adequately necessary for ministers to be educated for ministry; and Pastors two, three, four, five, and six indicated that it is highly necessary. For Question 15, Pastors one and two indicated that the associate minister's preaching is highly favorable; Pastors three and four indicated it is adequately favorable, and Pastors five and six indicated it is somewhat favorable. (See Chart 2.)

Chart 2. Individual pastor's responses to questions 13-15



On the average, the pastors' responses for Question 13 were more than somewhat but less than adequate, responses for Question 14 were more than adequate but less than high, and responses for Question 15 were adequate. (See Table 2.)

Table 2: Mean scores for Questions 13-15

Question 13	Question 14	Question 15
2.7	3.8	3.0

Table 3 shows the responses of the pastors in relation to questions 1-12. All of the pastors indicated that education was either highly or adequately necessary for ministers (Question 14) in spite of the level of effectiveness of the associate minister.

Table 3: Pastor's responses to Questions 13-15 with Questions 1-12 Mean score

	Question 13	Question 14	Question 15	Q 1-12 Mean score
Pastor one	4	3	4	4
Pastor two	2	4	4	3.5
Pastor three	3	4	3	2.6
Pastor four	2	4	3	3.4
Pastor five	3	4	2	2.3
Pastor six	2	4	2	2.1

Senior Pastor Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Questions 16

Question 16 asked what the pastors believed were missing from the preaching ministry in their particular church. Possible responses were lack of education, lack of training, lack of understanding the congregation, other, or there is nothing missing at all. The senior pastors' response follows:

Pastor 1: lack of training

Pastor 2: lack of training

Pastor 3: lack of education, lack of training, lack of understanding the congregation, other – experience, bad learned habits, under called

Pastor 4: lack of education, lack of training, lack of understanding the congregation

Pastor 5: Other – preaching continuously being evolved

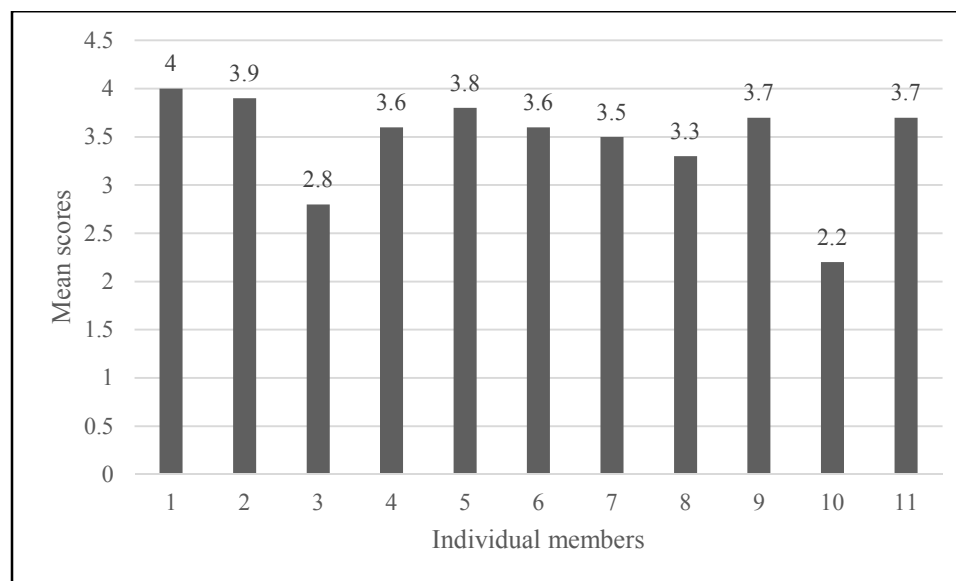
Pastor 6: lack of education, lack of training, lack of understanding the congregation, other – lack of practice

None of the pastors indicated that there was nothing missing all. However, all of the pastors except Pastor 5 indicated that either training or education were missing. Pastor 5 indicated that preaching that continuously evolved is missing.

Church Group A Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Questions 1-12

Church group A consisted of eleven (11) members, which means of the 25 surveys sent to the church, eleven were returned. One member (1) was between the ages of 65-75, six (6) were between the ages of 45-64, and four (4) were between the ages of 20-44. The mean score for each member for questions 1-12 are presented in Chart 3.

Chart 3: Mean Scores for Members of Church A



Among the eleven members in Church A, who returned surveys, one (1) responded that the ministry of their associates was highly effective, eight (8) responded that the ministry of the associate pastors was less than effective but more than adequate, two (2) responded that the ministry of the associate pastors was less than adequate but more than somewhat. A highly effective response indicates complete satisfaction with the work of the associate. An adequate

response indicates the associate minister's work is satisfactory or acceptable for meeting the needs of the ministry, however, there is room for improvement. A somewhat response indicates there is a small bit of satisfaction with the associate's work in ministry. Most of these members believed the associate ministers were more than adequately doing an effective job in ministry. None of the members indicated they were not satisfied at all with the work of the associate minister.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Church A

<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Std. dev.</i>
11	3.4	3.6	4	.5

The mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for questions 1-12 of church group are presented in Table 4. The mean score is 3.4, the median score is 3.6, and mode score is 4. Based on these scores, the church group A as a whole have indicated that the associate minister is more than adequately effective in fulfilling the responsibilities of his or her calling. The standard deviation score of .5 indicate that the scores are close in range.

Church Group A Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Questions 13-15

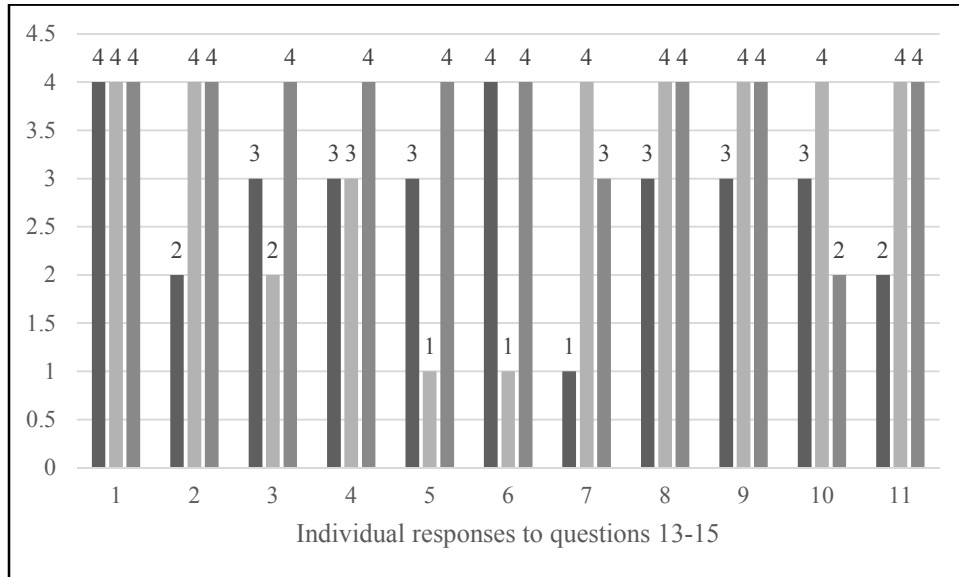
Questions 13-15 asked the overall opinion of the church's effectiveness in ministry training, the necessity of education for the associate minister, and the favorability of the associate minister's preaching.

Question 13: Is the church effective in training for ministry?

Question 14: Do you think it necessary for ministers to have education for ministry?

Question 15: What is the overall opinion of your associate minister's preaching?

Chart 4. Individual members' responses to questions 13-15 for Church A



On the average, church group A responses for Question 13 were more than somewhat but less than adequate that the church is effective in training for ministry, responses for Question 14 were more than adequate but less than high that it is necessary for ministers to have education, and responses for Question 15 were more than adequate but less than high for the opinion for the associate minister's preaching. (See Table 4.)

Table 4: Mean scores for Questions 13-15 for Church A

Question 13	Question 14	Question 15
2.8	3.1	3.7

Church Group A Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Question 16

Question 16 asked what the members believed were missing from the preaching ministry in their particular church. Possible responses were lack of education, lack of training, lack of understanding the congregation, other, or there is nothing missing at all. The members' responses follow in Table 5.

Table 5. Church Group A Responses to Question 16

Lack of education	
Lack of training	3
Lack of understanding the congregation	1
Other	Preaching style Using a single translation (2) Ability to give message without reading from notes
There is nothing missing at all	3

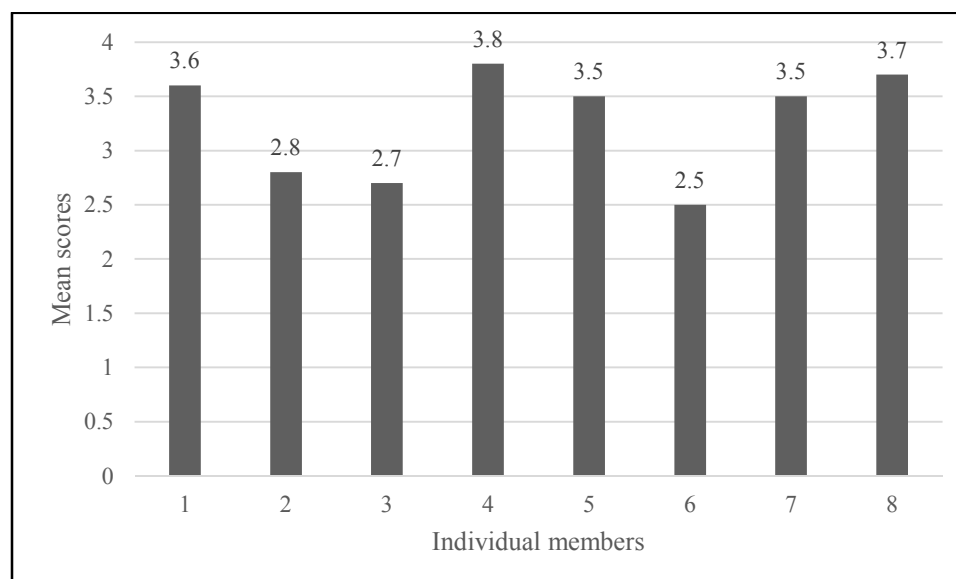
None of the members indicated there was a lack of education. However, three (3) members indicated a lack of training was missing, one (1) indicated a lack of understanding the congregation, and three (3) indicated there was nothing missing all. Four (4) of the members gave other responses, indicating that preaching style, using a single translation, and preaching without reading notes was missing. For the most part, church group A does not see education as a need to do effective ministry.

Church Group B Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Questions 1-12

Church group B consisted of eight (8) members, which means of the 25 surveys sent to the church, eight were returned. One (1) was 75 years of age or older, one (1) was between the

ages of 65-75, three (3) were between the ages of 45-64, and three (3) were between the ages of 20-44. The mean score for each member for questions 1-12 are presented in Chart 5.

Chart 5: Mean Scores for Questions 1-12 for Members of Church B



Among the eight members in Church B, who returned surveys, five (5) responded that the ministry of the associate pastors was less than highly effective but more than adequate, three (3) responded that the ministry of the associate pastors was less than adequate but more than somewhat. There were no highly effective responses, which would have indicated complete satisfaction with the work of the associate. An adequate response indicates the associate minister's work is satisfactory or acceptable for meeting the needs of the ministry, however, there is room for improvement. A somewhat response indicates there is a small bit of satisfaction with the associate's work in ministry. Most of these members believed the associate ministers were more than adequately doing an effective job in ministry. None of the members indicated they were not satisfied at all with the work of the associate minister.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Church B

<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
8	3.5	3.5	3	.5

The mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for questions 1-12 of church group B are presented in Table 6. The mean and median scores are 3.5 and the mode score is 3. Based on these scores, the church group B as a whole have indicated that the associate minister is more than adequately effective in fulfilling the responsibilities of his or her calling. The standard deviation score of .5 indicate that the scores are close in range.

Church Group B Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Questions 13-15

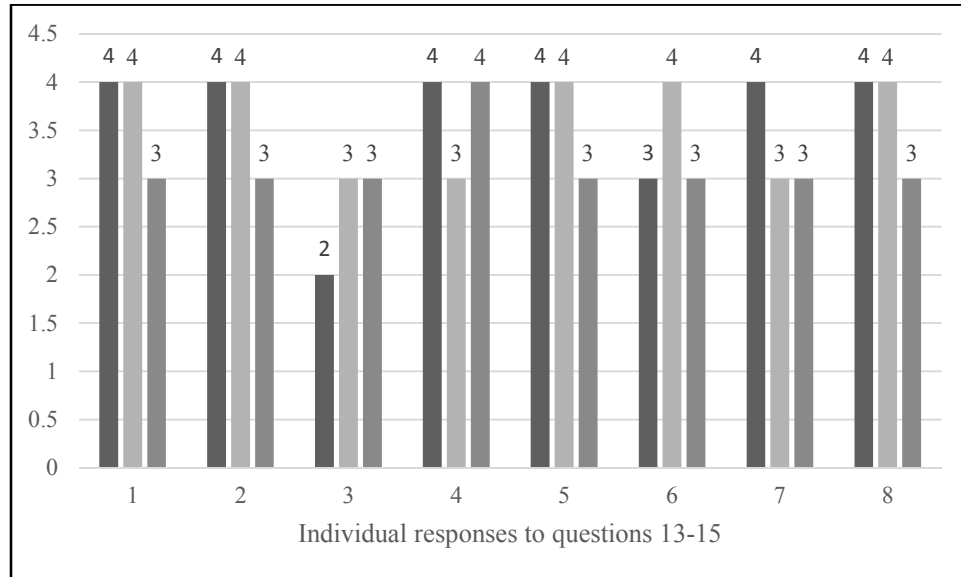
Questions 13-15 asked the overall opinion of the church's effectiveness in ministry training, the necessity of education for the associate minister, and the favorability of the associate minister's preaching.

Question 13: Is the church effective in training for ministry?

Question 14: Do you think it necessary for ministers to have education for ministry?

Question 15: What is the overall opinion of your associate minister's preaching?

Chart 6. Individual members' responses to questions 13-15 for Church B



On the average, the church group B responses for Question 13 were more than adequate but less than high that the church was effective in training ministers, responses for Question 14 were more than adequate but less than high that they believe education is necessary for ministers, and responses for Question 15 were more than adequate but less than high opinion of the associate minister's preaching. (See Table 7.)

Table 7: Mean scores for Questions 13-15 for Church B

Question 13	Question 14	Question 15
3.6	3.6	3.1

Church Group B Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Question 16

Question 16 asked what the members believed were missing from the preaching ministry in their particular church. Possible responses were lack of education, lack of training, lack of understanding the congregation, other, or there is nothing missing at all. Church group B members' responses follow in Table 5.

Table 8. Church Group B Responses to Question 16

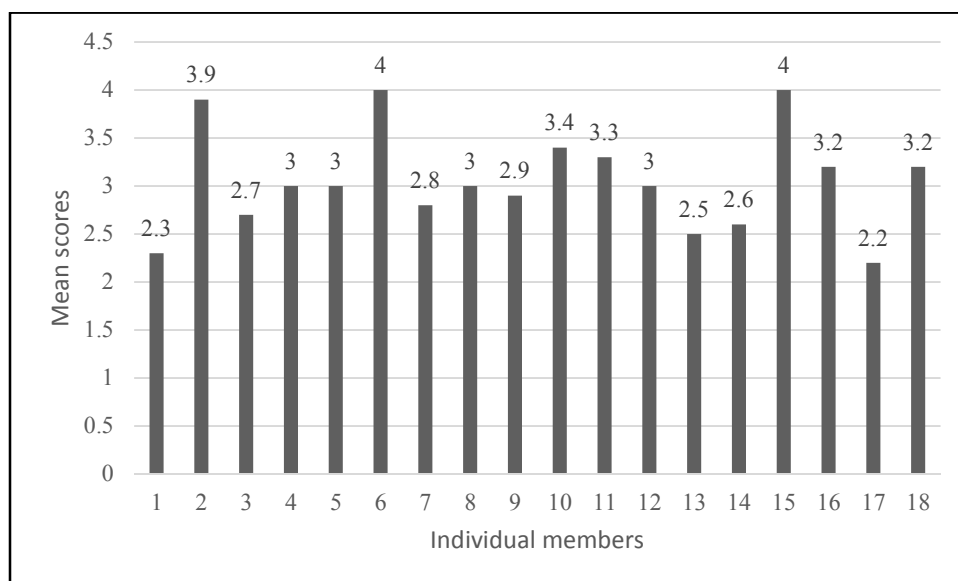
Lack of education	1
Lack of training	2
Lack of understanding the congregation	3
Other	
There is nothing missing at all	2

One (1) of the members indicated there was a lack of education. Two (2) of the members indicated a lack of training was missing, three (3) indicated a lack of understanding the congregation, and two (2) indicated there was nothing missing all. For the most part, church group B expressed that a lack of understanding the congregation is missing from their ministry.

Church Group C Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Questions 1-12

Church group C consisted of eighteen (18) members, which means of the 25 surveys sent to the church, eighteen were returned. Two (2) was between the ages of 65-75, fifteen (15) were between the ages of 45-64, and one (1) were between the ages of 20-44. The mean score for each member for questions 1-12 are presented in Chart 9.

Chart 9: Mean Scores for Questions 1-12 for Members of Church C



Among the eighteen members in Church B, who returned surveys, two (2) responded that the associate ministers were highly effective, five (5) responded that the ministry of the associate ministers was less than highly effective but more than adequate, four (4) responded that the associate minister was adequate, and seven (7) responded that the ministry of the associate pastors was less than adequate but more than somewhat. A highly effective response indicates complete satisfaction with the work of the associate minister. An adequate response indicates the associate minister's work is satisfactory or acceptable for meeting the needs of the ministry, however, there is room for improvement. A somewhat response indicates there is a small bit of satisfaction with the associate's work in ministry. Most of these members responded that the associate ministers were less than adequately doing an effective job in ministry. None of the members indicated they were not satisfied at all with the work of the associate minister.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics for Church C for Questions 1-12

<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
18	3.0	3.1	3	.5

The mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for questions 1-12 of church group C are presented in Table 9. The mean score is 3.0, the median score is 3.1, and the mode score is 3. Based on these scores, the church group C as a whole have indicated that the associate minister is adequately effective in fulfilling the responsibilities of his or her calling. The standard deviation score of .5 indicate that the scores are close in range.

Church Group C Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Questions 13-15

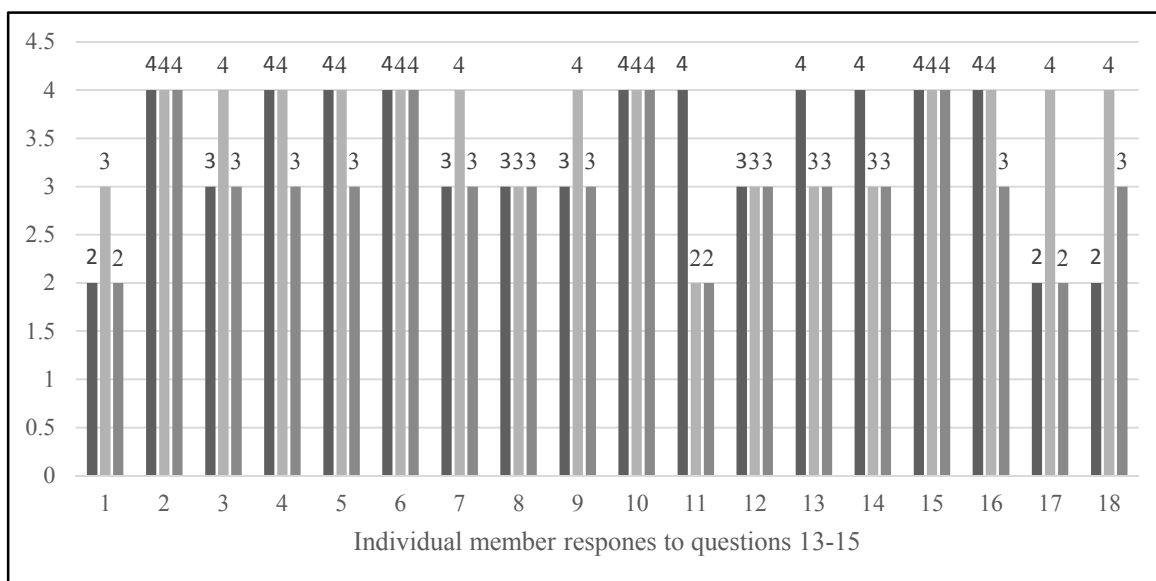
Questions 13-15 asked the overall opinion of the church's effectiveness in ministry training, the necessity of education for the associate minister, and the favorability of the associate minister's preaching.

Question 13: Is the church effective in training for ministry?

Question 14: Do you think it necessary for ministers to have education for ministry?

Question 15: What is the overall opinion of your associate minister's preaching?

Chart 6. Individual members' responses to questions 13-15 for Church C



On the average, the church group C responses for Question 13 were more than adequate but less than high that the church was effective in training ministers, responses for Question 14 were more than adequate but less than high that they believe education is necessary for ministers, and for Question 15, the members had an adequate opinion about the associate minister's preaching. (See Table 10.)

Table 10: Mean scores for Questions 13-15 for Church C

Question 13	Question 14	Question 15
3.3	3.6	3.0

Church Group C Descriptive Statistics and Findings for Question 16

Question 16 asked what the members believed were missing from the preaching ministry in their particular church. Possible responses were lack of education, lack of training, lack of understanding the congregation, other, or there is nothing missing at all. Church group C members' responses follow in Table 11.

Table 11. Church Group C Responses to Question 16

Lack of education	3
Lack of training	5
Lack of understanding the congregation	5
Other	Lack of spirit-filled proclamation; Lack of faith
There is nothing missing at all	6

Three (3) of the members indicated there was a lack of education, five (5) of the members indicated a lack of training, five (5) indicated a lack of understanding the congregation, six (6) indicated there was nothing missing all, and two (2) identified spirit-filled proclamation and faith is missing from the preaching ministry. For the most part, church group C expressed that there was nothing missing at all from the preaching ministry. However, close to that response the members indicated that a lack of training and understanding congregation was missing.

Analysis Summary

Overall, the pastor group provided the lowest scores, however, no one in any group indicated that the associate minister was not effective at all. The pastor group indicated that ministry of the associate minister was less than adequate but a little more than somewhat

(questions 1-13), and they indicated that the overall ministry of the associate minister was adequate. In spite of their low scores, the pastor group provided the highest scores for question 14, which asked whether they believed it was necessary for the associate minister to be educated.

In contrast, members of the church groups also indicated that education should be necessary for the associate ministers. However, of the 37 combined total church members, 11 indicated there was nothing missing at all in the preaching ministry of the associate minister (question 16). In line with their low scores for the effectiveness of the associate ministry, the pastor group did not indicate nothing was missing at all. They believed the preaching ministry lacked one of the various choices for question 16. (See Table 12.)

Table 12: Mean scores for questions 1-15 for all groups

	Questions 1-12	Question 13	Question 14	Question 15
Pastor Group	2.9	2.7	3.8	3
Church Group A	3.4	2.8	3.1	3.7
Church Group B	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.1
Church Group C	3	3.3	3.6	3

Chapter 4

This chapter contains an interpretation of the findings for the analysis of data and the ministry implications for education in ministry. Additionally, theological reflection in light of the precedent literature are examined. Finally, recommendations are included to help inform ministers and associate ministers of the need for education in ministry.

Analysis of Results

The intentions of this study was to provide empirical support for the need for education among ministers and associate minister. The researcher used observations of pastors and church members to show that the lack of education among associates preaching substantiated the inadequacies in explaining Christian doctrine and principles adequately. On a small scale, the data did provide results to support the established observations for this study. However, because the sample was small more substantial research may be necessary to further validate the need for education for associate ministers.

In this research, many of the surveys in the pastors group were not returned. Twenty five surveys were mailed out however, six were returned. Of the six surveys that were returned by pastors all indicated that there is a need for associate ministers to be educated in order to be effective in preaching. The precedent literature identified the importance of education for those preaching.

For the member group, one hundred survey were sent to four churches however, thirty-seven were returned from three churches that responded. Like the pastors, church members indicated the importance of education for the associate ministers.

The Need for Training

When I joined the U.S. Navy in 1975, I had no idea what to expect when I boarded the train traveling from Richmond Virginia to Orlando Florida. I traveled with six other people who were oblivious to what lie ahead. Upon entering our destination we knew that our lives would be changed. Upon arrival we were met with an instructor who began shouting orders. We knew right away that if we were to become a part of the institution of military service we would have to study the regimens and disciplines that would help us mold into Sailors. After training we were assigned to our various duty stations where we would carry out the rest of our career. I was trained on board ship as a medical personnel. This training prepared me for the task of caring for the people on board the ship.

Ministers should have the frame of mind that when accepting the call into the ministry they need to obtain the necessary training to prepare them for the service of preaching. They must not come with the mentality that they can depend solely upon the Bible as the word of God to lead and guide them to proclaim the message with clarity and understanding as they lead others. The question must be asked as to what kind of job are we doing and are we effective. If the preacher is to preach sound doctrine,¹⁰⁸ his role should be to do his best to present himself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.¹⁰⁹

Church members are becoming more educated and would require associate who are academically trained. There will need to more than just the study of the Bible to satisfy preaching. Ministers will have to take a proactive role to meet the challenges of ministry. There

¹⁰⁸ Titus 2:1.

¹⁰⁹ 2 Timothy 2:15.

has to be self-examination of self to determine how one can be effective in their assignment. It is imperative that preachers come to know their short coming in a changing society and how to preach to those demands. They have to rightly divide the word of truth as Paul caution Timothy. Followers who have become more literate and educated would find themselves either satisfied or dissatisfied with their associates. The preacher must be able to shore up the righteousness of Christ, moral convictions, principles and the sacredness of Jesus Christ. They must infect people with the principles of God, and doctrine and excite and direct their lives in following Christ. C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya are insistent in *The Black Church in The African American Experience* that if the Black Church is to have a viable future the need for professional seminary education appears to be critical. They recognized that the educational issues is problematic for most black churches because the historical evangelical background of the Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostals did not have stringent educational demands but only required evidence of a personal call from God to the ministry. The anti-intellectual and fundamentalist strains of that tradition have made it difficult for innovative church leaders and bishops to make professional seminary education a requirement for the ministry.¹¹⁰

I was trained to help people in the military and as such I would find it wise that ministers get the training they need as they embark on ministry. There should always be an expectation that when there is a preaching moment biblical doctrine and principle should be clear and God's word of truth rightly handle. For ministers called into God's service, this can be devastatingly hard if they are not prepared. What makes God's call hard? Preparation. By setting the frameworks of hermeneutical study and understanding the importance of the tools God has given

¹¹⁰ Eric C. Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 130.

the minister to carry out the responsibility they have been assigned to prepare them for the laborious task before them.

Response to the Issue

This research wanted to determine whether a lack of education affected the overall preaching performance of associate ministers. In asking the questions, do you consider the preaching effective in satisfying listeners' expectations and is he/she skilled in biblical interpretation and theological understanding? The pastors and members who took and returned the surveys revealed that there was a need for education among their associates. They also indicated that education was a definite step in helping with the skill of biblical and theological understanding. John A. Broadus said in *Preaching* magazine that the minister should study through observing the occasions of life from the currents of his congregation in order to rightly deliver the message. Whether studying individuals, culture, the church or oneself, strength and freshness in preaching comes from the labor of much study. Preachers must process and analyze both the text and the context within which each sermon is preached. Beyond analysis, the preacher should study associations in order to create a sense of perspicuity in freshness.¹¹¹

The survey study also revealed that the associates needed to have a dedication and commitment to church ministry. Six of the church members wrote additional comments indicating that their associates needed to be more in tune with what is going on with their listeners. James Broadus in the same article from *Preaching* magazine reminds the preacher that freshness must be established as a regular discipline early in ministry. This practice will prove helpful as the minister ages and loses his youthfulness and novelty in the pulpit, Broadus argues. Lack of freshness, Broadus asserts, yields an uninterested and disconnected audience. The

¹¹¹ Mark M. Overstreet, "Preaching Rediscovered: Broadus: Lost Lectures and the Recovery of Exposition," *Preaching*, 25, no. 1 (2009): 31.

minister maintains freshness through the study of Scripture, systematic theology, and other formal academic endeavors combined with an increase in the preacher's ability to address difficult subjects in common terms from the pulpit.¹¹²

Recommendation for Education Practice

Based on the results of the research project and precedent literature of this study, this section provides recommendations for educational practices. This project has determined that there is a good probability that a lack of education among associate ministers does not occur as a result of there being no resources for study. Any time spent in preparation and study by using various Bible study resources will increase understanding. Although more academic resources are available and may provide teaching and learning tasks with knowledge and understanding of biblical principles, preachers will be able to adapt the resources to their preaching and teaching needs much more readily. Ministers and associates should devise an effective training strategy and maintain a constant realization of what it is that meets the needs of ministry in the church and be guided by what directions their ministry is headed.

Upon during this research, I became aware of an abundance of resources readily available. For those seeking theological education there are a number of theological seminaries that are offering free courses to those who are not seeking a formal degree. This is great for church leaders in that it is not based on their educational levels, thus benefiting pastors and lay leaders. Based on this research project, the majority of those surveyed revealed that there is a need for education among their associate ministers. Those who have a better perspective on their inadequacies will best be able to direct their path in obtaining the right educational tools.

¹¹² Ibid.

Contribution to Literature Review

The literature review identifies sources relevant for the preacher to guide them toward knowing and experiencing God's purpose and plan for their lives. Ultimately, application of education should produce preachers who are intellectually and spiritually mature and practicing the disciplines that demonstrate their understanding of doctrine and theological principles.

However, based on the research, there are African American churches who have a number of associate ministers who do not have formal education and are thus not fully able to understand and preach doctrinal and theological principles effectively. This does not imply that they are not capable. However, they do not have the necessary tools that results in intellectual maturity.

Essential tools for effective biblical preaching are educational resources. The precedent literature has indicated that educational resources will help the associate propel to greater understanding of Scripture when properly chosen and implemented with effective learning educational resources can make a difference in the preaching and understanding biblical principles. One of the best practices a minister can do to be well prepared is by spending time in study using resources such as commentaries, study Bibles, Bible dictionaries, and so forth. However, this research has revealed that pursuing the necessary education for ministry will impact the ministers overall preaching and interpretation of biblical doctrine and principles. Because of the nature of education in ministry, the goal of learning perhaps a specialized strategy of preparation may have more positive results.

Training for Associates in Ministry

The Apostle Paul gives a reminder in Ephesians 4:11-14 of God's giftedness so that the gospels message would go forth in a manner that would reach people with clarity.

“And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelist, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the eaves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”¹¹³

John R.W. Stott in *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* says that the highest service that men may attain to on earth is to preach the Word of God. This service falls peculiarly to priests, and therefore God more straightly demands it of them... And for this cause, Jesus Christ left other works and occupied Himself mostly in preaching, and thus did His apostles, and for this, God loved them.

The Church, however, is honoured most by the preaching of God’s Word, and hence this is the best service that priests may render unto God... And thus, if our bishops preach not in their own persons, and hinder true priests from preaching, they are in the sins of the bishops who killed the Lord Jesus Christ.¹¹⁴

These words by John Stott make it certain that we cannot handle Scripture adequately in the pulpit if our doctrine of Scripture is inadequate, conversely he says evangelical Christians, who have the highest doctrine of Scripture in the Church, should be conspicuously the most conscientious preachers.¹¹⁵ In becoming a conscientious preacher and to prepare for this assignment, one can find many avenues that may be taken in preparing for ministry. A church can develop a training program to meet these needs..

¹¹³ Ephesians 4:11-14.

¹¹⁴ John R.W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1982), 22-23.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 99.

Recommended Training Program for Associates in Ministry

This author has developed a training program for his church, which can help associate ministers develop and become more effective in ministry. This training program is a work in progress that will be developed with the assistance of the senior pastor who will lead in helping the associate ministers to refine their craft and be preachers “rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). The training will be held over a six-month, consecutive period and create bridge to further training. During this period, training will take place twice a month and provide lessons on the theory and practices of preaching as well as other essential topics that will further develop associate ministers. Primary to the training will be the lessons on sermon development, which will require that associates select a text with classroom assistance and develop the text into a sermon. Over the course of the training, the associate ministers will evaluate one another as they preach their sermons before the class. At the end of the six month period, each student will be able to map their progress based on the evaluations. Following the six-month training, when the associate minister completes a sermon that has been preached before the congregation, the senior pastor will provide feedback and instructions for further training, if necessary.

Five principles will be the focus of this six month training.

1. An understanding of the theory and practice of preaching.
To be effective preachers, associate ministers must learn basic preaching theory so that they can correctly interpret and understand the biblical text or exegete the text. The work of rightly dividing the Word of God demands good exegesis so that the biblical text can be applied, thus, changing the lives of congregants. Included in this training will be lessons on the distinctiveness of African-American preaching.
2. An understanding of how to develop and implement a sermon.
Sermon preparation enables the associate minister to present the best work possible during a preaching opportunity. Because there is a plethora of information available to congregants, associate ministers must seek to present content that can hold the attention and appeal to the minds and hearts of listeners.
3. An understanding of the doctrinal principles that undergird the ministry of the church.

Associate ministers need to know and understand the doctrines of the church, which includes what they believe about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible. The sermons of associate ministers must be built on what they know about God; therefore, what they know must be true. When the truth about God and other doctrinal topics are the foundation of sermons, the knowledge and understanding of the congregants will be enhanced; but more importantly, their relationship with and faith in God will be strengthened.

4. An understanding of spiritual disciplines.

Associate ministers need to understand and practice daily spiritual disciplines, which include prayer, Bible study, fasting, and meditating so that they can be spiritually strong and grow in their personal walk with God. Also, through personal understanding and practice, they will be better equipped to teach others these essential disciplines through their sermons and other teaching opportunities.

5. An understanding of the functions of the church.

Associate ministers need to have a thorough understanding of why the church meets and of the strategies that help the church fulfill its calling. The basic work of the church is done by a body of believers through evangelism, ministry, worship, discipleship, and fellowship.

Four textbooks for the course will include *Invitation to Biblical Preaching* by Donald R. Sunukjian, which is a practical guide to developing twenty-first century sermons that are biblically faithful, clear, and engaging; *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament* by Kevin J. Vanhoozer to increase theological understanding; *Discipled Warriors* by Chuck Lawless, to guide a study of the church functions, and *Spiritual Disciplines* by Don Whitney to lead in the development and practice of spiritual disciplines.

Upon successful completion of the course, associate ministers will be able to:

- A. Implement proper study methods for the preparation of sermons.
- B. Develop and preach well-rounded sermons for the African-American congregation.
- C. Understand the vital role of various kinds of expository preaching for the church.
- D. Have a well-rounded understanding of the ministry of preaching.
- E. Be equipped to promote life change and spiritual development in the lives of others.
- F. Understand and promote the functions of the church.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

People from all walks of life have been called into the ministry of preaching. In accepting this role, they come with the knowledge they have gained by watching or imitating a preacher whom they have come to admire. Unfortunately, some think, as Jacqueline Blalock Montague's dissertation speaks of, that what has become a well-known statement of many black church people, which reflects a great myth of the black church that if you are called by God, wisdom flows directly to you: therefore, an intermediary is not needed, indicating that ministers do not need education to fulfill a ministry calling in the Black church.¹¹⁶ In believing this, some may not see how their ministry could fare better with knowledge and understanding gained through academics. Cleophus LaRue has talked much about the imitations of other preachers that have been admired. How they may be familiar with Scripture but have no idea of presenting doctrine or principles of the Bible. In the book *Power in the Pulpit, How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* by Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, they talk of a tool box which contains many tools of all shapes and sizes for all kinds of tasks. They state that the more tools a man has in his toolbox, the more tasks he will be able to accomplish.¹¹⁷ So it is with the intellectual development of the preacher. They have been called upon to preach, the more they have studied for ministry, the better prepared intellectually they are for carrying out the task effectively.

Hershael W. York and Bert Decker in *Preaching with Bold Assurance* reminds us of the challenge of biblical preaching today by letting us know that the needs of people have not

¹¹⁶ Jacqueline Blalock Montague, "Biblical Hermeneutics for the Twenty-First Century African American Church: Introducing Seven Key Solutions Promoting Higher Education," (DMin thesis, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminar, 2014), .

¹¹⁷ Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 74.

changed since the Bible was completed. They are still born into a sinful world, separated from God, in need of salvation. They still struggle with “the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does” (1 John 2:16), which are the same temptations that Eve faced in the Garden of Eden when she “saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom” (Gen. 3:6). Thousands of years later, our temptations and struggles may take on a different form, but at their core they are still the same struggles as those presented in Scripture. So people still need to hear God’s teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16), but they also need to hear it in the way that best communicates and demonstrates the Bible’s relevance. Further, they need to be shown how to *apply* the truth that has been presented.¹¹⁸

The Author’s Personal Realization for Education

Having served in an African American church and receiving my call into the preaching ministry and serving for more than twenty years in seven churches, I understand the need for education in ministry. This author has served in several capacities within the church: a Sunday school superintendent, Sunday school teacher, singles ministry leader, pastoral care minister, prayer ministry leader, and an associate minister for fifteen of those years. I have also taught conferences at Lifeway Christian Resources at Black Church Week in Ridgecrest North Carolina¹¹⁹ and conferences with the National Baptist Convention USA in Detroit, Michigan, Phoenix, Arizona, and Dallas, Texas. Based on the insights that this author has gained through

¹¹⁸ Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching With Bold Assurance* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 6.

¹¹⁹ This author has developed and presented the following conferences in Ridgecrest N.C for Lifeway Christian Resources in: How to Simplify Your Life; The Simple Life; Praying in Faith; The Call to Follow Christ. Witness to The World: Fellowship with Believers; Keeping the Unity of the Spirit; Perimeters of Light; 11 Innovations of the Church

academic training in homiletics, hermeneutics, and classroom teachings, evidence has been exemplified as to why there is a need for education in the present ministry setting.

The need for academics in ministry came to this author shortly after answering the call into the preaching ministry. After developing and preaching my initial sermon, there was a reality check to show that I did not know as much as I thought. There was a quick realization that there would or could not be any change if I could not hear or understand what I was doing. Even though there was a knowledge of the Bible, there was not an understanding of some of its tenets of doctrines or principles. There was a lot more that needed to be learned. Throughout the early periods of my ministry, there was a great awareness of inadequacies in trying to develop sermons while listening to other preachers who seemed to have it all together. It was during undergraduate studies that this author received a much greater exposure and understanding of the Bible.¹²⁰ I begin to recognize that if I were going to preach in a way that was simple and clear for the congregants to understand then study was necessary and needed.

Following graduation from Southern Methodist College, the author continued studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where studies in homiletics, theology, church history, hermeneutics (the interpretation of Scripture), and the languages (Greek and Hebrew) help gave a deeper understanding of the call of the preaching ministry and why it became necessary for studying. The words of Paul to Timothy became clearer? “Study to show yourself approved, rightly dividing the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). The author recalls this point when he had to demonstrate this in his first preaching class at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The knowledge gained from that experience was crucial in understanding the contents

¹²⁰ The undergraduate studies were at Southern Methodist College in Orangeburg South Carolina in the areas of Bible Studies and Ethics.

of preaching. This was emphasized throughout the course in that hermeneutic and homiletics were especially important in this and any preachers' life.

Upon graduation from seminary, the author continued studies in theology at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. While in these studies, the author accepted a position in his church as a prayer ministry leader and conference speaker, knowing that he would be serving many in need. This further confirmed the need for training. The moment that reinforced the need for training came when this author was called upon to develop a presentation on Biblical Manhood¹²¹ for the Stone Rivers District Association. The presentation was presented to more than fifty men and based on the knowledge of hermeneutics and theology gave this author a compelling stimulate for the reasons of education in ministry.

Observations Drawn From the Study

The information gained from the research and surveys for this project can be used to inform ministers and associate ministers of the need for education. It can also help them get a glimpse of the attitudes of the members of the church as it relates to the effectiveness of the preaching ministry.

The Necessity of Ministerial Preparation

Charles Haddon Spurgeon pinned these words from his book *Lectures to My Students* that we are few and we have a desperate fight before us; therefore, it is needful that every man should be made the most of, and nerved to his highest point of strength. It is desirable that the Lord's ministers should be the picked men of the church, yea, of the entire universe, for such the age demands; therefore, in reference to yourselves and your personal qualification, I give you the

¹²¹ This was a presentation presented at the Stone River Baptist Association annual meeting for men. The Stone River Baptist Association is an association comprised of more than 100 churches in the Stone River District where this author serves as the Lay Ministry Leader since 2014.

motto, “*Go forward.*” *Go forward* in personal attainments, *forward* in gifts and in grace, *forward* in fitness, for the work, and *forward* in conformity to the image of Jesus.¹²² Even though First Corinthians 11:28 says to examining oneself, whereas it speaks of preparing for communion a preacher should heed the same words as he prepare for the preaching ministry. He should do a heart check and see if he is truly prepared to minister to the people. There is a great necessity for preparation in ministry as stated in chapter one of this study, preachers of today are finding that education is becoming a must. Congregations are more educated, and they expect to have preachers who are able to demonstrate the same. “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1Tim. 4:16).

Preachers of today will find that if their interaction with the text is thought provoking and challenging, people will tend to connect with those who will put forth the effort of connecting with them. The preacher can also see that with the opportunities of education they now preach doctrinal and theological messages that are relevant to the lives of their members.

The Necessity of the Relevance of Biblical Scholarship

Cain Hope Felder opens us to the reality of interpretation by explaining to us that various methods have been used to interpret the biblical text in its own context and to explore its contemporary relevance. He says whether the biblical interpreter has been a lay person reading the Bible “devotionally,” a pastor preparing a sermon, or a trained scholar doing technical exegesis, some method or methods of interpretation have always been operative.¹²³ Hershael W.

¹²² C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures To My Students* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 205.

¹²³ Cain Hope Felder, *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 7.

York reminds us in *Preaching with Bold Assurance* that if we want our hearers to feel compelled to apply the truth, they need to hear the truth presented in a compelling manner. We must not content ourselves with content alone, but must also preach to the audience in a way that connects with their lives.¹²⁴ The main issue in regards to interpretation is that of acceptance of the fact of a need for study. Proverbs 4:7 says, the beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya pointed out in *The Black Church in the African American Experience* that if the Black Church is to have a viable future, the need for professional seminary education appears to be critical. They recognized that the educational issues is problematic for most black churches because the historical evangelical background of the Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostals did not have stringent educational demands but only required evidence of a personal call from God to the ministry. The anti-intellectual and fundamentalist strains of that tradition have made it difficult for innovative church leaders and bishops to make professional seminary education a requirement for the ministry.¹²⁵

Jacqueline Blalock Montague in her dissertation titled “Biblical Hermeneutics for the Twenty-First Century African American Church: Introducing Seven Solutions Promoting Higher Education” forecasts an expected transformation from the seminary experience in theological education. She said that you will find your self-understanding dramatically altered through the seminary experience, and you may at times feel as if you are limping along after you encounter God in a new way. She explains her reasoning is based on the idea that Jacob’s all night match

¹²⁴ Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman 2003), 6.

¹²⁵ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 130.

with the angel (Genesis 32:22-32) dramatically exemplifies how people are affected when they dare to touch holy things.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Montague, 95.

APPENDIX A

DRAFT COPIES OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 10/7/15 to -- Protocol # 2315.100715

CONSENT FORM

Understanding African American Preaching; The Style, Culture, and Rationale for the Worship Experience and The Value for Education

Harry Greg Zimmerman Jr
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study titled *Understanding African American Preaching: The Style, Culture, and Rationale for the Worship Experience and the Value for Education*. You were selected as a possible participant because your church is ideally suited for my research because of your membership totals. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Harry Greg Zimmerman Jr, D. Min. candidate at Liberty University School of Divinity.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of uneducated ministers in the pulpit. Education is vital to all professions, including ministry; therefore, the researcher is hoping that the findings of this research may encourage ministers who have not pursued the appropriate studies for their calling to seek such.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following: complete an anonymous survey. The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are no risks in participating in this study.

The researcher is hoping that the findings of this research may serve to enhance the experience for church members. Participants will not receive any personal benefits.

Compensation:

Participants will not receive compensation for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home, and only the researcher will have access to the records. The records will be shredded after 3 years. The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 10/7/15 to -- Protocol # 2315.100715

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Harry Greg Zimmerman Jr. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 615-519-3462 or hzimmerman@liberty.edu. Mr. Zimmerman's faculty mentor is Dr. Kevin King. Dr. King can be contacted at klkingsr@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone

other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971

University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

APPENDIX B

Survey Questionnaire

Demographics

1. What is your current position in your church?
 - ☐ Senior or teaching pastor
 - ☐ Associate pastor (youth, children's, music, singles, etc.)
 - ☐ Other church staff
 - ☐ Lay leader
 - ☐ Other _____
 2. What is your age?
 - ☐ 20-44
 - ☐ 45-64
 - ☐ 65-75
 - ☐ 75 or over
 3. What is your marital status?
 - ☐ Single
 - ☐ Living in a committed relationship
 - ☐ Married
 - ☐ Widowed
 - ☐ Separated or divorced
 4. What is your highest level of education?
 - ☐ Less than high school
 - ☐ High School graduate
 - ☐ Some college, trade or vocational
 - ☐ College degree
 - ☐ Post graduate work or degree
-

Questions: This questionnaire is in reference to associate ministers who preach. This is not in reference to the pastor.

1. Do you consider the preaching effective in satisfying listeners' expectations?
 - ☐ Highly effective
 - ☐ Adequately effective
 - ☐ Somewhat effective
 - ☐ Not effective at all
2. Is the preacher skilled in biblical interpretation and theological understanding?
 - ☐ Highly skilled

- ☐ Adequately skilled
 - ☐ Somewhat skilled
 - ☐ Not skilled at all
3. Does the minister have a proper understanding of the Bible?
- ☐ Highly knowledgeable
 - ☐ Adequately knowledgeable
 - ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable
 - ☐ Very little knowledge
4. Does the minister give a clear explanation of the sermon text?
- ☐ Highly explains
 - ☐ Adequately explains
 - ☐ Somewhat explains
 - ☐ Does not explain well
5. Does the minister have an understanding of contemporary culture?
- ☐ Highly understands
 - ☐ Adequately understands
 - ☐ Somewhat understands
 - ☐ Does not understand at all
6. Do you feel the minister is confident in his or her abilities?
- ☐ Highly confident
 - ☐ Adequately confident
 - ☐ Somewhat confident
 - ☐ Not confident at all
7. Does the associate minister's sermon help the listeners solve problems addressing issues in culture?
- ☐ Highly helpful
 - ☐ Adequately helpful
 - ☐ Somewhat helpful
 - ☐ Not helpful at all
8. Does the associate minister preach sermons that are relevant to the text?
- ☐ Highly relevant
 - ☐ Adequately relevant
 - ☐ Somewhat relevant
 - ☐ Not relevant at all
9. Is the associate minister in tune with what his or her listeners are thinking?
- ☐ Highly in tune
 - ☐ Adequately in tune
 - ☐ Somewhat in tune

- ☐ Not in tune at all
10. How satisfied are you with the associate minister's preaching?
- ☐ Highly satisfied
 - ☐ Adequately satisfied
 - ☐ Somewhat satisfied
 - ☐ Not satisfied at all
11. Is the associate minister's interaction with the text thought provoking and challenging?
- ☐ Highly thought provoking and challenging
 - ☐ Adequately thought provoking and challenging
 - ☐ Somewhat thought provoking and challenging
 - ☐ Not thought provoking or challenging at all
12. Does the associate minister communicate with clarity?
- ☐ Highly communicates with clarity
 - ☐ Adequately communicates with clarity
 - ☐ Somewhat communicates with clarity
 - ☐ Does not communicate clarity at all
13. Is the church effective in training for ministry?
- ☐ Highly effective
 - ☐ Adequately effective
 - ☐ Somewhat effective
 - ☐ Not effective at all
14. Do you think it necessary for ministers to have education for ministry?
- ☐ Highly necessary
 - ☐ Adequately necessary
 - ☐ Somewhat necessary
 - ☐ Not necessary at all
15. What is the overall opinion of your associate minister's preaching?
- ☐ Highly favorable
 - ☐ Adequately favorable
 - ☐ Somewhat favorable
 - ☐ Not favorable at all
16. What do you believe is missing from the preaching ministry?
- ☐ Lack of education
 - ☐ Lack of training
 - ☐ Lack of understanding the congregation
 - ☐ Other _____
 - ☐ There is nothing missing at all

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Date: December 2015

VITA**Harry Zimmerman Jr.**

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Personal Information

Marital Status: Married, Christina Zimmerman

Education

DMin (Candidate), 2015, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA
MTS, 2010, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA
M.Div., Evangelism and Missions, 2008, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,
Louisville, KY
BA, Bible Studies, 2004, Southern Methodist College, Orangeburg, SC
BA, Music, 1975, Virginia State College, Petersburg, VA

Other Training

Expository Preaching Certificate (Candidate), 2015, Union University/ Stephen Olford
Institute, Memphis
Transitional Pastor Training, May 2012, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, TN
Education courses, 1995-1997, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL

Religious Employment

Associate Minister, Faith United Missionary Baptist Church, Nashville TN, 2012-
present
Associate Minister, First Gethsemane Baptist Church, Louisville, KY, 2004-2009
Youth Minister Leader, Greater Faith Baptist Church, Orangeburg, SC, 2001-2004
After School Program Director, Greater Faith Baptist Church, Orangeburg, SC, 2002-2004

Additional Experience

Associate Minister, Faith United Baptist Church, Nashville, TN, 2012-present
Associate Minister, Simeon Baptist Church, Antioch, TN, 2009-2011
Instructor, National Baptist Congress, Dallas, TX, 2014
Instructor, National Baptist Congress, Dallas, TX, 2013
Instructor, National Baptist Men's Training, Nashville, TN, 2013
Conference Leader, LifeWay Christian Resources, Ridgecrest, NC, 2009-2012
Baptist College Ministry Intern, Kentucky State University, Frankfort, KY, 2007

IRB APPROVAL/WAIVER PAGE

October 7, 2015

Harry Greg Zimmerman, Jr.

IRB Exemption 2315.100715: Understanding African American Preaching: The Style, Culture, and Rationale for the Worship Experience and the Value for Education

Dear Harry,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:

(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu. Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP *Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*

The Graduate School

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