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THEORY AND PRACTICES IN PASTORING

AMERICANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

A CONTEMPORARY AGENDA

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By

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ABSTRACT

THEORY AND PRACTICES IN PASTORING AMERICANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT: A CONTEMPORARY AGENDA

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There is a plethora of literature on pastoring churches. However, very little literature exists on the subject of pastoring African American churches. The belief that "man was created in the image of God" negates the contention that there are inherent differences in the people of the world. It is a Biblical fact that all of mankind descended from common ancestors, Adam, Eve and Noah (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7, 21-25), Genesis, Chapters 9, 10, 11). It must, therefore, be understood that differences existing in human behavior can not be attributed to ethnic or racial inheritance. However, it must be recognized that differences in human behavior along racial and ethnic lines do exist, resulting from varying socio-cultural experiences. In this light, therefore, Americans of African descent have differences that are peculiar to their culture and lifestyles as compared to the culture and lifestyle of varied Americans.

The differences in the skills necessary to effectively carry out the responsibilities of the Pastor are due to the historical and cultural experience of African Americans; thus, this study investigates the history of the African American.
In addition, the study includes varied ministries of Calvary Evangelical Baptist Church, predominantly an African American congregation located in Portsmouth, Virginia. Methods used and the quality and competency of practices within the ministries will be addressed.
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"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5,6).
"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Many godly people collaborated with me as I sought to complete this project. Without their prayers and support, it would have been extremely difficult. But God has been rich in His mercy and love.

I am deeply indebted . . .
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“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more (Luke 12:48).

The uniqueness of pastoring Americans of African descent varies as much as any questionable issue. African Americans attend nearly every denomination in the world. Today, it is very strange to visit a church in America and not find at least one Black person as a member of the congregation. Yet, there are differences within the African American race, as individuals within other races. To try and make a common denominator of all Blacks into a formation of one character is absurd.

This paper will deal with differences that are assumed to be reality as well as issues that cause division within the body of Christ. The separation of races has brought about social, economic and cultural distinctiveness. For Pastors to ignore the uniqueness of these distinctives of African Americans will hinder the effectiveness of ministering to them. Charitey Simmons in her article Mentors and Managers: Leaders for Black Churches states,

The church traditionally has been the most important institution in the African American Community, although churches are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the various social problems of the community. Perhaps the single most pressing need is for well-trained clergy.¹

This study will also explore the fact that traditionally, churches were gathering places for African Americans to worship God and receive training. Training oftentimes

¹ Charitey Simmons, “Mentors and Managers: Leaders for Black Churches” Christian Century (February 1, 1995), 100.
encompassed more than religious information. Christopher G. Ellison and Darren E. Sherkat, in their article “The ‘Semi-Involuntary Institution’ Revisited: Regional Variations in Church Participation Among Black Americans” states,

Throughout American history, the Black Church has occupied a distinctive position in the individual and collective lives of African Americans. Research over the years has consistently reported that Blacks attend church more frequently, participate in other church-related affairs more often, and belong to more church-affiliated organizations than their White counterparts. Studies indicate that religious institutions continue to play important roles in the Black community, promoting racial awareness and identity. ²

**Purpose of the Study**

The intent of the present study is three-fold: (1) to identify those historical, cultural, social and economic differences that affect ministering to African American churches and communities, (2) to propose a model for the pastor who serves as minister to African Americans through local churches, and (3) to address several contemporary issues that will shape an agenda for pastoring Americans of African descent.

**Statement of the Problem**

Although there is generally a plethora of literature on pastoring churches, there is little information regarding pastoring African American churches. The need for the present study is evidenced by the fact that there is a dearth of literature that specifically addresses the methods of effectively pastoring African Americans. Most

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² Christopher Ellison and Darren E. Sherkat, “The ‘Semi-Involuntary Institution’ Revisited: Regional Variations in Church Participation Among Black Americans” *Social Forces* (June 1995), 73.
of the literature on Black Americans and the church is viewed from a historical perspective.

**Definition of Terms**

Salient terminology’s are applicable to the understanding of this study in perspective:

**African American** –


**Afro-American, adj.** Of or pertaining to American Blacks of African ancestry, their history, or their culture. –*n.* An American Black of African ancestry.3

**African Americans** (American Blacks or Black Americans), racial group in the United States whose dominant ancestry is from sub-Saharan West Africa. Many African Americans also claim European, Native American, or Asian ancestors. A variety of names have been used for African Americans at various points in history. African Americans have been referred to as *Negroes, colored, Blacks,* and *Afro-Americans,* as well as lesser-known terms, such as the 19th-century designation Anglo-African. The terms *Negro* and colored are now rarely used. *African American, Black,* and to a lesser extent *Afro-American,* are used interchangeably today. Economically, Blacks have benefited from the advances made during the civil rights era. The racial disparity in poverty rates has narrowed slightly. The Black middle class has grown substantially. About 43 percent of African Americans now own their homes. However, African Americans are still underrepresented in government and employment. Approximately one-third of the African American population lives in poverty; a rate three times that of White Americans. The unemployment gap between Blacks and Whites has grown. (In 1997 the unemployment rate among African Americans was 2.3 times the rate for Whites. The income gap between Black and White families also continues to widen. Employed Blacks earn only 77 percent of the wages of Whites in comparable jobs, down from 82 percent in 1975.4

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Socio-Cultural -

Socio-cultural, adj: of, relating to, or involving a combination of social and cultural factors. 5
Culture – African American culture is both part of and distinct from American culture. From their earliest presence in North American, Africans have contributed literature, art, agricultural skills, foods, clothing styles, music, and language to American culture. 6

Economic Differences –

Economic, adj. 1. Of or pertaining to the production, development, and management of material wealth, as of a country, household, or business enterprise. 2. Of or pertaining to economics. 3. Of or pertaining to matters of finance. 4. Of or pertaining to the necessities of life; utilitarian. [Ofr. economie, management of household <Lat. oeconomia < Gk. oikonomia <oikonomos, household manager: oikos, house + nemein, to manage.] 7

Pastoring –

(Pas’t-er) (ro’eh; poimen; literally, a helper, or feeder of the sheep (the King James Version <Jer 2:8; 3:15; 10:21; 12:10; 17:16; 22:22; 23:1-2>, and in <Eph 4:11>, Besides the literal sense the word has now a figurative meaning and refers to the minister appointed over a congregation. 8

Dichotomy Theory –

Probably the most widely held view through most of the history of Christian thought has been the view that man is composed of two elements, a material aspect (the body) and an immaterial component (the


6 Microsoft Encarta 98 Encyclopedia, “African Americans: Culture.”


soul and/or spirit). Dichotomy is based on the argument that there are only two substances, one material and the other immaterial. This view does not absolutely necessitate that the soul and the spirit are strictly synonymous; however, it recognizes similar origin and substance (within the immaterial), characterized by different functions. [Gk. dikhomia < dikhotos, divided: dikha, in two + temnein, to cut.] (1) The Genesis account of creation supports the teaching that a material body was energized by the breath of God, and it became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). (2) the words “soul” and “spirit,” are used interchangeably, suggesting similarity in origin (immaterial) yet a functional difference (Gen. 41:8; cf. Ps. 42:6; Jn. 12:24 cf. Jn. 13:21; Mt. 20:28; cf. Mt. 25:50; Heb. 12:23; cf. Rev.6:9). (3) Scripture teaches the idea that the body and the soul (or spirit) constitute man’s entire being (Mt. 10:28; 1 Cor. 5:3). nine

Assumptions

There are a number of basic assumptions that are foundational to the position of this study. It is assumed that the church has a three-fold purpose. (1) To propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ, (2) to facilitate worship, and (3) to serve as a support mechanism for its members and the community at large. With regard to the propagation of the gospel, the unchanging message of the church is that Jesus Christ was crucified, buried and He arose on the third day for the remission of sin. It is the responsibility of the church to proclaim this message to the world. As a facilitator of worship, the church must provide the spiritual atmosphere as well as the physical facility to promote corporate fellowship. As a support mechanism, the church must provide programs for discipleship, counseling, and training. In addition, it must provide for the physical needs of the people.

This study is also based upon the assumption that certain socio-cultural differences affect the pastoring of Americans of African descent. Furthermore, these differences must prescribe the practices employed in such ministry. Therefore, pastors of African American churches should evaluate and structure their ministries to meet the needs of the population being served. Moreover, a crucial factor in meeting those needs is the ability to understand the people, their history, their culture and their concerns. In this regard, ministering to Americans of African descent requires a knowledge and understanding of the issues that are peculiar to this population. This knowledge and understanding must include those factors that influence, motivate, and direct the behavior of African Americans.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*Old Testament Allusions to Black People*

We know that all men can trace their origin and ethnicity to Adam and Noah. Acts 17:26-27 says,

> And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

With Adam being the first man to be created, God blessed him, as we see in Genesis 5:1-2.

Noah was also blessed by God and was told to fill the earth with children. Genesis 9:1 states, "so God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth". In Genesis 9 verses 18 and 19 these statements appear, "now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Jepheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated."

It is important to note in Genesis 9:20-27 that Noah did not curse Ham, who "saw the nakedness of his father", rather he cursed Canaan, one of Ham's sons. It cannot be over emphasized that Noah did not curse all of Ham's sons, only Canaan; since it is being taught erroneously that all dark skinned people are under the curse of Ham. Ham had four sons, Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan. It is very interesting to notice that Ham's descendants are listed throughout the Bible.

One example is Nimrod, the son of Cush. Genesis 10:8-11 states:
Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, ‘Like Nimrod the Mighty hunter before the LORD.’ And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah.

Therefore, as Nineveh, the Assyrians, and even the Tower of Babel appear throughout the scriptures, one can assume that their origin is Cushite.

In 2 Samuel 18:21-33, a Cushite shows the impact of God’s diversity with mankind. The Cushite was sent to David by Joab to take the news about the death of Absalom. No name was given for the Cushite other than "the Cushite".

On the other hand, observation of the family of Canaan reveals in Genesis 10:15-20, that there are many descendants,

Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth; the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, as far as Lasha. There were the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands and in their nations.

Many of these descendants are later found at war with the nation of Israel. The Amorites are probably the most familiar of the nations of the Canaanites in the Bible. Numbers 21:31 states, "Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites". These were wicked people who practiced idolatry even though they were ruled by great kings. In Amos 2:9,10, God said,

Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was as strong as the oaks; Yet I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath. And it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness to possess the land of the Amorite.
It is not difficult to recognize that God gave the children of Israel much of the land that was occupied by the Hamites.

Psalms 106:21,22 states that God delivered the children of Israel from the land of Ham. "They forgot God their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt; Wondrous works in the land of Ham, awesome things by the Red Sea."

Furthermore, the majority of the Old Testament reveals the nation of Israel being in conflict with the many descendants of Ham. There are numerous individuals of Ham's descendants that are mentioned. May one even consider a Hamite identity for Job? The Bible is explicit concerning his identity, yet we know that Job is from "the land of Uz," (Job 1:1). Jeremiah tells us in the book of Lamentations 4:21 about the land of Uz, "Rejoice and be glad, O Daughter of Edom, you who dwell in the land of Uz!" The land of Uz is referenced to Edom. The Edomites were descendants of Esau. Also in Genesis 36:8, "So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir." Esau is Edom.

An examination of the land of Seir prior to Esau's occupation discloses that it was the dwelling place of the ancient nation of the Hittites. Genesis 36:1,2 shows Esau's intermarriage with the Hittites descendants of Canaan. "Now this is the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom. Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite." Additionally, the New Open Bible gives this commentary regarding Uz. "The land of Uz is adjacent to Midian, where Moses lived for forty years, and it is conceivable that Moses obtained a record of the dialogue left by Job or Elihu." It continues to say that "Lamentations 4:21 locates Uz in the area of Edom, southeast of the Dead Sea. This is
also in the region of northern Arabia, and Job's friends come from nearby countries\(^1\). The Arabians are known to be descendants of Ham.

We do know that Job lived during the time of the patriarchs. Job 42:16 says, "After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations." His life span could have been approximately 200 years. Abraham lived 175 years according to Genesis 25:7. Isaac lived 180 years, according to Genesis 35:28. Jacob lived 147 years as mentioned in Genesis 47:28. This would demonstrate that while the Jewish nation was making its historical debut, God fearing Job was alive and well on planet earth. It would be very enlightening to Americans of African descent that they may have common ancestry with this great man of God.

While it would be difficult to definitively identify each of the Hamites regarding racial make up, it can be safely stated that it is most probable that the African American is a descendant of Ham; assuming direct lineage of Noah and therefore Adam. It can therefore be exegetically correct to say that African Americans are of the same genetic pool as the rest of mankind.

*New Testament Allusions to Black People*

It has been over 1900 years since the New Testament was written. With respect to places that are mentioned in the Bible, many countries and provinces have changed their names. History has provided us with great insight of the migration and relocation of people all over the world. Integration and interracial marriages have permeated every

race of people. The New Testament provides us a view of different races that are incorporated into God’s program.

Although they were not mentioned by name, many Hamites were in the New Testament. As early as Matthew 1:3-6, God lists four women in the genealogy of Jesus.

Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

Listed in the Table of Nations as descendents of Ham, were Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba. Raymond E. Brown gives a very important observation about this genealogy. “These women were held up as an example of how God uses the unexpected to triumph over human obstacles on behalf of His planned Messiah.”\(^2\) Cain Hope Felder says,

Regardless of the social or ethnic stigmas originally attached to the identities of these four Old Testament Women, Matthew demonstrates that they exercised leadership by performing a service for God important enough to entitle them a place in the genealogy of Jesus.\(^3\)

Due to Bathsheba’s marriage to David, dark skinned people were included in the Messianic line. Because Jesus was from the seed of David, and of mixed ancestry, any person from any background can thus identify with the Christ.

Simon of Cyrene, the man who was “compelled” to carry the cross of Jesus, was from Cyrene in North Africa. He is recorded as the father of Alexander and Rufus in the

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book of Mark. (Mark 15:21). It is believed that Simon of Cyrene and his family, through
the witness of Paul, became Christians (Romans 16:13).

In Acts 13:1, we see two more Africans, Simeon that was called Niger and Lucius
of Cyrene.

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets
and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and
Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with
Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

“Prophets and teachers”, they were guided by the Holy Spirit to ordain Barnabas and
Saul for the work of the ministry. We can presume that Simeon was African because of
his surname “Niger”, which in Latin means “black”. Lucius, who was born in Cyrene
can also be presumed to be of African descent. Both men were leaders in the church at
Antioch.

The only Ethiopian mentioned in the New Testament was the eunuch, the official
or treasurer to the Candace (queen of Meroe in Nubia). The Hebrew word for “Eunuch,”
translated in our English version of the Bible, is “officer” and “chamberlain.” Phillip, the
Evangelist, baptized this eunuch on the road to Gaza (Acts 8:26-39). Ethiopia is a Greek
term meaning “burnt faces”. To the Egyptians, Ethiopia is called “Cush”; to the
Christians it is known as “Nubia”. We can therefore assume from the above portrayal
that the “eunuch” was an African.

While ministering to a crowd of people at the lakeside of Galilee, Jesus met the
Syro-Phoenician woman.

From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon, and he
entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be
hidden. For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit
heard about Him, and she came and fell at his feet. The woman was a
Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast
the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, “Let the
children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’ bread and throw it to the little dogs.” And she answered and said to Him, “yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs.” Then He said to her, “For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter. And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.” (Mark 7:24-30).

Mark indicates that she was Greek by nation, Matthew that she was a Canaanite (Matt. 15:22). Felder points out,

Like the relentless widow in Luke 18, the Syro-Phoenician woman’s bold faith helps her gain full access, recognition, and direct assistance from Jesus, despite traditional biases against her full humanity. 4

The Impact of the African American Experience Within A Historical Perspective

Inferences can be made that within the gene pool of African Americans there is the common origin of genetic material from Adam and Eve. This statement can be made and justified for each race of human beings.

The point is that whatever greatness is resident in the nations that find their roots in the sons of Ham, must find the heritage of that greatness in God. It is He who uniquely, sovereignly, and supernaturally authorized the racial differences that is the basis of those nations. 5

The particular uniqueness must, therefore, be found in cultural diversity brought about by the total historical and social experiences of the people in question. Some of the aspects of the experiences will now be considered.

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4 Ibid.

Black history has been characterized as a violent, turbulent, tear filled experience.

James Weldon Johnson, noted Negro poet and civil rights leader, expresses this in “Lift Every Voice and Sing”, the renowned *Negro National Anthem*:

Lift Every Voice and Sing
Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun,
of the new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears have been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might, led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray,
Lest our feet stray from the places, Our God, where we met Thee,
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
may we forever stand.
True to our GOD, true to our native land.  

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Black Africa witnessed the early development of individual freedom and the influence of religious belief as the sole rule and guide to faith and practice.

Chancellor Williams, of Howard University, developed the representative list of human rights, which is presented hereafter from customary laws and/or constitutions of early Black African societies. “Every member of the community had--

1. The right to equal protection of the law.
2. The right to a home.
3. The right to land sufficient for earning livelihood for one’s self and family.
4. The right to aid in times of trouble.
5. The right to petition for redress of grievances.
6. The right to criticize and condemn any acts by the authorities or proposed new laws. (Opposition groups, in some areas called “The Youngmen,” were recognized by law).
7. The right to a general education covering morals and good manners, family rights and responsibilities, kinship groups and social organization, neighborhoods and boundaries, farming and marketing, rapid mental calculation, and family, clan, tribal and state histories.
8. The right of a man, even a slave, to rise to occupy the highest position in the state if he has the requisite ability and character.”

Furthermore, Williams states that fundamental theories and principles of

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customary law that are the foundation of Western Style developed in pre-contact African stateless societies. He views the influences of Arabic and European contacts as detrimental to the development of Black African social structure. This detrimental influence becomes significant when considering the African American enslavement experience in light of the fact that their cultural roots can be traced to sophisticated social structures that were characterized by “chiefless societies”.

Complicated migrations also led to social upheaval, which was further aggravated by contact from less compassionate societies. Williams notes that tremendous pressures exerted on Africans actually began in prehistoric times. These pressures which uprooted so many settled communities came from two principal agents of destruction. The first agent of destruction was the natural environment. The slow, relentless incursions of the desert sand destroyed the possibility of agriculturally based economies. The loss of arable land brought about the necessity to migrate from historical homelands. The second agent of destruction was the incursions of Asian hordes. The Europeans did not arrive until later; however, their invasion did accelerate the movement. Both of these agents potentiated the chance of tribal clashes with otherwise distant people when forced to find new land. “The migrations were the moving phenomena in the tragedy of the destruction of ancient African culture.”

The Christian influence in Africa is nearly as old as Christianity itself. In the second century Victor, the first Pope whose native language was Latin, was a North

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 317.
African and so was the Emperor Severus who reigned between 193 and 211. By 1444, captives brought back to Portugal were being given to the Catholic Church and being trained in Latin and theology as a prelude to returning to Africa.

African and Euro-African clergy, like their Portuguese counterparts, produced examples of holiness and devotion, but Black and White alike were often reluctant to exchange the relative comfort and security of Sao Thome and the Cape Verdes for life on the African mainland.11

The average African American, however, must trace his roots to a different influence of the White church and the social structure, which it sought to uphold. The chronological sequence of the migration of the African American can best be understood in the sequence presented by William L. Banks, in his book The Black Church in the United States.12 The roots of the African American church can be found in the historical period that is covered by the period 1619 through 1776. While nearly twenty million Black Africans were brought to the New World as slaves between the years 1517 and 1840, the majority entered captivity during the 1619-1776 period.

Unlike their European counterparts, the African did not enter the Americas in search of religious freedom or other such noble cause. Instead the African was violently and traumatically uprooted and transported to the Americas for reasons other than his interest.

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11 Ibid., 55.

Memories of Africa were erased. Family ties were destroyed. To safeguard against rebellion, members of the same tribe were separated, for without a common language there would be less chance of revolt. For economic reasons families were split up: a father sold to North Carolina, a mother and baby sent to Georgia, an older child delivered to a plantation owner in Virginia -- never again to see one another.\textsuperscript{13}

Denominational work among the slaves led to Black membership in White churches during the Revival Period from 1777 to 1819. This period was characterized by a rectification of "Christian Ethics" by various legal rulings asserting that Christianity was not a legal barrier to slavery. This was prompted by the fear that slaves converted to Christianity would have to be considered free.

The Anglican Society of the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, was founded in 1701 and intended to care for British emigrants, soldiers and Indians and Blacks in White Churches as well as some White ministers in Black Churches and finally the rise of the Black Preacher.\textsuperscript{14}

The next period, which Banks refers to, is the "Period of Reaction" from 1820 to 1865. This period is marked with extreme oppression of the African American church. Banks gives several reasons for it.\textsuperscript{15} This period was a critical era as slavery became a critical part of the South's economy. Industrial advancements made production possibilities soar if sufficient manpower was cheaply available to operate the new equipment. Changes in the country's attitude toward slavery sharply divided America over the issue. The prospect of more Free States and strong militant abolitionist led pro-

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 13.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 19-23.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 24-25.
slavery groups to further oppress the African American church. Perhaps the most important single reason for the Reaction period was the incidents of slave revolts that increased fear among many southern Whites.

The period from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of World War I is labeled by Banks as the “Reconstruction and Retaliation Period.” This period covers from 1866 to 1914. The systematic segregating and suppressing of the African American characterized it. “It was the successful attempt by Whites to shackle the freed Blacks and to establish a permanent caste system based on race.”

Radicalism is the characteristic of the period from 1915 to 1953. Prior to World War I, 90 percent of the African Americans lived in the South and 80 percent of those lived in rural areas. The beginning of migrations as it did for ancient African civilization had a destructive effect on African American culture. It led to a decline in African American membership in mainline denominations and a rise in their participation in cults. The underlying reason was the African American’s disgust for White institutions. “One hundred Negroes were lynched during the first year of the twentieth century. By the outbreak of the First World War, the number stood at 1,110.”

The final period that Banks deals with is the Revolution, which he asserts began in 1953, and which he believes to be still in progress. While Banks takes a strong stand against civil disobedience on scriptural grounds, he correctly observes the reality of

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16 Ibid., 55.

17 Ibid., 48.

18 Ibid.
Revolution as a period in African American History. He seems also to be correct in his assertion that the period is still unfolding. Evidence of this is the fact that Nation of Islam minister, Louis Farrakhan, was able to mobilize hundreds of thousands of African American men in his effort to reclaim the values of personal responsibility and empowerment.

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya support the view that African American history is still in a period of Revolution. They state that the urbanization of the African American and the effect of the Civil Rights Movement must be dealt with as a function of the Black Revolution. Other signs of revolution, which they point out, are the increased role of the women in the pulpit and the distinctive styles of music which, impact the development of the modern African American Church.\(^1\)

\textit{The Cultural Differences}

To understand the uniqueness of pastoring African Americans, one must understand complex social, cultural and economical dynamics within the historical framework. The African American experience grew and developed historically and socially through the advent and rise of the Invisible Church. This institution existed within the community but was not seen nor understood by the White community.\(^2\)

Specific socio-cultural differences associated with persons of African American descent influence the church's ability to effectively minister to the population.

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Any class analysis of the U.S. shows very clearly that Black people are the most oppressed group of people inside the United States. We have suffered the most from racism and exploitation, cultural degradation and lack of political power.21

"The Black church was born in slavery. Its existence symbolizes a people who were completely stripped of their African heritage as they were enslaved by the 'Christian White man.'”22 The confusion continued to develop when the African American was confronted with the question of whether he was a brother or property. Did he possess a soul or was he merely a commodity? Professor Kelly Miller points to an inner torture, which developed from trying to worship God in a gallery.23

Miller continues to explain that as African American Christians gained conscious self-respect, they grew tired of the back pews and upper galleries of the White churches. They sought places of worship more compatible with their sense of dignity. This development of self-consciousness spilled from the pews of African American churches into the front seat of buses, on to the stools of the lunch counters and eventually into nearly every phase of American social life.

The Invisible Church, that early manifestation of true religion which began in swamps and bayous, linked African American believers in a spiritual union, which was a low level of human recognition. It was, however, self-recognition.24 “The agony so long


22 Ibid.


24 Ibid., 9.
suppressed burdened the air with sobs and screams and rhythmic moans. God's praises were sung, his mercy enjoined, his justice invoked." This was the beginning of the invisible institution of African American society, which has birthed so many of the unique cultural characteristics of the African American.

White America's contributions to the uniqueness of the African American character are manifold.

The official version of the history of this nation and its people is laid down with intended finality in our official literature of instruction. But much of that literature is often consciously and sometimes inadvertently committed to perpetuating the Great American Myth of White supremacy and Black debasement. The Myth is protected by an intricate system of taboo, and it is buttressed with a clever folklore which functions to lend credence to what is patently incredible.

Insensitivity on the part of the White Christians can be demonstrated in the following example. During a recent discussion with a White pastor, accusing M. L. King of being a communist and an adulterer, he commented that he would rather close his church's school than celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday. This comment reflects a deep-seated insensitivity toward the feelings of most African Americans who, regardless of King's private life, venerate King for his social contributions. Many African Americans view such beliefs as racist in light of the fact that numerous White Americans are extolled in spite of unscrupulous and questionable lives.

Furthermore, many White ministries focus attention around the needs of the White American middle class. This results in a failure of White pastors to address the

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25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.
African American experience in sermons and lectures. African Americans interpret such behavior as refusals to identify with the pain and suffering African Americans have experience both physically and emotionally. A review of five volumes of sermons by well-respected White Baptist leaders, Dr. Lee Roberson and Dr. Hymen Appleman, reveals a total lack of references in their sermons and lectures to the African American experience.

In many cases this racial insensitivity is so obvious that one wonders why it goes unnoticed even within religious groups. It is a known fact that not very long ago many White congregations had intentionally or unintentionally excluded Americans of African descent from worship, membership, and leadership.

Racial insensitivity is not only apparent within White churches and denominations, but also within the scholarly community.

One cannot read the biography of Bob Jones, Sr. without being impressed with the level of his commitment to the evangelical faith. His purposes were noble. He aimed to please the Lord Jesus Christ. In his activities, He was in great demand as an evangelist for the first thirty years of this century. Even after the start of Bob Jones college, which he did not want named after himself, he spent time preaching as an evangelist. In view of his manifest knowledge of Scripture and the apparent blessings of God upon his ministry, I come away from the reading of his biography perplexed, discovering that the man was both a racist and segregationist. Until a few years ago, it was the official policy of Bob Jones College, which later became Bob Jones University, not to accept any students of African descent.27

Dr. A. Charles Ware, in his book Prejudice and the People of God, shared the following comment:

Apparently, racism was alive and well during the Middle Ages and following when European scholarship began to unearth and document the contribution of ancient people to modern civilization. Freeman and Griffin mention how the scholars deliberately Europeanized their discoveries, lest the African be cast in the light of having had intellectual, scientific, business, and navigational acumen that surpassed that of any other people of their generation and before.28

Even in 1998, for national promoted conferences and workshops, one can read magazines, newspapers, journals, flyers, brochures, advertisements of any sort, and seldom find one African American speaker or facilitator.

The White pastor must show genuine racial sensitivity. The present study points out the benefits of White pastors attending workshops on race relations. Such workshops emphasize the practice of racial sensitivity, similar to those provided in the secular arena.

The following are other very obvious behaviors which demonstrate feelings of superiority and racism on the part of White Americans, such as: (1) The practice of limiting the number of African Americans who occupy positions of authority and administration in predominantly White churches. (2) Exclusion of African Americans from decision making positions in White Christian broadcast and print media [with the exception of African American entertainers]. (3) A blatant disparity in the hiring of African American teachers in White Christian schools. A workshop on racial sensitivity could be beneficial in mitigating these behaviors.

To this point the study has examined the challenges facing a White minister pastoring a congregation of African Americans. From this point, the examination of the challenges facing the African American minister pastoring such a congregation will

28 Dr. A. Charles Ware, *Prejudice and the People of God* (Indianapolis: Baptist Bible College of Indianapolis, 1998), 33, 34.
proceed. Regarding genuineness, the African American pastor does not have to prove a concern for the problems facing his members. His challenge centers around the issue of credibility. First, he must establish his calling.

Ministering in the African American church, particularly in the urban communities, requires an understanding and acceptance of the certainty of rejection.

David Clarebaut indicates the following in his book, *The Urban Church and the Urban Minister*:

Many urban pastors have thrown in the clerical towel because, instead of being supported by their denominations, they became the objects of criticism. The urban church worker should expect to be branded a radical or an apostate by many of his denominational peers who hear of his work and style of ministry. But this outside rejection may not be so bad, for a pastor can shut much of that out.

What is more painful are the breaches and cleavages likely to develop within his own congregation and the community he serves. The pluralism of the population absolutely guarantees breakdowns of communication and the emergence of criticism and condemnation.²⁹

Consider an example of the majority American of stereotyping of African Americans:

Fifty-three percent of non-Blacks believe that African Americans are less intelligent than Whites; 51 percent believe they are less patriotic; 56 percent believe they are more violence-prone; 62 percent believe they are more likely to prefer to live off welfare and less likely to prefer to be self-supporting.³⁰

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Slavery helped to produce personal qualities which were not to be valued in a free society. Shiftlessness, lack of reliability and the attitude of give the least and get the most are generally prevalent in any population of slaves. The lax moral climate brought on by the condition of slavery may even be evidenced to a degree today. William Banks quotes *The Souls of Black Folks.*

Many of the worst characteristics of the Negro masses of today had their seed in this period [plantation period] of the slave’s ethical growth. Here it was that the home was ruined under the shadows of the church, White and Black; here habits of shiftlessness took root, and sullen hopelessness replaced hopeful strife.31

The pattern of preaching and the underlying theology of the White church also contributed to the historic demoralizing of the African American. “One belief held by many [White Christians] was the “Hamitic curse.” Genesis 9:25 was a favorite text of many Southern preachers. 32 Keil and Delitzsch also discuss the so-called “Curse of Ham”:

In the sin of Ham there lies the great stain of the whole Hamitic race, whose chief characteristic is sexual sin; and the curse which Noah pronounced upon this sin still rests upon the race...Although this curse was announced upon Canaan alone, the fact that Ham had no share in Noah’s blessing, either for himself or his other sons was sufficient proof that his whole family was included by implication in the curse, even if it was to fall chiefly upon Canaan.33

The idea of the spiritual inferiority of African Americans was believed to be proved from the Scriptures. Support for the servitude of the Black race was believed to


32 Ibid., 29.

33 Dr. A. Charles Ware, *Prejudice and the People of God*, 41.
be Bible based. While it is not currently popular for racists to use scripture to support
their position publicly, privately they continue to hold these teachings. More popular
today are buzzwords and phrases. “Today they give social reasons, or talk about a
culture gap, crime, IQ, and immorality. To be sure, there are still those who believe the
Black man is doomed to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water (Josh 9:23).”34

The Old Testament was not the only Biblical support that the racist found to
substantiate his position.

Not only were scriptures cited in an attempt to support the belief that
Negroes were cursed, but they were used to support the very
institution of slavery itself: See Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-25;
1 Timothy 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Peter 2:18-19; and Philemon.35

It was not the heathen world who became the African American’s enemy, but brothers
and sisters in Christ.

Those who laid claim to the Black man’s body, his labor, his children,
born and unborn, were Christians, and the strange claims these White
Christians made upon their fellow Black Christians were validated by
a system of lay anxious to accommodate the claims of property, but
peculiarly insensitive to the claims of persons -- Black persons in
particular.36

Clearly some Whites used the Bible to justify slavery and continued servitude of African
Americans after the emancipation. Modern methods of discrimination have had a
deleterious effect on African American’s self esteem. All of the above contributed to the
uniqueness of African Americans.

34 Banks, The Black Church in the U.S., 30.

35 Ibid.

36 Lincoln, “Black Consciousness and the Black Church in America” Missiology, 11.
It is sometimes difficult for White America to understand the effect which slavery had on African America. Often the attitude which is evidenced in the White American is simple "why get mad at me, I didn’t own any slaves." White Americans fail in their understanding of the importance of the role of slavery in the African American experience.

The Black revolution is the corporate expression of thirty million people of African descent against the ancient regime which has used religion as an instrument of dehumanization and exploitation. The critical, evaluative faculties which inform human behavior in ordinary times are often muted or short-circuited in the fervor of social change.37

The Black migration from the rural south to the urban northern industrial centers produced another crisis in the corporate life of African Americans quite similar to the crisis created by slavery and emancipation. Uprooting large numbers of people and transporting them into a cultureless setting again destroyed the semblance of social organization that developed through the church.

In the city environment the family of the masses of Negroes from rural areas, which lacked an institutional basis and was held together only by cooperation in making a living or by sympathies and sentiments generated by living together in the same household, was unable to stand the shock of the disintegrating force of urban life.38

The family suffered from migration because men were forced in many cases to leave their families to seek work. Women were required to leave the home and enter the

37 Ibid., 19.

work place to work long hours, thereby leaving children unattended in a strange and
hostile environment. The stabilizing influence of the extended family and network of
friends was lost in the anonymity of the big city. Informal social control was lost.

The disorganization of the Negro family in the city was reflected
in the large numbers of women who had been deserted by their
husbands, by the increased numbers of unmarried mothers, and
by the high rate of juvenile delinquency among Negroes. 39

Social Differences

“Sociologically, there is no more critical institution than the family. It is the chief
agent of socialization and the transmitter of basic values.” 40 God, of course, recognized
the significance of the family by establishing it as the first institution that He ordained in
human society.

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh:
she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.
Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave
unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:23-24).

God intended for the institution of marriage to be a permanent one. “Wherefore they are
no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put
asunder.” (Matt. 19:9) The will of God is that the family units propagate the Word of
God.

The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth,
against who thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion,
and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he
the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a
godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal
treacherously against the wife of his youth,” (Mal. 2:14-15).

39 Ibid.

40 Claerbaut, Urban Ministry, 76.
And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

Enough can not be said of the importance of the family as the primary institution of social control. God planned and instituted it, but through ‘the hardness of man’s heart’ it has been destroyed. The strength of African American culture was destroyed with it as well.

Another prime reason for the destruction of the African American family has been poverty. Impoverished communities are characterized by low self-esteem, low wages, long hours, multiple jobs or no jobs at all, high divorce rates, men deserting families and women heading households. 41 Each of these characteristics can be seen as factors that contribute to break down of the family. There is little stability in an impoverished relationship. Financial pressures lead to squabbles, despair, hopelessness and desertion. Without adequate funds, nutrition is not adequately provided. Health care is often nonexistent. Child care, supervision and education are not priorities. Crime easily becomes a way of life for many. Drugs and alcohol provide a means of financial gain for some and a means of escape for others.

"Over 50 percent of Black families are characterized by the absence of the father and are therefore for the most part female-headed. 42 The result is street socialization, poor

41 Ibid., 77.

42 Ibid.
education and the institutionalization of poverty. Hopelessness becomes the inescapable corollary for most.

The chief victims of the deterioration of the African American family are the children. It is not a faceless problem. Lives are wrecked, the die cast, the failure of many guiltless children is certain.

The related concern is the escalating problems of Black teenagers and young adults in the crisis sector of the Black community, the dependent poor or underclass. Black teenage females have among the highest pregnancy rates in the world, and Black males have the highest homicide and incarceration rates in the United States.⁴³

Harry Singletary, the Secretary of the Department of Corrections for the state of Florida has been quoted in personal conversation as stating that currently one out of every four Black males between the ages of 16 and 22 residing in the state of Florida is under the supervision of the Florida Correctional Department. Singletary has further stated that at the current rate one out of every three Black males in that age group will be under supervision by the year 2000.

The debate goes on among social analysts and lawmakers as to whether these social problems are symptomatic of a need for social reform or evidence for general social revolution. Thus, the situation gives rise and momentum to the uniqueness of African Americans.

As a result of the family patterns that have developed in the African American community there have also developed corresponding differences in the attitudes of the products of those families. Dean Hoge of Catholic University analysis of computer data

⁴³ Lincoln and Mamiya, The Black Church in the African American Experience, 1.
from two major research studies produced some interesting differences between the Black and White Protestant youth who responded in the studies. A synopsis of the results is presented as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to question by youth</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely preferred to marry</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think they will get married</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think that is desirable for wife to work</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think people can be trusted</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think that they will be treated fairly</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think the Federal Govt. can be trusted</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think that religion is very important</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think that God can be trusted to handle life</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother says she loves you and speaks kindly</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father says he loves you and speaks kindly</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not think people in general can be trusted</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion is the most important influence in my life</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another important finding is that self-esteem of individual young people depends on their social context; persons who are minorities in race, religion, or social class, relative to the others in their schools, tend to have lower self-esteem. In studies looking at neighborhoods, not schools, the same finding occurs and the theoretical conclusion is the same – a dissonant context depresses self-esteem.

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44 Dean Hoge, *Five Differences Between Black and White Protestant Youth, Affirmation* (Spring 1989), 75-83.

45 Ibid., 81.
Based upon the results of this research, one must infer that poverty, low socio-economic performance, and family break down, as well as other indications of social deterioration lead to low self-esteem. These by-products of past oppression greatly impact the uniqueness of the African American.

Finally, C. Eric Lincoln observes that,

The survival of the Black family must depend ultimately upon the strengths of residents in the Black community. This fact in turn points to the critical testing of the adequacy of the Black subculture to entertain crisis and survive. That is the mark of cultural self-sufficiency: survival.46

If survival is the basis by which we judge success then the family elements of the African American community have been successful in the fullest sense of the word. The African American family has remarkably survived oppression by government, religion, and relegation to second class citizenship.

As seen by the alarming ratio of African American males in prisons, they do not see a future, nor hope for themselves. They do not see a long expectancy for life and thus seemingly have no regard for others.

The pastor has to realize that the latch key situation is not due to the parents lack of concern, but rather limited resources which preclude them from hiring housekeepers, babysitters, or nannies to be present when the children return home. The pastor needs to be aware that teen pregnancy is increasing in the African American community, while abortion is on the rise in the non-Black communities.

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The pastor must also be aware of society's contribution to the deterioration of the African American family, something that stems from the destruction faced during slavery and that continues today. Pastors of African Americans must be sensitive to the fact that other families experienced cohesiveness, while the African American family suffered disintegration. The pastor needs to avoid the myopia which views the past experiences as having no effect on current behavior. With understanding, the pastor will be able to help build families because he will recognize the source of the behaviors of his congregation.

Realizing that addictions, robbery, and Black on Black crime stem from feelings of hopelessness, emptiness, and self-hatred will help the pastor to minister to the true needs of the people entangled in these problems. Pastoring people of African American descent, requires the pastor to be understanding and non-judgmental. Going beyond identifying the problems, the pastor must look for the true causes upon which can be fashioned the ministry that will offer preventative as well as curative solutions.

**Economic Differences**

Economic facts exist that are not general in nature but specific to the African American. There is little doubt that a great part of the uniqueness of the African American is also directly attributable to economics. Had the Southern agricultural economy lifestyle not needed a large pool of inexpensive and uneducated labor, at least in America, the slave trade would not have flourished. It follows in reasoning that the resulting social and cultural dynamics, which comprise the African American experience, would be non-existent.

Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish sociologist conducted a study for the Carnegie Commission of American society. He was deeply puzzled by the apparent contradiction
between what he saw as the high American ideals of democracy and freedom in relation to the actual behavior and practices in American society. He was so shocked by discrimination and suppression of African Americans that he entitled his resulting work *An American Dilemma*.

Myrdal's study made a number of observations that are included as follows:

The high rates of poverty, unemployment, and underemployment found among Black people in both urban and rural areas were not found among corresponding White populations. Race based economic discrimination was found to exist along with, incidents of institutionalized violence, segregation, poor housing, substandard educational system, hunger, poor nutrition, and higher rates of infant mortality. The unemployment rate among African American adults was twice that of White adults. The median Black family income was a startling 51 to 62 percent of that of White families. The 1980's have seen a 38 to 50 percent unemployment rate among Black teenagers. 47

Lincoln and Mamiya expand on these statistics, African American owned businesses, they note, represented 2.7 percent of all business firms in 1972. Affirmative Action programs have done little to improve the deplorable situation as it relates to African American businessmen. The National Urban League reported in 1982 that Black owned businesses represented only 2 percent of all American businesses. 48

Don Lillywhite, Labor Market and Demographic Analysis of the Virginia Employment Commission, cites these statistics from the 1990 Census on the Median Household Income in Virginia:

- Whites - $44,600
- Blacks - $27,000


48 Ibid.
Asian - $50,000

The disparity between the overall economic conditions and the general conditions of the African American can be seen from two views. Both result in worldviews from which African Americans develop paradigms to process their thoughts on American society. The one view is the revolutionary worldview; the other is a nonviolent passive resistance worldview. The revolutionary worldview is indicated by those who would subscribe to *The Black Manifesto*:

We shall liberate all the people in the U.S. and we will be instrumental in liberation of colored people the world around. We must understand this point very clearly so that we are not trapped into diversionary and reactionary movements. Any class analysis of the U.S. shows very clearly that Black people are the most oppressed group of people inside the United States. We have suffered the most from racism and exploitation, cultural degradation and lack of political power. It follows from the laws of revolution that the most oppressed will make revolution in the U.S.\(^{49}\)

On the other hand, African Americans who follow the thinking of Martin Luther King may refer to the speech “I Have a Dream” to be motivated to continue to work to obtain part of the American Dream:

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on the promissory notes insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check, which has come back, marked “insufficient funds.” We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we’ve come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.\(^{50}\)

\(^{49}\) Banks, *The Black Church in the U.S.*, 131.

\(^{50}\) Martin Luther King, Jr., *I Have a Dream*, Speech at the March on Washington, August 29, 1963, eds.
Notice the different tones reflected by the two voices of African American authors. The one reflected in the *Black Manifesto* is confrontational, overflowing with violent intent. It implies that the people of color of the world have been victimized and must be avenged. The other "I Have a Dream" indicates a desire to pursue the American Dream. Confidence is portrayed in the ability of the African American to reach full citizenship and to enjoy the rights and benefits thereof by working inside the existing system.

A great deal of confusion has developed in African Americans because of the contradictions in social values based not on man’s concern for his fellow man, but based upon man’s greed. In July of 1827 an African American preacher, Rev. Nathaniel Paul wrote these words which reflect a ray of hope out of confusion.

"The progress of emancipation ... is ... certain: It is certain because that God who made of one blood all nations of men, and who is said to be no respecter of persons, has so decreed."\(^{51}\)

African American churches have an agenda for economic development:

A church’s clergy is the strongest force for educating and motivating the church’s members. Developing pastoral leadership is critical to all successful faith-based community development.

Besides offering spiritual guidance and sustenance, black churches across the nation are providing community development corporations, credit unions, housing developments and child care projects.

The church has been designed to be a beacon for the community, which means it, has to be more than a pulpit. It has to be used as a platform to carry out civil rights programs through economic and social development, said Eric Dickey, a Biloxi councilman of Ward 2.

The church should help provide a better quality life for its residents. The burden of welfare reform has shifted from the churches to the government, but it should be a combination of the two, Dickey said.\textsuperscript{52}

These divergent worldviews must be taken into account when pastoring African Americans; the uniqueness of these people must be recognized.

\textit{Church Differences}

The traditional African-American church evidences several cultural differences that have a major impact on the uniqueness of this population. Specific differences are found in a number of areas. Among them are the mode of worship, mode of sermon delivery, mode of music, and mode of dress. Conducive to understanding the African American experience is exploration of these areas of uniqueness.

The worship style, which has developed in the traditional Black church, can best be described as an act of celebration. Worship is conducted in the context of observing notable occasions with festivities; demanding active participation of the worshiper.

The masses of Black Christians expect the Black worship service to include elements of celebration. The degree of celebration in a particular church or in a particular sermon depends very largely upon the preacher and the preaching context.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{52} Marquita Smith, \textit{Churches Find a Vision in Traditional Role of Social Service} (The Sun Herald Online, 1997), 1.

The participation in the service by the worshiper, while leading to a satisfied worshiper, often leads also to an emphasis upon emotionalism.

In many cases, the people are not taught but entertained; without that entertainment, there will be disappointment.

The preacher who can discern the celebration needs of the audience and adjust the sermon to provide opportunity for such celebration is classified by the typical African American congregation as “a good preacher.”

The more stylized, animated, and flamboyant the delivery, the more people will agree that “We had church today”. In the average Black church, one writer notes, “when the preacher does not design his sermon so that celebration can take place, one will hear the sisters saying at the end of the service, ‘I wonder what’s wrong with Reverend today, he didn’t preach.’” It is tragic that so many have been conditioned to this type of worship to the extent that any pastor calmly, quietly expositing the Bible, is in danger of being berated for not knowing how to preach.

Many of the traditions and rituals found in the typical African American church’s mode of worship have been established since slavery; such traditions include: the “marching in” or processional of the choir, and reading scripture line by line as the pastor comments on different points or reiterates each line. Other activities include “Men’s Day”, “Women’s Day”, and “Anniversary Celebrations.”

Another tradition of the African American church is the ritualistic prayer format, which includes non-scriptural statements, i.e. asking the Lord to “Stop by the hospital” or

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.
to “Stop by here (the church).” Such petitions invariably follow a pattern that ends with a plea for God to grant the one praying for a home in heaven when that person’s work on earth is done. The pastor is obligated to teach “scriptural” methods of prayer to the African American congregation.

“We have to be aware of where our agenda comes from, even within the church. God’s people often gather to pray about what the church does. We ask God to bless this activity and that program. But we often fail to find out if the programs and activities we plan are what God wants us to do. Then we wonder why God doesn’t seem to answer our prayers. There is a reason for His apparent silence. He will only bless His agenda as it is carried out His way (Matthew 6:10).^56

There is no overt problem associated with these traditions and rituals. The problem develops when African Americans come to expect these traditions and rituals as part of worship. Some parishioners will leave a church where such traditions and ritual do not exist. “There is a direct correlation between the number of congregations, the number of persons attending the worship services, and the degree of celebration in the worship service.”^57 The point to be made is that traditions and rituals are a part of the fabric of African American people. The virtual inveteracy of such activities suggests that removing or altering tradition and ritual is not readily accomplished. Anyone who seeks to do so can expect opposition.

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^56 Anthony T. Evans, *America’s Only Hope: Impacting Society in the 90’s* (Chicago; Moody Press, 1990), 42.

Regarding preaching, it is imperative to state that a sermon is not merely a good speech. On the contrary, preaching is a serious presentation of God’s word, which must be presented clearly and coherently to insure the listener’s ability to understand and apply the instructions he has heard. African Americans, by comparison, are accustomed to animated presentation, vociferous delivery, reaching a crescendo of emotion.

Preaching styles are as numerous and varied as African American preachers. Henry H. Mitchell characterizes some of the preaching styles in his book *Black Preaching*. Historically, there has been an absence of seminary trained African American preachers. The consequence of this absence of training has been a tendency toward shallow presentation of the truths of God’s Word. The pattern of “call and response” is easily traceable to African culture. This form of preaching lends itself to emotional involvement, rather than a clear presentation of the Word of God. The benefit of training would provide the African American preacher with tools to organize the presentation in an interesting manner while at the same time allowing the listener to respond to the instruction of the Word of God.

The style of music in the traditional African American church generally reflects African ancestral influences; it is rhythmic and high volumed. “It is not uncommon at meetings to see large groups of people who shouted, cried, laughed, barked, danced, rolled on the ground, had visions, spoke in tongues, swayed, gesticulated, trembled, fell prostrate, and jerked. These were all thought to be evidences of the work of the Holy

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Spirit.” Emotionalism, inspired or evoked by music, sets the tone for the traditional worship experience promoted to a large extent by the music. The traditional African American congregation prefers this type music to the quieter, slower paced music found in White American churches. After visiting churches that provide the latter, African Americans often comment negatively regarding the music, describing it as “dull” or “drab”. Hindered by less emotional music, many African Americans miss the message of the Gospel.

“The importance of music in the Black worship experience is seen in the emphasis which it receives in the church. Half of all Black churches have two or more choirs, while over 90 percent emphasize both gospel and spiritual music and over 25 percent also play other Black music including jazz and blues.” The rise of gospel singers, designed to take the African American worship back to its traditional roots is interpreted by Frazier as a reaction to the secularization of the African American church. Sunday is a traditional and emotional experience for the African American Christian.

Many of them, despite their fancy dress, come from experiences in which they had to scrape, shift, and hustle in order to ‘make ends meet’ in an alien society. Their experiences leave them with social handicaps, economic impotence, withered spirits, and blistered hopes. Their very souls have been wounded but not destroyed.

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It is within this framework that the emotional venting of the African American worship experience must be understood.

Rooted in slavery is the African American tradition of wearing “Sunday Go To Meeting” clothes to church, such as, dressy dresses, suits, neckties, high heels and hats. Many are not accepting of congregations where the attire is more relaxed, i.e. blue jeans, casual skirts, blouses, and tennis shoes. Such dress is considered by African Americans to be distasteful and disrespectful. This tradition has been a hindrance for many that feel they have nothing suitable to wear to church, and thus do not attend.

Cain Hope Felder in his book *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class and Family*, offers this analysis:

Blacks have brought colorful drama and imaginative narrative adaptations to the Biblical text by centering on scripture and tradition. They have achieved in producing a distinctive, imagistic idiom through sermons, slave narratives, a poetry often created in prayer, rhythmic sorrow songs, spirituals and gospel songs.\(^\text{63}\)

\(^{63}\) Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters*, 79.
CHAPTER 3

METHODICAL DETERMINANT FOR DATA

The purpose of this study is to show the necessity for exploring the relationship that Americans of African descent face within the context of the church. The hypotheses are based upon the assumption that socio-cultural differences of African Americans prompt a need for special attention in ministry. Therefore, this study evaluates the structure, sources and signification of the African American people as it relates to their perspective of the pastorate.

According to Massey and McKinney,

Much of the Black pastor's time within the church was spent creating an atmosphere where peace and harmony could reign and goals could be planned, executed, and achieved. The pastor was often the arbitrator of major disputes on minor fronts. In addition, the pastor had to become, overnight, counselor for the home and church; teacher; interpreter of the times, employment specialist; a civic leader with ready answers, not necessarily solutions, to the ills besetting his people; a spokesman, champion, and advocate for the oppressed, defeated and disenfranchised—A "man for all seasons."¹

The Pastor has a vast array of responsibilities requiring him to wear the proverbial "many hats." His most prominent responsibilities are considered to be preacher, teacher, counselor and role model and father figure. "A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (Proverbs 15:23).

The Pastor as Preacher and Teacher

The fundamental rule regarding pastoring is that a pastor must meet his people where they are (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). In order to accomplish this, he must be genuine, honest and caring. Due to the nature of cultural distinctives present in the African American community, ministry in a Biblical way presents challenges. These challenges are often affected by whether the pastor is White or African American.

Charles V. Hamilton, a Black historian, states in his book The Black Preacher in America:

The black preacher has been called upon by politicians, parishioners, peacemakers, and all others. He has been the natural leader in the black community. He has a fixed base, the church; he has a perpetual constituency, the congregation.²

A White pastor must be genuine in showing his sensitivity toward African Americans and the African American experience. Otherwise, the people perceive the White pastor as uncaring.

In an interview held with John Byrd, former Dean of the College of Biblical Studies in Houston, Texas, this striking comment was voiced; “Blacks come to the table with a basic distrust. They have been lied to, locked up, used, and abused.”

Traditionally, many African Americans have felt that Whites do not or can not identify with their struggles, nor do Whites understand the circumstances in which African Americans find themselves.

One factor contributing to this perception is the fact that many White Americans

support political agendas which are antithetical to the African American's religious beliefs, as well as, detrimental to the amelioration of the African American's socio-economic status. In the eyes of most African Americans, current conservative religious positions of White Americans are not in the best interests of the African American population. Historically, theology as presented by White Americans has tended to substantiate feelings of alienation experienced by African Americans. "The Resolution on Racial Reconciliation on the 150th Anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention" passed on June 20, 1995 at Atlanta, Georgia, for example, states that large predominantly White Baptist denominations supported social and political agendas that were harmful to African Americans.

Cain Hope Felder advises,

All who proclaim the gospel in the Black church today would do well to adhere to Paul's wise advice regarding the preacher's purpose. "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Colossians 3:9). The preacher stands as the messenger between God and the people of God, in an elevated position (Ezekiel 33:1-6), watching and waiting for the coming of the Lord and observing signs of the times and the environment. Then he or she may discern and declare the truth of the gospel as fully adaptable for the needs and conditions of Black life. The Black preacher must plumb the depths of his or her being, in order to discover the continuing mystery of God as the God with us—Emmanuel. (Matthew 1:23).³

Many African Americans are very suspicious of African American ministers, assuming they are in the pulpit for monetary or other personal reasons. The African

American minister must overcome the view of being a money-grabbing, womanizing, continuation of the White establishment. In most cases, these stereotypes are associated with African American rather than White ministers. The African American pastor who is genuinely called must work diligently to disassociate himself from such characterizations. Realizing that as he attempts to fulfill his calling, there will be tests from the congregation. It is important that a bond of trust be forged with the congregation, which will take time and patience. However, if the African American minister is persistent, success is assured.

The African American pastor must establish the credibility of his calling because the congregation will have a difficult time accepting the authority of another African American. As a result of societal dictates, authority is typically associated with the White race. C. Eric Lincoln discusses the idea of acceptance of the White system of authority over that of the African American in his book, The Black Muslims in America:

Some minority-group members feel that it is sensible to accept what cannot be changed or avoided. ‘You don’t like it, but what can you do?’ This attitude of conscious resignation or futility is the most common form of acceptance but it is not the whole story. At the other extreme is the wholehearted acceptance of desperate social conditions characteristic of a caste society such as pre-Ghandian India. In such a society every group -- high or low, favored or scorned -- is felt to have a divinely ordained place in the sun. Social discrimination is no more than obedience to the divine order of the universe, and resentment of it would be as unthinkable as resentment of God. This attitude comes naturally, of course, to many Whites in America, but there is some evidence that it was also widely held among American Blacks in times of unusual repression. Vestiges of this kind of adjustment behavior are probably retained among some Blacks living in isolated rural area and among certain family retainers who identify closely with their employers. Few African Americans today exhibit this whole hearted acceptance of discrimination and social privilege for
Whites, but many will consciously defer in specific situations in which inferiority is implied.  

Although there are Sunday school classes and Bible studies, congregation members are also taught from the pulpit. In that vein of thought, the pastor can also be considered a teacher. As a teacher of the African American congregation, the pastor must allow for the different educational levels found within the church. In allowing for these variations, he must use a wide array of teaching techniques. He must monitor the pace of his presentation depending on the topic and on the depth of complexity of the information. Polysyllabic words and pompous language are not necessary; since he may lose in lucidity what he gains in impressiveness. Unfortunately, many African American pastors forsake the former for the latter.

Another issue with regard to the pastor as teacher centers on the pastor’s training. Many African American pastors have not attended any Bible institution, particularly seminary. He insists that the Holy Spirit will give the “utterance.” A lack of organized training can be detrimental to the ministry leading to misinformation and unscriptural practices.

Dr. James Costen, President of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, a consortium of six Black seminaries, has estimated that only about 10 to 20 percent of the Black clergy nationwide had completed their professional education, Master of Divinity level.

In many cases African American pastors have learned more about rituals than the scriptures. On the other hand, in the case of African American ministers who did attend a

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5 Ibid., 342.
seminary, those seminaries were predominantly African American due to segregation. In the past, policies established at predominantly White seminaries prohibited attendance of African Americans. Yet, from Ecclesiastes 7:12, Solomon tells us that "wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense, but the excellency of knowledge is, that Wisdom gives life to them that have it." Most African American seminaries became liberal and were not "rightly dividing the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15)." The White seminaries, on the other hand, were conservative in teaching, "rightly dividing the Word of God," but staunchly refusing to admit African Americans. It is still very rare today that an African American pastor would consider attending the White institution. Some African Americans feel that they will not be accepted or if accepted, they will possibly lose their identity.

Tony Evans in God's Perspective of Blacks states,

If we who are black look at ourselves through the lens of Scripture, we can begin to find an appropriate basis for racial pride in the God of the Bible. It also means we can give other races the same significance and respect as part of God's creation that we expect to receive from them.⁶

Moody Bible Institute and Carver Bible College were two of the first to open their doors to African American Bible students. Dallas Theological Seminary graduated its first Black Th.D in 1985. The problem remains, however, that many African American pastors are either not attending seminary or are attending liberal seminaries. The position

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of this study is that it is imperative for pastors of African American churches to attend and establish sound seminaries for adequate training.

It is the responsibility of the pastor to teach his congregation victorious living. Who needs this lesson more than the apparently defeated African American community? Data developed on reasons young African American people are leaving the church was reported by Lincoln and Mamiya in their book, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*⁷. The data which Lincoln and Mamiya present asserts,

Nearly 35 percent of the young African Americans who are currently leaving the church are doing so because their pastors are not communicating truths they can understand, or consider to be relevant to their lives.⁸

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. states:

One of the most depressing spectacles in the Church today is her lack of power. Too frequently the Church has little or no impact at all on the society and nation in which she ministers. Therefore, the masses outside the Church, not to mention the additional scandal of those within the Church, are indifferent to her. At the heart of this problem is an impotent pulpit. And that impotency will not be dealt with definitively until the exegete is armed with an authoritative message based on the single meaning of the text as informed by its antecedent theology, and until there is also a decision to take the time to wait on God until the messenger is “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Only then will the Church begin to prove once again that “the gospel... is the power of God” (Romans 1:16).⁹

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The Pastor as Counselor

Because we live in a world of confusion—drug addiction, violence and abuse, mental disorders, divorce, and many other things, the average pastor who loves his people, will spend many hours in counseling sessions. A pastor who is in touch with his people will be able to look out at his congregation and see those who are carrying heavy burdens and deep wounds. He will be able to pick these people out because he has counseled them. These people have placed their trust in his skills as a counselor.

Clyde M. Narramore’s book, Marriage Counseling, Theory and Practice, states,

Counseling is a process, not a lecture. Too often after a counselor has talked with a person for a few minutes, or even an hour, he may think that he has “solved” the problem. But effective counseling is seldom done quickly. Since counseling is a process, it requires time.\(^\text{10}\)

The pastor is a counselor in the pulpit and the office. For a number of reasons, many African Americans do not go to professional counselors. Perhaps the most obvious reason is that of economic prohibition. A general mistrust in the ability of White middle class professionals to understand the African American experience hinders the wide use of counselors. Additionally, African Americans generally do not view professional counseling within the context of health care. Educational programs aimed at removing the stigma of mental illness went unheeded by the majority of the African American community. In this community it is one thing to see a doctor for a broken bone, but quite another to see a doctor for a broken home.

Counseling from the pulpit is a technique that requires skill from a well-trained pastor. The Bible is the basic textbook for the preacher. Communication skills, along with knowledge of man's physical and psychological needs, are required of the pastor. The Word of God has a great deal to say about common problems that man faces daily. For example, God speaks about anger, fear, love, hatred, guilt, repentance, forgiveness, divorce, trust, discouragement, anxiety, physical illness, financial issues, and depression. The preacher cannot ignore these problems; rather he must address them from the pulpit.

When the preacher gives a message regarding any issue of human involvement, he is providing counseling from the pulpit. Even Jesus' disciples needed counseling. He was continually addressing areas that concerned His followers. Thomas had problems with doubt; Peter was always in trouble; and James and John, the cantankerous ones, were nicknamed Sons of Thunder; and Judas was known to be a thief. When Jesus ministered to them, He was ministering to all generations. Yes, the pulpit can be vulnerable to litigation, but it must always replicate Christ's example, as a "balm in Gilead," meeting the needs of the people. The people sitting in the congregation week after week can identify with any issue preached from the pulpit.

The counselee must be convinced that whatever is discussed is kept completely confidential. Yet, upon hearing a message on such issues as abortions or extramarital affairs, counselees have the tendency to associate it with the counseling session. Several times this writer has preached sermons that evoked surprised responses from former counselees who thought their business was shared from the pulpit. However, they discovered that they were not in the preacher's thoughts when the sermon was being
delivered. There is always too much to say and too many illustrations within the context of the Bible to resort to the use of confidential information from a counseling session.

Every homiletically correct message should address contemporary issues and provide timely solutions. When Paul told Timothy to preach the Word, Paul did not imply just certain parts, but rather preach the entire Word of God. Paul helped Timothy with an apparent lack of confidence referred to in 2 Timothy 1:7. Yet, Paul shared with the Corinthians about his own fears in 2 Corinthians 7:5. Being led of the Spirit, the preacher must be aware that the pulpit can be used to counsel people without knowing the specifics of the case. The omniscience of God makes applicable the message of His Word to everyone without exception.

Some people may never make an appointment for a formal counseling session. Yet, there are issues that they have which somehow must be addressed and a solution worked out. The pulpit is such a place for this spiritual dialogue. The Holy Spirit is always the third person in a counseling session. Since the Holy Spirit knows the needs of everyone, He can be relied upon for handling the unspoken needs of church members. With this in mind, the pastor can be confident in preaching each message knowing that the resolution of troublesome situations comes directly from God.

Preachers should teach counseling classes. Inevitably, students who take counseling classes are the first recipients of counseling for their own problems. Yet, the same students will be used to counsel others. Paul told Timothy “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (II Timothy 2:2). One or two counseling classes will not make
an individual an expert. However, training in counseling will open avenues that otherwise may remain unused.

At Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Gary R. Collins taught the course entitled “Counseling Troubled Families.” He left a great impact upon his students. The writer of this thesis project, was motivated to teach the same course at a Bible Institute that he founded in 1986. Because of the respectability of students of all walks of life, many of them signed up for the course, “Counseling Troubled Families.” People who are involved in secular training on a daily basis have proved to be productive students. These students need a place to unload, while at the same time learn the Christian aspect of counseling. The classroom setting is as much a spiritual device as the sanctuary or counseling office. Lay counselors can be trained to assist troubled families.

Dr. Gary R. Collins states in his book, Innovative Approaches to Counseling:

Lay counselors are individuals who lack the training, education, experience, and credentials to be professional counselors, but who nevertheless are involved in helping others cope with personal problems.¹¹

The preacher is a spirit-filled person who has been trained to rightly divide the Word of Truth. He should not neglect the opportunity to teach a class on counseling. Many times there are individuals who are serving the Lord faithfully, but feel inadequately qualified in addressing certain issues. Taking a counseling class taught by a wise pastor would prepare the worker for the ministry. The class taught by the pastor is a

formal and, yet often, an informal way of handling problems. The pastor, then, is the leader who is well qualified to train others.

As the pastor trains other, he provides leadership for the entire congregation. Dr. Frank J. Schmitt, Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, cites in his class notes, *A Practical Introduction to Church Administration*: "Leadership is a process of influencing other people to work together to accomplish a desired purpose."¹²

Dr. Elmer Towns, Dean of the School of Religion states; "Leadership is not doing everything nor is it being everything. Leadership is getting the job done through other people."¹³

How does all of this relate to pastoring African Americans? There is no fee involved in seeking counseling from the pastor. The African American pastor is regarded as being able to understand and empathize with the counselee’s condition facing the African American experience. The stigma of mental illness is removed when the counseling takes place at the church; one is merely "going to see the pastor." Thus, effective ministry to the African American church demands that the pastor obtain training in theory and dynamics of counseling.

One of the pastor’s responsibilities is to prepare God’s people for the work of the ministry, so that the body of Christ may be unified in the "Knowledge of God’s Son,


thereby, becoming mature, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13). Many theologians view these verses in Ephesians as the pastor preparing others for service. Yet, these verses do not exempt the pastor from the responsibility of a counselor. He may train others in giving advice and the spreading of the Gospel; however, the availability for consultation should never be a neglected function of pastoring. Counseling is a way of staying in touch with the reality of the people. It is also good for the pastor’s soul; allowing him to “Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15).

Bill and Lynne Hybels in their book, *Fit to be Tied*, state,

Some people refuse to seek counsel because they are embarrassed; they don’t want anyone to know their marriage is a bit frayed around the edges. Some people refuse because they are afraid to face a painful truth, or afraid of what they might learn about themselves or their spouse. Others refuse because they are stubborn and cruel. They would rather dismantle the emotional health of their spouse than expend the energy to get help. Still others question the theological “rightness” of seeking professional counsel.14

There is no way for the pastor to be knowledgeable about everything that goes on within his congregation or the individual lives of members. Nevertheless, sitting and conversing with his people and offering suggestions provide for a healthy atmosphere that creates unity within the body. A pastor will be quickly exhausted or burned out if he counsels all day or even every day. A biblical example is found in Exodus 18:13-23. Moses received good counseling from his father-in-law, Jethro, who advised Moses not to commit himself to counseling all day.

Jethro said in Exodus 18:14,18 “Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening? Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out.” Jethro’s suggestion encouraged Moses to take only the exceptional cases and to delegate the others to capable workers. Likewise, today’s pastor has to delegate certain counseling tasks to capable members of his congregation, not only to prevent burnout, but to enhance constructive participation among the members. However, the pastor can not totally relinquish the responsibility of counseling to others. Close supervision of assistant counselors and regular-briefing sessions between these counselors and the pastor is vital to the pastor staying “in touch.”

Although it is possible that a given session can reveal a lesson, moral principle or explanatory illustration that provides spiritual nourishment to others, making it information worthy of being shared from the pulpit. Such lessons must never breach the confidentiality of the original counselee. The key to proper sharing of such information is “total depersonalization.” The pastor must extract the valuable object lesson, then carefully craft and present the lesson in such a manner that the original counselee cannot attribute it directly to his/her personal confessions. The skill and wisdom to manage effectively the delicate and difficult task of counseling is a quality all counseling pastors must develop.

Bearing in mind that Christians should not take one another to court (1Corinthians 6), the pastor is required to exercise a profound and compassionate judgment and adhere to divine direction both during and after a counseling session. A lawsuit may be a severe action, but many times wounded people are retaliatory in their
actions. Church splits and dwindling memberships amid distrust and bitterness are often the consequences of betrayed confidentiality between counselor and the counselee.

The pastor can not allow the outcome of counseling sessions to affect the way in which he ministers to the counselee or the entire congregation. For example, he can not allow himself to become judgmental and lose respect for the counselee involved in cases relating to sexual or psychological abuse, or unfaithfulness on the part of a mate. In addition, the pastor has to monitor his own emotions and level of involvement making sure that his ability to perform his pastoral duties remains unaffected. Knowing how to transfer counselee’s problems to the Lord is a very necessary skill of a counseling pastor. Recognition that only the Lord can carry the burden of the people or solve their problem allows the pastor to maintain emotional and spiritual balance. Sometimes, after the pastor has devoted many hours to an individual, there are no immediate results. Occasionally, there are never any changes. The pastor should never give up on the counselee until the Lord changes the situation.

The Pastor as Role Model and Father Figure

Society has suffered a shift in the family structure. Divorce, out-of-wedlock births, incarceration, drug abuse, and murder have all contributed to proliferation of the single-parent homes. According to demographic research, the proliferation of single-parent homes exists to a greater extent in the African American community than in any other ethnic community. Dr. Willie Richardson echoes the gravity of the problem in his book, Reclaiming the Urban Family:

More than half of all families of African Americans are single-parent families or substitute parents such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles. The growth of single-parent families must be curtailed if children are
going to grow up in homes according to God’s purpose for the
family.15

What are the ramifications for those who pastor African Americans? First and
foremost, the pastor becomes an important role model for the congregation and the
community. In single-parent homes, strong male role models are missing. Consequently,
the pastor becomes the source of positive male identification. Lincoln and Mamiya state
the following:

In his work on the lives of Martin Luther and Mahatma Ghandi,
Erikson emphasized the role of the identity crisis during adolescence
as a critical part of the religious formation of these great men.
However, embedded in Erikson’s dynamic scheme is the view that an
identity crisis is also possible during the stages of middle age and old
age. Apparently, in the experiences of the Black clergy we
interviewed, the crises of middle age, which also coincide with raising
a family, were a pivotal time for a return to religion and church.16

The identity crisis is inherent in the life process. It is, therefore, of particular
importance that the man who pastors African Americans be an example of stability in at
least three important areas. The pastor must be a model for young men to follow.
1 Timothy 4:12 states, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers
in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” Additionally, to the entire
congregation, the pastor must be a father figure who instinctively employs Biblical
solutions to all problems. Finally, he must exemplify the standard by which young
women select their husbands. The pastor must be above reproach. “A bishop then must

15 Willie Richardson, Reclaiming the Urban Family (Grand Rapids: Zondervan

16 Lincoln and Mamiya, The Black Church in the African American Experience,
329.
be blameless” (1 Timothy 3:2). He cannot have any strings attached or hanging from his life. An attaché case is not complete without a handle. But the Pastor cannot have any handles that people can use to question his Christian testimony. Yes, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” but the Pastor’s testimony must be without shame to the cause of Christ. No one should be able to find legitimate faults with him. Since the bishop is the chief administrator, he has the responsibility of overseeing the spiritual well being of the church. God’s leader must set the example, not only with his lips but also with his life.

_The Pastor’s Family: Assuming its Accountability Before God_

The pastor’s family is usually under the watchful eye of his congregation and peers. In his first epistle, Paul instructs Timothy concerning the qualifications of the pastor or bishop; both being interpreted as the one who shepherds the flock. Paul says, “he must be the husband of one wife.” (1 Timothy 3:2). The bishop is always identified in the masculine gender. Further, he must manage his own house well, for “if anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?” (1 Timothy 3:5, NIV).

Today, we have many pastors shepherding the flock of God, but failing to shepherd their own families. As a result, the power of the ministry is negatively affected. The testimony before the world and God’s people is damaged. As the head of the household, the pastor will give an account before God for his family.

The successful pastor focuses his family around his wife. She should be his best friend and confidante. Without a wife who is a helpmeet for him, the pastor’s ministry cannot be successful. She prays for the pastor, encourages him and protects his
reputation. The Pastor should be able to confide in his wife, allowing her to share in the ministry. However, the pastor's sensitivity to the Holy Spirit guides him in knowing that he cannot burden or bombard his wife with weighty details concerning the ministry. The wife should also be encouraged to help with weddings and to develop the female leadership in the church, especially newly married women. The wife is the nucleus of the successful pastor's family.

The pastor's wife should be encouraged to be herself, rather than strive to meet the expectations of others. The pastor's home is a reflection of his loving wife. It is there that she carries out her primary ministry, loving and caring for the family. Providing rest, relaxation, constructive criticism and support are key responsibilities that must be performed by the pastor's wife if he is to be successful.

The success of the pastor's home life is a great support system to the success of the church. The pastor's home becomes a teaching tool that can be effective in training the congregation in the practice of biblical family life. The pastor's wife is an asset when meeting new members as well as in greeting the old ones. Many of the pastor's best sermons are preached not from the pulpit, but from the example of his home life. The writer, L.M. Stretch, states,

A good wife makes the cares of the world sit easy, and adds a sweetness to its pleasures: she is a man's best companion in prosperity, and his best if not only friend in adversity; the most careful preserver of his health, and the kindest attendant on his sickness; a faithful adviser in distress, a comforter in affliction, and a discreet manager of all his domestic affairs.\(^\text{17}\)

The crowning success of every minister is that his children grow up to know, love, and live for the Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 1:6). It should be realized that the pastor’s family is considered to be a model. His children should not, however, be manipulated, stigmatized or made to feel guilty for being children, specifically children of the pastor. Time with the children is to be enjoyed. Eddie B. Lane in his book, *The Christian African American Family*, states,

Encouragement is one of the most effective ways of developing and maintaining a strong, positive relationship with children. Encouragement is the means by which parents help their children prepare for and deal with mistakes.¹⁸

The pastor should set aside quality time for ministering to his family. What is not planned for will not be done. This all-important part of the ministry must be planned for in order that it not be swept aside by the crisis of every day ministry.

The successful pastor will make the family the highest priority in his life, next to his relationship with God through Jesus Christ. To do this he must make some commitments: (1) He must have a personal and family devotional life. (2) He must provide for the children’s physical needs. (3) He must maintain a public and private life for the children. (4) He must let the children know that their mother is his best friend, the most important and respected person in his life. Next to his relationship with God, there can be no more important relationships than those of his wife and children.

The pastor who is to be successful in ministering to African Americans must realize that a foundational problem in this community is the absence of a biblically

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based family structure. For this reason, it is of paramount importance that he teaches through his life what a family should be and how it should function.

*The Pastor and Roots*

Essential to the African American tradition is the requisite for eloquence and oratorical skill of the pastor for qualification as pulpiteer. One need only to remember the orations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other preachers who participated in the Civil Rights Movement to understand the quality of communication which is indicative of the African American pulpit. Use of imagery, allegory, and metaphor are techniques employed to motivate an audience to action, sway their thoughts or to inflame their emotions. One can hardly question the African American preacher’s abilities in these areas. As valuable as these techniques are, the time has come for a break from this tradition in order to advance the cause of Christ.

This writer was called into the ministry in spite of a speech impediment. In praying and considering where to train for the pastorate, he was determined to overcome this handicap. The urgency to study God’s Word and prepare for the work of the ministry became an overwhelming motivation. Following completion of study at Washington Bible College, the writer chose Liberty University.

Why this break from a traditional path of preparation? Liberty University enhanced the seed of his background. God is more interested in a pastor preaching His Word than in a public speaker waxing eloquent. Attending a predominantly White college sometimes labels the African American pastor as “preaching White.” Despite the
labeling of man, it is a privilege from God to attend Liberty University and Seminary in which the curricula center on the Word of God.

Why is it important for the Black pastor to remember his roots? The answer is found in the historical uniqueness of the African American. The strength of African American people has been characterized by their abundant faith in the Lord. Their churches today have a great deal more biblical concepts, but the early church had a great deal more faith. When a person was converted (saved) he really had a change of heart. His family and community observed this change clearly. Upon joining the church, he became very active - most likely a deacon or a pastor. This came about because of the consistent prayer life of his wife. She spent many nights and early mornings in constant prayer for her husband or son.

When the African American pastor came to visit the home, the family considered it an honor. In his Guide to Practical Pastoring, C. Sumner Wemp explores the importance of pastoral visitation.

Visitation is the missing link between the pulpit and the people. No doubt it is the weakest link in the church today. No pastor can run a church from behind a desk; if he tries, he will run it into a grave. Personal, perennial visitation is essential to a vibrant, virile church ministry. Your biggest responsibility to your people is to "watch for their souls, as they that must give account" (Hebrews 13:17), and it can't be done from the pulpit on Sunday alone. 19

In the past, at Christmas time, the finest ham from the smokehouse was reserved for the pastor and his family. The best sweet potatoes were cleaned and basketed for the pastor. The most beautiful clothing and quilts were made and given to the pastor.

Whatever request the pastor shared was taken to heart and acted upon in the most prompt way. The Black pastor received little money. Yet, he was held in the highest regard, and considered a man of worth. While there may have been a lack of exegetical Biblical exposition in the pulpit there was a basic understanding of the Scripture in the hearts of the people as they believed that the laborer (pastor) was worthy of his hire even of double honor.

One primary fact to assist the African American pastor in reaching the decision to remember his roots, is that God always uses His people to exhort the pastor. The committed pastor was always among the poor in the community. He depended solely upon God and God’s people to meet his needs. 1 Peter 5:6 states, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”

Woven into the fiber of the African American pastor is an historical element that can not be ignored. Lincoln and Mamiya examine this issue in The Black Church in the African American Experience:

On the whole, the evangelical tradition, especially in the south, tends to be highly correlated with political and behavioral conservatism among Whites. However, many Black evangelicals tend to be conservative in their religious views but liberal in their political positions. The fundamental critique of racism in American society, which is found in the Black religious heritage, is partly responsible for this more liberal view.²⁰

Satan has used this element to undermine the simple gospel of Christ with social gospel and loathsome prosperity theology. The Enemy has neutralized to a great extent the

²⁰ Lincoln and Mamiya, The Black Church in the African American Experience, 239.
White church by confusing it with equating Biblical Christianity to conservative politics. The African American church has been duped into thinking that Biblical Christianity is liberation theology and social gospel. However, any conservative Biblical scholar knows that there is no social gospel. There is, however, social law and the Gospel of salvation.

It is the Christian’s duty, irrespective of ethnic origin, to confront Satan whether it is on the grounds of “we shall overcome”, “pie in the sky, by and by” or “God is a Republican or Democrat mentality.” It must be recognized that Satan has placed false prophets in the African American community to make people dwell on the here and now rather than give consideration to their eternal destination. It is the duty of all Christians to cast down false doctrine, heresy and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. Duty demands that the Christian snatch these people from the jaws of eternal death.

_The Pastor and Health: Whereby God May be Honored_

For you formed my inward parts;  
you have covered me in my mother’s womb  
I will praise You, for I am fearfully  
And wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works,  
And that my soul knows very well.”  
(Psalm 139:13-14)

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). Man was created perfectly, without sickness, without disease or death. He was placed in a perfect habitation equipped to maintain his perfect state of being. Because of man’s sin or disobedience to God, the promise of death interrupted this continuum of eternal life. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

No longer does man have the privilege of eternal life apart from acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We are given a new continuum through death – the
optimum assurance of eternal life. Man becomes responsible for maintaining health in its most efficient form until death results. What is health? Health is a relative state that depends on the satisfaction of biological, psychological, sociological, cultural needs, and the ability to make suitable adaptations to stresses affecting these needs as they arise from within or without the individual.

Unlike Adam, the first created man, modern man is not in a perfect habitation. His environment is polluted with wastes from his industries. His foods are contaminated with toxins and carcinogens from fertilizers, pesticides and processing. Modern man finds his home bombarded with televisions and stereos. Advanced technology has provided him with microwaves, escalators and elevators and, of course, the finest automobiles.

Yet God alone created all of the things which are best to supply the needs of man to maintain optimum health. In Psalm 139:13-14, as prefaced, God receives glory and praise for knitting together the most mysterious, complex network of machinery known in creation, the human body.

For instance, there are 206 bones that make up the skeletal frame. This frame protects the innermost being, yet it does much more. A bone is living tissue that receives processes, and ships blood components and a vast host of vital mineral salts and materials. God admonishes man to shun evil and to fear the Lord. This will bring health to the body and nourishment to the bones.

Man is blessed with 600 or more muscles that are attached to the skeletal system, holding the system together. Signals from the brain empower the various muscles to move. Consider the body's motor skills in the dilation of the pupil of the eyes, movement
of food along the digestive tract, standing, beating of the heart. By God’s hands the body is composed of organs, tissues, nerves, and is made to function interdependently. How wonderfully and marvelous is God’s creation!

Yet, man’s body and mind are most abused. Man destroys miraculous formations that were brought to life by God’s own breath! Man is physically and mentally corrupt - overeating, failing to exercise or get proper rest. Consequently, he renders inefficient his digestive system, lungs, liver, brain and general physical status and stamina. Certainly, this desecration is not the reason our loving God created man in his image. Man is created to serve and to bring honor and glory to God. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10, NIV).

God’s chief servant is the pastor. A pastor has multiple roles that enable him to be an efficient and effective minister to his flock.

Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap (1 Timothy 3:2-4,7).

Titus 1:7-8, says that since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must “be blameless, not overbearing, not quick tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, [and] not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.” It is imperative that a pastor maintains his level of optimal well being. A pastor is expected to perform in roles of father, husband, teacher, counselor, administrator, peacemaker, leader and friend.
Through proper diet, regular exercise, proper rest and relaxation, he will be able to efficiently satisfy his role requirements. A pastor cannot subject himself to gluttony, thus causing excessive strain on his heart, digestive system, muscular skeletal system and deterioration to his physical appearance. In God’s word, men are told that they are to be obedient to fasting (abstinence of food) and prayer to enable them to discipline their flesh and humble themselves to the Spirit of God.

Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly (Matthew 6:16-18).

A pastor cannot resort to cigarette smoking “to calm his nerves.” “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Philippians 4:6). Cigarette smoking may also be a precursor to cancer. The above Scripture also commands us not to worry. A pastor cannot resort to alcohol or drug consumption as forms of recreation, socializing or relaxing. These behaviors will inevitably defy the commands of God, i.e. not given to drunkenness, not violent, not quarrelsome. “Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler, whoever is led astray by them is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1). Alcohol also leads to deterioration of brain, and blood cells as well as, liver and stomach damage. These are several examples of why God admonishes us to live a pure life. “Be holy, for I am Holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

Physical health is interdependent on mental health. There are many satanic devices to instigate physical destruction; how much more to invite mental collapse or
inadequacy. “Train yourself to be Godly. For physical training is of some value, but
godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to
come” (1 Timothy 4:7-8, NIV).

J. Oswald Sanders in his book, *Spiritual Leadership*, refers to “Elation and
Depression: as experienced by Dr. F. B. Meyer, renowned pastor:

Most people who knew Dr. F. B. Meyer would have no hesitation in
writing him down as a convinced optimist, ever seeing the bright side
of things, ever hopeful, ever vigorous, ever confident of the ultimate
triumph of good over evil. And they would have been right. He was
delightfully hopeful and inspiring. But he was far too keen and
thoughtful a man, too great a student of humanity, and in himself he
was unmeasurably human not to be overcome now and again by the
pessimistic views of life. He occasionally went down into the very
depths of human despair. He had seen too often and too clearly the
seamy side of life not to be sad and pessimistic now and then.  

Sanders eludes, further, to the testimony of the late C.H. Spurgeon in his lecture
on “The Minister’s Painting Fits:”

Before any great achievement, some measure of depression is very usual
. . . . Such was my experience in London. My success appalled me, and the
thought of the career which seemed to open up, so far from elating me,
cast me into the lowest depth, out of which I uttered my *miserere* and
found no room for a *gloria in excelsis*. Who was I that I should continue
to lead so great a multitude? I would betake me to my village obscurity,
or emigrate to America and find a solitary nest in the backwoods where I
might be sufficient for the things that were demanded of me. It was just
then the curtain was rising on my lifework, and I dreaded what it might
reveal. I hope I was not faithless, but I was timorous and filled with a
sense of my own unfitness. . . . This depression comes over me whenever
the Lord is preparing a larger blessing for my ministry.

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22 Ibid., 150.
A pastor is constantly subject to change and in order to minister he must be adaptable. In the realization of his expectations and responsibilities, psychological stresses will be ever present. In his own power and stamina, he is inadequate to produce. A pastor must rely on the love, guidance, strength and total dependence upon God. He must maintain a good relationship with God based upon respect for His commands; evidencing humility and total reverence for Him. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

A pastor’s leadership and his testimony to others depend totally on his sensitivity to the Spirit of God. “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, “Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

In this polluted society, pastors are succumbing to sexual sins, impure thinking, and financial racketeering that result in death from diseases, physically and mentally. Today, mental illness is perceived as schizophrenia and manic depression. Mental illness encompasses a realm of deceitful, immoral, worldly, impure and self-gratifying thought processes, which lead to wicked actions. The consequences of these thought and actions result in sin, which leads to death.

George Barna proclaims,

David, in contrast reflected the humility, obedience, compassion and dedication to God that marks a true visionary leader in the church. You cannot read the Psalms attributed to David without being struck by his passion to know and serve God. You cannot overlook the clear sense of the future that God had instilled within him. Like all visionary leaders, David was human and, as such, made mistakes.
But one of his redeeming qualities was his burning desire to remain true to the vision for the future that God had placed in his heart, which God allowed him to work toward despite the frailties of his human nature.23

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8). The role of a pastor requires uncompromising dedication both physically and mentally. God has justly made provisions to take care of his shepherds. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

A pastor who is spiritually dead is of no value in God’s family. He must keep his mental health perfectly functioning to minister to those whom God has intended. “You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for in YAH, the Lord, is everlasting strength” (Isaiah 26:3-4), “and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding; will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

Our problem in God’s work is our utter subjectivity. Our subjectivity builds a high protective wall around us so that everything about us is immune to the criticism our fellow men because we have prayed about it, or the Lord has led us. I am not speaking lightly about prayer or of divine guidance. But if a person is not very careful, this subjectivity can become a protective wall around an individual to keep him from the truth.24

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Should not a pastor maintain his mental and physical health that is given by God? 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." J. Oswald Sanders in *Spiritual Leadership* states, "He should be prudent, sound minded. This word indicates the well-balanced state of mind resulting from habitual self-restraint," and refers to the inner character which results from daily self-discipline. 25

As African Americans move closer to middle and upper class society, it becomes more important for the pastor who will minister to them to be conscious of his physical appearance and his mental habits.

*The Pastor and Worship: Personal Encounter With God's Majesty*

David said in Psalm 22:25, "My praise shall be of You in the great congregation; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him." Praise of God in the church is due to Him. In fact, it is all that man can give to Him for his mercy and grace. When man worships God in the beauty of holiness, he exalts His name above all names. The pastor should try to lead the people to a personal encounter with the majesty of the living Holy God. Worship is the essential expression of service, which a pastor can render unto God.

God is to be worshipped on His terms. Worshipping God is to be done more than just on Sunday. It is a way of life in which man worships God continually. The Psalmist David, states, "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His

hand.” (Psalm 95:6-7a). Believers ascribe to God His worth, and affirm His supreme value. Each time the believer goes to church, he worships God through adoration or praise, singing or clapping, or raising of hands in appreciation for His goodness. One should never seek to be a spectator in church, on the contrary, one should seek to be a true worshipper.

The result of worship can be expressed by sharing love with fellow believers. Sharing the gospel with unbelievers and meeting the needs of people on a very physical level are also means of worship. The difference between traditional emotionalism and true worship is that the former is flesh centered aimed at self-satisfaction, while the latter is a spiritual outflow from a deep appreciation for the presence of God.

A pastor should lead believers to worship God. It is a part of the ministry to which God has called him. Blackaby and Brandt offer this description:

No one, in all of society, has such an awesome privilege as a pastor—called by God as His ambassador to a lost and dying world, with the resources of God to meet their deepest need. What an assignment to be sent, by God himself, with the “keys of the Kingdom of heaven.”

He should teach others, after winning them to Christ, how to do the work of the ministry. Worship is the first and foremost in this ministry. Opportunities are provided for the congregation to participate in every aspect of each worship service. To insure that true worship occurs, an itinerary should be followed which allows the worship service to be carried primarily by the congregation. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

A. Personal testimonies of problems and blessings.

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B. Reading of the Scriptures by the congregation, in unison or responsive.

C. Interspersing musical responses throughout the service which take the choruses that are based solidly on Scripture. Many times one can use other useful choruses which express praise and adoration of God.

D. Continuity and variety in worship service in the selection of hymns, choruses and Scripture portions. The elements of the service are distributed in such a way that events of the same type do not follow one another directly. Many times a spoken portion of a service is followed by a chant. Also, it has been learned that the worshiper’s attention span is increased if, after he has been standing for a portion of the service, he is given the opportunity to sit down and vice versa.

E. The great hymns of praise traditional to the church. Even here, the principle of variety must be used in selecting hymns.

F. In certain instances it is found that it is not necessary to have the congregation to sing every verse of the hymns contained in the hymn book.

G. Invocation and opening prayer by leaders.

H. Special music either by the choir or by varied individuals.

I. The offering.

J. The public invitation following the sermon. The invitation will give the worshipper the opportunity to participate in the sermon by bringing him to the point of making a personal commitment.

K. A dignified conclusion. A benediction is dignified, spiritual and a Scriptural way to end a service.
L. A transition into the formal time of fellowship. The congregation should be
couraged to welcome visitors and enjoy one another in the Lord before departing.

Expository preaching of the Word of God is the centerpiece and hallmark of a
worship service. Blackaby and Brandt present this admonition:

God must be honored just in the proclamation of His word. 
Tremble yourself as you preach! Weep with pain, or joy, as you 
preach! Exhort, plead, encourage, as you preach! Let all who 
hear you be aware that you are entrusted with all the grace of 
God and have come expectantly to see God express His grace to 
them.\textsuperscript{27}

This should never be forgotten. The tendency to shorten the message and design the
service to entertain the congregation should be resisted at all cost. The order of service
and the sermon should be equally prepared.

Variety and innovation should mark the format of a service but the following
order is offered as an example:

(a) Call to worship

(b) Opening Hymn - standing

(c) Hymns by the choir

(d) Welcome

(e) Prayer

(f) Hymn by choir

(g) Solo

(h) Pastoral comments

(i) Offering

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 77.
(j) Hymn by Choir
(k) Solo
(l) Sermon
(m) Invitation
(n) Benediction
(o) Fellowship

Blackaby and Brandt submit this attestation:

God’s people are the only ones he has assigned to bring everyone into the experience of His salvation and His fullness of life!—This assignment is unique! And when abundant life (John 10:10) begins to be experienced in ever-increasing measure, not only is a life deeply affected, but every life he or she touches is likewise affected for good. Light dispels the darkness, and salt preserves and brings flavor to everything. And even more amazing and exciting is the life of a pastor who has been given the stewardship of God’s people, to create an atmosphere of life and be an enabler of God’s people to experience the life of God in all His fullness in the life of the church.28

A Biblical Theology

It is very important that the pastor is theologically sound. Since sheep follow the shepherd, the leader must know what he believes and where his belief will take him. The best way for the pastor to be effective in his work is to formulate his theology in his heart before he enters into a full time ministry. When the pastor goes to the pulpit, he needs to be in tune with the Lord so that he speaks God’s message as revealed in God’s Word.

This writer recalls the first sermon that he preached in a homiletics class. The professor said that the delivery had been satisfactory and that many good things had been

28 Ibid. 42.
said. He continued, "Next time, say what the Scripture says!" Speaking from the
authority of God's Word is a lesson that should be continually practiced. The preacher
cannot afford to merely say good things.

Without equivocation, the contemporary minister must be theologically grounded
in the central doctrines of Christianity, and must actively promote an indoctrination of
God's Truth for his congregation. His pursuit must be with the zeal of fanatics,
exhibiting the vehemence and tenacity of the occultists. The successful pastor of African
Americans will understand that one of the unique qualities of the congregation is their
expectation of their preacher. He must emphasize the teaching of doctrine in order to
overcome traditionalism in worship. It is the substance of worship and teaching that will
follow the church member into life and become the basis of his decision making.

*Preaching For Best Results*

The differences between today's preaching and that of Jesus' are enormous. John

Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that
proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' (Matthew 4:4) If we are fed by
every word that comes out of the mouth of God, then we ought to
study every word. Today, preaching has lost that. Many things are
preached except the word of God. We must teach the Bible—every
word of it. That is important. It doesn't matter if you don't have an
appetite for it.²⁹

The major errors are not in emphasis but in the message. The hope of the
preacher for best results must rest in a dependence upon the Lord. The biblical preacher
must speak by the authority of Christ and in His name. The preacher is Heaven's

Grace Communications, 1984), 11.
ambassador and must speak only what he has been commissioned to speak. The biblical preacher is not an entertainer. He is not to speak what comes from his mind or what he feels the congregation wants to hear. He must speak as 2 Corinthians 2:17b (NIV) dictates, “In Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.”

The preacher must sincerely have as his goal to glorify God in all that he does and says, and to seek the salvation of the souls to whom he preaches. To accomplish this goal he must first study and meditate upon the Word of God to find God’s will. Then he must faithfully communicate the will of God to the people. This is a sacred matter and must be done without vanity. Personal vanity lessens and obscures the Word. The preacher must not become a stumbling block to the communication of the message.

The Gospel of Christ must also be preached in such a manner that it will be understood by all who listen. Paul states, “Yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue” (1 Corinthians 14:19).

Preachers, if they are called of God, must preach. God has sent them for that purpose and empowered them for that work. An important step in the fulfillment of the call is to take complete advantage of the training resources and educational systems available. This is a particularly expedient endeavor for ministers to African Americans. Today’s complex society demands well trained leaders. That God would have His preachers well trained and thoroughly prepared is more than reasonable. Dr. Woodrow Kroll cites in his book, *The Vanishing Ministry*: “The training of the clergy has always
held a prominent position in American education. In fact, more frequently than not it has occupied the premier position.\footnote{Woodrow Kroll, \textit{The Vanishing Ministry} (Grand Rapids, MI: Kresel Publications, 1991), 53.}

Preachers must take it upon themselves to fulfill the ministry which God as set before them. In 1 Corinthians 1:17 (NIV) Paul said, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.” The preaching of the Gospel is the operation of God by which He shows His power in the salvation of those who are lost.

A pastor, in a sense, is similar to God’s priest for his love flows to God, and his service is to God. He must direct people’s attention and affections to God. The pastor’s purpose in life is to make Christ known and to express his deep love for God. To make God known to others requires the preacher to possess a deep personal relationship with Him. He cannot communicate what he does not know. As a preacher, a man must know God intimately, be knowledgeable of His ways and be cognizant of His love. The pastor must be open to receive His love if he is to share it with others; therefore, teaching them and encouraging them to respond to God who has made that love possible.

Titus 2:1 states, that the man of God is to “Speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.” That man must preach those concepts which agree with biblical doctrine, tend to make the hearer sound in the faith, and to lead to holy living. Preaching the attributes of God is essential to the conversion of man. Without knowledge of God, a sinner will not know whom he has offended, who his enemies are or who is able to save
him. Phillips contends that this act of surrender is one of the most important steps to a life of victory.

The believer's body is the temple of the Holy spirit, and he desires complete sovereignty over his temple. Once he has control of the believer's body, the Spirit of God can then impart victory over sins which involve the use of the body's members. Granted a new law which liberates from sin: granted also a new Lord who is none other than the third person of the triune godhead, it is obvious that a new life must follow.31

Preaching the whole counsel of God, His truth and His goodness is essential.

God's law must also be an essential part of Gospel preaching. Jesus, after He talked of the holiness of God, taught the people of the laws of God. Romans 3:20 states, "Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." 1 John 3:4 says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." All sinners, are so ignorant of God's law that they must be told that they have sinned against God. Preaching messages about the Ten Commandments is a way to teach a sinner of his guilt and thereby instill within him a desire for salvation.

Needed most of all in the African American church is the recognition that the Gospel is the whole counsel of God. Liberation theology can not deliver the African American from the wrath of God; only the Gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to affect such deliverance. The Preacher must explain the Gospel and make application of it to the sinner.

Pastors must deal with the awful reality of sin—sin in their own life, sin in the people of God, and sin in the multitude of lost people around them. No

life or ministry can know victory, success, and joy that ignores the reality of sin and God's solution and provision for sin.32

The message must be strong and boldly preached. As Paul said in Romans 10:14, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?"

The fundamental evangelical African American preacher must have a good delivery. Expository preachers are often complimented in African American churches for the quality of their teaching. This type of response should serve as a reminder that most African American congregations appreciate fervor in the message. Upon approaching the African American congregation requires the preacher to present the whole counsel of God coupled with the excitement of the traditional Black worship experience. This is a plan, which takes into consideration the cultural uniqueness of the African American experience while developing the spiritual life of the congregation.

Dr. Jerry Vines in his book, A Practical Guide to Sermon Preparation, comments on "Organizing the Expository Sermon:"

The expository preacher has a powerful ally as he seeks to creatively communicate God's Word to the man in the pew. He has been promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit. This feature of the expository preacher's work separates him from other forms of communication. Beyond question the modern preacher of the Word is facing what appear to be insurmountable difficulties. He is preaching to people who are accustomed to well-trained, fluent, polished communicators on television and radio. He is also trying to communicate to people who may have very little Bible understanding or background. Much of the terminology of Scripture may be strange or foreign to them. In his own strength the preachers are sometimes charged with answering questions no one is asking. One answer to this charge is, we are answering questions people should be asking.

32 Blackaby, The Power of the Call, 56.
Yet, I am not so sure the charge is actually true. People are indeed asking the questions we are answering; they are just asking them in different words. Further, through intelligent, exciting, contemporary preaching of the Bible we can elicit from our hearers a desire to hear answers to the right questions.\textsuperscript{33}

The Apostle Paul’s charge to Timothy profoundly epitomizes “Preaching for Best Results:”

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry (2 Timothy 4:15).

CHAPTER 4
A MODEL FOR PASTORS WHO MINISTER TO
AMERICANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT

The Role of the Local Church

Traditionally, the essential function of the local African American church has been to serve as a support system for its members and community at large. When contemplating ministering to African Americans, the pastor must understand this traditional function while providing a contemporary agenda.

George Barna lamentably states,

One of the most popular and devastating barriers to true vision is the notion that God would never cause you to change what you have always done before. In reality God uses traditions in ministry to provide people with a semblance of consistency and stability. Traditions can form a foundation upon which he builds the future. Traditions can serve as a bridge between the past and the future, enabling people to retain a comfort zone while focusing on him.¹

The programs and ministries of the church have to be designed to meet the present and future needs of its constituents.

Educational Programs

When pastoring the African-American population, the pastor must be aware of and allow for the differing levels of education in the congregation. His messages, while being instructive, must include varied and appropriate forms of pedagogy. The pulpit, is not the only place for instruction, churches need educational programs as well. These programs allow for a more in-depth presentation of material, and an opportunity for

questions and answers. Two typical educational programs in the church are Sunday School and Bible Study.

This research will suggest how such programs should be conducted in the African American church and will further propose the introduction of three other educational programs: workshops, seminars and the Christian school. Workshops and seminars can be designed to meet specific needs that have been identified. The Christian school can open the doors for many African American children, considering the extremely low rate of matriculation for this population in the predominantly White Christian schools.

*The Pastor and Community: Impacting Through Christian Principles and Participation*

This portion of the research will serve as a case study on the writer’s experiences as pastor of Calvary Evangelical Baptist Church for the past fourteen years. His personal participation in the African American experience augments the research previously presented. The goal of this research is to promote the transition in the African American church from traditional worship based on the slavery experience to biblical worship based on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Calvary Evangelical Baptist Church is located in Portsmouth, Virginia adjacent to the northern most border of the City of Chesapeake. However, Calvary’s marketing area is the entire Hampton Roads area. Members travel from Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Suffolk Newport News, and Hampton. As a local church, Calvary Evangelical Baptist Church is interested in the human needs of its congregation and community. Christ met the human requirements of people; therefore disciples of Christ are admonished to meet
the needs of others. In meeting the human demands, Calvary has the following ministries:

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<tr>
<th>Marriage and divorce</th>
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<td>Poverty</td>
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<td>Pollution</td>
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<td>Pre-School (ages 2-5)</td>
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The ministry of Calvary Evangelical Baptist Church transforms the attitudes of helplessness and hopelessness through vital Christian experience, sustaining hope through Christian friendship and evangelism. The cities of this area can be geographically divided so that each person in our church is responsible for working in a specific area. Therefore, our church has taken steps to improve the housing conditions among our church families. Through Christian principles and active participation, Calvary focuses on community improvement.

Calvary has a diversified membership with many and varied experiences. Many have been criminals; some have even spent time in jail. Still others are doctors, lawyers, schoolteachers, secretaries, laborers and members of the military service. In addition, members of this congregation have employment with the local school boards, social service agencies and the juvenile court system. Because of the presence of these professionals within the church community, efforts are being made to combat
delinquency and crime. Annually, teenagers from Calvary along with teens from surrounding cities take part in a sports camp in Branson, Missouri where they learn Christian principles and techniques for living victorious lives. This program is headed by an individual employed by the juvenile court system. The teens from this group who commit themselves to Jesus Christ will never become unnecessarily entangled with the law. Though our juvenile court has done its share in the treatment of youthful offenders as a criminal, it can only seek to repair the damage after it has been done. Far more important than correction is intelligent prevention of delinquency, which is facilitated by the ministry of the church.

Research has shown that delinquency is caused by unwholesome family conditions and lack of wholesome outlets for youthful impulses and energies. In our communities, we know that those who commit crimes are not the real enemies.

Mammoth problems contributing to delinquency are examined by Scott A. Bradley in his book, *The Black Man*:

The problem comes in when Black youth are only shown role models whom they in turn can never be like. They are told that the chances of their becoming like their role model are very small if not impossible. Black role models are not people who cannot be touched, or talked to. Black role models are in our communities, setting a positive example such as parents, teachers, and ministers! Black athletes have survived a one-in-a-million chance in making it to the Pros. There are about 1300 Black athletes in the three major sports of Baseball, Football, and Basketball. (The forth major sport, Hockey, has so few Blacks playing it’s not even worth mentioning). These 1300 represent less than one per cent of the entire Black population. There are 8% more Black lawyers and 13% more Black doctors. But the importance of excelling in other fields such as law, medicine, science, and literary are not stressed enough. We can do more than just excel on the playing field. When we move into an area where the white man is threatened, however, we began to face quota’s and discrimination. The facts are that doctors, lawyers, teachers, and
ministers, among others, are needed more to build and advance the Black purpose, and mold Black society.\textsuperscript{2}

Ephesians 6:12 states, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Satan is the enemy that causes all social ills. The duty of the office of pastor, is to reach sinners, to seek with Christian appeal an end to corruption wherever it is found, and to carry the messages of hope, repentance and salvation.

Calvary provides biblical teaching that limits delinquency from the individual’s life. Nearly ninety percent of teenagers involved in the Teen ministry at Calvary graduate from high school and go on to college. Some of the current youth leaders at the church came through the program themselves. Like the “one leper” they feel compelled to return to Jesus and give thanks. “Now one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan” (Luke 17:15, 16). Many of our former teenagers are graduates of Liberty University and are now in other cities carrying out the Great Commission.

These models are positive proof that God is no respecter of persons. The African American who commits his or her soul to Jesus Christ will be blessed, accepted in the Beloved and in nowise cast out.

\textsuperscript{2} Scott Bradley, \textit{The Black Man} (Bellwood, IL: Rivers of Life Ministry, 1993). 95, 96.
Church Ministries Designed for Fellowship

The local church should be viewed as a support network to minister to people from all walks of life. Everyone within the local church can be a participant in a program that touches others. Paul said that we should bear one another's burden (Galatians 6:2). When members are not actively touching others live, they should be told the importance of ministering to one another. Pointing out how involvement helps the entire church to grow encourages members to become more active.

Church ministries allow for support and the development of personal relationships. People have an opportunity to meet and make new friends in order to come out from among the people with whom they have associated prior to salvation. In ministries, people can make contact with others who can identify with their situations. Such identification provides comfort as individuals come to the realization that they are not alone. Philippians 4:19 states, "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The music ministry, for example, provides fellowship even when there is no practice or performance. Choir members have at least one thing in common, they love to sing! Thus, singing allows an opportunity for other subjects to be addressed. To further enhance fellowship, choirs have begun to serve refreshments after rehearsals. This is a great way for individuals to get together and talk. As a result, other gatherings are planned providing occasions to kindle friendships.
The prayer ministry is another area of involvement. A group is selected each Sunday to pray during the first half of the worship service. This group effort provides another opportunity for people to touch each other and thus last enduring relationships.

Through Fellowship the church people to get to know each other. The pastor plays an integral part in promoting group involvement. People have a tremendous need for opportunities to communicate. Every church sponsored function must make it a part of its goal to minister to the needs of the people. Calvary is a very unique church! There is diversity in its ministries:

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Paul told the Thessalonians to “Warn those who are unruly, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone” (1 Thessalonias 5:14).

Three groups of people require three different methods of ministry. (1) Paul told the Thessalonians to warn the unruly group because they are troublemakers. This group can get into a church and breed confusion and, consequently, disrupt harmony.
Secondly, the fainthearted group should be encouraged. These people need comforting words because they are easily depressed and discouraged. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 states, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

Thirdly, the weak group must be supported. There are people who have fragile moments in their lives that cause them to succumb to sin. They need strong members who may function as support beams to build them up until they are able to stand on their own.

Finally, Paul simply said, “Be patient with everyone.” The mission of the church requires that the ministry never give up on any person, no matter how bleak the situation appears. As long as there is life, there is hope. Every person can receive hope through individualized counseling and friendship.

_The Aversion of African American Men Toward Church Practices_

The single most obvious problem in the African American community today is the lack of male participation in the family. This absence is also seen in the church with many of the largest movements being female dominated. Currently, there is a proliferation of female pastors and deacons in the main line denominations as well as the peripheral groups and cults. The absence of African American men from the pews indicate that these men have an aversion to the church.

The primary reason for the absence of African American men in the church is apparently a struggle with authority. The problem relates to rebelling against having
others over them. It is God’s plan that men be in a position of authority. When asked to submit to a pastor, African American men feel another man is challenging their authority. There seems to be a general rejection of the Lord’s authority at home, on the job and in church. African American men, relying on their authority, have a tendency to give room for satanic influences.

Secondly, an absence of African American men may be due to submission to women specifically. 1Timothy 2:1 states, “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.” Most African American women are more aggressive and assertive than African American men. This behavior may be thrust upon these women by social circumstances. Men who refuse to take responsibility for leadership, surrender to women. They do not take authority in the home, school, work or church. Whatever the specific cause the fact is that in participation in church requires assuming responsibility, which ultimately leads to leadership roles.

Thirdly, the issue of trust hinders African American men from involvement in the church. Generally, there is a low trust level among African American men toward church leadership. They believe the pastor is dishonest. Historically, womanizing has been prevalent among African American pastors. The image of the African American preacher has been that of a flamboyant moneymonger who drives a Cadillac. This does not produce a climate of trust.

Fourth, envy prevents African American men from full participation in the church. The pastor is the center of the wife’s attention Sunday morning and Wednesday night. Due to the low level of spiritual discernment that results from not participating in
church, the wife’s respect for the pastor is misinterpreted. Women speak admiringly of their pastors, but fail to make the similar comments about their husbands because the husband is not in church. The husband considers his wife a hypocrite since she does revere her pastor more than own her husband. The husband is envious of the pastor’s place of respect, all the-while refusing to take that place himself.

The fifth reason that African American men refuse participation in the church is their lack of biblical knowledge. Most African American women have had more experience in church and Bible study than the men. As a result, they are more familiar with scripture. Many African American women are perceived by their husbands as flaunting spirituality when the woman displays Bible knowledge.

Finally, African American men do not involve themselves in home prayer and Bible study. Due to the work requirements of the average African American man, his time is limited. Due to his absence from church he is not generally as well versed in the Scriptures as his wife. There is a fear that should he exert himself in this area, he may be challenged, confronted, and corrected. He risks being humiliated in front of wife and children. He, therefore, withdraws from participation in these activities in an effort to save face.

*The Family of God*

The family is the basic unit of God’s. There are many dynamics that come into play in the process of strengthening the family. Some are economic, social, and reach down into the very fabric of African American culture. The primary plank in the platform to build strong churches must be to build strong families. How can this be done? The answer is quite simple. Do it God’s way!
Dr. Willie Richardson echoes the gravity of dynamic forces in his book, *Reclaiming the Urban Family*: “More than half of all families of African Americans are single-parent families or substitute parents such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles. The growth of single-parent families must be curtailed if children are going to grow up in homes according to God’s purpose for the family.”

African American men must be held accountable for their behavior as heads of the family. The pastor, the deacons, an every man in the church must be in the position to accept authority and be responsible for his actions. Before men can be held accountable, they must be taught what their responsibilities embrace. It is incumbent upon the church to build leadership skills. If a man leads his family, all will follow Christ.

Secondly, the role of the woman in the family is equally important. The woman who assumes responsibilities for rearing the children and attending household affairs shares the benefits of the family unit. What are the prevailing attitudes held by African American women toward African American men as head of the household?

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah describes the condition of Israel in his time. The first five chapters, give reasons for the destruction of Israel. Specifically Isaiah states there were no mighty men; their women ruled over them and their children oppressed authority. African Americans also share these problems. There is a general absence of mighty men in the African American community coupled with the rise in female leadership. Perhaps the most glaring similarity between Isaiah’s day and ours is children who oppress. The alarming rates of teen pregnancy, juvenile crimes, violent crimes,

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school dropouts and attitudes of hopelessness demonstrate the deterioration in the family structure.

C. Sumner Wemp in his *Guide to Practical Pastoring* suggests, "Reaching whole families should be the aim of the church." The Church, has the only answer: Jesus Christ. It must, therefore, be the commitment of the church to return to its first love. The Church must build families but it must find ways to do so. The key to mending the family is reaching African American men with the transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Ladies’ Fellowship (Prime Rib)*

Ladies’ Fellowship (Prime Rib) serves as a catalyst ministry. Most of the speakers are regular people: wives, mothers, singles and seniors. Many of the attendees are distressed, co-dependent, or even women of extraordinary calibers. What an encouragement they find when they realize the speakers at Ladies’ Fellowship identify the necessity of this ministry.

Ladies’ Fellowship is designed to provide a relaxed informal atmosphere. However, the biblical basis is retained so that the ladies feel free to express themselves. Christ-centered counseling is the basis upon which solutions are built in this ministry. This ministry provides a great opportunity for ladies to utilize their leadership skills, and to exercise their spiritual gifts.

Ladies’ Fellowship serves also as an extension of the Pastor. This is an excellent opportunity for lay women to assist the pastor in areas where he assumes less

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involvement for reasons of gender. Ladies’ Fellowship promotes family fellowship, and friendship, thus, freeing the pastor to be available for other areas in the church. However, if there is information that the pastor should be aware of, it is provided with strict confidence. This enables the pastor to counsel more effectively with the family, if it is deemed necessary.

Ladies’ Fellowship provides an open invitation to all ladies in the church. There are many group activities to provide involvement and allow ladies the opportunity to gather in different settings. For many ladies these activities serve as much needed outlets. However, participants will receive much more because of the information that is provided to minister to the total woman.

“WOW” ministries (Women of Wisdom) put each woman of the church in a small cell group for prayer and fellowship. “Mother - Daughter Tea” has been a delight during the Mother’s day weekend annually. Annual seminars in an attractive setting featuring a national speaker always draw a large crowd. Local women have a chance to receive instruction and counsel from nationally known Christian women. Christmas time is not the same without a “Progressive Dinner”. The ladies join in a caravan or bus and visit from house to house, enjoying a special dish at each selected home. Monthly meetings are the largest single gatherings at the church. It only makes one wonder, what is going on with the women? One thing is obvious; these women are actively seeking fellowship with others of like precious faith.

The Single Parent

With over half of the African American families being headed by a single parent the church must develop ministry programs that will adequately serve their needs.
Traditional singles programs that emphasize social interaction do not meet the complex needs of this group. Single parents look for financial planning; child rearing and other practical skills that promote the practice of biblically-based techniques. They are in search of mentoring programs for children in an effort to create possible role models. Additionally, they seek counseling for their children that they themselves cannot provide.

Ministering to single people requires involvement in their lives. This means becoming involved in thorny problems. The church must not back away from this troubling aspect of ministry. Singing and preaching are exciting and fun, but when the worship service is over, hurting people go home to live in misery. The Pastor must condescend to show his congregation how to put into practice every day those principles he preaches on Sunday.

*Friendship: A Great Need for the Contemporary Minister*

The greatest need of the contemporary African American pastor is his need for close friendship. In a local body where the harvest and needs are plentiful, but the laborers are few, the pastor has innumerable responsibilities and duties. He finds himself functioning as an overseer and shepherd, an evangelist to lost souls, a provider of faith, a counselor, and a visitor to the sick and shut-in. The pastor is continually giving of himself to people.

Yet, there lies deep within this African American pastor the need to share with another person all that transpires within his own life and within the ministry entrusted to him. There is a need for the contemporary pastor to be stimulated in his thinking and actions. There is even a need to be encouraged and challenged spiritually. However, the need of the pastor to receive encouragement from the body of Christ is overlooked.
because of his position of leadership. In actuality, the contemporary pastor needs encouragement, support, and edification from the laymen of Christ. But, with whom does the pastor develop a close friendship?

It is a fact that any friendship or relationship must go through the building stage of acquaintance to casual friendship to close friendship. Though no time frame is set for a relationship to go from acquaintance to close friendship, certain qualities must be present leading to its progression. These qualities: mutual love, deep sharing, self-sacrifice, encouragement, motivation, spiritual challenge, loyalty and fun are the fabric of true friendship that the pastor craves.

The basis for a trusting relationship is agape—unconditional love. Only God is capable of accepting and loving unconditionally the total human. The maturing Christian can learn to love unconditionally as God loves through Christ. Therefore, the pastor needs to know that his friend accepts and loves him totally and fully. God’s way includes loving and accepting one’s pastor in his weaknesses and strengths, loving and accepting him in his limitations, abilities, and potential.

The person developing a relationship with the pastor should be seeking to have the pastor’s best interest and highest good at heart. Having a person’s best interest in mind is prerequisite for the health of any relationship. However, in the pastoral relationship many people expect the pastor to be perfect, and when they see his limitations and weaknesses, they tend to use those shortcomings against him. Betrayal or backbiting is always hurtful and damaging. Whomever the pastor has or hopes to have as a close friend, needs to know the requirements of unconditional love.
Love becomes the foundation for the relationship; the sharing of hearts begins to take place. Deep sharing usually occurs where an abiding trust exists. For this reason the pastor, especially the pastor of today, should pray that God would send to him someone of like heart and of similar vision. God can use this person as a source of encouragement because he understands the pastor’s heart. Such a friend’s godly talents augment the pastor’s strengths, and minimize his weaknesses. God’s vision for the church could then be realized more easily.

Another very important way that God may use one who befriends the pastor is as a prayer partner. Truly, miracles could ensue. And yet, these qualities alone are by no means exhaustive, but give some idea as to the type of person the pastor needs in order for deep sharing to occur in a relationship.

The pastor needs a friend who will speak to him in truth and in a spirit of love. This friend will motivate his thinking and challenge him spiritually. He will view the pastor as a confidant, and a brother in Christ, and a member of the body who has been entrusted as overseer and shepherd of the local body. Loyalty becomes a factor because there will be a need to share honestly, yet to respect the pastor in his leadership role. This dichotomy transcends other friendships.

The pastor and this friend represent a forceful dichotomy. When this dichotomy is accepted, disagreements or like challenges end amicably. As unconditional love remains the foundation upon which friendship is built, loyalty is established.

No relationship is complete without fun. The pastor needs to break away from the everyday concerns of the ministry and just relax and have fun. This break from the norm is a source of refreshment to the pastor, allowing him to recharge. The contemporary
pastor just needs someone with whom he can be himself. The avenues through which the pastor has to develop close relationships are endless. It takes time to develop a close friendship, and only as relationships develop do qualities of true friendship emerge. Love, self-sacrifice, depth in sharing, encouragement, challenge, motivation, loyalty and fun are essential to any close relationship.

When pastoring African Americans one encounters a continuous flood of traumatic and sad circumstances. The unique nature of the group to whom he ministers makes it necessary to have a release valve, which serves as a mechanism for admitting then releasing anxiety and pain effectively. This close personal friend for the pastor is the mechanism!

Church Finances: Accountability and Testimony

It is most important to have a good image in the community to silence nay sayers who will criticize the church. No other area comes under attack as much as the financial management of the church. It is important to organize controls over the finances of the church. This organization is important to the church’s efficient operation. Because the pastor is accountable both to the congregation and to God, he should closely observe the financial operations of the Church in order to insure ethical practices.

Planned budgets should be followed. Forecasting should be done to determine as closely as possible the level of giving in order that correct projections can be made. Budgets should be based upon the requirements of the church to minister to the needs of the people. While flexibility is needed to respond to emergencies, commitment to follow a well-planned budget will forestall criticism that is so frequently aimed at the African American church.
In planning a budget, each department of the church should submit its financial requirements for the year. A review of all requests should be made and the budget should be adjusted accordingly. In the budgeting process, goals should be set and the calendar planned. This procedure will permit coordination and focusing of the church to reach predetermined objectives.

When the final document is prepared, the congregation should approve the annual budget. With a financial document completed it can be administered on a day to day basis through established procedures for expenditure of funds through the maintenance of a record keeping system to safeguard all funds.

The treasurer is the main officer in charge of controlling expenditures, but operates under the supervision of the pastor. A purchasing agent should be assigned to receive and approve all requisitions from department directors. This person would generally be the pastor in smaller churches or one of his assistants in the case of larger churches.

Financial accountability, as well as theological soundness and stability of the pastor’s family life, is the most important aspect of any model of a contemporary church. It is particularly important because of inherent mistrust expressed by African American males. Past abuses of pastoral authority have also contributed to the problem of mistrust.

Based on the number of dollars passing through the African American community each year reported by consumer research, the African American population is the third largest consumer group in the nation. In spite of this, the African American churches are suffering financially. In most White churches, the congregation appears to realize that
the church needs money to run effectively and that the pastor and his family need provisions. Many African Americans, on the other hand, do not understand.

African Americans are primarily concerned about whether the money is being misused. This is due, in part, to the flamboyant life style of many pastors. When impoverished people see ostentatious inclinations, they rebel against giving to the church.

Despite the fact that African Americans make up the third largest consumer group, there are many who suffer financially because of unemployment and low wages. Both of these factors contribute to the financial distress in the African American church. As a result, many of these churches resort to other methods by which to raise funds, such as: dinner sales, yard sales, membership competitions by state, Tom Thumb weddings, Miss First Church competitions, challenges between various organizations within the church, and a potpourri of other activities.

Although such activities may produce funds, they are not in accordance with God’s instruction “Bring all the tithe into the storehouse” (Malachi 3:10). This is a message that must be taught to African Americans. Tithing is a commandment with rewards, something that many African American church members have yet to grasp. The Apostle Paul taught liberality and thanksgiving.

I don’t need to write you about the money you plan to give for God’s people. I know how eager you are to give. And I have proudly told the Lord’s followers in Macedonia that you people in Achaia have been ready for a whole year. Now your desire to give has made them want to give. That’s why I am sending Titus and the two others to promised. This will prove that we were not wrong to brag about you. Some followers from Macedonia may come with me, and I want them to find that you have the money ready. If you don’t I would be embarrassed for trusting you to do this. But you would be embarrassed even more. So I have decided to ask Titus and the others to spend some time with you before I arrive. This way they can arrange to collect the money you have promised. Then you will have the chance to give because you
want to, and not because you feel forced to. Remember this saying, “A few seeds make a small harvest, but a lot of seeds make a big harvest” (2 Corinthians 9:1-6, CEV).

The pastor of African Americans must institute teachings and policies that encourage giving. Such policies would include the following:

1. The pastor must oversee the handling of the money.
2. It must be made obvious trustworthy people handle the money.
3. The congregation must be given clear details on how the money is being spent.
4. The congregation must be allowed to ask questions regarding the budget.
5. The congregation must be given, periodically, a detailed itemization of the budget, and must vote on budget items.
6. Religious issues concerning African Americans must be addressed. (Afro-centric issues are hindering many from total commitment).

The pastor must be, in essence, beyond reproach in activities associated with the budget and finance of the church. People must be assured that the funds are being handled in a Godly, wise, prudent manner.
CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether, it is good or whether it is evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

The writer revisits the purpose of this study: Theory and Practices in Pastoring Americans of African Descent. This study seeks to make the pastor aware of the barriers that African Americans have faced and do now face.

For success, the pastor is accountable:

1. Admit that there are barriers. Accept the fact that Sin and not race has caused these barriers. Biblically, there are many allusions to Black people, therefore, God is no respecter of persons. The impact of the African American experience is unique within a historical perspective that has produced culture differences.

2. Believe that God is greater than any barrier that is separating us. As the man of God, the pastor as preacher and teacher must provide counsel and exemplify God’s faithfulness through his family, health, and worship.

3. Commit to God these barriers. The answer lies within the role of the local church with its educational and community programs and participation.

4. Seek to bring about oneness. This will be done when church ministries are designed for fellowship. The aversion of the African American men is due to church practices.
5. Make decisions, that he will be a part of the solution to the barriers. Since the church is the family of God, the pastor must seek to provide opportunities for every person to practice righteousness and love one another; as seen in 1 John 3:7-12:

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

The Word of God is unchanging; God is no respecter of persons. In His perfect creation there is perfect justice and equality. In the beginning, perfection existed both in the physical and spiritual realm. It was through Adam's conscious choice to rebel against the perfection of God and the world was plunged into the mire of sin. Dr. John Phillips applies the standard of Romans 3:9 to the Sin-Race discussion:

What then? Are we better than they? No, in wise: for we have before proved both Jews and gentiles, that they are all under sin. All men are on the same footing before God when it comes to a matter of sin. Jew and gentile, oriental and occidental, red and yellow, black or white there is no difference. All men are sinners in the sight of God.¹

Sin brought defilement to the human experience. Death, disease, war, famine and strife ravaged all people. Embodied in sin are oppression, discrimination and hatred. Since these experiences exist, it is necessary to understand that when dealing with people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds, one deals with a different corporate

¹ John Phillips, Exploring Romans, 55.
experience. That corporate experience determines to a great extent how all men think, act, and have their being.

Understanding these facts, African Americans are a unique people having a common historical, social and cultural experience. This neither elevates them nor debases them in relation to other social strata or of American society. It simply makes them unique in the American experience, just as social dynamics make the American Indian, the Alaskan Eskimo, or the Louisiana French unique in their common corporate experience. After all, one must acknowledge that the strength of America has been the assimilation of a myriad of people from all over the world, molding them into “one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.” Yet, how did we get where we are?

Dr. Woodrow Kroll summarizes it in his Book, The Vanishing Ministry:

Again and again, Satan has diverted God’s army. Again and again, he has confused us about our responsibility to the Commander-in-Chief. Again and again, he has vividly shown us the legitimate needs of this world to which we could dedicate our lives. Again and again, Satan has plotted for what is good to rob us of what is best. We did not get to this low point in the battle deliberately. And we did not get here with our eyes wide open. Satan worked subtly to get our eyes off the Commander and on to ourselves. We were duped; all of us were tricked. But now we know it. Maybe we could claim innocence before when the ranks of God’s soldiers were rapidly depleting, but what will we claim in the future? If you have asked God henceforth to keep Satan’s devilish diversion from you, watch out! That will call for some heart-searching decisions and will undoubtedly affect every area of your life. Are you ready for that?²

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and

² Woodrow Kroll, The Vanishing Ministry, 69.
spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened I unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do (Hebrews 4:12-13).

Certain socio-cultural differences do affect the pastoring of Americans of African descent. These differences must prescribe the practices employed in such ministry. Pastors of African Americans should evaluate and structure their ministries to meet the needs of the population being served. A crucial factor in meeting those needs is the ability to understand the people, their history, their culture and their concerns. In this regard, ministering to Americans of African descent requires a knowledge and understanding of the issues that are peculiar to this population. This knowledge and understanding must include those factors that influence, motivate, and direct the behavior of African Americans.
CHAPTER 6

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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