Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

The Decline of Church Attendance in Black America:
A Biblical Mandate for Black Males to Godly Leadership.

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Doctor of Ministry

by

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ABSTRACT

The Decline of Church Attendance in Black America:
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The church was established as a place where sinners could come and find refuge for their souls. Getting people to feel secure in their relationship with Christ, many churchgoers have decided to stay away from church. Studies show for the past several decades’ church attendance declined in many Baptist churches across America by 61 percent. The roles of black males lack the leadership ability to lead in the home, as a husband, and in the family. Research has uncovered several issues which have shown because of this decline. Black Baptist churches in Florida are suffering from male leadership. Leadership must discover the problems that have caused people to withdraw from attending church. Several major issues have developed about attendance. This author will conduct face-to-face surveys with 10 participants who formerly attended church and 10 black men that do not go to church. This survey will comply data to decide the suitable approach to resolve the problem and develop programs to aid the churches. Josh 24:14 (NKJV) will be the foundation of this project as it identifies and bring concise information that will help in resolving this matter and spread it to church leaders. By it, they may adopt these methods as a tool to draw people back to the house of God. These facts are sure.

Abstract Length 216

Key Words: Churchgoers, church leaders, Relationship with Christ, House of God, Black Baptist churches
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Abbreviations

(Black MSM)  Black Men who have sex with men
(FITTDM)  Family interactional theory: the developmental model
(HBCU)  Historically Black Colleges and Universities
(IBI)  Independent Black Institutions
(NAACP)  National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
(UNCF)  United Negro College Fund
(NKJV)  New King James Version
(NASV)  New American Standard Version
(BTU)  Baptist Training Union

Biblical Abbreviations

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of Problem

Black America churches have been declining presently because of moral and spiritual values of church-goers of all ages. Ethical values are eroding with changing times. Crime is on the rise in the Black community, the church has a duty to reach people by ministering Christ to them. The church must meet the challenge of developing people to live their lives in a manner that reflects God in them. Many role models and leaders in the church have disappeared. Families must align themselves with God’s Will by focusing on their roles in the church. The Bible says, “When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel” (Judg. 2: 10 NKJV).

The book of Judges is a sign of what has gone wrong with today’s society. Women now handle the role of leadership in Black America families; this role was for male influence, but, because of the male leader being absent the family is shaken. The family is facing erosion. The effects have fallen on the church. The foundation of the church is the families and the church needs them to survive. The family leadership roles are now in the hands of women, women that have become the sole breadwinners. Moreover, women are serving in leadership positions in the church as they head the family.

The twenty-first-century church seems ready to accept the challenge of black women in leadership roles. Alexander Ross states, “Many economic and educational indicators demonstrate improving conditions for women proportional to men. Wages, labor force participation, and occupational distribution among women over the past few decades have grown closer to levels
that are characteristic of men.”¹ In the absence of black males in both the home and the church, avoid has been created. This void has also left a vacuum in a society where there are fewer male role models in the home and church.

Statement of Limitations

The purpose of this project is to address the absence of African-American males church and the vacancy left in the family. God created man to worship Him, but the black male has distanced himself from this purpose. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9 NKJV). This same question can be asked of the black male. What has happened to the black male? This is what we are examining. God is calling to black males to restore broken relationships between God and man. What has happened between the African-American males and the church has crystallized the church community. The family has corroded at the absence of the male. Since the communities and churches are in obvious need of the African-American male, this absence is felt. Young males are hanging out on streets, under oak trees, and in small gangs.

Mentors have been used as temporary role models in the home, this is an attempt to fill the role of the father in the home. They are being considered as a replacement, due to failing fathers, the role model is supplying the absent leader of the family, and the role of the African-American male is an important part of the family, church, and community. This is a problem that has existed for a long time. Finding ways to bring the African-American male back to church presents a challenge, but what is found in with the results will show the black male’s lack interest in church. The church and black families have ties with each other because the community relies

on the church for its strength and hope.

The church is a place of refuge for the people to come to be helped spiritually. Hart Nelsen proposes that, “Scholars have viewed the black church as central in the black community, and they have considered the role of black religiosity and the black church in fostering.”

Theoretical Basis

The leadership role is God’s mandate for males in the family. The absence of the male’s leadership in the home has caused children to go astray. With no one to direct them in a godly way, children take authority themselves. Without the male role model, peer pressure causes children to stray away without. The Bible teaches, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). The role of the father is that of leader and teacher of the children and his household. God wanted men to assume the authority given to them as head, and to teach them their children the way of God directing them to become the next family leaders.

In light of God’s mandate in bringing the African-American male to leadership, the main challenge is convincing African-American males the need of coming to Christ. In drawing them into the Church, church leaders must have spiritual and foundational programs to offer the black male and train him in the values of a Christ-centered life. Hart Nelsen writes;

Even though the church is central in the black communities, blacks having a higher rate preference,” from 3.5 and 4.5 percent in 1957 and 1972-1974, respectively (Glenn, and

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3 Ibid., 398.
of church members attending than whites (76 percent compared with 69 percent in 1983, according to Gallup, 1984:55), blacks are showing an increasing rate of "no religious Gotard, 1977:444; nonwhite data), to 6 (nonwhite), 9 (nonwhite) and 12 percent (black) in 1976, 1979, and 1983, in order (Gallup, 1978:36-37, 1982:25-26, and 1984:44.3

Nelsen further stated, “Blacks present a slightly higher rate religious preference than whites despite their higher membership rate (nine-tenths of all Americans have a religious preference while seven-tenths claim church membership) and the importance of the black church to the black community.”4 What was once a netted community that upheld the centrality of the family has lost what their forefathers instilled in them; the foundation of family first is lost.

Building relationships between black males and God are the mandate that will take prayer, effort, teaching, and time. Taking the leadership role in the home is the first step. Reynolds writes, “Black fathers traditionally are absent from parenting; and some are unwilling to take responsibility for their children, so researchers know little about their parenting practices.”5 These actions overflow into the church, where black males are extinct or at least at a minimum. With the father absent, leadership falls on the mother; this responsibility is the fathers. Stepfathers have taken the role of the father in many families. If the stepfathers come into a family later in a child’s life, the child usually rebels against him.

The absence fathers are an old problem found in Isa 1: 17 mentions the fatherless. Thomes writes, “The role of the father in the socialization of children in the American nuclear family is of particular interest since he is ordinarily the only adult male with whom the child can have stable, daily interaction.”5 Today, children in single-family homes with no father figure have lost the essence of having a father role model. Peers and pop culture idols have become the

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male role models today, positive and negative; and they are stepping into filling the leadership roles reserved for fathers. The church needs to have ministries that are designed to minister to single families, the purpose is to take priorities in the proper development of youths in the family and the church.

The problem of fatherlessness has a lasting impact on children throughout their young lives. Thomes writes, “These children had a slightly but significantly lower school-grade placement than the children from mother-father homes, probably reflecting their slightly younger age.”6 Today’s children are the next generation to grow into what may be called a generational curse; a continuous cycle of the male abandoning the church and home. This problem has been viewed from both sides: the absent and present father. As Thomes writes, “The children from father-absent homes made significantly fewer choices of the Father to carry out these parental-role activities and more choices of the mother than did the children from mother-father homes.”7

If there is going to be a church presence with leadership from the males, the families that are affected by the absence of male leadership within the home must change for the better. The church mirrors the home, the home contributes to the church, and both need each other to make a change in church attendance. Walter Allen who studied the black family and marriage, says, “The area of and family studies presently faces a plight like that of the youth whose physical growth has surpassed his social and intellectual development. Research has outdistanced organizing the various findings into a convincing theoretical.”8 When it comes to either single parenting, or dual parenting, dealing with the facts that exist in the black family varies. These

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6 Ibid., 91.

7 Ibid., 91

actions affect the children and the future of the church. Millennials are bored with the traditional church, they may regularly attend, while there is a contrast between their attendance and absence in the twenty-first century.

  Education also plays an import role in church attendance. Youth today want to be heard, but not all churches are listening. Vaughn brings out a valid point; “Each member of the church has their personal challenges and want to be heard. When they feel needed, there is someone listening to them, they would be more open to express their concerns.” Church leaders are inclined not to have time to get to know people in their congregations; to the church leader’s amazement, people, especially children, and youth take notice of the leader’s acts in ignoring them in church activities. Church leaders should be more attentive to their members, get to know them and their concerns, and make them feel they are wanted in the church.

  Black Churches must reach out to the community and make their presence known. The luxury of sitting between the four consecrated walls will not succeed the mission of Christ and the church. Jesus taught the church to make a disciple. He said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen” (Matt. 28:19-20). The Black Church must step up in carrying out the Great Commission which is the mandate of Christ. The church has become satisfied with the preaching on Sunday, while the rest goes undone, and outreach is neglected altogether.

  The church and the community must have a relationship if the church is going to survive, and grow in the attendance of local families. Vaughn suggests, “Having the fitting relationship with the community starts with God. Jesus opens the doors of having the right

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9 Wayne Vaughn, *Keeping Your Church Alive*, Minneapolis, MN: 2016, 3
relationship that people are looking to have through the church and community. Through a relationship with God, this honors Him and work He expects from the church.”

The missing portion of church development lies in the framework of making disciples, to which Jesus commanded as the primary principle of the church. Moving into the community, the Black Church must research its objectives, put aside church politics, and embrace Father’s business.

Statement of Methodology

This thesis project is considering the decline of the black church attendance and returning the black males focus on God’s mandate. The findings of this research will be used to develop an incisive plan to encourage African-American males to realize their place in the homes and church. The preliminary findings of this research will uncover the problems that have existed for several decades. Primary and secondary resources will support these findings by showing evidence that the role of African-American males has been consistent in their cultural, home, and church during the past decades.

This report will consist of surveys from twenty men that do not attend church for various reasons, ten of whom were former church attendees and ten who never attended church. The Black Baptist Church does not always take part in reaching fallen families. When families are forgotten, children are forsaken and; the church struggles to keep the member in the pews. Richard Davis argues, “African-American families without refuting there are real social and economic problems that warrant close attention”.

These surveys and interviews will give a pattern that churches should apply to reach families; and resolve the curve with absent African-

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10 Ibid., 23.

American males and start a change the declining in church attendance to building church attendance. Davis further argues, “The diverse ethnicity and social class in the contemporary black community are making it difficult to maintain a sense of a unified community.”

Chapter Two will evaluate the church, and the African-American family in the decline of church attendance by African-American males in the twenty-first century. Chapter Three will consist of surveys and interviews that will explain why African-American males do not attend church; and why the number of them that have attended church has declined. This chapter is comprised of inclusive findings from research delivered by other writer’s articles, books, and journals on this subject. Chapter Four will review methods for use and implementation of the research findings to reach African-American males and return them to church. Chapter Five will be the summary and conclusion offering suggestions for reaching others that are willing to accept the challenge of carrying out the mandate of God. This thesis project will be used as a guide to reach African-American males.

Review of Literature

The resources in this review provide illustrations for and summarize the studies in this thesis. The following sources will supply an approach from a theological, historical, applicable, and significant document which will be useful for mentoring in the church. It will also provide training methods that churches may use to reach African-American males. This writer lists a few available books, articles, and journals that are applicable to this study.

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12 Ibid., 400
Books

David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, “Some men are proud and want to be their own god. Men must admit weakness or neediness as compared to women. Because of the difference in brain structure, men experienced a traumatic experience in church at an early age, so, it may be a contribution to him staying away.”¹³ Men may have experienced traumatic encounter during their youth. Murrow writes, “It doesn’t take a bad experience or abuse from their childhood. Some faced boredom in a church that has remained in mind that keeps them from church, they do not want to face this same experience.”¹⁴ Murrow has a wealth of information that can help in reasons black males stopped attending church.

Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, *Adam! Where Are You? Why Most Black Men Don’t Go to Church*, focus on the comparison of men to women and the perception of church life and its value towards living life to its fullest potentials. Kunjufu insists, “It is like everybody is looking for black males. Black women are looking for black men to marry. Black children are looking for male role models to pattern after Black males that are mature are being sought by schools to volunteer as a role model to students.”¹⁵ Kunjufu suggests that the source of many problems that have contributed to the decline of African-American males not attending church from the past to present. He asserts, “Having a listening ear to the people, they are saying the black churches are all the same and not progressing.”¹⁶

Wayne J. Vaughn, *Keeping Your Church Alive* focuses on pastors, leaders, and the

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¹⁴ Ibid., 31.


¹⁶ Ibid., 11
membership recognizing their responsibility to the church community. He states, “Every pastor/leader is responsible for providing Christian training to believing saints that would support spiritual growth. Spiritual growth should model Christ in the church and outside the church.”

The church has the responsibility to train disciples to disciple others for the kingdom of Christ. Vaughn states, “The Lord gave marching orders to the church, The Great Commission was the pattern to follow. It was not just for the disciples who sat in His presence, but for the followers of Christ today.”

Thom & Joani Schultz Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore; This book focuses on the problems with going to church. There is a malfunction that exists in the church with the pastor, the parishioners are bored with the status quo, and the church is not lively enough to keep parishioners in the pews. Schultz suggests, “Christianity is in a crisis, people are still attending church, but the number is shrinking in smaller churches. Many Christians have taken on a materialistic character, walking in self-denial that produced a negatively charged the church perspective overall.” Schultz shares data that shows activities of each age group that has stopped attending church. The Schultz’ express the current condition of the church.

Journal Articles

“The Black Church: Responding to the Drug-Related Mass Incarceration of Young Black Males: “If you had been here my Brother would not have died!” by Sharon E. Moore, A. Christson Adedoyin, Michael A. Robinson, & Daniel A. Boamah: In effect these authors have

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17 Wayne Vaughn, Keeping Your Church Alive, Minneapolis, MN: MCP, 2016, 30.

18 Ibid., 31.

19 Thom & Joani Schultz, Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore group.com 2013, 13.
researched on the prime problem facing young African-American men today.\textsuperscript{20} The drug epidemic is plaguing the African-American communities, taking away the men and incarcerating them for buying and selling drugs. Communities are suffering socially, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. Moore further stated, “The African-American men incarnation represent a large part of the criminal justice system. The Black Church plays a major role in the community and has many spiritual and political influences which can address the social disorder that reaches into the black community.”\textsuperscript{21}

“Black Church Members’ Perspectives on the Role of the Black Church into Rehabilitate Juvenile Sex Offenders” by Victoria M. Venable points out the church's role in the rehabilitation of sexual offenders.”\textsuperscript{22} The church, occasionally shy away rehabilitation, the facts are, there are not many qualified people available through the church staff to teach on rehabilitation of sexual offenders. There are churches whose leaders have been guilty of committing the same acts themselves. Venable states, “In the past, the African-American church played a role in the families by helping them when the crisis came up, they reached out to enable the families to cope with and overcome the problems.”\textsuperscript{23} There is a challenge today with churches committing to formal education to equip people to counsel such individuals.

\textit{Declining Religious Authority? Confidence in the Leaders of Religious Organizations, 1973-2010} by John P. Hoffmann researchers the challenge of upholding religious authority

\textsuperscript{20} Sharon E. Moore, A. Christson Adedoyin, Michael A. Robinson, & Daniel A. Boamah, “The Black Church: Responding to the Drug-Related Mass Incarceration of Young Black Males: “If you had been here my Brother would not have died!” Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2015), 313

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 314

\textsuperscript{22} Victoria M. Venable “Black Church Members’ Perspectives on the Role of the Black Church in the Rehabilitative Process of Juvenile Sex Offenders” Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2015), 350

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 351.
among the secular world. The leadership in the local churches have lost their influence in the outside world, respect for preacher has decreased, and leaders have lost the respect of the people they are assigned to serve and guide with spiritually.\(^{24}\) Hoffmann’s aim is to analyze the downward trend of leadership losing its influence in the community.

The pulpit must influence those in the pews that would change the communities where they live.

Secularization Theory has been a large force in religious studies. Research addressing this theory shows a vibrant relationship with church and community in the 1980s and 1990s. Proponents argued that we were witnessing declining attendance at religious services, an increasing number of atheists and religious "none’s," and an era when many religious organizations, especially in the U.S. and Western Europe, saw their membership declining almost to insignificance.\(^{25}\)

In “Unchurched Black Americans: Patterns of Religiosity and Affiliation” Hart M. Nelsen directs his work toward demographics areas of Black Americans who are not attending church according to research documents by Gallup. Nelson writes, “The ‘churched’ is a person who is both a member of a church or synagogue and who has attended church or synagogue in the last six months, apart from weddings, funerals, or special holidays (Gallup, 1978).”\(^{26}\) By identifying these groups of people, Gallup now can identify their relationship and involvement with the church. “The survey also pinpoints those who can be approached about church attendance. Many people do not attend church on a regular basis, only 48 percent are


\(^{25}\) Ibid., 4.

regular attendees while 52 percent are occasional or non-attendees.”

In “A General Model of Church Growth and Decline” by John Hayward views the church, “As a subset of society which the church growth is based on the dynamics of the population of its a community that results in growth.” The church in the twenty-first century has failed in carrying out the mandate of Jesus, the Great Commission. Jesus said, “Go into all the world and make disciples of all nation” (Matt. 28:19), and this is to be carried out by all disciples. Church recruiters have a pattern of church increase but have limited exuberance to move society to develop the model of Christ. According to Hayward, “Such rapid growth was predicted to occur if the proportion of unbelievers exceeded a threshold ceasing before society is completely converted. The growth burned out because the enthusiasts’ effort was increasingly ineffective in a shrinking pool of unbelievers.”

“Black Men’s Perspectives on the Role of the Black Church in Healthy Relationship Promotion and Family Stability” by Wanda Lott Collins & Armon R. Perry study examines the black males and how church life shaped their spousal relationship and family life. The Black Church is the light of the black community, and it should do all it can to reach out to the lost in their area. Collins and Perry state, “The Black Church identifies with the community, diverse in origin, denominational, spiritual doctrine, and has a significant role in the culture and history in the lives of the people she represents socially and politically.” It is obvious to the church that

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27 Ibid., 399.


29 Ibid., 179.


31 Ibid., 431.
many have African-American males have fallen away from church due to its non-participation in the worship services. Worship is a means to draw lost African-American male back to church. Children are becoming lost in the world of darkness as the church sits idle.

“Enter into His Gates: An Analysis of Black Church Participation Patterns” by Sandra L. Barnes expands, “The narrative of the Black Church and its spiritual and secular role in the black community.”32 The Black Church is designed to be an influence in its community and beyond. Many churches leaders are attempting to influence as many people as they can, but the church is not effectively crossing the boundaries needed to expand. Barnes states, “The Black Church has been set aside from White congregations are not supporting Black congregations when it comes to working in the community to reach people in the Black.”33

Stereotyping can affect any efforts in reach out to give assistance to African-American males when they are in need. Most Black Churches who are declining struggle to fulfill the main programs that make the church an outreach church. It is important for the Black Church to reach Black communities and let the community it is concerned about them.

In “Age, Period, and Cohort Effects on U.S. Religious Service Attendance: The Declining Impact of Sec, Sothern Residence, and Catholic Affiliation” Philip Schwadel says, “The base church attendance from 1972-2006 with random examples from the South and non-South that involved men and women.”34 In comparison, the churches in the South are called “Bible Belt Churches,” and the participation in the Protestant churches in the South increased in


33 Ibid., 175.

attendance in past decades. The mega-church has increased in membership, while the smaller, more traditional churches are losing members and having to close the doors. The Catholic church attendance has been declining since the early 1960s and 70s, but they have recently stabilized within the past decades. High levels of religious services are found in the South, this is where the greatest level of pressure to church attendance can be found and less the pressure in the North.\footnote{Ibid., 6.}

“Leadership as an Enabling Function: Towards a New Paradigm for Local Church Leadership in the 21st Century” by Rob Elkington, et al. Elkington et al. state. “A critical part of the church is its leadership; the leadership plays an important part of healthy and resilient church development.”\footnote{Elkington, Rob, Darryl Meekins, Jennifer M. Breen, and Susan Martin. “Leadership as an Enabling Function: Towards a New Paradigm for Local Church Leadership in the 21st Century.” \textit{In Die Skriflig} 49, no. 3 (2015):2. Accessed November 21, 2016. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i3.1911} The church needs to become mission focused on its leadership. The church cannot forget the values of the mission, to reach lost souls for the kingdom. Elkington writes, “There are challenges to leadership; leaders must have the capacity or willingness to develop the ability to practice leadership skills to direct the church in the direction of growth. True leadership must be developed, to be missional directed and effective leaders, this also may require a mentor to aid in this development.”\footnote{Ibid., 3.}

Dissertations and Thesis

“The Role of Preaching in Revitalizing Declining Churches” by Jammie Dale Vance is intended to be a manual for pastors with declining church, to teach and build the church into a productive and viable one. New preachers need to know their flock, they have been given the
responsibility to oversee and guide them into a thriving church.\textsuperscript{38} The church is the body of Christ, and it is God’s intention for church growth. Of course, many people, they find the church to be less entertaining than they expect. According to Vance, “Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix suggest, “That each of these forms or models of preaching could all be expository sermons.”\textsuperscript{39}

“A Study of Why Some Inner-City, African-American Churches in Chicago Have Undergone Significant Membership Decline, while others Have Seen Large Increases in Membership in The Post-Civil Rights Era,” Norman Goodwin focused on the decline of the church attendance in the inner-city of Chicago as some outer-city church attendance grew into megachurches.”\textsuperscript{40} The average church is losing members to the larger churches. Church members are contending with their churches status of membership. The members of churches with decreasing attendance are less likely to invite a friend or relative to their church.\textsuperscript{41} The inner-city of Chicago has transformed into a different place as a new generation has moved into the inner-city. Most of this generation has no concept of church and has fallen into a life of crime.

In “Religious Involvement, Life Satisfaction, and Spiritual Well-Being Among Young Adults in A Black Church” by Kimberly J. Dean, Dean argues, “The fact that the young adult’s involvement in church is divided into two factions whether they are involved in church attendance or church organizational activities.”\textsuperscript{42} Young adults are a signficante number of attendees in church, and they are active in many parts of the church. The general number of


\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 15.

\textsuperscript{40} Norman Goodwin “A Study of Why Some Inner-City, African-American Churches in Chicago Have Undergone Significant Membership Decline, While others Have Seen Large Increases in Membership in The Post-Civil Rights Era,” (DMIN Asbury Theological Seminary 2011). i accessed November 21, 2016.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 1.

\textsuperscript{42} Kimberly J. Dean “Religious Involvement, Life Satisfaction, and Spiritual Well-Being Among Young Adults in A Black Church: (Capella University, Doctor of Philosophy 2013). i accessed November 21, 2016.
Young adult’s that attends church regularly may vary on any given Sunday. Dean says, “The population studied of African-American young adult church attendees, including biracial males and females, ranging from 18 to 35 years of age, those who attend church regularly and those who attend church minimally.” As the church changes so do the general population of those attending. The younger groups of attendees are those who have attended church at some point in their lives, and there are others who continue to make the church a part of their lives.

“Membership Decline in United Methodist Church Since 2000: A Delphi Study of Churches in Virginia” by Charles E. Rainford. Rainford expresses concern for the church as it sees a rapid decline. Rainford says, “The church decline may hit an all-time low by 2025, Protestant churches have declined 60 percent from 2005-2007.” The vast interest in church attendance is alarming, megachurches throughout the country are swallowing the small ones. Many churches seen on television have large followings, and some people who do not attend church feel they have enough preaching from those programs. The decline in church attendance is the major issue. Rainford contends that untrained leaders have conflicts that exist in the church may be a major contributor to the decline. There are many pastoral leaders who have entered into ministry without proper training, but they are leading congregation blindly and causing many to stumble.

The Decline in Church Attendance in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and What Can be Done to Reverse the Trend by Louis A. Butcher Jr. confirms, “That church attendance has

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43 Ibid., 1


45 Ibid., 5
dropped among the young adults, as many have stopped attending church, as other young adults have never attended church.” Leaders are seeking people to attend church, the problem is many people believe that the church is not meeting their spiritual and physical needs. Some Christians have seen their personal relationships within the church become a challenge. However, worship service is when the people of God come together in fellowship honor and praise God in community with each other. Butcher found that old Israel worshiped God with meaning and purpose whether in the Temple or in the Synagogue, God had a personal role in their lives.\footnote{47}

Biblical References

1 Tim. 4:1-2 (NKJV) says, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”\footnote{48} False teachings have infected Christian values among church-goers in the late 20\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st} centuries, and the rise, of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormonism, Black Muslimism, and other teachings that are contrary to Christ’s doctrines have brought confusion into the church.

2 Corinthians 4:1-3 says, “Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who

\footnote{46 Louis A. Butcher Jr. “The Decline in Church Attendance in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and What Can be Done to Reverse the Trend” (Liberty University, DMIN, 2015), 2, accessed November 21, 2016.}

\footnote{47 Ibid., 3}

\footnote{48 1 Tim. 4: 1-2 (All Scripture is NKJV unless otherwise noted).}
do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”49 Paul highlights both the importance of the ministry and the works of the enemy undermining the effects of preaching the gospel. Satan has closed the minds of unbelievers, by blinding their minds from the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Neh. 1:5-6 says, “And I said: ‘I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.” 50 Nehemiah’s prayer of confession included himself and the children of Israel. Israel had fallen away from the Lord and did not follow His commands. Thus, God allowed them to suffer at the hands of their enemies for their disobedience.

Jn. 6:35-37 says, “And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’ But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”51 Although Jesus offered the people true assurance of salvation through Him, many did not understand Him as the Bread of Life. This was a metaphor that compared eating physical food to spiritual nourishment.

49 2 Cor. 4: 1-4.

50 Neh. 1:5-6.

51 Jn. 6:35-37.
Josh. 24:14-15 says, “Now, therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”\(^{52}\) As the head of his house and leader of his people, Joshua makes known the importance of his decision to lead his family in following God. A godly man role is to head his household to follow God and give godly instructions to those in the household.

Nehemiah 3:1 says “Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests and built the Sheep Gate; they consecrated it and hung its doors. They built as far as the Tower of the Hundred, and consecrated it, then as far as the Tower of Hananel.”\(^{53}\) Church leaders should pioneer efforts in rebuilding community and relationships within their churches. Many leaders do not participate in common efforts to meet the needs of the people they serve. In Nehemiah 3, we find the High Priest and other priests working for a common good.

Neh. 4:1 says, “But it so happened when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews.”\(^{54}\) The enemy does not want to see relationships, grow within the community of believers as they come together by bringing other to Christ. Conflict and confusion become his primary tool in disrupt the community and family relationship within the church.

\(^{52}\) Josh 24:15-15.

\(^{53}\) Neh. 3:1.

\(^{54}\) Neh. 4:1.
Jud. 2:20 says, “Then the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He said, ‘Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers and has not heeded My voice.’” Obedience is an important part of following God, and history shows that Israel’s disobedience to God’s commandments has resulted in tragic consequences for His people, and this pattern is re-emerging into the church today. Blessings come with God’s people obey His commandments.

1 Jn. 2:3-5 says, “Now by this, we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this, we know that we are in Him.” In this passage, John reaffirms the importance of obeying the commandment of God. Believers come to know God primarily by obedience to His Word, keeping it in daily life. If anyone does what Jesus says, Christ will own him or her as His own.

Eph. 6:1-3 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” Paul gave instructions to children to obey their parents as unto the Lord, showing the correlation between parents and God. Many children disrespect the parents and make an opening for the Lord to act upon them His justice.

55 Jud. 2:20.
56 1 Jn. 2:3-5.
57 Eph. 6:1-3.
Col. 3:20 says, “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.”\textsuperscript{58} Paul’s letter to the Colossians carries the same message for today’s children today about the importance of godly obedience to their parents. God honors children who honor their parents and have pleasure in them by giving them a long life.

Eph. 6:4 says, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”\textsuperscript{59} Fathers have a God-given the mandate to train children in the ways of the Lord. Although the absent fathers in today’s society have walked away from their God-given responsibility, it does not change the mandate that God has given to them. As the head of the household, the father should have an active role in disciplining and educating their children in the Word of God.

Col. 3:21 says, “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”\textsuperscript{60} Again, the role of the fathers is to encourage their children in all areas of life without provoking them. The word *provokes* in the Greek (ἐρεθίζω) means to stir up or irritate. Fathers have an obligation to their children to lift them to fulfill their God-given potential and, to honor God in every way possible.

Matthew 11:28-30 says, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”\textsuperscript{61} Jesus offers freedom to all sinners who come to Him. God wants to build a relationship with families, fathers, mothers, and children need to surrender to the Savior of mankind today.

\textsuperscript{58} Col. 3:20.

\textsuperscript{59} Eph. 6:4.

\textsuperscript{60} Col. 3:21.

\textsuperscript{61} Matt. 11:28-30.
Jn. 14:1-3 says, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Jesus assures His disciples (all followers of his) of the way to eternal life. Jesus secures every person trust in him the assurance of the reality of heaven and that he is the source to gain eternal life. Believers can look forward to a prepared place in heaven and be with Jesus throughout eternity.

Lk. 23:42-43 says, “Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." The dying criminal exercised more faith in that moment than his disciples who followed Jesus daily. The thief confessed faith permitted Jesus to grant him a place in the kingdom of God. God looks for faith from men today; God is looking for anyone believes in him to have a desire to live with him in heaven regardless of his or her life’s hardships.

Jn. 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” The entire gospel is based on this verse, salvation is contained in Jesus Christ who gave the ultimate sacrifice for all mankind. His death on the cross clearly expressed God’s love. God has no intentions of leaving anyone out of the plan of salvation that chooses to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. There is a clear choice to be made, believe in Jesus Christ and be saved from destruction, or choose not to believe in Jesus and receive damnation and destruction.

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63 Lk. 23:42-43.

64 Jn. 3:16.
Conclusion

Choosing not to believe in Jesus Christ is the choice of damnation and destruction, those making this choice will be thrown into the lake of fire. Knowing Jesus Christ is the one who Died on the cross is the way to God. Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection are the foundation of the church, this expresses the love of God for all humanity. The church must spread the Good News of the Gospel to the world; preaching, evangelism, and sharing one’s faith with others are the means of getting this message out to the lost before Jesus comes back to receive His elect people.
Chapter 2

The Male Role in the Church and Family

In the Book of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul lays out God’s mandate for the church and family. Paul says, “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (Eph. 5:23-24 NKJV). This equivalence lays the foundation for families and churches to follow the rule of governing their Christian lives. African-American men have fallen away from God and His mandate by neglecting His Word. Many have stopped attending church altogether while abandoning the family principles shown through Christ. Paul further teaches the fathers to bring up their children in the admonition of the Lord: “And You fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

The male role is a great responsibility to society and the church. God’s mandate carries with it fathers rearing their children in the ways of the Lord. The failure of each generation to obey God’s commandments and precepts allows the enemy the opportunity to undermine the process of God’s salvation through Jesus Christ. This has become a crisis in the black community. Today’s church and family has a striking resemblance to that of Israel: the absence of the male role has impacted both institutions. Ray Williams writes, “America is rapidly becoming a fatherless society, or perhaps more accurately, an absentee father society. What is important and influential to families is the father’s presence, now fathers and families have become significantly declined since the Industrial Revolution and are now reaching critical proportions.”65

65 Ray Williams, “The Male Identity Crisis and the Decline of Fatherhood: Is America becoming a fatherless society?” Psychology Today, 06/08/2014, 1
Men are falling to crime, prisons, drugs, and abandoning the institution of the family.

Evangelizing the African-American males is the challenge for the church. There is a need to evangelize this community to save this generation., In his book The 21st Century Church, John Schwarz states, “The troubling statics shows the declining attendance of Americas churches averages about 17 percent attendance every Sunday. This number could drop below 15 percent by the year 2020.”66 The male absence in the family has affected the relationships in church attendance. Position and the lack of relationships with the church is a contributing reason to the problem of absenteeism in church. The church has played a significant role in the black community. According to Collins and Perry, “Historically, the black church has influenced African-Americans in the community socially and politically. Civil rights were born in the black church. Black men moved up to leadership roles to lead the fight for social justice for the African-American communities.”67

The fabric of the African-American community is strengthened when men participate in church and family roles, their God-given purpose. African-American males have potential leadership qualities and they need to show these qualities to reclaim and express their leadership. Potential leaders are developed by role models as their success is an investment for the next generation of leaders. The church’s role should be to help develop a person’s life according to the Word of God. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, “So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.” (Eph. 4:17 NIV).


The Bible gives purpose and meaning to life. The church must teach the people how to apply the Word of God to their life and to live as representatives of God in their communities.

Culture

The African-American culture is unique; there are bonds that connect families together that are facing challenges which separates them. Today families are broken and divided needing to be rebuilt; fathers and mothers are in homes that form a unique foundation. Thomes writes:

Interviews with families with children ranging in age from 9-11 with both parents in the home, followed by 31 families of 36 children, 19 males and 17 females with diverse age ranges with an absent father. The interview results showed a wide range of differences between the children with fathers in the home and those who were without fathers in the home.\(^{68}\)

The church needs to be able to reach its community by evangelizing African-American males and others that have forsaken church. On an average Sunday, one can travel through African-American communities at 11 a.m. and find many young men avoiding church. Many believe in God but only attend church on special occasions; such as funerals, weddings, Christmas and Easter. In addition, Paul J. Olson writes, “Surveys taken found that attendance increases on holidays and special events like Christmas Eve, Easter, and Mother's Day” \(^{69}\)

Drugs have entered the African-American culture and have begun destroying young black American males. This drug infestation has resulted in many African-Americans’ imprisonment, consequently destroying the fiber of the African-American community. The church has not learned how to approach this problem that is taking many men away from their


families and the church.

Sharon Moore writes, “The United States has had a rise in drug-related Arrests because of the Nixon administration 1971 Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970. The Laws are designed to impact the war on drugs, but instead, the U.S. prison population rose from 300,000 to more than 2 million.” The young African-American male population is shifting to a greater number in prison. These young men are caught up in the drug epidemic which has increased drug-related arrest among males.

The numbers are astonishing. The loss of black males in the United States is rising because of the drug endemic. The tragedy of these losses should grasp the attention of the church. The church must engage in drug prevention programs that will meet the needs of black families. The church must also engage professional counselors to help in giving counsel to the males seeking support that will help make a change in their lives. The African-American culture has a level of pride. It boasts of many entertainers, athletes, television personalities, and more that have contributed to the American culture. From its roots through slavery, to this current day, African-Americans have made strides as Americans to have a place in society. The church has been in place as the nucleus of African-American culture, and it has been the backbone as well as its source in understanding how to deal with issues that confront life.

Shifts in the central conception of the church’s role have changed equality in Black Americans lives by secularization. In “Black Men Perspective,” Wanda Collins writes, “About the church, the increasing secularization in black communities has reduced the influence of religion; and has contributed to the decline in the central importance

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of black churches.”\textsuperscript{71} The central part of black culture is decreasing as black males have become a lost part. Many people have lost confidence in the role the church plays in their lives, and have taken a back seat in the church. Others believe in God but have never entered the church, a place where God can communicate with them. The anatomical structure of Black families continues to play a critical role in the church. If the church does not have a role model teaching family values, these values will be missing in the next generation of youth and young adults. Collins states, “The African-American males through social, educational, and occupational backgrounds would represent progress, including established professionals, emerging young adults in college, and the working class”\textsuperscript{72}

Education

Educating African-American’s in the early twentieth century was a challenge. Education was first church-based; schools were opened by African-American’s that educated their own children. Trained teachers began teaching black children to ensure an education for them. From the beginning of desegregation, discrimination accompanied African-American students to the classrooms. As African-Americans adjusted to desegregation in the late 1960s, Black schools were being eliminated. Black activists who aligned themselves with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) saw that desegregating schools would bring equal education, they sought to accept the change for the better. This came as results of “Brown vs the Board of Education 1954.” Desegregation began in the 1960’s. In her \textit{Ninth Annual Brown Lecture in Education Research}, Vanessa Siddle Walker states, “The role of the NAACP was

\textsuperscript{71} Collins, “Black Men’s Perspectives on the Role of the Black Church in Healthy Relationship Promotion and Family Stability,” 431.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 433
advocates for teacher and the ritual of teaching, advocating education among African-American children.”

Another shift took place through naturalization; which also affected Black culture. John Dudley writes “The philosophical analysis of naturalization named by defining what African-American naturalization is in several different ways. As a subset of an expanding naturalist canon, or as transitional efforts that paved the way for more demanding.” With an education, the effects of literacy could end the shortfall of status-quo among African-Americans. The challenges that African-Americans face was in educating their children, and the need to transcend the stigma that blacks cannot learn. In African American Culture, Thabiti Mtambuzi writes, “The need for black parents and educators registering children in Independent Black Institutions (IBI) to formally receive educations. The themes that emerged from this study were central to the perspectives and beliefs that influenced African-American parents and educators to support IBIs.”

There are similar occurrences that coincide with Mtambuzi’s and Dudley’s writing. When comparing the literature of written books, the role of education matters. African-American males are behind or left out. Education must become more inclusive. These changes in education would allow black males to move forward in meeting these challenges. Education is part of the American standard that determines how far an individual goes in life. Brandon L. Wolfe and

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75 Thabiti Mtambuzi African American Culture Journal of Psychological Issues in Organizational Culture, Volume 6, 2016, 7-8
Paulette Dilworth writes, “There are limited roles among African-American administrators and students in what they can achieve in white America public universities.”\textsuperscript{76} Wolfe and Dilworth further write, “Discrimination based on race is nearly absolute in academe. The major universities in the United States represent tokens of Blacks in their facilities and on their staff, leaning toward special individuals who can fill the role in some way or another.”\textsuperscript{77}

There is a need for higher education in the Black communities. Men such as Booker T. Washington, the first president of Tuskegee Institute led this effort. Funding for black institutions has been dropping off as private donors cut back their donations. In her article, \textit{The Origins of the United Negro College Fund as the Cornerstone of Private Black Colleges}\textsuperscript{78} Marybeth Gasman writes, “Contribution from the Board of Education and the Rosenwald Fund were redirected to fund philanthropist in the black community such as Gunner Myrdal’s An American Dilemma and towards white education.” Many African-American Colleges relied on the church, organizations and alumni support for higher education. Many African-American churches are still supporting black colleges and universities across the nation.

Supporting higher education was a priority for many churches. Many may not receive contributions as they wished because of declining attendance. Federal Financial Aid was an option for many aspiring students pursuing higher educations. The United Negro College Fund (UNCF) has been in place since the early twentieth century, and it has assisted with a scholarship for young Black Americans aspiring to go to college to improve their education.


\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 668.

\textsuperscript{78} Marybeth Gasman “The Origins of the United Negro College Fund as the Cornerstone of Private Black Colleges” \textit{The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education}; Summer 2007; 56; ProQuest, 87.
Michael Lomax writes:

Many HBCUs are affiliated with denominations widely recognized for their support in the African-American community -- the various Baptist conventions, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the United Methodists and the United Church of Christ. But Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana, the nation's leading educator of future black physicians and pharmacists, is a Catholic institution. And Oakwood University in Alabama is closely affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁷⁹

Gasman writes, “Business has been channeling funds to give to higher education in a systematic and continual fashion. By making it possible for funds to support aspiring businessmen to contribute donations easy. There were no secrets about who was donating what: reports were given reporting who donated.”⁸⁰ Through contributions, black males can reach their potential and contribute to society through higher education. Some churches have decided to invest in the academic futures of African-American men. Many do not attend college. Families suffer as black males find their way to the streets rather than the books.

Wolfe writes, “Redevelopment of higher education has historically been trending with actions of the struggles and oppression between African-Americans and their White counterparts. The task of diversity in the United States requires higher education for both groups which must be acknowledged and extracted.”⁸¹ Efforts are being made for educational benefits to those willing to achieve their highest potential of learning. This should be every man’s dream.

Education throughout the years has become diversified, yet there still room in the black community. The balance in education between black and white males must be represented by the population of those who want to earn a higher education. A number of black athletes in college

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⁸⁰ Ibid., 88.

⁸¹ Wolfe “Transitioning Normalcy,” 669.
receive athletic scholarships that pay for their education. Wolfe writes, “When considering the changes since the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, tremendous strides have been made for African-American and people of color in the way of equality for higher education professionals.”

82 The black male’s absence is a major trend in higher education.

In “Black Women Students Far Outnumber Black Men at the Nation's Highest-Ranked Universities”, Robert B. Slater writes “The number of black females enrolled in major universities is greater than black males. Black women earned two-thirds of bachelor’s degrees in the African-American community, while 70 percent earned master’s degrees, and 60 percent doctorates.”

83 These statistics must change if the black male is going to move forward. African-American males are presented with challenges socially and professionally. Faced with ambiguity, they may not know what the future holds for them. However, if they trust in God their future could be blessed.

HealthCare

Healthcare has become a major concern for black males. The HIV and Aids viruses are among the most challenging healthcare problems today. As healthcare challenges are reaching the church, African-American males are shying from the reality that they may be a carrier of the virus. Patrick A. Wilson writes, “Historically the churches have played a role in the culture and society in Black America. Black communities and individuals are directly involved with churches, the black church remains strong in Black America.”

84 Church involvement preserved

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84 Wilson, “Ideologies of Black Churches in New York City,” S229.
the community. Wilson stated, “Black churches have been involved in social and political movements as well as being involved in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950’s and 60’s.”

Velma McBride Murry writes, “Despite improvements in income earnings among African-Americans over the past two decades, many African-Americans residing in the southern regions of the United States continue to live in deep poverty.”

Many African-American males suffer from the lack of healthcare. There is a wide range of mental and physical health-care issues among African-American men, which include depression, anxiety, and stress. Helen Black writes, “The attributes of depression have been associated with the lack of spirit. African-American men describe the importance of clinicians to acknowledge the spirit in treatment psychic pain and are aware of prayer and worship to address their crisis.”

Depression is a progressive state of the mind that many African-Americans males begin to experience early in life. Shervin Assari writes, “The presence of anxiety, depression, and problems of alcohol use are associated with the trouble of mental health on lower levels of subjective health and quality of life is consistently associated with or shown through.” As Black males deal with depression, it spills over into areas of their lives that confront the church, community, and families. Their concerns become their quality of life. The church must take on the role of counseling these men if they want to help shape the community as it should.

85 Ibid., S229.


Substance Abuse

Assari’s study identifies many health-care problems the black male faces daily. For example, medication is used as a treatment for depression. If used in a wrong manner, it can lead to addictions and dependency on other medications, and many males have access to prescription drugs. In fact, the prescription drugs are a problem, not a solution. Substance abuse and depression are present within the scheme of black men having sex with men. In “The Relationship of Religiosity, Spirituality, Substance Abuse, and Depression Among Black Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM)” Tommie L. Watkins Jr. states, “The relationship between substance use and depression for men who have sex with men and particularly Black men who have sex with men (Black MSM) is clearly a multifaceted issue.”

Torrance Stephens states, “The history of illicit drugs and alcohol misuse among African-American males is common in the prison population in the United States. The range of substance dependency ranges from 18 to 86 percent of inmates. Drugs and alcohol use has increased erratic sexual behavior and increased the prison population.” Alcohol and drugs have dominated the African-American community for decades, and this epidemic has turned fatal. While Alcohol Anonymous (A.A.) meetings and drug abuse programs offer help for substance abusers who want to overcome their habits, sobriety is not an easy task. Many abusers struggle with it, but caring ministries and people with genuine concern will assist those men with their struggle.

Stephens further writes, “Although African-American men use illicit substances like marijuana at similar rates of other ethnic groups, they are more likely to engage in increased

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sexual risk-taking.”

The street life of African-American males has evolved to include the effects of substance abuse, and these habits are lasting and challenging. Churches actively involved in rehabilitation should be aware religiously and spirituality of substance users. Whether it is known to them, they have an important role in the lives of African-American males. Watkins affirms, “In efforts to better understand the religiosity outcome of a variable quantity, the sum of worship, openness, religious beliefs, and choosing religious values it creates. The sum of spiritual guidance is a spiritual connection, spiritual wholeness, and health with an individual substance that exists in individual relationships.”

Watkins continued “Among Black MSM, religiosity was significantly positively associated with the use of cocaine and crack, and the negative use of poppers.” Substance abuse including alcohol, drugs (cocaine, marijuana, heroin, etc.), binge drinking, and illegal prescription use, has contributed to many African-American males steering away from church altogether. Substance abuse among African-American men is crippling African-American communities and culture. Although religion and spirituality are used as tools for measuring an individual’s, many pastors and churches are not equipped to handle substance abuse.

Churches need to rely on professionals who are suited to counsel substance abuse. Pastors who have studied substance abuse and been trained as counselors are qualified to be advisors. Mance E. Buttram writes, “Much of the literature discussing BMSM substance use and sexual risk behaviors references the multitude of syndemic problems that are also present in this population. Syndemic theory views adverse health conditions as fundamentally interconnected;

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51 Ibid., 274.


53 Ibid., 258.
that is, two or more afflictions.” Many African-American males are engaging in social habits and activities that have removed them from their spiritual responsibilities to the church and family.

The church has significantly impacted the lives of African-American’s. It must assist families both spiritually and physically, equipping them to fulfill God’s Will. The Bible says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6). Watkins writes, “In his study of substance abuse, they found a considerable relationship in religiosity, spirituality, and substance use among Black males (MSM). Those individuals with higher spiritual connections had fewer polysubstance abuse among those tested for abuse among those tested for abuse and depression.” The limits of substance abuse are outside spirituality and religiosity. There are those who have neither spent time in the church nor grown up in a home that taught biblical principles and supported spiritual values. Having the knowledge of church allows people to understand spiritual authority, which in turn would strengthen them to overcome substance abuse.

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure plays a major role in turning men into substance abusers. Danelle Stevens-Watkins, writes, “Binge drinking and drinking in general by an adolescent driven through socialization influence, this influence compromised the families influence in the lives of teens.”

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Peer pressure appears to be the most consistent predictor of socialized influence.

Steven-Watkins writes, “A number of studies have examined posited risk and protective factors in relations with binge drinking in young African-American males.”97

Religion is important to the black family; it is a means of preserving cultural values, despite peer pressure. Watkins Jr. writes, “Although religiosity and spirituality were highly correlated, they were correlated with distinct variables, and they were associated with different patterns of individual substance use, indicating that they are distinct but relative concepts.”98 Religiosity and spirituality are found in adolescent age groups; it is the means which strengthens the African-American families to avoid substance abuse; it keeps them from being affected by peer pressure. Parents can also pressure adolescent behaviors they are not familiar with, in which they make choices that may lead in the wrong direction. This pressure can push them to associate with individuals that could ultimately lead them to crime and other detrimental activities.

Trenetta T. Clark focused her study on parents and peer influences on young or youth within the Black community. Substance abuse has become prevalent because of peer influence. Parents can at times heighten problems that lead their children towards substance abuse. Although Black youth have a lower national scholastic average than their white counterparts, substance abuse is still a problem within this demographic. Clark writes;

According to FITTDM theory, drug use is influenced by interrelationships between adolescents’ personalities (e.g., ego integration), previous drug use, parental characteristics (e.g., parental warmth, drug use), and quality of relationships with family members, peers, and the environment.99

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97 Ibid., 1437.


Drug use among African-Americans is down because of parental mentoring. Clark continues, "Wallace and Muroff (2002) suggested that parental influence might be a stronger determinant of adolescent drug use than peer influence for African-American youth compared with youth of other races/ethnicities." 100

Wrong relationships have an impact on the lives of African-American males. Relationships affect both attitudes and emotions. It also influences healthy relationships in families where the adolescent listens to their peer’s advice. Laura M. Padilla-Walker writes, “Research suggests that peer influence is evident in at least four ways: direct peer pressure, indirect peer modeling or association, normative regulation, and the structuring of opportunities.” 101 Additionally, Philip O’Donnell, states, “Socially young African American males are pressured into gangs to carry out acts of violence due to peer pressure. Concerning African-American youth, various sociodemographic factors appear to increase the risk of juvenile crime including single-parent homes and neighborhood characteristics.” 102

The role of peers, positive or negative has a lasting impact on African-American juveniles. Peer relationships affect their maturation into adulthood, and negative peer relationships can lead to gang involvements and other ills in their lives. O’Donnell writes, “Research shows the trait of peer dominance is associated with low to moderate income families in urban locations.” 103

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100 Ibid., 54.

101 Laura M. Padilla-Walker, Roy A. Bean “Negative and positive peer influence: Relationship to positive and negative behaviors for African American, European American, and Hispanic adolescents,” Journal of Adolescence 32 (2009), 324.


103 Ibid., 433.
The church has been challenged to evangelize their communities to win people for Christ. Carrying out programs to confront social issues such as substance abuse could interject positive influence and mentorship for adolescents facing peer pressure. Moreover, parents are the best defense against negative peer pressure. Clark writes, “Investing parent influence because it seems to be especially important for African-American youth, may help explain how parents buffer against negative peer influence may be useful in developing African-American youth.”

African-American youth have an uphill climb as they try to make their life better; to achieve their American dream by following Christ through the church.

**Black Male Arrest Rate**

A large percentage of African-American males comprise the US prison population, being imprisoned at a higher rate than Whites. In “Halting African-American Boys’ Progression From Pre-K to Prison: What Families, Schools, and Communities Can Do!” Oscar A. Barbarin writes, “The penal system thrives on a steady supply of African-American males, who accounts for 10 percent of all youth, but 60 percent of youth under the age of 18.”

Jean Bonhomme, writes, “There are great racial disparities within the U.S. prison system. In 1999, 9 percent of African-American males between the ages of 25 to 29 were in prison. African-American male high school dropouts were jailed or in prison, while few found employment.”

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Law enforcement has set standards against African-American males to charge them with crimes by what is called “mistake in identity.” They are targeted as suspected criminals. In light of these percentages of young black males, they are surrounding with scrutiny that accompanies low-income areas of America. Black Churches need to be more proactive in young African-American males with training and developing their Christian character. David J. Knight, writes, “Urban youth of color are often absented from the normative theory of adolescent development or depicted as deviant and pathological. Researchers active in social science do not entertain the question on the damage-centered perspectives on the adolescent.”

Knight further writes, “While some researchers are exploring violence, economic tension, and limited opportunities afforded for young men of color living in urban communities. The general literature that is being neglected is racially ethnically, gender and cultural and economically, or socio-economically marginalizes the situations.”

Health fears are on the rise among African-American males who are imprisoned at an early age. Homosexuality is a growing concern among male prisoners. Bonhomme writes:

High-risk activities of homosexuality are very prevalent among the incarcerated. It is reported up to one-third of inmates are active homosexuals and one-half are injecting drug users. The rate of injected drug use is higher in prison than drug treatment centers. The rate is due to outside population use being incarcerated.

Because the trend mostly involves African-American Male society often deems them problematic. They are viewed as violent, limited in potential, and economically and socially non-developmental. Knight writes, “Young African-American men can manage stress by sharing

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108 Ibid., 433.

their thoughts, feelings, ambitions, frustration, and pressures with problem behavior associated with friends and peers. Blacks and Latinos often share their views on race relations, gender, discrimination, and stereotyping in school with other.”\(^\text{110}\)

African-American males who successfully meet daily challenges are frustrated by their stereotyping as underachievers. School-age males especially are facing the degenerating stigma and the challenge to overcome it. Barbarin writes, “By high school, boys of color are much less likely to participate in college prep classes, and they are often tracked into vocational and less demanding classes. They have lower high school graduation rates and, therefore, lower college attendance rates than their White peers.”\(^\text{111}\) The church needs to assure African-American males, they can achieve whatever they set their minds to achieve in a positive manner. The purpose of raising children is to allow them the privilege to know they have a divine purpose given by God.

Every day, inmates are released from prison; and they enter society with no definitive life direction. Bonhomme writes, “The Following release from prison, inmates are moved directly from a controlled environment to a low level of supervision. They may immediately be exposed to high-risk places and people, and few have developed relapses prevention skills during their imprisonment.”\(^\text{112}\) According to Barbarin, “The school has failed young African-American males. Children of African-American descent often attend schools with qualities associated with low quality and poor outcomes. African American children are highly segregated and with a high concentration of students growing up in poverty.”\(^\text{113}\) The move from pre-K to prison has to change, for African-American males to succeed in lives in glorifying to God.

\(^{110}\) Knight, Toward a Relational Perspective, 435.

\(^{111}\) Barbarin, Halting African American Boys, 82.

\(^{112}\) Bonhomme, African-American Males in the United States, 224.

\(^{113}\) Barbarin, Halting African American Boys, 84.
Stopping African-American youth from becoming a statistic in the penal system, starts at home with parents and peers. For instance, some teachers may have a special interest in helping African-American reach their full potential in life; the teacher takes them under their tutelage and molds them, especially those who may come out of a single-parent home. Barbarin writes, “Once African-American boys are caught in infractions, they have a spotty history in school attendance and are often committed to state facilities for juvenile offenders will finish school for crimes. Once they are committed to state facilities for juvenile offenders, it difficult to emerge from it.” Home training seems to be missing in the lives of young African-American males in low-income African-American families; these children lack the special attention they need at home. Mentors are needed to meet the needs of special interest children and give them proper guidance.

Ministry Reflections

There are special needs for ministries to focus on to foster programs that are geared towards training former inmates. These programs should focus on how to make each former inmate more productive as a citizen. In addition, these ministries need qualified people to help with counseling these individual. Peer pressure, Walker writes, “measures to be benefitted around applying studies consistent with adolescents’ self-reported negative and positive peer pressure and indirect and direct peer pressure.” Walker breaks down different types of peer pressure these adolescents face:

*Negative indirect peer association:*
There is a need to analyze adolescent negative indirect peer associates by deciding how many friends they associate with that are destructive and have deviant behavior.

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114 Ibid., 84.

Positive indirect peer association:
Assigning adolescent positive indirect peer associates measures the values and interest of close friends; that moves towards the adolescent’s development. Relationships that are designed to represent a positive peer relationship, while their consequence should have important results that make them.

Positive direct peer pressure:
Assess direct peer pressure towards positive behavior by what they do with friends of the same sex, opposite sex, and others.

Self-esteem:
Review and analyze adolescent’s self-esteem by evaluation of certain feeling useless or am I satisfied with me.

Empathy:
The need to decide if adolescents’ response to, feelings for others, their response when others are taking advantage of, the kinds of protection they can offer to others.  

Ministries must approve programs to meet the needs of African-American males being released from prison. Mentors should have programs for success for those coming out of the correctional institutions and ministries should also provide a strong support network. This will ensure that the former inmates will have a good support system. As they become productive citizens outside prison. Bonhomme writes, “Rehabilitation and correctional personnel have known for decades the high rate of recidivism for inmates returning to correctional facilities was largely related to an ineffective transition of inmates back to the community.” Churches need to ask assistance from those who have worked with the programs.

Bonhomme also notes, “The cycle of incarceration and release of large numbers of African-American men largely concentrated in urban communities battles major social and economic hurdles.”

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117 Ibid., 25.
118 Ibid., 26.
Florida known as Another Chance Transition Service (ACTS), was established to help convicted felons. In this program, many receive quality support for their transition back into society. ACTS say, “Community Outreach is a vital part of the ACTS mission? We strive each day to be an integral part of the community by serving basic needs to individuals and families. ACTS work in partnership with other community and social service agencies to ensure these needs are met.”

The usefulness of programs such as ACTS and the church ministry can prevent former inmates from returning to the corrections system.

Barbarin suggests a concept that would curve the juvenile incarceration rate. The church and families can work together to tackle this continuous cycle of crime infestation. The results of working together with families can produce a generation of young African-American males as achievers in life. Barbarin writes, “What families can do to help African-American boys are as follows:”

- Begin with protecting your own health and well-being.
- Support and continue child learning at home.
- Develop a partnership with the school.
- Talk to, read to, and have fun with your child.
- Use the three X’s (disclose, explain, expand) in conversation with a child.
- Address any problem in direct but affirming ways.
- Raise your son to take pride in his ethnic and cultural inheritance.
- Raise your son to be caring, responsible, and ethical.”

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120 Barbarin, Halting African American Boys’, 84.
Schools should take part in curbing peer pressure among African-American males. Barbarin writes:

- Acknowledge the challenges and the promise of African-American boys
- Support positive emotional development in African-American boys
- Develop strong positive relationships with the families
- Use instructional approaches that motivate and engage
- African-American boys Help boys of color to affirm their identities as young men of African descent
- Teach boys to be caring, responsible, and ethical. ¹²¹

Today, there is a void in the lives of young African-American males. Confronted with unseen challenges, they try to cope with alcohol, drugs, and sex. All three are dangers when misused and misrepresented. HIV and AIDS have transmitted two ways, first, through drugs and use of dirty needles, and secondly, through unprotected sex with a carrier of the virus, either male or female. HIV and AIDS destroy lives. The church and the community, need to form a coalition to address these problems, by training and equipping both parties. Life is short, and valuable souls are dying due to these epidemics that are raiding the community and the church alike.

¹²¹ Ibid., 85.
Summary

African-American males have become the missing link to the family in the twenty-first century. They have fallen from God-given domain; to a place of degradation. The church is being challenged to help these men change their lives. The African-American youth are in perils. They compromise a large portion of the penal system; due to their participation in the illegal drug trade, and many are gang members and victims of gang violence. Health issues have plagued African-Americans, including those stemming from prevalent homosexuality. With many cases of HIV/AIDS virus affecting the community, this problem has overwhelmed the social fabric of the African-American community. However, some church ministries and organizations are attempting to discuss these issues and return African-American males back to God’s ordained place.
Chapter 3

Research Findings from Interviews and Surveys

Methodology

The findings of this research should give overwhelming evidence as to why African-American males have fallen away from the church. The church has suffered from this problem. It seems that African-American males are purposefully neglecting the church. African-American males have a breakdown in their lives and have not returned to the church or the family. Evangelistic efforts are confronted with the problem of drawing these individuals to attending church has stopped, and those who never attended church are not coming. The purpose of this research is to determine why African-American males are neglected church. David Murrow writes, “The 1998 findings show a staggering 92 percent of African-American churches reported gender gaps, the highest among American faith groups.”\(^{122}\) The gender gap existed for years, but it appears that no church is worried about the consequences of the missing men.

There is an ongoing struggle that African-American churches are facing today with the absence of its males. However, understanding the problem will eventually lead to a solution. The church’s mission is to go; Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone” (Mk. 16:15). Churches’ failure to carry out this mandate that has led to the absence of African-American males in the congregation. Dave Earley writes, “Jesus’ followers took seriously the responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission. After hearing Jesus give the commission for the last time and seeing Him ascend to heaven in the clouds (Acts 1:1-11) they immediately met at a weeklong prayer meeting.”\(^{123}\) The first-century disciples began their ministry carrying out God’s


mandate to evangelize the world.

He also states, “The last words anyone speaks are considered of utmost importance. The last words of the main person in history are of such significance they must be taken with grave and total seriousness.”\textsuperscript{124}

The information David Murrow received about black churches were surveys of certain churches in Philadelphia. For instance, churches were not paying attention to the gender gaps among their church members. These facts show what church leaders are lacking when it comes to the gender gaps in their congregation attendance. The missing black male is an epidemic. The absence of males in the church is a nationwide problem that needs to be reversed. Churches are failing to talk with their members. The failure of the Black church was not checking on first-time visitors and repeat visitors and failing to upgrade communications information; this results in failure to reach people. Church leaders have become too busy to address the church body, becoming more concerned with their personal stability and security. Murrow writes, “Men’s absence reflects a deep frustration with the way churches operate.”\textsuperscript{125}

In their book, “\textit{10 Temptations of Church, Why Churches Decline and What to Do About it}.” John Flowers and Karen Vannoy write, “The church may be the only organization that does not exist for the sake of its members. Although individuals in every congregation have needs, the church as the body of Christ needs no one and nothing except Christ alone.”\textsuperscript{126} The church needs to build on Christ as her foundation to increase attendance. Omitting the Great Commission causes the church fail on its mission to grow the church.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 21.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 33.

Surveys of Absent Males

Appendix A contains twenty-question surveys given to twenty African-American males; each respondent was asked to fill in his responses to the questions. Appendix B is an additional survey given to ten people attending church. This survey is asking the church members to give their response to twelve questions pertaining to evangelism in their churches. The findings in this report suggest that the church needs to have a serious meeting regarding the issues at hand: the absence of church members and finding qualified individuals to lead a turnaround in the gender gap in church attendance. The survey questions are unbiased and, practical enough to discover the reasons why African-American men do not go to church. These surveys will serve as reliable tools needed to collect data on the status of African-American men within the church.

Collected Data

Question one covers the ages of each participant. The participants range between the ages of eighteen of sixty-five; millennials to baby boomers. Each participant certified that he was of age to participate in this survey. 18-30 comprises 9%, 50-71 comprise 25%, and 31-49 comprise 36%.
Question two was about the participants marital status. Some participating in this survey are not married. Thirty percent of participants were married, and 70% were not married.

Question three covered their participants’ education. Most participants reached a high level of education for African-American males. The level of education that vary by age groups. Finishing High School is necessary to develop fundamentals life skills, and this number is reflected in college attendees. Thirty-four percent finished only High School, and 5% did not finish High School. Sixty percent attended college, but only 2% graduated college or a major university. Twenty-seven percent earned some college credits.
Question four asked about the participants’ families. Problems with the family association account for much of African-American men absenteeism from the church. African-American sons usually follow in their fathers’ footsteps. Fathers set the example for church attendance, but they are not attending church. Fifty-eight percent of recipients grew up with their father and mother. Of that percentage, 25% were abused growing up. Twenty-three percent of participants grew up with a step-parent, 10% in single-parent homes, and 9% in guardianship and foster homes.

![Family Background](image)

Question five asked about their participants’ parents’ church attendance. Eighty percent of respondents said their parent(s) attended church. As noted in the previous question, some fathers occasionally attended church. Twenty percent stated their parents did not attend church. Of the children of that 20%, 60% said it affected their social status and associations the community.
Question six asked if the participants attended church. Seventy percent of respondents said they attend church; 30% said they did not attend church.

Question seven was about their experience with church. Each respondent shared his experience with church differently. One called his experience “fun,” while another said he was “relaxing.” Chart 1 shows each participant’s assessment of the music and the preaching based in a family-oriented setting. Preaching the Word of God is the focal point of the worship service, and the music accompanies it. The attitudes of church-goers can affect the way of non-believers coming to Christ; many participants expressed this as the main reason they stopped attending church.
Question eight was about their likes or dislikes with a church. Each participant was asked to share their likes or dislikes about the church. Additionally, the participants expressed different factors that would increase their interests in church attendance. Added to this question is: as is relates to church, what would assist you satisfactorily to attend church. One respondent expressed, “Hearing the word the Word of God; the respondent dislikes when people are not genuine about their relationship with Christ and church.” Preaching is centered on the core application of Scripture. Most people recognize their purpose for coming together in the church, as well as their need to hear that God cares for them. Those that disliked church view their dislike to the people who are judgmental of others; when they themselves are not right according to the Word.
Question Nine asked the participants what time they stopped attending church, or if they attended. This question produced many different answers for not attending church. The reasons ranged from lack of transportation to not feeling comfortable with the status quo in church. The most common reason for men who stopped attending was: the people claiming to be Christ-like but acting hypocritically.

Question ten asked the participants. “What would it take for you to attend church again?” The purpose of this question was to find a common thread that might spark the interest of African-American males in becoming active in the church. Pastors need to preach effective messages to people so that they are convicted to set their priorities properly. Each respondent the
respondents viewed the church as top priority, each church member should recognize their duty to the visitors. Thirty percent of the respondents said that the disposition of the church membership could be friendlier, while 30% said the church needs a more comfortable setting. Twenty percent said that preachers should have more relevant messages, and the other 20% said they need to hear more intensive and powerful message in churches.

Question eleven asked if finances played a role in the participants’ decline in church attendance. Finances are a large part of the church ministries and the various roles therein: supporting staff, paying bills, church school, and evangelism. The participants expressed concerns about financially supporting the church. Sixty-five percent of participants say they do not mind paying the tithes and offerings. Twenty-five percent do not think it is necessary to give financially, while 10% are unsure.
Question twelve asked about the participants’ influence over others attending or not attending church. Thirty-two percent felt they were influenced to attend church by others, but do not have influence over others that do not attend church. Thirty-two percent felt that church attendance should be determined by personal conviction rather than outside influence. Twenty-three percent said that they need examples or role models to explain the life of Christ to them. Twelve percent were not sure about role models.
Question thirteen asked the participants about individuals or ministries that made them aware of God. Forty-five percent of these participants heard of God’s love from their parents, 27% learned from grandparents, 18% heard the gospel preached, and 9% learned from an evangelism team.

Question fourteen asked the participants what would peak their interest in church. Fifty percent of participants value time in church. They would like to see service times under two hours. Twenty-five percent desired more positive and welcoming attitudes from church members. Fifteen percent said they think church members are passing judgment on them. Nine percent wanted God’s Word to nurture them so they can become better people. One percent felt they are being judged because of their past practices in life.
Question fifteen involves the participants’ family members church attendance. Sixty percent of the participants said their families attended church. Of this number, only 40% of the families are consistent in church attendance. Forty percent said their family does not attend church.
Question sixteen asks how often they read the Bible. Reading the Bible is important for spiritual growth. The participants agreed that it is a part of their lives, but not all agreed that they were actively reading the Bible. Fifty-one percent said they read the Bible. Twenty percent of them read it daily, 9% read it weekly, 7% read it monthly. Thirteen percent do not read the Bible.

Question Seventeen asked the participants’ if the Bible influences their thinking about church. Eighty percent of the participants said the Bible influenced their thinking about church. One hundred percent this group said the church should be governed by the Bible. Twenty percent said the Bible did not influence their thinking about church.
Question Eighteen asked the participants’ what would encourage them to read the Bible?

Those who did not read the Bible said that good teaching and example of Christian living and compassionate accepted attitude from the church would encourage them to read the Bible. Fifty percent of the participants said they look for quality biblical principles for Christians. Thirty percent are looking for examples from the Christian community to assist them in reading the Bible regularly. Ten percent wants the church community to stop judging them, and 10% would like for more Christians compassion by welcoming them into their community.
Question Nineteen addresses the respondents’ activity in the church. Some church members were satisfied attending Sunday morning worship only, while others wanted to be involved beyond the Sunday morning service. Forty-two percent of respondents want to be involved in Sunday School, and 29% wanted to participate in musical ministry. Eight percent wanted to be involved in outreach ministries geared towards helping others. 8% showed interest in ushering, and 13% do not know.
Question Twenty asked the participants if they are open to conversations about Christ. Twenty-five people said they were open to conversation about Jesus Christ. Eighty percent of respondents wanted to have the gospel shared with them, so they could know more about Jesus Christ. Fifteen percent were not sure if they want the gospel shared with them, although, they believe in God. However, they were willing to go to church although some needed transportation.

**Collected Data Part Two**

Appendix B was given to members of different churches. The information it contains is used to decide if their church is ministering to the African-American men or other people. Evangelism is the key ingredient to church growth. Not many church pastors and leaders are promoting evangelism. Church leader needs to train others and receive training themselves in evangelism. Each question prompted participants to decide whether their pastors are training and teaching evangelism. The numbers from these results are astounding. The questions pertain to the length of time each participant has been a member of a local church.
A. How long have you been a member? Church membership change as people move from church to church. Most millennials try many different churches to find one that meets their needs. The older groups are more stable, they tend to commit to one church rather than moving from one church to another. Of the participating members, 40% have been members of one church between 1-9 years. 30% have been affiliated with their local church between 10-19 years. Twenty percent have held their membership between 20-29 years, while 10% reach 30 plus years. Churches in military towns have the largest changes in membership attendance; ministries are not adapting or evangelizing to survive the absent male population, they must carry out an evangelical program.

B. What is your current position in the church? One hundred percent of respondents are members of the church: 20% are secretaries or church clerks, 10% are Deaconesses, and, 20% are Deacons. Fifty percent of the respondents worked in other areas in church ministry; some were youth directors, mentors, choir members, and ushers. No pastors or leaders took part in this survey.
C. *Gender?* Most of the church attendees today are women. Men are the minority attendees. This has been the trend in America for several decades. Seventy percent of the participants in this survey were women, and 30% were men. This is a reflection of the twenty-first-century church.
D. *What is their personal feeling about disciplining the unchurched?* The word disciplining was unusual for some participants, 10% of respondents did not know the difference between training and correcting. Some felt that church members should not disciple non-Christians. There is a real concern among the respondents about disciplining and evangelizing. Another 10% said No training should be given. Conversation is an essential part of discipleship or evangelism. 80% agreed that new converts need to be taught the values of Christianity and the conditions of evangelism.

![Pie chart showing responses to teaching]

E. *Have you been trained in evangelism?* Churches are losing paces with the world when it comes to the Great Commission. Pastors are not training their members in the importance of evangelism. Sadly, many, have dismissed it altogether. Statistics show that 90% of respondents have not been trained in evangelism, while 10% have. Of the 10%, only 50% use what they have learned to reach the unchurched.
F. *Are you willing to take on to take part in evangelism?* One hundred percent of the participants with no training in evangelism said that they were willing to be taught.
G. *How concerned are you about the lost?* Forty percent of the respondents said they were concerned about the lost. Forty percent are concerned about their salvation. Ten percent are neutral, 5% have no concerns and 5% is unconcerned. This problem stems from pastors’ unwillingness to express the importance of evangelism and discipleship; therefore, these result is staggering in today’s church. Bring lost souls to Christ is the main part of Christianity. Paul wrote, “For while we were still helpless, at the appointed moment, Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6; HCSB).

H. *Does your pastor support discipleship or evangelism?* It’s difficult to understand pastors and other individuals that know the importance of evangelism but do not teach it. Thirty percent of respondents said their pastor supported evangelism, 60% said their pastors neither support nor teach evangelism, and 10% did not know. Churches are decreasing because of pastors’ failure to invest in ministry beyond their Sunday morning services.
I. *What is the name of your denomination?* Of the denominations respondents sharing, 80% were Baptist, 5% were Church of God in Christ, 5% were Methodist, 5% were Non-Denomination, and 5% were Catholic. Each group found it necessary to understand the actions in their local church not teaching evangelism.
J. *What is your education?* One hundred percent of the respondents graduated from High School. Fifty percent of High School graduates pursued a higher education. Twenty-five percent earned some College credits. Fifteen percent graduated from College. Five percent have their master’s degree, and 5% have their doctoral degree. From pastoral experience, many college graduates take part in some ministry within their church working with youth, mentoring, teaching Sunday School. Moreover, they try to encourage the next generation to carry on these ministries when they come of age.

K. *What is your age range?* The age range varies among the church members who responded to this survey. Ten percent of the respondents were between 18-29, and 20% were between the age of 30-39, these groups are the Millennials and parts of Generation X, respectively. Twenty percent were between the age of 40-49, 20% were between the ages of 50-59, 20% between the ages of 60-69, and 10% were 70
and above. Baby Boomers are the most reliable and stable of all groups of respondents in church attendance.

L. *What is your church size in number?* The size of churches today displays a trend that is on the decline. The focus of this survey is to determine how to improve attendance in each church involves cities across the country. Ninety percent of the participants are involved in churches that consist of 100 members or less. Fifty percent of these respondents are not expecting their church to grow at its present pace. Five percent have less than 200 members but more than 101. One percent of the respondents are involved in churches that consist of 201-300 members. One percent of the respondents are involved in churches that consist of 301-400 members. One percent of the respondents are involved in churches that consist of 401-500 members. One percent of the respondents are involved in churches that consist of 500-899 members, and 1% of the respondents are involved in churches that consist of 900 and above.
Many surveys were given to a Chaplin of the Escambia County Sheriff’s Department and County Jail. Chaplin Reginald Benjamin was approval to conduct these surveys among the work release inmates on June 19, 2017. Chaplin Benjamin relayed a message on August 20, 2017, that because of unforeseen occurrences, they could not take part in the survey at present. He would like for me to keep the surveys for a later date to address these concerns of African-American males absent from church and family.
Summary

The surveys identify the basic problems evangelism that the church should discuss. Many of the respondents felt it necessary to express their views on the actions of the church and wanted their pastors to show them by address. According to the surveys, the unchurched males believes that church members, and pastors should change their disposition towards the unchurched and become friendlier to them. Sermons should ignite and inspire African-American males to continue attending church. Graphs are provided to show the different areas needed for the church to build the right relationship with these men. These graphs range in a variety of formats from age, social status, education, and other areas of concern. Most of the participants continue to read the Bible as a form of checking themselves with God’s Word. The church needs to give African-American males something that is revealing.
Chapter 4

Accumulated Data Results

The findings in the previous chapter showed the demographics of African-American males and their relationships with the church. According to the information collected, it is obvious men want to become more involved in church attendance. The church must adjust to meet the need for men and women alike. The men who engaged in this survey supplied the information about their feelings on the issues of Ministries in the local church should evangelize African-American men drawing them to church.

African-American Males: The Needs to be Address

Wayne Vaughn stresses the importance of addressing people’s needs. He states, “Regardless of the initial motive for coming to a church, each person has needs that should be addressed. These needs may be known or unknown to the person attending.” 127 As discussed in chapter two, the needs of African-American males are wide-range and the church needs ministries designed with African-American males’ needs in mind. By maintaining an inviting, and familial atmosphere, churches will need to move forward in the development of these programs. The church must understand what it takes for this demographic to receive the word of God as evangelism and discipleship are important to God.

Nathan Lorick writes, “We might spend time praying for our church to grow. We lift our sick to our heavenly Father.” 128 Effective evangelism and ministry begins within the church.

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128 Nathan Lorick, *Dying to Grow Reclaiming the Heart for Evangelism in the Church*. Abbotsford, WI, Aneko, 2013, 43.
Churches in the African-American community have forgotten to pray for the salvation of lost souls, especially the African-American male. Failure to pray and preach the gospel is crippling the church in its mission to reach lost souls. Lorick also says, “In Colossians 4:3, we see Paul pleading with the church to pray for the gospel to go forth.” He writes, “Praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open to us a door for the word, so we may speak forth the mystery of Christ.” The strength of evangelism is prayer. Modern church leaders have lost their focus on praying for evangelism during worship.

This study shows that church leaders in the African-American community are missing key moments to evangelize African-American males. The role of the church is to make disciples and train them to evangelize others. Evangelism is to win souls for the kingdom of heaven; many ministries lost focus in winning souls, they are missing opportunities to carrying out the Great Commission. Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” (Matt. 28:19). Churches are falling short of its mission: by missing opportunities to reach lost souls which is necessary for the church to fulfill Jesus’ commandment. Jawanza Kunjufu writes, “The need for consistent role models it is important for everyone, for children, adolescents, adults, and elders. It has often been said, I would much rather see a sermon than to hear a sermon.” Church leaders must lead the people of God into the mission of the church to save lost souls.

What the church is doing for the African-American male today shows the future of the church and community relationships are on the brink of failure. What the church needs to do is reach this population with the gospel of Jesus Christ and find ways to increase church attendance, involve its population involvement, and train them to reach others like them.

\[129 \text{ Ibid, 44.}\]

\[130 \text{ Kunjufu, Adam! Where Are You? 73.}\]
Pastors are inconsistent with their roles in the lives of their flock as well as those outside churches. However, there are enough people to fill every church in the community if the pastors help. In Chapter three, we detailed some common life paths of spiritually-afflicted African-American men. Strategies or plans designed to carry out evangelism starts with the pastors. Kunjufu writes, “Many pastors tease the congregation and remind sisters, don’t go home and tell your husband what the pastor said.”\textsuperscript{131} Pastors need to focus on the importance of ministry and not take this work lightly, many men need evangelizing to become Christ-like.

The Churches Atmosphere

The atmosphere of the church must be comfortable for newcomers. This is the house of God, a place where weary souls can find refuge and peace. First impressions are lasting impressions. If a pastor or some members make a visitor feel uncomfortable, that visitor will not likely return. Since church members are the primary cause for increasing church membership, they should reflect the Christ they claim to serve. Pastors and leaders are often committed to having recurring visitors. Of those newcomers attending, 20% said the church was fun while 15% said it was relaxing; these percentages reveal that an increasing number of people attend church for enjoyment.

Only 10% of respondents found the church family based. The church needs to be oriented towards families. Families should be compassionate for everyone that takes part in the church, and those who want to become part of it. The main function of the church is the Word of God. Thirty-five percent of respondents viewed preaching God’s Word as the main reason for their attending church, but not overwhelming. The Word of God is the pillar of the church, and it

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid, 75.
changes people lives. Therefore, there should be a balance that incorporates the total church experience. Church members attitudes and dispositions play a role in winning people to Christ. Many respondents refused to return to church after members made them uncomfortable being in church service.

Kunjufu further writes, “I would agree that those churches that are entertainment and containment, which are only open on Sunday, only shout and holler, are exclusively concerned about Heaven but don’t teach people to enjoy life on Earth.”\textsuperscript{132} Church leaders and members alike must have the mindset to go beyond the four walls of the physical building. The work salvation begins with, is the spiritual man’s desire to be saved. Church memberships are based on numbers, and numbers come through prayer. Lorick writes, “If churches could ever convince their people to pray for the lost, their load for the lost souls would be recaptured, and lost friends, relatives, and even strangers would be the benefactors as the gospel would be shared out of the overflow of God’s inner working.”\textsuperscript{133} Church leaders must instill within Christians a godly concern for lost souls, caring for them as they would their loved ones.

Peter Northouse writes, “Transformational leaders set out the empower followers and nurture them in change. They attempt to raise the consciousness of individuals and to get them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of others.”\textsuperscript{134} It is church leaders’ sole responsibility to train, teach, and help the church reach its full potential to carry out the Great Commission. It is the responsibility of both the pastors and churches to be willing to reach lost men in order to bridge the gender gap in the church. Pastors and other church leaders should engage in every

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 86

\textsuperscript{133} Lorick, Dying to Grow, 45

opportunity to teach evangelism in a classroom setting. Some preachers and evangelists think that evangelizing the community and winning souls to Christ in the pastor’s sole responsibility.

Pastors/Leaders’ Role in Evangelism

The challenge facing pastors and church leaders today is fulfilling the Great Commission. This is the key to church growth and saving of souls. According to the surveys, some pastors believe in evangelism but do not teach it to their congregations. This is the downfall of the African-American community. Many African-American pastors and their churches have joined in Baptist Training Union (BTU), but many of these churches have used BTU as another form of Sunday School. Hence, this partnership has not produced evangelism. However, caring, concerned and compassionate pastors are community-oriented. On Sunday mornings, many African-American males occupy street corners, and Christians tend simply to pass them by rather than to share the gospel. BTU does not urge anyone to reach out to evangelize on Saturday for these men to come to church on Sunday.

African-American churches are geared-up for worship service on Sunday morning, and Bible study and prayer services are the least attended of the three. Centered on singing and good preaching, worship service is the main avenue through which the average African-American church reaches people. Pastoral leadership is mainly responsible. Northouse writes, “Challenging the process means being willing to change the status quo and step into the unknown. It includes being willing to innovate, grow, and improve.”\textsuperscript{135} These changes should take place in order for men to be concerned about spiritual growth. Peter Scazzero writes, “Emotionally healthy

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 184.
planning and decision making begins with an assumption. The assumption is this: as fallen human beings, we have a tendency to develop hardened hearts.”

Pastors need to form men’s groups within their churches with the sole purpose of reaching men for Christ. One church has men convening for a specific concern to draw attention to the group wearing tee-shirts that say, “Men for Christ.” This group meets on the sidewalk across the streets from a liquor store as part of a commendable effort to make African-American men aware of Christ, and it is done without directly engaging these men in a conversation to introduce them to Christ. All mankind needs to know Christ in the pardon of their sins. David Murrow writes, “Every man is, at this core, a hero-worshiper. And our are his God-hero. A man walks into church searching for a leader he can look up to and respect.” The primary roles of pastors and leaders is to teach evangelism. Pastors and church leaders should share with their parishioners, how to give a testimony of Christ.

Aubrey Malphurs writes, “The leader’s God-given capabilities are the special, lifelong abilities that God bestows at birth, at the time of one’s conversion, or possibly sometime later. Various terms are used for these capabilities, such as talents, gifts aptitudes, and abilities.” Pastors and leaders who are willing to make the difference in someone’s life must make the shift to fill the gaps in churches today. There are born leaders to lead God’s people. Moses was one of those leaders. The purpose of his birth was to lead the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. Then, there are leaders who are made to lead by the example of someone else. They are trained to do a job God selected them to do, under the supervision of someone else. Timothy, appointed

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136 Peter Scazzero, The Emotionally Healthy Leader, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015, 187-188

137 Murrow, Why Men Hate Going to Church., 145

to the pastor, the church in Ephesus was trained by Paul. Many leaders today are self-made, not trained or mentored by spirit filled men of God, and unable to move forward with God’s purposes. Some leaders are self-made, those who desire to hold leadership status. God has given men gifts which would allow them to become leaders that God is calling for today.

Pastors have the authority to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. As leaders, they should place emphases on evangelism through preaching. Pastors in some churches have lost their passion for Jesus and have set out on their own venture in the church. David Platt writes, “Because we are starting to redefine Christianity, we are giving in to the dangerous temptation to take Jesus out of the Bible and twist him into a version of Jesus we are comfortable with.”

Pastors are taking the Great Commission out of the Bible; therefore, they are reluctant to mention its meaning. The writer of Acts states, “Therefore when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’” (Acts 1:6 NKJV). Just as the disciples were distracted by their past becomes their present, pastors are forgetting their main objective.

Jesus redirected their attention to evangelism. He said, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NKJV). Jesus planned mission work to be part of the church—work fulfilled through pastors who continuously stress the importance of evangelism. Murrow writes, “Pastors, you are the single most important reason in your church’s capacity to reach men. Not what you preach, but who you are. Evangelism is secondary for pastors who have no concerns to reach the lost. Men will choose or reject your church

\[139\] David Platt, Radical, Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2010, 13
on their respect for you.”

Evangelism is the sole responsibility of every believer, but it is the pastor’s responsibility to keep it at the forefront of his congregation. If the pastors demonstrate genuine concerns for people and a commitment to reaching the lost the people, they lead will help them move forward in follow them to move forward closing the gender gaps that exist in the church. Vaughn writes, “When teachers and pastors spend most of their time just sharing information rather than teaching how the gospel can and will change your life, the person rarely changes. If your church’s education ministry has no real focus or expectations for change then your church has a problem”

The Role of the Church

The pastor’s leadership should lead the church in paths of duty. The Bible says, “By this, My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so, you will be My disciples” (Jn. 15:8 NKJV). Leading people to Christ is the focus of evangelism. God is the center of evangelism, and the church has a duty to testify of Him. William McRaney Jr. writes, “From the beginning of humankind, God has been purposeful in His desire and His activities with people. The God who made us has positive desires toward people. Unlike humankind, He purposes unlimited power to act on His desires” God is the source of hope, peace, prayer, and love that can draw man to Him.

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140 Murrow, Why Men Hate Going to Church, 146.
141 Vaughn, Keeping Your Church Alive, 32-33.
Prayer

Prayer is a spiritual source to strengthen for the churches have neglected to employ in evangelism. Prayer services attendance has been reduced to a few people, and the duration has been reduced to five or ten minutes. Churches in the past formed prayer services that took place one night per week (sometimes until midnight) and had real results, but this is not the case today. Jesus said, “What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?” (Matt 26:40 NKJV).

The church has drifted into a spiritual sleep and cannot pray effectively for the lost men. Individual prayers are effective, but the focus is on evangelism which takes the whole church in cooperative prayer. Garratt Immink writes, “Prayer is a vital religious practice. In all world religions, prayer is most important and even people who are not religious sometimes pray. Although prayer is a basic religious act, it is a complex phenomenon and puzzling to comprehend.”

The church must realize that there is a need for prayer. Prayer is the power of the church. Satan does not want the church to engage in prayer because; he knows that prayer moves God to act on the church’s behalf. The church needs to understand that it needs prayer for evangelistic efforts in the community. Jesus said, “Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest’” (Lk. 10:2 NKJV). Vaughn writes, “People are usually more attracted to Christ based on what they see someone do than by how much that individual may know.” Christians have opportunities to show Christ in their lives by showing Christ-likeness to others. They can also share their testimony about Jesus and what He has done for them.


144 Vaughn, Keeping Your Church Alive, 35.
Commitment to Christ and Evangelism

The twenty-first-century church has a commitment to Christ, but there is a decline in church attendance with youth as well as men across America. Schwarz writes, “Jesus final words to his disciples was to take the gospel to ‘all nations’ (Matthew 28:19) and to ‘the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8). Christianity is more than something to be believed; it is also something to be lived, enacted and shared.” Churchgoers need to be in contact with people outside of the church, so they can exemplify Christ to non-Christians. Jesus cared for others during his time on earth, and, by doing so He drew crowds of people and he could preach the kingdom of heaven to them. McRaney writes, “God desires to establish a redemptive relationship with all humankind. The Bible refers to the people of God as a family, friends, and a community of faith.” Just as Jesus called the twelve to disciple men, He has also called all Christians to be His fruit-bearing witnesses.

Not all church members share their testimony about Jesus Christ and His love. Many churchgoers that declare Christ have not learned to share their faith, and they are timid when it comes to letting others know about Christ. William Fay writes, “God has called each of us to share our faith, in obedience. He has called each of us to evangelize. If one of your excuses for not sharing your faith is, ‘I don’t have the gift of evangelism,’ then you need to examine Scripture.” There needs to be a concise method for churchgoers to find a way to share the message of Jesus Christ with others. Fay has diagnosed the problem of churchgoers not sharing Jesus, as “The Sin of Silence.” Satan uses the scheme of fear to keep the church from sharing.

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145 Schwarz, The 21st Century Church, 23-24

146 McRaney, The Art of Personal Evangelism. 16.

Christ with lost souls, and, as a result, no new converts are coming to church. With a combination of pastors not teaching evangelism and churchgoers afraid to share Jesus, God sees a problem.

Nathan Lorick writes, “If churches could ever convince their people to pray for the lost, their burden for the lost would be recaptured, and lost friends, relatives, and even strangers would benefit as the gospel is shared.” Prayer in the church has to manifest itself in the body of Christ; church members must be spiritually awakened to attend to the works of evangelism. The church needs to reflect the community, and it becomes a problem when the church is doing nothing in the community. Thom Rainer writes, “The response to the changing community was subtle. Families moved to different parts of town, others would follow, so the church began a death march, as family by family left the church.”

Churches in the African-American community are vying for the largest church membership, but they are leaving out the absent males from the equation for acquiring members. Praying for lost souls to be saved and set up evangelistic campaigns are good. However, citywide revivals have become fund-raisers by designed; the church’s mandate is to evangelize the lost. Saving lost souls was once the main ideological purpose of revivals; preceded by a week of prayer. The old twentieth-century churches were successful in saving lost souls, including those of men. However, the church today has fallen short of its predecessors’ commitment to evangelism. Gerald Kieschnick writes, “Our task and privilege are telling the old, old story of

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149 Nathan Lorick, Dying to Grow Reclaiming the Heart for Evangelism in the Church, Abbotsford, WI: Aneko, 2013, 45.

Jesus and His love in ways that address the deepest spiritual needs of people whose life experiences differ greatly from our own and most certainly from that of our parents and grandparents.”  

In general, life circumstances are different from those in the twentieth-century church, people are not the same, and their ideologies are different from those of the old church. Nonetheless, the church should make an effort to reach the lost. Missionaries go to foreign countries with the Word of God. They are trained to interact with people of different counties according to their respective cultural standard. They face unseen dangers from the natives who do not want the gospel spread in their countries; nevertheless, they go knowing that they are putting their lives in danger of being lost. The African-American church will not take the challenge of evangelizing its communities. Church members are not praying for lost individuals to know Christ and repenting of their sins. Rainer writes, “Going in Christ’s power requires effort. Certainly, the results are dependent on Him, but obedience is work. And obedience is His power means that we are praying to Jesus so we can reach others.”

Strengthening Your Commitment

Every Christian has a commitment to Christ. If a Christian wants to fulfill the commitment, he or she must carry out their commitment to Christ. Christians are to be obedient to Christ; obedience is more important than personal feelings or the opinion of others. Christians need to commit to obedience and the Word of God outlines Christ’s expectations of His followers. “If you love me, keep my commandment's.” (Jn. 14:15 NKJV). Some pastors and

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151 Gerald B. Kieschnick, Waking the Sleeping Giant, St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2009, 95.

152 Rainer, The Autopsy, 42.
churches have failed to keep Christ’s commandments, and the consequences include the absence of African-American males in the pews. Rainer writes, “Members of the dying church weren’t willing to go into the community to reach and minister to people. They weren’t willing to invite their unchurched friends and relatives. They weren’t willing to expend the funds necessary for a vibrant outreach.”

Believers need to know the importance of reaching lost souls. In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus admonished his disciples, “The harvest is truly plentiful, but the labors are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:37, NKJV). The church needs laborers. The harvest of African-American men is crying out for someone to share the gospel. They may seem evasive, but they are crying for the word. Objections might come, from the respondents, but the best way to get around this is preparation. Fay writes, “Once you discover your friend’s real objection, never fall into the temptation to argue. Don’t be motivated by a desire to be right or to prove him wrong. Instead, be motivated to share Jesus in love.”

Strengthening Christians commitment to evangelize by witnessing is important for the Kingdom. Whether enacted by a leader or church member, the mission of the kingdom is evangelizing the unsaved. The greatest declaration to Christendom is the Great Commission, to train disciples to beget disciples. The start of the salvation journey needs the support of the Word of God. Barton writes, “Their newfound freedom is exciting at first. A deep spiritual journey is, after all, what we have been longing for, and actually getting on the way is quite the emotional high.” Learning to share Jesus with others is exciting, joyful, and refreshing to both the new

153 Ibid., p. 44.

154 Fay, Sharing Jesus, 82.

155 Barton, Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership, 93.
convert and the one that shared Christ.

Personal commitments to serving Christ should not have time constraints; on the contrary, Christians must demonstrate a commitment to obeying Christ by developing a schedule to reach out to lost individuals that are weak in their walk with Christ particularly men in particular. The mission of the church is to reach lost souls and sharing the gospel with them is the main recourse. Murrow writes, “Jesus spoke constantly of the kingdom of God. Men are kingdom builders. They think hierarchically. But many churches have replaced the masculine term kingdom of God with the more feminine family of God.”\textsuperscript{156}

Evangelizing Men for Christ

The strength of the church and family relies on the presence of men. Young people in the African-American community are destroying one another out of a lack of godly male leadership. When men are absent from the home and church the structure that God has ordained crumbles. In the book of Genesis God said, “Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you” (Gen 3:15b ESV). Since this time, the familial imbalance has carried over into the church. Men have been absent from the church and no one cares. The family suffers from his absence as well. The majority of young men in prison today, came from homes where the fathers were absent. Reclaiming and returning youth to their rightful place in society, starts with reclaiming fathers to their rightful place in the home and in the church.

The social and economic imbalance in the American society needs to change; society stereotypes young African-American men according to this imbalance, and this stereotype often encourages them to navigate life through illegal means. Myer writes, “The persistent experiences

\textsuperscript{156} Murrow, Why Men Hate Going to Church, 98.
of social adversity faced by black urban youth in other ethnographic accounts—violence, drugs, gangs, early death, injury, and incarceration were also faced by our participants. We often left the field feeling dismayed.”\textsuperscript{157} Family and church are essential to reclaiming African-American males. The church must demonstrate its compassion and concerns for the community from within; compassion and concern provide an important showing for reclaiming youth and adults alike. Churches need to prioritize evangelizing African-American males, but they do not engage in strengthening men’s presence in their congregations. Evangelism involves reaching lost individuals and bringing them into the kingdom of God.

Young people’s church attendance is established by the role models at home. Fathers turn their sons against the church when they do not attend. The churches are also competing with Sunday’s sporting events, which are very popular with young boys. Murrow writes, “Sports leagues are taking over the time slot traditionally occupied by the church. This is fine with boys. They know how to win on the athletic field, but in Sunday school, it’s very hard for boys to win.”\textsuperscript{158} Many larger churches have organized church leagues to draw the youth back to the local church and compete with sports leagues in their communities. Teaching the youth about Jesus is an important part of their upbringing. Solomon writes, “Train up a child in the way he should go; when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

Many men are not attending church, and there is a need for them to become active in church, evangelism is the way. Luke writes, “Go out into the country lanes and out behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come so that the house will be full.


\textsuperscript{158} Murrow, Why Men Hate Going to Church, 118.
For none of those, I invited first will get even the smallest taste of what I had prepared for them” (Lk 14:23b-24 TLB). Those who receive the invitation need to know the severity of the calling; many take it lightly and do not follow through with their promise to God. However, there is no excuse for avoiding God’s call to evangelize the lost as Christians are to give an account of their labor. Christians must make every attempt to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to every person they are in contact with.

The church should make evangelism a part of its regular meeting schedule and, have a service that reaches those willing to come. Kunjufu writes, “If we really believe in our program, we need to take it to the street. One thing I respect about the Jehovah’s Witness is that as much as I resent their knocking on my door, it is obvious from the outreach perseverance that they believe in their program”159 The most detrimental part of the church is when a vote must take place before anything could be done. Many ministries die due to a vote. Biblical mandates should not be voted on because God’s program for the church, is not a suggestion. Rainer writes, “We are to be servants. We are to be obedient. We are to put others first. We are to do whatever it takes to seek the best for others and our church.”160 Road blocks often come up… in church, the progress that God intends for the church to take can be hindered by those not wanting to see kingdom building.

The church should employ Jehovah's Witness’ model of evangelism. Although their message is not of Jesus Christ, their evangelistic techniques are effective. They are trained to go from door to door sharing their message and passing out tracts on their religion. The church can use this model to get the message of Jesus’ gospel to lost people. When witnessing to people, the


160 Rainer, Autopsy, 50.
evangelist will discover that; there are different reasons people are not attending church. Therefore, they must be prepared to answer these reasons and having friends that can help equip individuals better know the best approach to share Jesus’ love. Fay writes, “God sends many people into my life. Some come only for a moment; others, for months or even years. Perhaps God will use me as a conduit to show them the good news of this Son.”\textsuperscript{161} God also sends believers; people who are neither connected with the church but knows Jesus as Saviour.

At this point, believers should learn to make the connection with the gospel to those they are sharing with. In a convincing manner, Jesus should be shared with all men, more so, with the unsaved. Flowers writes, “Whatever is of interest and will bring people together in an introductory conversation may become a potentially small group. Inside of this and subsequent conversations, relationships will be established, and relationships will deepen over time.”\textsuperscript{162} Church relationships begin with conversations between new members and those who have been members for years. According to Vaughn, “In order for people to feel comfortable and to express joy, they must smile at one another. Jesus wants us to express the joy that He has given to us by giving it to others not just in our service outside the church, but with our fellow believers inside the church.”\textsuperscript{163} The attitudes of believers is an important part of evangelism, as it could be the determining factor in unbelievers’ willingness to accept Jesus.

\textit{Continuing to Keep the Church Alive}

Keeping the church alive calls for a balanced approach. This means that everyone has to

\textsuperscript{161} Fay, Sharing Jesus, 115.
\textsuperscript{162} Flowers &Vannoy, 10 Temptations of the Church, 68.
\textsuperscript{163} Vaughn, Keeping Your Church Alive. 38.
participate, no one can afford to miss out on church growth. Vaughn writes, “Every person has commitments that they need to honor. These could be family, friends, teachers, parents, children, supervisors, co-workers, neighbors, or fellow Christians to name a few.”¹⁶⁴ Christians must honor their commitments to God through His word. The Bible motivates believers to be doers of the word. James writes, “But be doers of the word, and not hears only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22 NKJV). McRaney writes, “Be a safe person with a dangerous message. Jesus was a friend of sinners. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, friends of tax collectors and sinners.’ (Matt 11:19).”¹⁶⁵

Evangelism Impact

Evangelism will not be an easy job, Satan attempt to sabotage its beginning. There are many fears to conquer and obstacles to overcome evangelizing. There must be a beginning point. Prospective candidates to be evangelized are available in all age groups, and some of the simplest to start with our youth. This is the age group Satan attacks most, moving them towards people and areas of life that will do them harm. Flowers writes, “Declining churches bemoan the lack of children but are unwilling to do what it takes to attract children to the church. We post signs that say, ‘No Skateboarding.’ We offer them ancient, worn-out gyms equipment. We quit volunteering for VBS and teaching Sunday school.”¹⁶⁶ Youth have headed a world that will lead them astray.

The evangelism impact will happen only after prayer. Before believers embark on their

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁶⁵ McRaney, The Art of Personal Evangelism, 64.

¹⁶⁶ Flowers & Vannoy, 10 Temptations of the Church, 77.
God-given mission, they must pray, and their prayer should be God-centered to move forward. Paul reminds believers of the daily conflicts in the spiritual realm: “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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” (Eph. 6:11-12 NKJV). H. B. Charles, Jr, writes, “Be consistent in prayer. Do whatever it takes to maintain and sustain your prayer life. Keep your heart in a posture of prayer before God. pray for the will of God by praying according to the Word of God.” Praying for the success of evangelism efforts is crucial for the church’s growth.

Evangelism starts with energy and enthusiasm. As it goes on, it usually becomes stalled. However, through incessant prayer, believers will receive God’s encouragements and hope. The simple form of sharing Jesus starts with family and friends. McRaney writes, “Sharing the gospel is the privilege of every single believer. The norm should be that every Christian is actively sharing his faith. Everything that has lived has reproduced, for too it should be with Christians.” African-American churches need to embrace evangelism. In the community, the church is losing the younger African-American males to drugs, and gangs, the prison population is heavy with African-American youth and young adults.

The number of youth and young adults in prison reveals failed attempts or no attempts to reach them. If there had been any attempt to reach them before they got involved with the wrong people, the results could have been far better. Vaughn writes, “The church is comprised of people who recognized the fact that they were, and are not perfect, and are in need of

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168 McRaney, The Art of Personal Evangelism, 44.
redemption. If we who call ourselves Christians know that we are far short of what we should be, why is this so hard to share with others?"¹⁶⁹ Churchgoers are judgmental of others, especially those who they think are criminals. They judge others so severally that; they forget their own failures in life; they are not perfect in the sight of God. This causes churchgoers to miss opportunities to share the gospel message with the unchurched.

Proverbs 11:30 states, “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise” (NKJV). According to Platt, “Any Christian can do this. You don’t need to have the inordinate skill or unusual abilities to make disciples. You don’t need to be a successful pastor or a charismatic leader to make disciples. You don’t need to be a great communicator or an innovative thinker to make disciples.”¹⁷⁰ Jesus has given every believer the ability to tell somebody about His love, and believers must be willing to share their Christian experience with loved ones and friends alike. Yet, Satan uses fear to prevent believers from sharing Jesus with others. Flowers writes, “Fear is crippling. It causes us to do things we should not otherwise consider. There is no question we live in fearful times, and the projections are that these times will continue in the decade to come.”¹⁷¹

The church must identify its fears and, overcome them with courage in Christ. Flowers writes, “After Jesus’ death, the first disciples must have been terrified as they gathered behind locked doors in the upper room. Yet the presence of the risen Christ emboldened them to step beyond their fear into the world that was every bit as threatening to them, if not more so than ours is to us.”¹⁷² There are people who want to hear the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus

¹⁶⁹ Vaughn, Keeping Your Church Alive, 112.

¹⁷⁰ Platt, Radical, 90.

¹⁷¹ Flowers & Vannoy, 10 Temptations of the Church, 123.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 123.
Christ. If the believers are not sharing Jesus, who will let the world know of Jesus Christ? African-American males are available to receive the message of Jesus’ love. It is time for all Christians to recognize their responsibilities to Christ and kingdom building. Evangelizing the lost is the focus, fear is hindering, Jesus said, “And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do” (Lk. 12:4 NKJV).

The impact of evangelism is life changing, soul saving revival of the churches attendance, and renewing a relationship with Jesus Christ. Christians should set an example to those with whom they are sharing the gospel. Jesus was an example to his disciples. Paul said, “Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Earley writes, “In those days Jews would not speak to Samaritans, but Jesus broke the ethnic barrier to speak with her. In those days religious men would speak with women, but Jesus crossed the gender barrier to share with her.” 173 Certain barriers need to be broken, and these barriers are keeping Christians from speaking to people who need Jesus in their lives. The gospel is the key to drawing the lost through evangelism, and it takes a listening ear that is willing to meet the needs of the unchurched.

Once pastor’s mention the importance of evangelism and teaching how to evangelize the lost would impact their church’s attendance. Many church members do not know how to evangelize, but facilitating outside training may provide a solution. The first steps to success in evangelism are making sure each member knows how to approach people. McRaney writes, “Not all the evangelistic conversations we have are with modern or postmodern adults like ourselves. Evangelism also occurs with people who do not share a similar stage of life,

173 Earley & Wheeler, Evangelism Is, 122.
philosophical perspective, or cultural background.”174 Knowing how to approach in a people and engage in conversation is important. For example, Jesus’ conversation with the woman at the well was about water. John writes, “A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink’” (Jn. 4:7 NKJV).

Finding the point of conversation would allow individuals to control a conversation that engages individuals to come to the point of evangelism. Setting the stage to interact with people, needs believers to show hospitality to every person they meet with. Shultz writes, “When Jesus said, ‘You will be treated as you treat others,’ He was referring to the cyclical nature of human behavior. When the culture judges the church, the church judge right back.”175 The Christians should have a conversation with non-Christians, and they should do so in a manner that will bring positive results. Knowing how to communicate with compassion and concern allows the love of Christ to show through the believer. The conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well demonstrates, how a simple request for water can lead to salvation.

Maintaining the focus of evangelism is also important. There should be no certain conditions for evangelism. However, spiritual conditions can affect receptivity to the gospel. Some adults can be sensitive and others abrasive because there are sin problems. Knowing the proper approach is important: how to share Jesus with them in a way that would open them to salvation. Some of will respond to the gospel. Children’s spiritual condition is to be considered too. McRaney writes, “Counseling children about Christ brings several potential problems. First, there is little information from the Bible on the conversion of children. Second, parents and

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174 McRaney, The Personal Art of Evangelism, 140.
175 Shultz, 21st Century Church, 72.
churches can pressure children to make a profession prior to their being ready to make such a commitment.”\textsuperscript{176} There should be an assessment of children before evangelizing them to make a full commitment to the church.

**Stirring the Gift of Evangelism**

Some people have left the church because someone has disappointed them or injured them emotionally. The sad part of the scenario is that those individuals have also separated themselves from God. therefore, the church must know how to approach each type of person. Gerald B. Kieschnick writes, “Challenges, struggles, and conflicts have been an integral part of our past, both distant and recent. Congregation and individuals in our Synod have disagreed, argued, and even fought over many issues, resulting in ecclesiastical division and family dissension.”\textsuperscript{177} Struggles within the inner core of the church have disturbed and dishearten people into leaving. The church should bear the blame for hundreds of people that took their eyes of God to focus on the conflicts.

Evangelism needs to focus on these hurts, and design a means to encourage and strengthen those who walked away from God. The writer of Hebrews says, “See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven” (Heb. 12:25 NKJV). Those who walked away from the church walked away from God. Not only have they alienated themselves from God, but they also have endangered their salvation. They must reconnect with God and stop comparing nonchurch-goers. Those who were driven away should

\textsuperscript{176} McRaney, The Personal Art of Evangelism, 141-142.

\textsuperscript{177} Rev. Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, Waking the Sleeping Giant, St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2009, p. 39.
know they have to give an account of their lives to God. Vaughn writes, “When an individual is encouraged, they are more apt to encourage others when they need it. Everyone appreciates getting encouragement whether they are young or old, male or female, black or white, red or yellow.”\textsuperscript{178}

When the church finally realizes the importance of evangelism, it will hasten to employ it fully. The writer of Hebrews says, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:24-25 NKJV). Christians are obligated to evangelize if they’re not evangelized, then I would suggest they are not brothers and sisters in Christ, and sin has separated them from God. Paul writes, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3: 23 NKJV). According to Earley, “True evangelism does not require cumbersome programs. On the contrary, evangelism should be a natural (organic) expression of every believer.”\textsuperscript{179} Every believer should focus on a person’s future in Christ instead of his or her past.

Paul writes, “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands” (2 Tim 1:6 NKJV). The church has people who are equipped for evangelism. All church members should understand the importance of evangelizing. Earley writes, “True gospel was never meant to be a private or individual affair reserved only for the solitude and silence of a believer’s soul. It was meant to be lived out in the community among Christians and unbelievers.”\textsuperscript{180} Too many Christians have taken a back seat to sharing the gospel

\textsuperscript{178} Vaughn, Keeping Your Church Alive, 121.

\textsuperscript{179} Earley & Wheeler, Evangelism Is, 115.

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., p. 115.
with others, and they have hidden the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus said,

> You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Matt 5:14-16 ESV).

If the lights of Christians are shining in the darkness, the world would see the light. It would be the realm of God’s kingdom on earth towards men. Earley writes, “Just as the human body was designed naturally to multiple cells in order to maintain health and to fulfill its purpose, the same is true with Christians and how they should live out their existence in this world.” Stagnation will eventually stall the church’s growth unless the church becomes evangelism minded. Evangelism is by virtue a natural process for the church, it is designed to reproduce itself. The nature of Christianity provides everyone with the spiritual ability to know Christ and to share His works in his or her life. Paul writes, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16 ESV).

Christians must be able to get out of their comfort zones. Hindrances to share the gospel abide by that zone. Jesus demonstrated to how to move outside of the zone—where one will be challenged to reach people that seems unreachable. Earley writes, “Often the best evangelists are not the professors with Ph. D’s in theology but instead are those who most recently have met Jesus. They have the best contacts with lost people and the most enthusiasm for telling others about Jesus.” Following the example Jesus set in the gospels is the best pattern available to the church. The African-American community needs the courage to go into the world and share in order to evangelize lost men and the children that are following in their footsteps.

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181 Ibid., p. 115

182 Ibid., p. 127.
Summary

There are specific changes the church and its leadership must implement to meet the needs of the unchurched African-American males. The church must devise plans for evangelism that reach the unchurched African-American males. God devised evangelism to reach the unchurched. Pastors must lead their congregations to become evangelistic churches. Through this approach, more unchurched individuals could become churched. Worship service has become an important issue to the unchurched African-American male, much sense there should be a constructive approach that should be implemented to attract them. Christians should make greater efforts to promote and support evangelism which is essential to the church’s growth and leadership. The church needs to reach into the fiber of its soul and show concern for the unchurched and meet needs. The church should have an active role for African-American men in their relationship with Christ.
Chapter 5

Conclusion-Ministry Aids

Evangelizing the unchurched is a spiritual battle. Every Christian participating in evangelism must know that spiritual warfare is real, and every effort is to glorify God and save lives. Satan is doing all in his power to keep people out of the kingdom of God. The collected data shows that the church needs to employ every means of evangelism to reach African-American males. The church should also prepare to confront Satan, the greatest enemy they have ever seen. Jerry Rankin writes, “My sensitivity to the reality of spiritual warfare has grown over the years. I’m not sure what I truly believed about the presence and activity of Satan prior to going to the mission field.”183 Engaging in evangelism will reveal hidden thing (sin?) in unchurched people’s lives. This is not to frighten anyone, but to prepare him or her for unceasing prayer for God’s guidance through the process. Christians will win.

Jesus likens evangelism to sowing in a field. Jesus says:

Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty (Matt 13:18-23 ESV).

Not all who are evangelized will come to Christ. Satan does everything he can to deter them. The goal of evangelism is to ensure that all people have an opportunity to know Jesus for themselves.

Identifying the Areas of Need

Implementing evangelism involves knowing their testimony in Jesus Christ. It also means knowing the Word of God, and how to apply it to different cases. Each person is different, and each person will have a different attitude towards evangelism and the person carrying the Word. According to the surveys in this thesis, African-American males need spiritual nurturing, emotional healing and physical healings. Taking on these are challenging, but evangelism finds the problems and meets their needs. Kunjufu writes, “Many times during the year the pastor will ask the congregation to bring a brother, especially if it’s men’s week. I know I have been guilty of not putting tremendous effort into the request.” Christians knowingly neglect the call to reach out to men and bring them to church. Part of the churches healing process is to recognize that Jesus wants the church to reach the unchurched. He died for all humanity.

The church is sleeping, and the sleeping giant must be awakened. It must regain its prominence in the communities it needs to serve. Church leaders and congregations have missed the mission Jesus assigned to them. Churches are dying; they are closing their doors to open no more. Prayer must be the primary source of evangelizing, and the church must pray together for the results. Charles writes, “Prayer is not an excuse for idleness, slothfulness, or negligence. Answered prayer requires spiritual partnership with God. Without God, you cannot do it. But without you, God will not do it.” It seems that the church is waiting for God to do the work He has instructed the church to do. He is not going to do what He commanded the church to do. It is customary for women to pray, but men do not like to pray. However, prayer is the power of the church as well the Christian life—for both men and women.

\[184\] Kunjufu, Adam! Where Are You? 110.

\[185\] Charles, It Happens After Prayer, 115.
Murrow writes, “Christians speak conversationally to one another, but not to God. When addressing the Almighty, they lapse into a strange language.” The institution of prayer is mainly for invoking God into human works, Jesus said, “Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labors into His harvest” (Matt. 9:38 NKJV). Rainer writes, “God, give me the conviction and the courage to be like the heroes of Hebrews 11. Teach me not to hold onto those things in my church that is my personal preferences and styles. Show me not only how to let go, but where to let go, so that I may heed Your commands more closely.” It is significant when the church recognizes the need to pray to God in order to move forward in evangelizing, and successfully winning men to Christ.

Proceeding According to God’s Directions

Jesus sent his disciples out to evangelize their communities in the gospel of Matthew. He said, “These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:5-6 NKJV). The church needs to evangelize local communities, neighborhood, and cities where there are poverty and lack of communication about Jesus’ love. The church need to embark on joint efforts and team up to train and employ evangelism in different communities. Just as the Jehovah’s Witnesses go door to door, the church needs to employ a more direct approach to sharing the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Fay writes, “God’s Word penetrates and changes hearts toward his Son. Hebrews 4:12 says, ‘For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit,

186 Murrow, Why Men Hate Going to Church, 192

187 Rainer, Autopsy, 23.
joint and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”  

Christians becoming involved in evangelism must have a sufficient knowledge of God’s Word. Believers should meet in Bible studies where they can learn the Word of God, and a study on their own time to reinforce their biblical knowledge for evangelism. Vaughn writes, “In setting the right example for the believers, the ministry leaders must be committed to the regular study of God’s Word. The Bible is not a book that is only to be used by pastors.”  

It seems that African-American men will find their way to the church if the church reaches out to them. The church is the place where they can find Christ, but Satan has a stronghold through deception that can only be broken by the Word of God. Rankins writes, “There is an ongoing battle between the flesh and the Spirit. Satan is opposed to our doing anything that glorifies and exalts Christ. He uses that self-centered nature of the flesh within us and the carnal values of the world around us to defeat us and cause us to sin.”

The reality of evangelism is that it fulfills the Great Commission, but few believers actually want to become engaged in the works of evangelism. However, evangelism is important for the church and individual believers; Jesus requires it. In the book of Acts, Jesus is recorded saying, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth’” (Acts 1:7-8 NKJV). When believers are guided by the Holy Spirit, they will share their testimony with unbelievers and those who stopped attending church. There are some that are pressured not to
give their life to Christ, but

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188 Fay, Sharing Jesus, 47.
189 Vaughn, Keeping Your Church Alive, 123.
190 Rankins, Spiritual Warfare, 141.
the Word of God can penetrate the hardest of hearts. Believers must be willing to commit to sharing Jesus with others.

Expect Spiritual Warfare While Evangelizing

Satan discourages believers who question the need for evangelism. He opposes anyone that desires to share the gospel with the lost. Spiritual warfare is real. Paul encouraged the church of Ephesus to prepare for spiritual warfare. Paul writes, “Above all, taking the shield of faith with which, you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:16-17 NKJV). The church needs to fully employ these words from Paul. Equipping believers to engage in spiritual warfare begins with studying God’s Word and moving forward with evangelism. If the church is going to win the battle Paul describes, all believers must equip themselves with the Word of God.

Inner chaos within the church is the main weapon Satan uses to keep unbelievers away from the church. Rankins writes, “We can readily understand how unholy living and dissension in the body of Christ are used by our enemy to erode our witness and the advice of the God’s kingdom. However, adversity can blindside the most dedicated Christian; creating doubts concerning God’s love, faithfulness, and power”191 Satan knows, that if unbelievers receive the Word of God into their lives, God’s love will be demonstrated therein. They will come out of darkness into His marvelous light. The enemy knows his power would be limited in a new believer’s life. Every believer must realize that spiritual battles constantly play out in the natural world.

191 Ibid., p. 195-96.
Vaughn writes, “Adversity is Satan’s favorite weapon because it is common to everyone and causes us to focus on ourselves and doubt God.” 192

Evangelism is a challenge, but it is worth pursuing in the name of Christ. As Christians ready themselves to witness, Satan places adversity in their path in the form of doubt. When witnessing to the African-American males, believers should beware of the devices of the enemy. He knows the church should make every effort to evangelize the unchurched; the end results would reflect that some will be saved, and some will not. Training effective witness to approach the unchurched makes a difference in effective evangelism. Earley writes, “If you think that once a person gives his or her life to Christ the battle is over, you are mistaken. In some ways, it only intensifies. Once people are saved, the enemy works against them to keep them from telling others how to be free. The war continues.” 193 The evangelizing Christian should always keep in mind the tactics of the enemy, who wants to keep believers off balance.

Serving Jesus and Others Through Evangelism

The greatest part of Christianity is serving others. There are many challenges in a life filled with Christ, yet through all the struggles, serving Christ is serving others. Jesus said, “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28 NKJV). Wheeler writes, “Nothing is more rewarding and fun than serving others. This is especially true when Christians choose to fellowship and serve as they seek the opportunity to point people to Christ. There is no need to feel guilty; it is OK to have fun and

193 Earley & Wheeler, Evangelism Is, 158.
serve Christ at the same time.”

Every Christian should have the joy of Christ and the determination to share Jesus with others. Satan hates every Christian who desires to share the good news of the gospel. Believers have a weapon that will defeat Satan, it is called prayer.

The twenty-first-century suffers from the lack of devoted disciples willing to put themselves on the line for others. Schwartz writes, “Christians should welcome opportunities to share the good news with anyone who asks about ‘the hope we have’ in Jesus (1 Peter 3:15), as Philip did with the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-40.” Inviting family, friends and neighbors to church is the first step of evangelism. Jesus said in Acts 1:9, “Jerusalem, then Judah, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth.” Jesus gave a starting point for evangelism, and it is up to the church and the individual's believers to begin. Schwartz writes, “Christianity and the church are drifting downward. According to world-class church historian Martin Marty, there is a fad today about declinism. How can we get beyond declinism? How can we breathe hope, meaning, and life into struggling churches and their ministries?”

Reaching beyond the four walls of the church is the only solution for declining attendance. The fears of not sharing the gospel need to be confronted head-on to get the church moving. The church must first understand the tactics of the enemy, then move toward sharing Jesus Christ with others. Earley writes, “For decades Christians have counted on reaping events as crusades, revivals, and church services to do their evangelism for them. This approach is no longer as effective, especially in an increasingly post-Christian culture.”

194 Ibid., p. 153.
197 Earley & Wheeler, Evangelism Is, 183.
American society has changed drastically, forcing the church to compete for people to come to receive Christ. Evangelism is the approach needed to reach the unchurched.

**Executing a Plan to Evangelize**

Pastors are central figures in evangelism. They are the primary factors unchurched people’s decisions to stay in the church or leave. Pastors’ personal lives, their actions within the church, and their interactions with others are important for the unchurched. The unchurched also observe church members, and this, too, is involved in their decision. And evangelist’s lifestyle must exemplify Christ since the unchurched looks at the way believers live, the way they talk, and what they do in the first steps of evangelizing. Earley writes, “As God personally bought the Good News to mankind, so we are to ‘incarnate’ Christ to the lost, that is, to penetrate, (to pitch our tent) significantly into the lives of the non-Christian for the purpose of not only verbalizing the Gospel but also to live it before them.”¹⁹⁸

Pastors and church members alike must display the characteristics of Christ. If church members are to bring the unchurched into the church, they must be examples of Christ before all people at all times. Moreover, the unchurched have problems, and they want their problems to be met. The Christian should be willing to listen to these problems and demonstrate Jesus’ practice. Wheeler writes, “As you read through the Gospels and study the encounters Jesus had with people, you quickly see that He was a good listener. Jesus always practiced active listening skills.”¹⁹⁹ When believers are not willing to listen to the unchurched, they are telling them that, they do not have time to address their needs. Jesus always found time to listen, it gave Him the

¹⁹⁸ Earley & Wheeler, Evangelism Is, 184.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 229.
opportunity to share the gospel.

When believer’s associate with the unchurched it is to engage a conversation with the unchurched that would make church interesting to them. John Schwartz provides helpful tips for the church, and pastors by implementing them in their churches.

- Asking millennial members to invite unchurched members, millennial friends, to come to church with them.
- Making your church known as a warm, special, and welcoming place for singles and seniors.
- Surveying and interviewing attendees to be sure your church and its members are working in unity with each other.
- Making Jesus and His message and His teachings the central focus of your church’s worship service.
- Teaching the Bible and Christianity to adults and asking them to do the same to their children.
- Teaching members how to disciple others one-on-one and how to live as lifestyle evangelists.
- Establishing church-wide fellowship groups and asking every member to join a group.
- Having an experienced spiritual director teaching classes on prayer, devotion and spiritual formation.
- Asking church members to help the least, the last, the lost and the left behind in our cities.
- Inviting family members, neighbors and colleagues to come with you to church.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ Schwartz, The 21st Century Church, 26-27.
Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ is sharing the story of what Jesus has done in the life of every believer, and it results in marvelous works. The church is made-up of families; these families comprising the body of Christ. Evangelism is designed to reach each family one member at a time and bring him or her to church. This is a mission to grow the church. The church needs to have a mission statement on evangelism. This statement will give clear directions on how to execute the purpose and plan for evangelism. Wheeler writes, “If a mission statement is vitally important to the growth of healthy organizations, we would do well to adopt the idea to our families. A family mission statement will serve as a centerline and guardrails for the family on the roads of life.”201 The roads are filled with obstacles the enemy has placed to make both believers and nonbelievers stumble, however, the guardrails, and center line will keep them on the road as Christ guides them through the storms of life.

The churches that are Spirit-led and Spirit-filled will have more success with evangelism than those that are not. If the church lets the Holy Spirit lead the church, He will guide the body of Christ into filling its purpose. Rankins writes, “Occasionally we come under conviction, rededicate your life, and get serious about living a Spirit-filled life, but it is usually short-lived as we get tired of the struggles and find the victory elusive.”202 Christians express the love of Christ to others through their lives, and this expression should not decline when troubles come. Evangelism is the one area that demonstrates Christ and draws the lost to Christ. The writer of Acts says, “So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). Sharing the word of God with others greatly impacts church attendance.

201 Earley & Wheeler, Evangelism Is, 316.

202 Rankins, Spiritual Warfare, 228.
Conclusion

Ministry is the power the maintains evangelism. Recognizing the real treats against evangelism, pastors and church members should prepare themselves to face the challenges of Satan. The goals of evangelism are to awaken the church and to realize their effects on the unchurched African-American males that energize them in coming to church again. There is a need for every Christian to stay equipped to carry the Word of God to the world. This means they must study the Bible and become skilled with Scriptures that combat the enemy to release the lost. Expect results when evangelizing, there are people that want to hear God’s Word and receive an invitation to church. Christians must become committed to God’s plan of salvation, they must become willing to engage in evangelism. Following the plan Jesus set for the church in making disciples will produce the results for the kingdom of God.
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IRB Approval

January 25, 2017

Eric Truss

IRB Exemption 2757.012517: The Decline of Church Attendance in Black America: A Biblical Mandate for Black Males to Godly Leadership

Dear Eric Truss,

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

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b): (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP Administrative Chair of Institutional Research The Graduate School

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APPENDIX A

MEN ABSENT FROM CHURCH SURVEY

1. What is your current age? 18-30 ___, 31-40 ___, 41-50 ___, 51-60 ___, 61 or more ___.

2. What is your marital status? Married, ___ Single, ___ Divorces, ___ Widow ___.

3. What is your highest level of Education? High School ____ Some College ____ Bachelor’s Degree ____ Master’s Degree ____ Doctoral Degree ____ other _____.

4. Did you grow with, Original father and mother ____ Step parent (s) ____ Single parent ____ Guardian ____ Other relatives ____ Other (please elaborate)

5. Did your parents attend church? Yes ___ No ___

6. Have you ever attended church? Yes ___ No ___

7. What was your experience like in church if you attended? Please explain in two or three sentences.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
8. In two or three sentences, what did you like or disliked about church?

9. Why did you stop attending church or never attended church? Explain

10. What would it take to get you to attend church?

11. Does supporting the church financially play a role with you attending or not church?

12. How much influence do you have on others people attending or not church?
13. Has anyone or any ministry caused an aware of God’s love and concern for you personally?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

14. What would you recommend the church do that will win you over to start coming church as a regular attendee?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

15. Do you have family members that attend church or have attended church?

Consistently and current____ Monthly____ Occasionally ____ Only for

Christmas/Easter/Thanksgiving ____ Years ago, ____ Funerals and marriages ____

Other____ Please explain in two or three sentences

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

16. Do you read the Bible? Yes ____ or, No ____ Daily ____ Weekly ____ Monthly____

Special Occasions ____ Crisis ____ Other ____ Please explain within reason why or why not.

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17. If you read the Bible, could it influence your thinking about church?

18. If you do not read the Bible, what would prompt/encourage you to read it?

19. How do you see yourself as an active member of a church?

20. Are you open to a conversation about faith in Christ? Yes _____ or No _____. If not, why?
APPENDIX B

CHURCH MEMBERS SURVEY

Please provide the following information

A) How long have you been a member? ____________________

B) What is your current position in the church? (Elder, Deacon, Secretary/Clerk, or member) ____________________

C) Gender: Male ____ or Female ____

D) How do you feel about disciplining the unchurched?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

E) Have you ever been trained in evangelism? Yes ____ or No ___

F) Are you willing to attempt to participate in evangelism? Yes ____ or No _____. This means telling others about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

G) How concerned are you about the lost? (Very Concerned, Concerned, Neutral, Unconcerned, Very Unconcerned). Please State why!

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

H) Does your pastor support discipleship or evangelism programs? Yes ___, No ____ or I do not know _____.

I) What is the name of the denomination you attend?

________________________________________________________________________

J) What is your level of education? ______________
K) What is your age range? 18-29 ___ 30-39 ___ 40-49 ___ 50-59 ___ 60-69 ___ 70+ ___

L) What is your church size (Number) by attendees? ______
Appendix C
PowerPoint Presentation

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

THE DECLINE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE IN BLACK AMERICA: A BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR BLACK MALES TO GODLY LEADERSHIP.

A PRESENTATION OF THE THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA
FEBRUARY 14, 2018

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PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

- The purpose of this research project is to show the need for the church to reach out to the African-American community to evangelize the African-American male. The church has fallen away from the Great Commission and has left it alone. The church needs to share its faith and convictions to approach unchurch men to bring them to Christ.
African-American Males Abandons the Church:

The Problem

• Ninety-two percent of African-American men are not in church.

• The church’s Spiritual and Moral ethics are eroding.

• They remain outside without the church taking aim at them through evangelism.

• There is a vacuum in role-models in the church.

• Family role model have shifted to women in single parent’s homes.
African American Males Abandons the Church and Home

The Problem

• Blacks present a slightly higher rate religious preference than whites despite their higher membership rate.

• Building relationships between black males and God are the mandate that will take prayer, effort, teaching, and time.

• The problem of fatherlessness has a lasting impact on children throughout their young lives.

• Today’s children are the next generation to grow into what may be called a generational curse; a continuous cycle of the male abandoning the church and home.
African-American Males Abandoned the Church

The Problem

• If there is going to be a church presence with leadership from the males, the families that are affected by the absence of male leadership within the home must change for the better.

• Education also plays an import role in church attendance.

• Church leaders should be more attentive to their members, get to know them and their concerns, and make them feel they are wanted in the church. Education is one of many factors church leaders can assist families.
Methodology

- The findings of this research will be used to develop an incisive plan to encourage African-American males to realize their place in the homes and church.

- Primary and secondary resources will support these findings by showing evidence that the role of African-American males has been consistent in their cultural, home, and church during the past decades.

- When families are forgotten, children are forsaken and; the church struggles to keep the member in the pews.
Target the Male Role in the Church and Family

• African-American men have fallen away from God and His mandate by neglecting His Word.

• The male role is a great responsibility to society and the church. God’s mandate carries with it fathers rearing their children in the ways of the Lord.

• Evangelizing the African-American males is the challenge for the church. There is a need to evangelize this community to save this generation.

• The male absence in the family has affected the relationships in church attendance.
Target the Male Role in the Church and Family

• The fabric of the African-American community is strengthened when men participate in church and family roles, their God-given purpose.

• The church’s role should be to help develop a person’s life according to the Word of God.

• The church must teach the people how to apply the Word of God to their life and to live as representatives of God in their communities.
The Culture

• Today families are broken and divided needing to be rebuilt; fathers and mothers are in homes that form a unique foundation.

• Drugs have entered the African-American culture and have begun destroying young black American males.

• The young African-American male population is shifting to a greater number in prison. These young men are caught up in the drug epidemic which has increased drug-related arrest among males.

• The church needs to be able to reach its community by evangelizing African-American males and others that have forsaken church.
The Culture

• The church must engage in drug prevention programs that will meet the needs of black families.

• The church must also engage professional counselors to help in giving counsel to the males seeking support that will help make a change in their lives.

• The central part of black culture is decreasing as black males have become a lost part.

• Many people have lost confidence in the role the church plays in their lives, and have taken a back seat in the church.
The Culture

• The church must engage in drug prevention programs that will meet the needs of black families.

• The church must also engage professional counselors to help in giving counsel to the males seeking support that will help make a change in their lives.

• The central part of black culture is decreasing as black males have become a lost part.

• Many people have lost confidence in the role the church plays in their lives, and have taken a back seat in the church.
Education

• African-American males are behind or left out. Education must become more inclusive.

• There is a need for higher education in the Black communities.

• Supporting higher education should be a priority for Black churches.

• Education throughout the years has become diversified, yet there still room in the black community.

• The balance in education between black and white males must be represented by the population of those who want to earn a higher education.
Education

• The black male’s absence is a major trend in higher education.

• The number of black females enrolled in major universities is greater than black males.

• Black women earned two-thirds of bachelor’s degrees in the African-American community.

• The black males must become more aggressive towards education.

• African-American males are presented with challenges socially and professionally.
Health Care

• Healthcare has become a major concern for black males.

• The HIV and Aids viruses are among the most challenging healthcare problems today.

• Many African-American males suffer from the lack of healthcare.

• There is a wide range of mental and physical health-care issues among African-American men, which include depression, anxiety, and stress.

• Depression is a progressive state of the mind that many African-Americans males begin to experience early in life.
Health Care

• As Black males deal with depression; it spills over into areas of their lives that confront the church, community, and families.

• Their concerns become their quality of life.

• The church must take on the role of counseling these men if they want to help shape the community as it should.
Substance Abuse

• Alcoholism and drugs have dominated the African-American community for decades, and this epidemic has turned fatal.

• While Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) meetings and drug abuse programs offer help for substance abusers who want to overcome their habits, sobriety is not an easy task.

• Many abusers struggle with it, but caring ministries and people with genuine concern will assist those men with their struggle.
Substance Abuse

• The street life of African-American males has evolved to include the effects of substance abuse, and these habits are lasting and challenging.

• Churches actively involved in rehabilitation should be aware religiously and spiritually of substance users.

• Substance abuse among African-American men is crippling African-American communities and culture.

• Churches need to rely on professionals who are suited to counsel substance abuse.
Substance Abuse

• Many African-American males are engaging in social habits and activities that have removed them from their spiritual responsibilities to the church and family.

• The church has significantly impacted the lives of African-American’s.

• The church must assist families both spiritually and physically, equipping them to fulfill God’s Will.
Peer Pressure

• Wrong relationships have an impact on the lives of African-American males.

• Relationships affect both attitudes and emotions.

• It also influences healthy relationships in families where the adolescent listens to their peer’s advice.

• The role of peers, positive or negative has a lasting impact on African-American juveniles.
The Black Male Arrest Rate

• A large percentage of African-American males comprise the US prison population.

• In 1999, 9 percent of African-American males between the ages of 25 to 29 were in prison.

• African-American males to charge them with crimes by what is called “mistake in identity.”

• Health fears are on the rise among African-American males who are imprisoned at an early age.
The Black Male Arrest Rate

• Homosexuality is a growing concern among male prisoners.

• African-American Male society often deems them problematic.

• They are viewed as violent, limited in potential, and economically and socially non-developmental.

• African-American males who successfully meet daily challenges are frustrated by their stereotyping as underachievers.

• Everyday, inmates are released from prison; and they enter society with no definitive life direction.
Research Findings from Interviews and Surveys

Methodology

• The 1998 findings show a staggering 92 percent of African-American churches reported gender gaps.

• The 2017 findings shows no significant changes.

• Facts and surveys show church leaders lacking when it comes to the gender gaps in their congregation attendance.

• Two interviews and surveys were conducted; Appendix A contains twenty-question surveys given to twenty African-American males; Appendix B is an additional survey given to ten people attending church.
Research Findings from Interviews and Surveys

Methodology

• Questions covered:
  
• the ages of each participant.
  
• their education levels.
  
• marital status
  
• were there any problems in the family?
  
• did their parents attend church?
  
• their participation in church as a family.
  
• Most of the participants are not currently attending church; they were asked if they would start attending.
Research Findings from Interviews and Surveys

• Finances being an important part of church; respondents said they would not mind supporting the church.

• Each respondent expressed their awareness of God, although are not actively participating in church. They expressed their interest in returning to church if they are invited by the right person.

• Respondents are willing to have conversations about Jesus Christ.
Research Findings from Interviews and Surveys

Part Two

• Part two was surveys given to current church attendees to determine if their churches were involved in evangelism, their gender population, and church size.

• Ninety percent of respondents said their churches support evangelism, 10% did not know, but all were willing to be trained in evangelism.

• When they were asked about the lost, 10% had little or no concerns for the lost.
Recommendation for Ministry

• African-American males are wide-range and the church needs ministries designed with African-American males’ needs in mind.

• The need for consistent role models it is important for everyone, for children, adolescents, adults, and elders.

• The church needs to reach this population with the gospel of Jesus Christ and find ways to increase church attendance.

• The church needs to be oriented towards families.
Recommendation for Ministry

• Church leaders and members alike must have the mindset to go beyond the four walls of the physical building.

• Pastors and other church leaders should engage in every opportunity to teach evangelism.

• Pastors need to form men’s groups within their churches with the sole purpose of reaching men for Christ.

• Evangelism is the sole responsibility of every believer, but it is the pastor’s responsibility to keep it at the forefront of his congregation.
African-American Males

Solutions

• Black Churches must reach out to the community and make their presence known.

• The Black Church must step up in carrying out the Great Commission which is the mandate of Christ.

• The church and the community must have a relationship if the church is going to survive and grow in the attendance of local families.

• The missing portion of church development lies in the framework of making disciples, to which Jesus commanded as the primary principle of the church.