Leading Like Jesus: a Curriculum to Disciple African-American Males Into Becoming Spiritual Leaders in the Home, Church, and Community at the Glenville Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cleveland, Ohio

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ABSTRACT

LEADING LIKE JESUS: A CURRICULUM TO DISCIPLE AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES INTO BECOMING SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE HOME, CHURCH, AND COMMUNITY AT THE GLENVILLE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN CLEVELAND, OHIO

by

MyRon Pelote Edmonds

Adviser: David Sedlacek
Problem
According to recent statistics, there are 13 million more adult women than men in America’s churches. National statistics also indicate that women are 56% more likely to hold a leadership position at a church. This reality appears to be more severe in African-American churches, where conservative estimates of 60-75% of the attendees are female and of the remaining percentage of male congregants very few are between the ages of 12-45. Consequently, it would seem that African-American churches are struggling to attract males and develop males as spiritual leaders. The Seventh-day Adventist Church
offers general enrichment programs for men. However, there is a scarcity of programs designed for the unique experience of the African-American male from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective. A discipleship curriculum is needed to provide transformational leadership training for African-American males in order to reactivate and strengthen them as spiritual leaders.

Method

A ten-month discipleship curriculum called Leading Like Jesus was designed and implemented with men in the church between the ages of 18-50 years old. There were a total of 14 participants. The program was evaluated to determine its effectiveness in transitioning males to move beyond peripheral church attendance and positional leadership to impactful spiritual leadership in the home, church, and community. Each of the participants was given a pre- and post-assessment called the Holistic Spiritual Leadership Growth Assessment (HSLG), which measured their growth in areas of spiritual leadership using both quantitative and qualitative questions.

Results

All of the 14 participants were positively affected by the Leading Like Jesus Curriculum intervention. Consistently and across the board in all 10 sections, the intervention made a difference in the leadership impact of the participants in their home, church, and community. Currently, each one of the participants is either an elder-in-training or a deacon-in-training at the Glenville Seventh-day Adventist Church.
Conclusions

The church must be intentional about developing its African-American men into spiritual leaders. Spiritual leadership is not caught, it is taught. The model of Jesus in the discipleship of the twelve is not only descriptive, but also prescriptive for the development of people, and, more specifically, the development of men. When men are challenged to be spiritual leaders through consistent, practical, and spiritual affirmation, they thrive and the church is blessed.
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A Project Document
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
MyRon P. Edmonds
February 2014
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DEDICATION

To My Family: my wife Shaneé, my daughter, Teylor, and son, Camden

Thank you for being so loving, supportive and understanding. You are my everything.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

When I arrived at Glenville, the church was on the brink of death. Many of its young people and young families had left, the church was graying tremendously, and church attendance had dropped to 250, with a membership of 1300. The morale was low concerning the future. The only thing celebrated was its history. I was automatically the youngest person on the church board. As I surveyed the congregation, I noticed that there was an overwhelming disparity in the representation of women to men in leadership. Not many young men were coming to church and those that did come were few. More alarming was that many of the men in the church were not viewed as the influential spiritual leaders by and large. The men at Glenville fell into two categories: (a) Men with leadership positions, but very little respect or influence with the church, and (b) Men not in leadership positions, with very little respect and influence with the membership. These two groups represented the small group of men in our church. The elders and deacons’ boards had only ordained and developed a handful of men in a twenty-year time frame. There seemed to be no intentional effort to develop male spiritual leaders. Women came to prayer meeting. Women represented the prayer ministry, Community Services, Sabbath School, Pathfinders, youth ministry, and the majority of the church board. My
concern heightened when I saw enough men in our church that attended but were, for the most part, marginalized or uninvolved in the ministry of the church. Although we had men as positional leaders, we had very few who were influential in the overall spirituality of the church. There was a need to develop and disciple male leaders before we became a heterogeneous congregation of women.

Another thing I noticed about my church was that many men had a “history” that cast them in a negative light, to the extent that they were not given any intentional attention and ministry. Heavily influenced by readings and other materials, I sensed that the best way to turn around the crisis with our men and our dying church was to follow the example of Christ and pastor the few who would impact the many. I decided that I needed to follow the example of Christ and disciple a small group of marginalized men. This radically changed my perspective of effective ministry. I was taught to pastor and give ample and equal time to every member, but this method was not effective. So gathering the men on the fringe of church influence was going to be my particular emphasis. This idea of developing and discipling a small group, like the men, was bearing fruit and, in my mind, deserved my attention for further research.

This new method of leading a church has become a passion of mine now and I am realizing its theological value to the body of Christ. It has helped me to have more balance in my personal life, as well as see more qualitative and quantitative growth in my church.
Statement of the Problem

According to statistics (Barna Group, 2000), there are 13 million more adult women than men in America’s churches. National statistics (Barna Group, 2000) also indicate that women are 56% more likely to hold a leadership position at a church. This reality appears to be more severe in African-American churches, where 60 (Pinn, 2002) to 75% of the attendees are female and, of the remaining percentage of male congregants, very few are between the ages of 12-45 (Kunjufu, 1994). Consequently, it would seem that African-American churches are struggling to attract males and develop the few that attend into spiritual leaders. The Seventh-day Adventist Church offers general enrichment programs for men (Adventist Men's Ministries), however, there is a scarcity of programs designed for the unique experience of the African-American male from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective. Programs addressing the spiritual growth and development of the Seventh-day Adventist African-American male are needed to attract men, develop manhood, inspire spiritual growth, and foster leadership development. A discipleship curriculum is needed to provide transformational leadership development in order to re-activate Seventh-day Adventist African-American males.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to design and implement an African-American male-specific discipleship/leadership development program for men 18-50 years old at the Glenville Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cleveland, OH, aimed at developing males into spiritual leaders. The program will be evaluated to determine its effectiveness in transitioning males to move beyond peripheral church attendance to impactful spiritual leadership in the home, church, and community.
Justification of the Project

The justifications of this project are as follows:

1. **African-American males are an endangered species in society.** Currently, there is a want of African-American male leadership in the home, church, and community. For the past 60 years, African-American families have been losing men at home and at church, simultaneously. There appears to be a direct connection between the absence of men at home and in the church.

2. **African-American church involvement is declining.** Currently, men are 57% less likely to attend church regularly if they are not married with children, compared to men who are married with children (Wilcox, 2005). This suggests that marriage does more than bind a man to one woman; it also ties a man to a local congregation. Higher rates of Black single-parent families result from higher rates of out-of-marriage adolescent childbearing within this group and higher divorce rates among Black women. The result is very little male-to-male mentorship and a lack of teaching regarding the theology of manhood from a biblical worldview.

3. **African-American boys need role models.** More than 19 million children—about one in four—were living in households where no father, biological or other, was present (Kelly, 2007). The statistics also show that this burden falls more heavily on Black children. Some 56% of Black children lived in single-parent families in 2004, with most of those families headed by mothers. That figure compared with 22% of White children and 31% of Hispanic children (Kelly, 2007). Homes without fathers result in

   1. 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes
   2. 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes
   3. 85% of all children who show behavior disorders come from fatherless
4. 80% of rapists with anger problems come from fatherless homes
5. 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes
6. 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical-abuse centers come from fatherless homes
7. 85% of all youths in prison come from fatherless homes

These statistics apply to African-American homes in disproportionate numbers. Compared with the 72% in our communities, 17% of Asians, 29% of Whites, 53% of Hispanics. (Burton, 2010)

Research shows that a natural desire to reach out to older males for guidance has pushed young boys to seek deviant older male role models (Popenoe, 1996). Discipling African-American males help to save the next generation from the vicious cycle of brokenness and vice.

4. More men in the church is synonymous with church growth. A church that celebrates, promotes, and develops manhood will effectually attract more men. A study from Hartford Seminary (Hadaway, 2005) found that the presence of involved men was statistically correlated with church growth, health, and harmony. Meanwhile, a lack of male participation is strongly associated with congregational decline.

**Organization of the Project**

This study contains six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, indicates the purpose and significance of the study, and provides the justification for the project, expectations, organization of the study, definition of terms, limitations, and the description of the project process.

Chapter 2 contains a theological reflection on God’s purpose for men, a biblical and Christocentric definition of manhood, the prophetic role of men, and surveys biblical practices of male-to-male leadership development.
Chapter 3 contains a review of the literature related to men and church participation. It also examines the notion of the “feminization” of the Christian Church. The role of African-American men and church culture are explored. African-American males’ relationship with the church and the reasons why most don’t attend church are analyzed. Current strategies that seek to disciple and develop men are reviewed. Finally, the best practices for the discipleship of African-American males are examined.

Chapter 4 describes the Christocentric African-American male discipleship and leadership development program narrative methodology.

Chapter 5 summarizes the study, presents the findings, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations for future research, as well as sharing personal impact and reflections.
CHAPTER 2

A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON HOW TO DISCIPLE
MEN TO BECOME IMPACTFUL SPIRITUAL LEADERS

Introduction

The family is the foundation of the church. Whatever families deal with, the church will face in proportion to the strength of its families. In the African-American community, families are being decimated by the absence and attrition of African-American males. Unemployment, incarceration, social vices like drugs and alcohol and, for many other men, lack of interest in the church has created an environment in African-American congregations that are bereft of male influence. Noted expert on African-American men, Kunjufu (1994), observed,

It seems like everybody is looking for the Black male. Black women are looking for a good Black man to marry. Black children, especially Black boys, are looking for Black men to nurture them and give them a sense of direction. Schools are looking for dedicated and consistent African-American men to volunteer for role model and rites of passage programs. While many employers have very little interest in people of color, and those who do realize that they could hire a Black woman to satisfy both race and gender quotas, there are some companies such as my own that are looking for African-American men who are skilled, articulate, and dependable. The Black church is also looking for African American me. (p. 4)

There is a need for spiritual renewal in the lives of Black males and part of that renewal should be centered in developing them into spiritual leaders that are driven by a purpose and destiny greater than themselves. In my context as a pastor in the African-
American church, one of the most significant voids in the life of the church is that of spiritual leaders. A spiritual leader is one who is able to influence people from where they are to where God wants them to be through the power of the Holy Spirit. Positional leaders are a dime a dozen. Positional leaders are those who are leaders because of their position but are inept in moving people toward the kingdom of God. The church needs leaders not just male or female leaders—it needs leaders. Leadership is needed, but within the Black culture and context in North America, African-American male spiritual leaders are in high demand because of the lack thereof.

From a biblical and theological perspective, the male is to be the leader of the home. Ephesians 5:23 says, “For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.” In America one out of every three children is raised in a single parent home, but in the African-American community, 66% of children are raised in a single-parent home. In my particular context, there is a growing lack of supervision amongst youth by men. Many of my young people who come to church come by themselves via ride from a member or public transportation. Those that are in church are mostly encouraged spiritually by females, like a mother, aunt, or grandmother. Male leaders and the development of them are at a standstill. It is my belief that, in order for there to be a resurgence of strong spiritual male leaders, we must, as a church, intentionally devote time and effort to the development and making of male spiritual leaders. At this point, we are hoping by accident and prayer that they will become what God has called them to be, but this is an act of futility. We must act with purpose and planning for men to be discipled into spiritual leaders. It is most critical now, because we are losing our men by the droves to the vices of the world and who better to
reach men than men. Until we stop the bleeding of lackadaisical men in the church, who have position but no real spiritual influence, and men leaving church, our families will be severely affected and ultimately the spiritual effectiveness of the church will be compromised.

The goal of this research paper is to establish a biblical model for discipling and developing inactive Seventh-day Adventist African-American males into spiritual leaders. First, I will look at God’s original purpose for males. Second, I seek to discover a working biblical definition of manhood using a Christocentric example. Then I will examine the prophetic role of men and, finally, a summary of the findings will be given.

God’s Purpose for men

The biblical launch pad for the purpose of men is the creation account in Genesis chapters 2-3. These passages reveal the divine intent of the creation order and the specific purpose in which He originally designed male and female. It should be noted that the idea of “humanity,” and specifically of manhood, is a divine concept. Genesis 1:1 establishes that impetus behind the existence of a man in the first place, “In the beginning God created.” Based on the order of creation, man (humanity) was the crowning act of creation on day six and the male was created first out of the sexes, “Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” In the creation of woman, the scripture says (verses 18-22),

The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.
But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

Comparing and contrasting the creation of the man and the woman, we can discover what God’s intent was for the purpose of each sex. Initially, it should be noted that the man was created before the woman. Man was created first. The idea of “first” in the scriptures often carries the notion of leadership and responsibility. Adam was exclusively given the responsibility of caring for the new planet, naming the animals, and ultimately meeting God first. Throughout the scriptures, the concept of the “first born” is attributed to having a special assignment, calling, and responsibility. The first-born males and beasts were dedicated to God (Exod 13:2,12; 22:29), beasts were offered in sacrifice (Num 18:17), to be redeemed (Exod 34:20; Num 18:15), precedence in the family (Gen 48:13,14) authority over the younger children (Gen 27:29; 1 Sam 20:29), received special blessing by father (Gen 27:4, 35), double portion of inheritance (Deut 21:17), and even of Christ (Col 1:18). The two main concepts that filter out of the biblical idea of being first is the idea of being especially responsible and sacrificial. Paul brought these concepts together in Ephesians 5, when he describes the role of a husband looking back at creation and the cross saying:

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. (Eph 5: 23-27)

We see here that the man is to be the head (first) and this headship is described as “Christ is the head,” which is further defined as sacrificial (verse 25) love that “gives up” oneself
for others in order to present them blameless before God.

In summary, the purpose of the man is to be first. Not to be better, smarter, wiser, or stronger, but first. Being first is a divine choice upon the man to be the initiator of the divine character of sacrificial love. Man’s divine reason for being is to be first in reflecting the characteristics of Christ, which is more about giving than demanding. As we reflect upon the Genesis creation account after the fall, God came looking for the man, Adam, and called out to him first, saying, “But the LORD God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’” (Gen 3:9). God’s question of accountability was first directed to the man, again indicating Adam’s unique responsibility in contrast to the woman.

**Toward a Biblical Definition of Manhood**

The Bible does not “define” manhood, it describes the process of making a man and the process of redeeming him. The two foremost examples of manhood are Adam and Christ. They are both first in initiating and influencing the spiritual destinies of two dispensations. Adam was created to be the perfect man but, because of his sin, he failed, Christ came and through Him we can only define accurately what biblical manhood is all about. Although, the mission of Christ is not mainly about redeeming “manhood” but “humanity,” men can still find in Him direction on what being a man is all about because He was the perfect “man” (Rom 5:17-19; 1 Cor 15:45-49). Therefore, the definition of manhood is the decision of a male to imitate the life of Jesus Christ in the home, church, and community.

**Jesus’ Example of Manhood**

Jesus is God and Man. He was the perfect Man. His mission was not to define manhood, but to “Seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). However, because
He was a male and not an asexual being, men can learn from His life how to conduct and define themselves as men. Jesus is the best example of what manhood is. Adam was intended to be the model for manhood, but because of his sin Jesus became the second Adam and redeemed the concept of true manhood where Adam failed. 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 says,

So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

Christ is the ultimate standard for what the image of manhood is. There are 3 areas of Jesus’ life that give understanding to men on how to be a man: (a) His relationship to His Father, (b) His relationship to His purpose, and (c) His relationship to women.

Christ Relationship to His Father

One of the important aspects of Jesus’ manhood was His personal view and relationship to His Father in heaven. Because of Jesus’ unique role as God and man, He was privileged to have both an earthly father (Joseph) and a heavenly Father. Joseph, His earthly father, made sure that Jesus, as a boy, was dedicated to God and circumcised according to the law (Luke 2:21-24), revealing Joseph’s responsibility to Jesus and faithfulness to Him as his son. The scripture does not record much of any interaction between Jesus and Joseph, but in Luke 2:41-49 we read:

Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they
traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”[f] But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

This text begins to show the relationship of Jesus with Joseph as His earthly father, but Jesus now, at the age of manhood (twelve), is deferring His decisions primarily to His heavenly Father. White gives us some insight on their relationship stating,

Jesus lived in a peasant's home, and faithfully and cheerfully acted His part in bearing the burdens of the household. He had been the Commander of heaven, and angels had delighted to fulfill His word; now He was a willing servant, a loving, obedient son. He learned a trade, and with His own hands worked in the carpenter's shop with Joseph. In the simple garb of a common laborer He walked the streets of the little town, going to and returning from His humble work. He did not employ His divine power to lessen His burdens or to lighten His toil. (White, 2001)

Her insight is given into the early days of Jesus’ life and Joseph’s relationship to Him. Joseph was involved in the development of Jesus as a man, teaching Him the principles of work as he trained Him in his carpentry shop. It would be assumed that they spent a lot of time together, giving Joseph the opportunity to help shape the life of Christ. But when Jesus became a man, the driving force and major paternal influence on His life was His heavenly Father. The scriptures show us that everything Jesus did was in direct connection to His relationship to His Father in heaven.

There are over 40 references in the Gospels of Jesus talking about His Father. The following texts are a few that show the influence of Jesus heavenly Father on His life.

“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and [he] to whomsoever the
Son will reveal [him]” (Matt 11:27); “I come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John 5:43); “I am my Father are one” (John 10:30); “If you had known me, ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth you know him, and have seen him” (John 14:7); “He that hateth me hateth my Father also” (John 15:23). It cannot be overstated that the life of Christ was totally influenced by His Father. The theological implication of this is that men need their fathers.

His Relationship to His Purpose

The second motivating factor in Jesus’ life was His purpose. The purpose of Jesus was to bring salvation to mankind. “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21). According to Luke 19:10, He says of Himself, concerning His purpose, “For the son of man has come to seek and save that which was lost.” This is one of the most poignant statements from Jesus Himself about His purpose. However, His purpose and His Father were intricately connected. Jesus saw His purpose through His relationship with His Father. John 8:29 adds perspective to the motivating factor behind His purpose: “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” Jesus understood His purpose and mission and was able to articulate it,

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor (Luke 4:16-18).

The ability to articulate in detail one’s mission is an important part of understanding purpose. When you have clarity like Jesus did on your reason for being, it focuses your
life in the direction of your destiny.

Jesus focused everything He did on His purpose. In John 2, He even filtered His decision to sweeten wine based on His purpose. Throughout other portions of the Gospels we see Jesus calculating every step, conducting healings, preaching sermons, and establishing relationships based upon the timing of His mission.

His Relationship With Women

Jesus’ purpose to save humanity, and His nature as God, caused Him to relate to women in a platonic manner distinct from the natural affection that men have for women romantically. It was not in the divine purpose of Jesus’ mission to get married. It was the plan of Jesus to “lift the oppressed,” and women were liberated and restored. Jesus is seen as a liberator of women in a culture where women were seen as less than men. Christ respected and loved His mother, He had boundaries with vulnerable women (John 4), He healed women (Luke 8), and He was able to relate to women of bad reputation without compromising (John 8), while simultaneously redeeming them and restoring them to a positive light and life.

In summary, Jesus as God is much appreciated by the Christian community, but often neglected is Jesus as a male and how His example is instructive for men on how to practically embrace their manhood. In many ancient renderings of Jesus, He is often painted as weak and effeminate, carrying no sense of strength or authority, but in the Scriptures men can find a complete different Jesus than the renderings. Christ spoke with authority. Christ was strong and courageous. He was a blue-collar, hardworking carpenter. He stood for the weak and the oppressed and the children looked up to Him. Even His enemies had to respect Him so much so that they spent their entire lives trying
to find a way to stop an unstoppable mission. It should also be noted that any man that is able to lead twelve men of different backgrounds and experiences is not a weakling, but a strong leader. But the ultimate definition of his manhood was in the completion of his mission to die for men, women, boys, and girls.

**Prophetic Role of men**

Malachi 4:5, 6

See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.

This text is seen as having a dual prophetic application. Elijah is not here seen as the literal prophet from the Old Testament, in that he has been dead at this point for hundreds of years, rather, it is a typological description of the work and ministry of John the Baptist, who would prepare the way for the Messiah. The “great and dreadful day of the Lord” is here applicable to the final judgment of God in the last days. At this time, the prophet Malachi describes as a sign of that “day of the Lord” a move of God to “turn the hearts” of “fathers” or men to their children.

This passage is rich with paternal and family motifs. The concept is that God will use men in the last days to bring about a reform in the family, specifically the children, in preparation for the coming of the Lord., Joel 2:28-31 is connected with Malachi’s prophecy of “the day of the Lord,” describing a similar future revival to take place amongst “children.” It says,

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will
show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Before the great and “dreadful day of the Lord” a revival will take place amongst families (young and old), and Malachi says it will be inspired by God touching the hearts of “fathers” (men) to return with loving affection back to their children.

The need for men to lead spiritually is not only a present-day concern, but a future necessity for the saving of families before the day of the Lord. Men are going to be used by God in a significant way to turn families back toward God. Thus, the necessity to prepare men now for the great revival before the coming of the Lord.

**Biblical Practices and Processes of Developing men into Leaders**

There are a number of examples in the scriptures of men developing men into leaders. In the Old and New Testament, the central motivation behind the development of leaders (including men and predominately men) was the successful transference of the mission from one generation to the next. This is especially seen in the relationship between Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will examine three relationships: Abraham and Isaac, Elijah and Elisha, and Paul and Timothy.

**Abraham and Isaac**

The paternal relationship of Abraham and Isaac is one of the first representations in the Old Testament of ancient practices of men developing men into leaders. God called Abraham to a special plan and purpose that would involve the whole world. The mission God called him to would involve conveying and transferring that mission and responsibility to the male posterity in his family. The Bible says, in Genesis 12:1-3,
The LORD had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. [a] I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

Implicitly within Abraham’s call was to nurture a son who would help to continue the mission. Abraham was an old man when God came to him, so the bulk of the mission would not be accomplished by him, but through his posterity, initiated by his son (Gen 18). So, within this assignment that God gave Abraham is an element of rites of passage to manhood and spiritual leadership, in that the success of fulfilling the mission God called Abraham to would be based upon Abraham’s ability to “pass it on” to his son. Abraham did three things in the life of Isaac that helped to develop him into a spiritual leader and man: (a) He circumcised him (Gen 17:9-27; 21:1-7), (b) he offered him as a sacrifice (Gen 22), and (c) selected his bride (Gen 24). These three specifics rites of passage have within them principles of male leadership development that we will discover.

First, the act of circumcision that Abraham performed on Isaac eight days after his birth signified the commitment to the covenant between Abraham and God. Genesis 17:9-14 says,

Then God said to Abraham, ‘As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.
Circumcision was a physical act upon the male child of covenant relationship to God. The covenant was the agreement God made with Abraham that He would make him a great nation and all the earth would be blessed by him. So circumcision was connected with covenant to God and mission. The first principle we can gain from this act of circumcision for male leadership development is the need to transfer spiritual responsibility and mission to males. This is foundational. The first step is to connect the male’s life to God and purpose. Men must understand their relationship to God and purpose before anything else.

Second, Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice. Genesis 22 describes the narrative of Abraham being instructed by God to offer his only son Isaac as a sacrifice unto the Lord. Abraham willingly obeyed God and offered his son as a burnt offering. Before he sacrificed Isaac, God intervened and provided a sacrifice in Isaac’s stead. This act of faith on Abraham’s part reveals another crucial principle of “living and demonstrating faith in God. Abraham obeying God’s radical request before his son Isaac made such an impact on Isaac’s faith that he willingly laid down his life for his father and God. Now the faith of Abraham had become the faith of Isaac too. This transfer of spiritual passion was initiated by Abraham’s courageous and bold act of faith in God before his son. White illuminates this concept saying,

At the appointed place they built the altar and laid the wood upon it. Then, with trembling voice, Abraham unfolded to his son the divine message. It was with terror and amazement that Isaac learned his fate, but he offered no resistance. He could have escaped his doom, had he chosen to do so; the grief-stricken old man, exhausted with the struggle of those three terrible days, could not have opposed the will of the vigorous youth. But Isaac had been trained from childhood to ready, trusting obedience, and as the purpose of God was opened before him, he yielded a willing submission. He was a sharer in Abraham's faith, and he felt that he was honored in being called to give his life as an offering to God. (White, 1958)
Crucial to the development of males into spiritual leaders is the need for a hands-on approach to a living faith in God. Abraham modeled and involved Isaac and the faith of his father successfully became his.

Finally, Abraham got Isaac a wife. According to the custom of the day, the father arranged a marriage for his children. In Genesis 24, Abraham, being up in age, is unable to handle the rigors of such an important search for his son Isaac, so in his stead he sends his servant Eleazer to find the appropriate bride for his son. The principle to be gained here is the father Abraham’s involvement in the son Isaac’s love life. He was intricately involved to the point of selection. It’s crucial for a man to provide intimate guidance to his sons in how to choose and relate to the opposite sex. Abraham’s involvement was based upon his concern that his son connect with a woman who would help further the covenant relationship and mission God called Abraham to and Isaac as well.

In summary, Abraham’s call to bless the whole earth was predicated upon the success of transferring the mission to his son. When God called Abraham, he was old and had more years behind him than in front of him. So the intrinsic within the call was the need for him to shape Isaac into the progenitor of the mission.

Elijah and Elisha

The relationship between Elijah and Elisha, based on the biblical record, seems to be one of an apprenticeship into the office of prophet. After Elijah’s victory on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 19), he was overwhelmed with broken expectations when Jezebel threatened him instead of repenting. In his dismay, he ran away in a suicidal state, wanting to die. Eventually he ended up in the cave of a mountain and God told him, “The LORD said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus.
When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet” (1 Kings 19:15, 16). Then, beginning in verse 19 of the same chapter, further describing the inception of their relationship, it says,

So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. ‘Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,’ he said, ‘and then I will come with you.’ ‘Go back,’ Elijah replied. ‘What have I done to you?’ So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

The relationship between Elijah and Elisha was inspired by God for Elisha to replace Elijah. In obedience, Elijah found the young man Elisha and took him unto himself and helped to develop him into the next prophet of Israel. There are two principles that we will highlight as guiding principles in developing men into leaders. First, it must be noted that Elijah was inspired and followed through with the command of God to take Elisha under his wing. Often, in the process of developing males, many men are inspired to do something, but the follow through and commitment to come out of their comfort-zone and do the hard work of mentorship falls short. Elijah went to Elisha’s house and patiently waited for him to join him. So Elijah reveals to us that, in order to develop a male into a leader, you have to commit to it and come out of your personal comfort in order to grow and develop a life.

Second, we see, in 2 Kings 2, another guiding principle at work with Elijah and Elisha—the principle of relationship. From the time God called Elijah to mentor Elisha, Elisha had spent quantity and quality time with Elijah, to the extent that a close bond was
developed between the two of them. There seemed to be a close connection between the prophet and the prophet-in-training similar to that of a father and son. In chapter two of 2 Kings, before Elijah was taken up to heaven, we see an intimacy between them in this exchange:

Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho.” And he replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went to Jericho. The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, “Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?” “Yes, I know,” he replied, “so be quiet.” Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.” And he replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them walked on.

Elisha and Elijah are joined as it were “at the hip.” It is interesting also to note that there was an appreciation on the part of Elisha for Elijah expressing his desire to not so much as take a break from Elijah’s influential presence. The key principle here is closeness of relationship. Elijah did not base his relationship with Elisha exclusively on duty, but also love and friendship. As Elijah is about to depart, Elisha’s desire is to “‘Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,’ Elisha replied” (verse 9). This text also implies a mutual respect for the personal friendship, which is crucial to mentoring and leadership development. Elisha went so far as to call Elijah “My Father! My Father!” (verse 12). Closeness of relationship is crucial in discipling young men for leadership.

Paul and Timothy

The relationship of the apostle Paul and his spiritual son Timothy is described in the two epistles to Timothy. In the second verse of the first epistle, Paul describes his relationship to Timothy, saying, “To Timothy my true son in the faith.” Paul’s relationship to Timothy is that of a spiritual son who was trained and developed into the role of pastor and leader of the flock. Wiersebe (1989) gives us this background:
First Timothy is one of three pastoral letters (including 2 Timothy and Titus) that the aging apostle Paul sent to those who would continue his work. Timothy was, in every way, Paul’s spiritual son. Young but gifted, Timothy had been assigned to lead the church at Ephesus—a church needing order in worship as well as doctrinal correction, plagued as it was by false teachers. Paul’s letter, likely written about a.d. 62–64, counseled the young man on matters of church leadership—from proper worship, to detailed qualifications for elders and deacons, to advice on confronting false teaching and how to treat various individuals within a congregation. Paul charged Timothy to live a life beyond reproach, giving believers a standard to emulate.

The letters to Timothy were to give encouragement and instruction to Timothy, the young leader. Barton, Veerman, and Wilson (1993) give us further insight on the context and setting of their relationship:

Although, Paul was not with Timothy physically he was able to maintain a relationship by sending letters. Timothy was one of Paul’s closest companions. Paul had sent Timothy to the church at Ephesus to counter false teaching that had arisen there (1:3,4). Timothy probably served for a time as a leader in the church at Ephesus. Paul hoped to visit Timothy (3:14, 15; 4:13), but in the meantime, he wrote this letter to give Timothy practical advice about the ministry.

The key verse of the first letter to Timothy is in chapter 4, verse twelve: “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech in life, in love and in purity.” In many respects, the relationship of Paul and Timothy is both professional and personal. Through their professional interaction, Paul and Timothy’s relationship has grown so much so that, after they are separated from each other, the relationship continues. Paul is still available to Timothy, even though he is on his own. This shows another crucial principle of male leadership development in that there never comes a time when discipleship is not needed. Paul could have allowed Timothy to manage the church without “interfering,” but the relationship continued even though they were not in each other’s presence. Paul is essentially helping Timothy to be successful in his profession by giving practical advice and wisdom to the young pastor.
From Paul and Timothy’s relationship, we can establish, theologically, that older men should continuously provide support and guidance to the younger men. Paul’s experience is invaluable to the young Timothy who is just starting out. The tone of Paul’s discourse to Timothy has an undercurrent of encouragement. He says in first Timothy six verse 12, “Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of eternal life to which you were called when you made good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” Paul in his wisdom recognizes that not only does the young preacher need instruction, but also a word of encouragement and inspiration to success.

Jesus and the Disciples

Luke 6:12-16

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

The selection of the twelve men called “the disciples” is the most instructive example in the scriptures on how to develop men into leaders. The theological concept of discipleship is rooted in the singular experimental act of Jesus calling twelve men unto Himself to learn how to lead as He led. Christ called ordinary men of sundry personality types, strengths, and weaknesses, but most amazing is the fact that these 12 men would follow another Man. Men do not naturally and willingly follow others, so for these men to follow Jesus to the extent that they did is worth our study and observation. How did He do it? What was the secret of taking twelve regular guys and moving them to greatness?

First, Jesus was attracted to their potential, not their present. The disciples would
not be considered budding preachers or world changers; they were unnoticeable to the aristocracy and religious leaders of the day, almost forgotten by society, yet Jesus chose ordinary men rather than the spiritual superstars. The riskiness of Jesus’ decision was to place His entire mission on the shoulders of 12 men whose most outstanding characteristic was their ordinariness (MacArthur, 2002). MacArthur illuminates this idea of Jesus’ choice of the ordinary, saying,

They were perfectly ordinary men in every way. Not one of them was renowned for scholarship or great erudition. They had no tract record as orators or theologians. In fact, they were outsiders as far as the religious establishment of Jesus’ day was concerned. They were not outstanding because of any natural talents or intellectual abilities. On the contrary, they were all prone to mistakes, misstatements, wrong attitudes, lapses of faith, and bitter failure—no one more so than the leader of the group, Peter. Even Jesus remarked that they were slow learners and somewhat spiritually dense. (2002)

Jesus saw their potential beyond their problems. He recognized their possibilities beyond their lowly professions. He instilled purpose and restored promise to God’s people through them. The strategy of Jesus worked because, in spite of their flaws and faults, these men carried the ministry of Jesus after His death and their impact is still felt to this very day.

Second, Jesus spent quality time with the disciples. The idea of quality over quantity should not be overstated. The amount of time that Jesus spent with the disciples in proportion to their assignment doesn’t make a lot of logical sense. Gladwell observes that most successful people who have made world impact or mastered a particular area of study, concept, idea, or skill have spent a minimum of 10,000 hours of time in mastery (2008). Most Bible students assume that Jesus was with the disciples intimately for the three-and-one-half-year length of His ministry, but Bruce suggests differently by pointing out that by the time Jesus identified and called the Twelve from the larger group
of His followers (Matt 10:1-4; Luke 6:12-16), half of His earthly ministry was already over (MacArthur, 2002):

The selection by Jesus of the twelve … is an important landmark in the Gospel history. It divides the ministry of our Lord into tow portions, nearly equal, probably, as to duration, but unequal as to the extent and importance of the work done in each respectively. In the earlier period Jesus labored single-handed; His miraculous deeds were confined for the most part to a limited area, and His teaching was in the main of an elementary character. But by the time when the twelve were chosen, the work of the kingdom had assumed such dimensions as to require organization and division of labor … It was impossible that all who believed could continue henceforth to follow Him, in the literal sense, whithersoever He might go: the greater number could now only be occasional followers. But it was His wish that certain selected men should be with Him at all times and in all places.— His traveling companions in all His wanderings, witnessing all His work, and ministering to His daily needs. And so, in the quaint words of Mark, “Jesus calleth unto Him whom He would, and they came unto Him, and He [ordained] twelve, that they should be with Him. (Mark 3:13-14) (Bruce, 1929)

Christ took less time with the most important mission with the destiny of the world at stake than a degree from the seminary. Basically, there was a little more than eighteen months of leadership training for these men, but the time was quality time that made a difference after He was gone (MacArthur, 2002).

Third, Jesus’ method of method of teaching was hands-on and practical more than it was philosophical and ethereal. Christ’s method was reminiscent more of “on the job training” rather than a “college classroom.” As an itinerant preacher, the disciples followed Jesus wherever He went and did whatever He did. They were not spectators who watched the game, but they were more likened unto players in the game, while Jesus coached. The Bible says that Jesus “appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons” (Mark 3:14,15).

The concept of “discipleship” is based on a hands-on approach to learning versus a
classroom concept. The Greek work is μαθετες, which means “learners, students.”

Several aspects of the rabbi-disciple relationship in the first-century Judaism are significant. The disciple left his home and moved in with his teacher. He served the teacher in the most servile ways, treating him as an absolute authority. The disciple was expected not only to learn all that his rabbi knew but also to become like him in character and piety. The rabbi in return provided food and lodging and saw his own distinctive interpretations transmitted through his disciples to future generations. So when Mark says that Jesus chose twelve men “that they might be with him” (Mk 3:14) he accurately reflects contemporary understanding of how future leaders should be trained. (Richards, 1991)

Christ’s developmental method required the disciples to participate in the process of their development. This strategy was not only common amongst the contemporary models of teaching, but was also unique in that Jesus gave His pupils “authority” (Mk 3:14). Most “disciples” of that day did not receive authority to act on behalf of their rabbi. Jesus recognized that they needed to experience all that He had in an accelerated hands-on fashion because He would soon be gone.

Finally, Jesus pedagogy was often based on a three-step process of dissemination (a) Demonstration, (b) Discussion, and (c) Direction. We will examine two case studies from the gospels.

Mark 9:14-29:

When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him. “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked. A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.” “You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered. “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” “If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.” Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” When Jesus
saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”

In this passage, the disciples found themselves powerless to cast a devil out of a father’s son. When Jesus comes to the scene He demonstrates how to deal with this particular demon by casting him out. Then He discusses and debriefs their failure with the disciples. Finally, He gives them direction that “this kinds can come out only by prayer” (verse 29). The point He made must have stuck, because there is no other example of this kind of failure again. The lesson He was trying to teach them must be modeled before that prayer preparation is indispensible in dealing with the devil.

John 13:1-17

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!” Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a
messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

Contextually, this narrative is situated in the final hours of Christ’s life and ministry. His disciples have just gotten into a “dispute” about “as to which of them was considered the greatest” (Luke 22:24). It appears that the disciples are not ready for the trial that is before them and Jesus decides during this Passover celebration to teach them about service and humility. First, in the middle of their “dispute,” He disrobes and, like a servant, washes each one of the disciples’ feet—demonstration (verses 5-7). Then after He is finished, He discusses (verses 6-14) with them what He has just done when He asks them, “Do you understand what I have done for you?” (verse 12). Finally, He directs them to “wash one another’s feet;” “no servant is greater than his master;” then the crucial directive statement, “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them” (verses 14-17).

**The New Testament Pastor as Equipper**

The apostle Paul presents the pastor as one who is responsible for providing transformational growth for the people of God, saying, in Ephesians 4:11-12:

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The pastor’s biblical role to “equip” people for the “work of ministry” is scripturally significant. Barclay, emphasizing the pastor’s significance, says: “There were the pastors and teachers…In one sense they had the most important task in the whole Church: They were not wanderers but were settled and permanent in the work of one congregation”
Barclay then defines the root meaning the word “equip”:

The word Paul uses for equipped is interesting. It is katartismon, which comes from the verb katartizein. The word is used in surgery for setting a broken limb or for putting a joint back into its place. In politics it is used for bringing together opposing factions so that government can go on. In the New Testament it is used of mending nets (Mark 1:9), and of disciplining an offender until he is fit to take his place again within the fellowship of the Church (Galatians 6:1). The basic idea of the word is that of putting a thing into the condition in which it ought to be. It is the function of the office-bearers of the Church to see that the members of the Church are so educated, so guided, so cared for, so sought out when they go astray, that they become what they ought to be. (Barclay, 2002)

For further clarity on the word equip (pros ton katartismos), Gaebelein, Douglas, and Polcyn (1995) state, “It may, however, signify the realization of purpose.” Therefore, the implications of the idea of equipping provides us with a working description of the role of the pastor as one who helps people to realize the divine purpose for which they were created or to restore them back to their proper usefulness. Considering the brokenness of men in church congregations, this concept has implications for the task of discipling men. The significance of the pastor’s discipling and equipping men is expressed further by Morley. “Here is the indisputable bottom line: The senior pastor is the key to everything. These are the three main factors in the highly effective churches: A senior pastor with the vision to disciple every man in the church” (Morley, 2009).

The pastor’s role is an extension of the ministry of Christ, represented in Luke 4:18 as a restorer. This idea of “mending the broken,” for the purposes of this project, bears special relevance for the oppressed and broken African-American man. African-American men need a pastor in order to “grow up” (Eph 4:12) and develop into spiritual leaders. The role of the pastor in the African-American context is very instrumental in discipleship. Johnson argues, “The major discipler is the pastor … In African thought, the
pastor is the chief, the priest-king, and unifier of all different tribes and languages (Johnson, 2001). African-American culture connotations of the role of the pastor will be explored in more detail in chapter 3, but suffice it to say that, theologically, the pastor is crucial to the development of his members and, in the case of the African-American church, the males. This idea fits well with the biblical role of the pastor as a teacher, trainer, and mender of the broken.

Summary

The lack of male spiritual leadership in the African-American church is a spiritual problem. The theology of the Scriptures encourages the proper direction and development of males into a life of purpose and usefulness. From Abraham to Christ, the constant pattern of male leadership development is rooted in close male-to-male relationships, discipleship towards a greater purpose and destiny, as well as practical learning techniques that are experienced in the flow of everyday life. There is a need for spiritual “fathering” for males. Christ’s model of manhood was actuated by a close relationship with His heavenly Father and earthly father, moving Him toward a destiny. A spiritual father is about mission and purpose. Spiritual fathers have the responsibility of shaping males for a purpose greater than themselves.

Intentional effort should be made by males who are “qualified” to pour their lives into males and see this as a part of their responsibility as a leader. Currently, we are expecting leaders to develop without an investment. Much of our expectations is muddled in happenstance rather than priority. Christ’s calling and sending of the disciples is a proven model on how to practically grow males beyond natural expectations.
CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Literature relating to discipleship, leadership, and men’s ministry is diverse and exhaustive. Much of the literature is helpful to this project because it is instructive toward the implementation of a curriculum to disciple males, develop them into leaders, and actualize men’s ministry programs. However, there are is a scarcity of literature that provides a framework for the discipleship of African-American males.

The review of the literature will be divided into seven subsections. The first section will be an examination of the unique experience and struggle of the African-American male in the United States, both historically and currently. Second section will review current research on men and their relationship to the church. In the third, I will assess literature and research regarding African-American males and their relationship to the church. Fourth, I will examine the literature that deals with factors that hinder male participation in church, specifically dealing with the concept of “The Feminization of Church.” Fifth, provides a specific look at the unique factors that hinder African-American males’ church participation. In the sixth section, I will examine the best practices of discipleship methods for men and current men’s ministry modalities. Finally, I will survey relevant strategies for the Spiritual Development of African-American Males.
Men and the Church

The idea of men and church is rapidly becoming less synonymous. Current sociological studies are revealing that church attendance in America is dominated by women, while the (though still declining) majority of church leadership is male (Barna Group, 2000). The typical U.S. congregation draws an adult crowd that’s 61% female, 39% male (U.S. Congregational Life Survey -- key findings, 2003). This gender gap shows up in all age categories (U.S. Congregational Life Survey -- key findings, 2003).

Murrow says,

After all, a man and His male disciples founded Christianity, most of its major saints and heroes were men, men penned all of the New Testament books, all of the popes were men, all of the Catholic priests are men, and 95% of the senior pastors in America are men. (Murrow, 2005)

While the pastor is most likely to be a man, at least two thirds of the ministry leaders will be women (Barna Group, 2000). According to church statistical forecasts, the future looks dismal, predicting that over 70% of the boys who are being raised in church will abandon it during their teens and twenties and many of these boys will never return (LifeWay Research).

African-American Males and the Church

Male involvement in the church seems to be even more severe in the African-American context, according to Kunjufu (1994) and Pinn (2002). They also suggest that in African-American churches, most of attendees are female and 25% of remaining males (very few) are between the ages of 12-45 (Kunjufu, 1994). However, these statistics seem to be somewhat qualitative and anecdotal. A thorough search of church attendance research has very little data specifically on the church practices of African-
American males. As a pastor in an African-American context, Kunjufu’s assertion could probably stand up to empirical scrutiny. According to Sahgal (2009), African-American men are significantly more likely than women to be unaffiliated with any religion (16\% vs. 9\%) (Sahgal, 2009). The literature also reveals a connection between the church attendance and marital status for men. Wilcox intimates that men in America are 57\% less likely to attend church weekly if they are single with no children, compared to men who are married with children (Wilcox, 2005). Comparatively, the marriage rate for African-Americans has been dropping since the 1960s, and today African-Americans have the lowest marriage rate of any racial group in the United States (Jones, 2006). According to the 2001 U.S. Census, 43.3\% of African-American men have never been married (Davis, 2010). Considering this statistic, juxtaposed with the relationship with married men and church attendance, there seems to be enough to connect the absence of African-American males missing from church with the available data.

The literature also claims that the Black church bears responsibility in its extreme disproportionate absence of men, in that historically the established Black churches have long made a parade of their concern for civil rights and for the plight of minorities, but have ignored the one minority whose cause they quietly ignore: Black men (Podles, 1999).

In summary, the literature on this subject is insightful to the dismal predicament of Black males and their participation in church.

**Factors that Hinder men From Church**

According to Barna more than 90\% of American men believe in God, and five out of six call themselves Christians, while only two out of six attend church on a given
Sunday (Barna Group, 2000). This seems to suggest that men are not “unbelievers,” so to speak, rather it might imply that they don’t “believe” in church attendance and participation as an expression of their faith pragmatically. Murrow adds to this saying:

Neither can we say, “Well, men are just less religious,” because this is untrue. Male and female participation are roughly equal in Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. In the Islamic world men are publicly and unashamedly religious—often more so than women. Of the world’s great religions, only Christianity has a consistent, nagging shortage of male practitioners. What is it about modern Christianity that is driving men away? (Murrow, 2005)

For that reason, Murrow presents the acronym “B.O.R.E.D.” (Murrow, 2005) as to why men are disinterested in church, saying, “Men and young people are B.O.R.E.D.: busyness, obligation, ritual, education, and duty are the pillars of modern church life” (Murrow, 2005). According to recent surveys, a large percentage say that they attend [church] as a way to fulfill an obligation (Woolever, 2002). Murrow concludes that men are rarely motivated by guilt, duty, or obligation (Murrow, 2005). Explaining why men are not motivated by obligation, he says:

Our congregations can’t gain any traction with men…because their adventurous spirits abhor the safety of the modern church. Again, we’re not talking about what’s preached and taught. The pastor may be offering stirring sermons, but the actual Christian life lived by most churchgoers is about as challenging as finger painting and as exciting as a bologna sandwich…There are significant minorities of …men who are security oriented. That’s why you find so many nice, safe, predictable guys in church. The modern church tends to attract any person—man or woman, young or old—who is security oriented. Meanwhile it repels any person who is challenged oriented…When it comes to men, the modern church is dangling the wrong bait. There just aren’t as many security oriented men as there are challenge-oriented ones. So the church catches fewer men…Men are drawn to churches with guts. (Murrow, 2005)

On that account, Murrow’s burden gives the impression that men are motivated by being challenged in their spiritual experience, in contrast to women who are looking for spiritual comfort and security.
Others like Daniel are critical of Murrow’s basic assumption that the church looks male-dominated but is feminine in every way (Daniel, 2007). She questions Murrow’s conclusions, accusing him of generalizing based on perfunctory psychological gender assumptions (Daniel, 2007). She also asserts that his assumptions that men are the only ones who want a risk-taking church leave out many women who would raise the same concerns, and accuses him of being biased to mega-churches, which he claims are more attractive to men versus the small older churches (Daniel, 2007). Concluding her critique, she summarizes her view, saying:

Murrow wants men back in church, but he wants women to change first…This kind of model for change in the church is what a four-year-old would come up with: if you don’t play by my rules, I’m picking up my marbles and going home…The implied message of Murrow’s book is that there is one way of being a man of God—and as for the girly men who don’t join the party, they’re just wimps who carry their wives purses to a church where they don’t want to be. It’s an argument that insults the women of the church far less than it does the men. Surely there are ways of being a godly man that do not involve kicking ass. The cross stands out as one. (Daniel, 2007)

The Feminization of Church

When considering factors that hinder men from finding much interest in church, the literature develops the idea more fully that Christianity is becoming feminized. Podles breaches this subject, claiming (he concerns himself principally, but by no means exclusively, with the Roman Catholic Church) that modern churches are women’s clubs with a few male officers (Podles, 1999). Podles, who is considered the seminal writer on this subject, cites The Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life statistical data as evidence that men are not interested in a feminized church:

1. More than 85 percent of those involved in ministry to the poor, sick and grieving are women, and social justice and peace efforts draw heavily on women.
2. More than 80 percent of CCD teachers and sponsors of the catechumenate are women.
3. More than 80 percent of the members of prayer groups are women.
4. More than 75 percent of those who lead or take part in adult Bible study or religious discussions are women.
5. Almost 60 percent of those involved in youth and recreational ministries are women.
6. 52 percent of parish council members are female.
7. 58 percent of those identified as the most influential leaders in the thirty-six parish survey were women. (Podles, 1999)

He concedes that the absence of men is primarily a phenomena of Western Christianity, suggesting that the Orthodox have a balance, as well as Islam and Judaism, which have predominate male memberships (Podles, 1999). He surmises that the root to much of the churches’ problems, including the absence of men, is the breakdown of the proper relationship distinction of masculinity and femininity, male and female (Podles, 1999). Furthermore, Podles elaborates that sociological and anthropological concepts need to be distinguished, saying:

Maleness and masculinity are not the same thing. We commonly recognize a distinction between facts of biology and masculine identity. Simply being an adult male is not enough; one must in addition be a man, which means more than simply have a male body. Being a man in the fullest sense is a matter of the will, a choice to live a certain way…Psychology and anthropology support the popular distinction between sex and gender. Sex is what the body is, that is, male or female. Gender is everything that is not limited to the body; it is a complex behavior, mental qualities, and personality characteristics—everything we mean when we say that someone is masculine, a real man, a Mensch, or (more rarely), feminine, real woman, a lady. (Podles, 1999)

Adding to this theory from a developmental psychology perspective, he surmises:

The relationship to the mother is crucial. Boys and girls have different developmental patterns because a girl is the same sex as the parent to whom she is the closest, her mother, while the boy is a different sex from the mother and may never even know his father. A girl, though she must develop her own identity, can model it after her
mother’s, while the boy must, in a sense, reject his mother, or he will never become masculine. (Podles, 1999)

This is an interesting perspective, because his man thesis is that the church lacks the process that creates masculinity: initial union, separation, and reunion, while the feminine is a maintenance of unity (Podles, 1999). In a critique of Podles’ work, Gordon aptly expresses what would seem to be a key implication of his theory of initiation and separation in order to establish masculinity, saying:

Mr. Podles thinks that, at its outset and for one thousand years thereafter, Christianity acted effectively, through its initiation rituals, to contain and channel masculinity. What went wrong? How did the Church become feminized, with the attendant threat to society of uncontrolled masculinity? Our author places principal responsibility on what he terms “bridal mysticism.” By tradition, the Church is the Bride of Christ; but Bernard of Clairvaux, recalling Origen, stressed the individual believer as a bride. Bridal mysticism, combined with Aristotle's view of the feminine, spread rapidly. (D. Gordon, 1999)

According to Gordon, Podles places the responsibility of the feminization of the church on society’s faulty theological views. In summary, Pivec says that the main issues that Podles (who is cited often in Murrow’s book) and others who suggest there is a feminization taking place in Christianity use to support this claim are

1. Gender differences based on the Bible, biology, anthropology, psychology, and human experience.
2. The contemporary music refers to Jesus as a Christian’s lover and praises His beauty and tenderness.
3. Men’s ministry—Church’s lowest priority—they suggest that there is a disproportionate amount of ministry offerings for women compared to the men. Women have Bible studies, prayer groups, teas and retreats, and, of course, children have a plethora of programs.
4. Touchy-Feely Sermons—Another turn-off is touchy feely sermons that stress emotions and inner spiritual experiences while neglecting the intellectual side of faith.
The key criticism of the idea of the feminization of the church is that it espouses that the church should embrace a “hyper-masculinity” that does not embrace a diversity of men and the idea that the church is still led by men who are accused of setting the tone for this so-called feminization (Pearcey, 2005). Consequently, this approach would be responsible for creating and maintaining the stereotypical man who is macho and self-reliant (Pivec, 2006). Finally, a call for a balanced approach to church culture with reference to gender emphasis seems to be the safest approach, resisting the pull to hyper-masculinity or hyper-femininity.

Factors That Hinder African-American men

There are a number of theories that reason why African-American men don’t come to church. With more than 60 (Pinn, 2002) to 75 % (Kunjufu, 1994) of African-American church attenders being female, this leaves a mere 25 % of males attending, which is considerably worse than any other male demographic, there is a need to explore the possibilities as to why. First, we will look at a few sociological challenges that are exponentially worse in the life of the African-American male that may present obstacles for his involvement in the church. Macon characterizes the problem as being foundationally historical in nature:

In order to effectively disciple the African American man in today’s world, one must first understand him from a historical perspective. Such historical understanding must include an analysis of his social, political, and religious orientation. Culturally he is different from all others, and he brings with him a unique history. He is “American” with the influence of an “African” culture and heritage. Furthermore, his religious practices have been enriched with the overtones of African culture. As the African has been an emotional practitioner of religion, so has the African-American male. As white Americans have sought to understand the Christ of faith from a Eurocentric worldview, so has the African American male attempted to see Christ in an Afrocentric way as one who identifies with the oppressed. (Macon, 2003)
Macon, who cites Lincoln, suggests that African-American men are trying to sift through an “Americanity” which is described as the prevailing indigenous interpretation of Christianity (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Macon further establishes this idea, saying that the present African-American culture has evolved out of a world of frustration, anger, and disillusionment, which began when African-American men were enslaved in America after being stolen from their homeland in Africa (Macon, 2003). Staples explains:

[During slavery] blacks were defined as a source of organic (or human) property for white slave holders in the notorious “3/5” clause. The clause allowed the slave owner to claim 3/5 constituency for each slave he possessed. Since non-citizens are beyond the pale of legal equality, the Dred Scott decision in 1857 affirmed that slaves were not citizens and could not bring suit in the courts. (Staples, 1982)

From the very beginning of Black slavery, African-Americans were cut off from their historical roots and culture (Macon, 2003). According to Lincoln, in an effort to maintain security for slave owners, Black men were separated from common tribal groups, languages, and even religion (Frazier & Lincoln, 1974). Macon concludes that life for the African-American male continues to be more difficult in America (Macon, 2003). Welsing presents concerning this view:

We must face the reality that today black men die younger than white men, white women, and black women. Black men are the most frequent victims of homicide, and they are being killed by one another in increasing numbers. The suicide rate for young black men is the only suicide rate greater than the rates of whites…Black infant mortality remains two to there times the figure for whites. We continue to have the highest rates of separation and divorce, thus family dissolution. We continue to have some of the highest rates of teenage parenthood…We continue to have high levels of juvenile delinquency, gang wars and drug addiction. (Welsing, 2004)

In many states, more than 80% of Black males have a criminal record and it is said that one in three young African-American men will serve time in prison, if current trends
continue. In some cities, more than half of all young adult Black men are currently under correctional control—in prison or jail, on probation or parole (Alexander, 2010). Thus, Macon argues, the problems of the African-American male and the Black family are reflected in the Black church (Macon, 2003)

Lincoln and Mamiya write that any casual observer of a Sunday worship service in the typical Black church is immediately struck by the predominance of female members (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Macon summarizes by stating that discipling the Black male is very difficult in part because the pool of available men is small; the perception of Black men concerning the church is that it is for women and children. Many of the effective inner city Black churches have relocated to the suburbs (Macon, 2003)

Kunjufu offers 21 reasons as to why African-American men don’t attend church. To examine every reason is not in the overall scope of this project, but we will look at the top five.

Kunjufu’s top five out of his 21 reasons why some Black men don’t go to church:

1. Hypocrisy—Many brothers said that there was too much contradiction between what was being said in church and what was being done in the community…there were ministers having affairs, ministers abusive to their children, ministers who said, “Don’t do as I do, but do as I say.”

2. Egotistical/Dictatorial Pastor—One of the problems that many men shared indirectly about their egos was the desire to be in a leadership position. If you analyze the structure of the church, you see that positions are limited, and many times if a brother demonstrated leadership potential, he was viewed as a threat to the pastor.

3. Faith-Submission-Trust-Forgiveness—They said they couldn’t fathom the Lord forgiving them for their immoral behavior. It became obvious that they had not forgiven themselves and had projected their feelings on the Lord.

4. Passivity—I asked the brothers if they had a weapon in their house, and 90 percent of the brothers said they did, and “that’s another reason why I can’t turn the other cheek. If somebody comes into my house I’m going to do more
than pray with him, I’m going to prey on him.”

5. Tithing—The topic on tithing took about three hours, because almost every brother had something to say about the church taking money from people and about how the money is being disbursed. Their comments included: “How is it that the largest institution on the block is the church? How is it that the person driving the best car and having the best wardrobe is second only to the drug dealer is the pastor? Hell, I would be able to drive the finest car and wear the finest clothes too if everybody on the block gave me 10 percent of their income.” (Kunjufu, 1994)

Kunjufu offered the most comprehensive list based on qualitative focus group findings. His conclusions could be seen as narrow if one were to consider the demographic subsets of his focus group of 75 males. The questions were things such as Where were these males from? What was their socioeconomic status? All such queries go unanswered, but the main reasons of Kunjufu’s work are worth further exploration.

Homoeroticism

Another interesting suggestion as to why some African-American males are not involved in church is the idea of homoeroticism. Finley intimates that the primary reason for African-American males’ absence is due in part to the “homoerotic” (not homosexual) symbolism of Christian worship for African-American men in relationship with the Divine, that is both God and Jesus (Finley, 2007). He distinguishes “homoerotic” from “homosexual,” saying, “I used ‘homoeroticism’ to refer to symbolic or actual same-sex relationships in which the desire or longing is for a uniting (or union) with the other of the same sex” (Finley, 2007). It is a description of the spiritual relationship dynamic a male will have with a same-sex deity. Finley claims that the rituals, homiletical language, and symbols exacerbate the problem, since they assist in sensualizing the religious atmosphere framed in romantic terms of devotion and submission (Finley, 2007). Finley further develops this idea saying that, in order for a man to worship God, he must let God
into his life. So the question is asked, “Can a male maintain his masculine identity and worship God in good faith?” (L. Gordon, 2000) Finley argues that the language of being entered by another man for African-American heterosexual men is a major cultural symbol indicating low social status, humiliation, disrespect, and an affront to his masculinity (2007). Finley summarizes his work, saying:

Let me be clear that the primary responsibility and the most significant critique of Black culture that the issue of the absence of African American men from churches reveals is the insufficient ways in which African Americans have confronted gender and sexuality, in this case, the inadequate ways in which masculinity is constructed and construed. (2007)

In summary, the literature suggests several reasons why some African-American men don’t come to church. They vary from sociological and practical to theological and philosophical. The one area of commonality seems to be the notion of church being a threat to African-American males’ understanding of their masculinity.

**Christian Discipleship Strategies**

Discipleship as a Method

The idea of Christian Discipleship is foundational to the mission and methodology of the church ministry. Because the subject of discipleship is vast, the focus of this review will be on literature that discusses discipleship from a methodological standpoint versus a missional theory. Mission deals with “purpose” (Lindberg, 2008) or “one’s calling” and answers the “what” question; methodology deals with “process” and “strategy” (Lindberg, 2008) and answers the “how” question. We will look at the seminal writers’ views of discipleship from a methodological standpoint, seeking to answer the question: How is discipleship accomplished?
Discipleship represents the mission given to the church by Christ to the disciples. As Christ was departing, He laid out a strategy for spreading the gospel to the world and it was no different from what He had done with the twelve. He said, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.” Their mission, simply expressed, was to “make disciples.” Many Christians are familiar with the idea of discipleship as a mission, but not many are clear that it is also a method. Collinson (2005) delineates the distinction of discipleship also being a method, saying:

The Christian faith community understands its prime directive from Jesus to be the making of disciples. It holds this model of teaching in high esteem because it was the specific form favoured by him in developing the leaders who would proclaim his message to humanity and establish his church across the Roman Empire.

Collison understands the idea of discipleship to be a “form” or a methodology toward making followers of Christ. He goes on to suggest six components of discipleship: (a) Relational, which he describes as the vertical (man to God and God to man) and horizontal (man to man) compositions; (b) Intentional—he clarifies that discipling is more than friendship, but the purpose of it is that teaching will take place; (c) Informal—in that it is “life-related”; (d) Typical—which emphasizes the necessity of corporate gathering for the building up of the individual disciple; (e) Reciprocal—no one person is always the teacher or the learner; (f) Centrifugal—it does not focus on personal growth for its own achievement, but for the purpose of making other disciples (Collinson, 2005).

The six components that Collinson clarifies provide the framework for his overarching definition of discipleship.

Christian discipling is an intentional, largely informal learning activity. It involves two or a small group of individuals who typically function within a larger nurturing community and hold to the same religious beliefs. Each makes a voluntary commitment to the others to form close, personal relationships for an extended period of time in order that those who at a particular time are perceived as having superior
knowledge and/or skills will attempt to cause learning to take place in the lives of those others who seek their help. Christian discipling is intended to result in each becoming an active follower of Jesus and a participant in his mission to the world. (Collinson, 2005)

Adding to this discussion, Samra defines discipleship as a process of becoming like Christ (Samra, 2003) and this is accomplished by being with Christ physically, seeing what He did, hearing what He said, being corrected by Him, and following His example (p. 222). Based on the Gospels, becoming like Christ was, according to Samra, accomplished by spending time with Him and suggests that, instead of the word “disciple,” a new but related concept was brought to the forefront, namely the concept of imitation (p. 223). Oman and Thoresen used the term “spiritual modeling” (Oman & Thoresen, 2003). Comparing the concept of imitation and discipleship, he describes the process as transferring one’s lifestyle to the next generation (p. 224). In terms of a sequential methodology, Samra offers two steps toward being an imitator (disciple) of Christ.

There are two different parts to the process: learning and incarnation. Though Abraham, the prophets, and Christ are not physically, believers today can learn from their examples in the Scriptures, and thus become more like Christ. In addition, as less mature believers interact with more mature believers who are incarnating Christ’s character, the less mature believer becomes more like Christ. Seeing the truths of Christianity lived out in someone makes these truths real. (p. 224)

Samra’s understanding of discipleship as a process of becoming like Christ (p. 225) is biblically rooted, first, when Christ came and the disciples literally followed Him and imitated Him. The second is based on after Jesus ascended when the process involved studying what He said and did and imitating His example (p. 226). Third, it also involved seeing Christlikeness lived out in mature believers and becoming more Christ like through imitation (1 Thess 1:6; 1 Cor 11:1) (p. 226). He notes that the trajectory
encompasses both the entry into the process (salvation) and growth in the process (sanctification) (p. 234).

Thus far, the literature evokes what seems to be a more organic methodology and description of discipleship that moves beyond what contemporary churches are calling “programs.” Writers like Hull are critical of the modern church commitment to discipleship, saying:

As Jesus said, "Every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40 RSV). Furthermore, I believe the crisis of the church is one of product, the kind of people being produced. I propose the solution to be obedience to Christ’s commission to "make disciples," to teach Christians to obey everything Christ commanded. (Hull, 2004)

Hull expresses further concern for the contemporary trend of the church to the extent that he sees the process of discipleship happening to the church by the world.

I maintain that the evangelical church is weak, self-indulgent, and superficial, that it has been thoroughly discipled by its culture. As Jesus said, "Every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40 RSV). Furthermore, I believe the crisis of the church is one of product, the kind of people being produced. I propose the solution to be obedience to Christ’s commission to "make disciples," to teach Christians to obey everything Christ commanded. (Hull, 2007)

Hull, influenced by the discipleship classic, *The Training of the Twelve* (Bruce, 1908), sets forth four stages in the process of Christian discipleship: (a) “Come and see”; (b) “Come follow me”; (c) “Come and be with me”; and (d) “Remain in me” (Hull, 2006). He then offers Christ’s teaching model in six steps: (a) “Tell them what”; (b) “Tell them why”; (c) Show them how”; (d) “Do it with them”; (e) “Let them do it”; and (f) “Deploy them” (Hull, 2007). Hull’s assessment of the methodological approach of Christ toward discipleship is evidence that discipleship is viewed by the writers as more than a mission but a method and process.
Ogden also espouses the idea that discipleship is not just the mission but also represents a methodology, saying, “My fundamental assumption is that we have less of a message problem today than we do a method problem” (Ogden, 2003). He states that discipleship is the process and the context for transformation into Christlikeness (p. 4). He presents a unique perspective of “peer discipling” approach (p. 2) called “Triads,” which is sharing one’s life with two others who are on an intentional journey to maturity in Christ (p. 4). He argues that triads provide the setting to bring together the necessary elements for transformation or growth maturity in Christ (p. 4). There are five characteristics of triads: (a) multiplication or reproduction; (b) intimate relationships; (c) accountability; (d) incorporation of the biblical message; and (e) spiritual disciplines (p. 4). Ogden believes that the relational approach to ministry is more effective than the traditional program model.

In spite of Jesus’ clear strategy of calling people from the crowds and focusing on a few, we continue to rely on preaching and programs as the means to make disciples. If we rely on the teaching content of preaching to fuel discipleship, then we have a misplaced confidence. Discipleship is fundamentally a relational process. Preaching can be a solitary one. The worshiper tends to be an isolated, passive recipient of the preached word. Preaching at its best calls people to become a disciple by pointing people to disciple-making settings, such as reproducible, discipling relationships. (p. 13)

He further explains that the contemporary trend of relying on programs is based on the idea that we don’t want to pay the price of the relational investment that discipleship requires (p. 13). Ogden quotes Eims to support this theory that we cannot mass produce disciples. “Disciples cannot be mass produced. We cannot drop people into a program and see disciples emerge at the end of the production line. It takes time to make disciples. It takes individual personal attention” (Eims, 1978).
Within this triad concept, Ogden asserts that once one enters into a triad relationship, although the Christian life may have been steady and incremental throughout a believer’s life, with entry into the triad there is a “gear shift to warp speed” (p. 24). He suggests three ingredients that converge to encourage rapid growth toward Christlikeness: “When we (1) open our hearts in transparent trust to each other (2) around the truth of God's Word (3) in the spirit of mutual accountability, we are in the Holy Spirit's hothouse of transformation” (p. 24).

Ogden’s main offering to the discussion of discipleship methodology is the concept of triad groups where spiritual development takes place through intentionality of relationship. McCallum and Lowery expand on this approach, calling it “organic discipleship” (McCallum & Lowery, 2006). They describe discipleship as a process that “focuses less on positions in the church and more on relationships. Instead of seeing God working mainly through church programs, organic leaders envision God moving from person to person, creating direct spiritual impact through relational love (McCallum & Lowery, 2006).

McCallum and Lowery are critical of modern church discipleship practices that see discipleship not as primarily the transference of biblical information but the process of raising up spiritual leaders.

One of the main goals of discipleship is to provide the body of Christ with leaders and role models who can teach others and lead Bible studies, ministry teams, or home groups... If we have any criticism of the popular literature on discipleship during the past few decades, it would be this: The recommendations are solid and needed, but they often don’t go far enough. The themes of many popular books on discipleship center on basic grounding of new believers, more than on raising up Christian leaders. (McCallum & Lowery, 2006)

The idea that discipleship is synonymous with not only the church’s mission but its methodology presents opportunities and challenges for our modern discipleship beliefs.
Program-based methodologies of discipleship are decried by the literature as being far from the biblical construct of discipleship and limited in their ability to produce disciples who make disciples. It is needful to thoughtfully consider the implications of moving modern discipleship practices from program-based modalities to relationship-based constructs. A perfunctory analysis of the literature’s impact on the modern church would suggest that major changes, and even a reconstitution of the church’s mission, should be examined. If the literature is right, in that disciples cannot be mass produced in the classroom or row by row through events and programs, then most American congregations need to overhaul their ministry strategy.

Discipleship Strategies for men

Matthew 28:19, 20’s idea of discipleship carries both an evangelistic (go) component and a didactic component (make disciples). This two-fold missional imperative is best seen in the method of Christ discipling the twelve. He choose individuals who would not fall under the category of “non-members.” In fact, these Jewish males more than likely attended the synagogue regularly and were religious. So Christ chose men “in the church” and discipled them to evangelize the world. The literature we will review concerning discipleship strategies for men will not be primarily concerned with the evangelization of men who don’t attend church, but will focus on current methods that disciple men who attend church. We believe that this is the starting point to reaching and evangelizing the men who are not coming. The literature we will review categorizes discipleship strategies as men’s ministries. Men’s ministries in the current literature are divided into two main philosophies: (a) Programmatic and (b) Organic. We will spend our time focusing on contemporary organic approaches.
Men are seen as being highly competitive and performance-driven. This poses a problem when you consider the idea of discipling men, according to Morley, Delk, and Clemer, (2006). Morley et al. say,

How are men successful in the world? We quickly figure out that we have to dress a certain way, have a certain job, make a certain amount of money, live in the right house, or have a good family. The focus is on external things that we can do or see. So we take a man from this world’s system and plop him down in church. He wants to be a “successful Christian.” He looks around and decides he needs to dress a certain way, use certain phrases, attend church a certain number of times, give money, serve on committees, and join a men’s class. Often we take a man from one performance-oriented culture (the world) and move him right into another one (the church). In both of these scenarios a man is basically relying on his own strength to be his god. (Morley et al., 2006)

So one of the challenges when approaching male discipleship is understanding that discipleship is not simply a religious form of competition and is counter cultural. The goal of discipleship is total heart transformation. Adding to this notion, Morley et al. continue, “We must get beyond a performance orientation. A man’s actions will eventually reflect what is happening in his heart. Just like you can’t treat cancer by putting a Band-Aid on a man’s skin, you can’t help a man become a disciple by fixing his behavior and allowing him to ignore his heart. Christianity is not about behavior modification; it’s about heart transformation” (Morley et al., 2006).

According to Morley et al., “Many churches rely heavily on information to help men become disciples. Men need to know the truth, but head knowledge is not enough to change a heart” (Morley et al., 2006). Juxtaposed against a traditional head knowledge discipleship approach, Morely introduces us to an approach where you create “moving experiences (Morley et al., 2006). Connected to this idea, he further explains that
conventional approaches to church discipleship often try to recruit men to “tasks” or “events” which do not motivate. The alternative is to communicate tasks and events as a part of a cause or vision (Morley et al., 2006). Morley calls his discipleship system the “The No Man Left Behind Model” (Morley et al., 2006). This process is touted to help men move step-by-step toward becoming mature disciples (Morley et al., 2006). It involves a three-step strategy: (a) Create Momentum, (b) Capture Momentum, and (c) Sustain Momentum (Morley et al., 2006). This three-step process is driven by a shared vision. The difficulty with understanding Morely’s model is that is vague and lacks detailed specifics. The positives with this model is that it allows for churches to customize their approach within this system.

**Spiritual Fathering**

Murrow suggests “Spiritual Fathering” as a discipleship model for men in the church (Murrow, 2005). In this idea of “Spiritual Fathering,” according to Murrow, churches are filled with spiritually immature men because they are not being “fathered” (Murrow, 2005). He defines “fathering” as being a “living example” or “are men who are walking with God and leading men by example to maturity in Christ” (Murrow, 2005). Further clarifying this posit, he says, “Men follow men. Boys imitate their dads. Jesus imitated His Father as well: ‘I tell you for certain that the Son cannot do anything on his own. He can do only what he sees the Father doing, and he does exactly what he sees the Father do’” (John 5:19 CEV) (Murrow, 2005). He gives several descriptors of what Spiritual Fathers do:

1. Fathers have on-going relationships with their children
2. Fathers teach by example
3. Fathers teach their boys how to release their masculinity in a healthy way
4. Fathers are not mothers
5. Fathers discipline their children
6. The father names the child
7. The father gives the boy his sacred role in life
8. The father prepares his boys to become fathers (Murrow, 2005).

For implementation, Murrow recommends that *Spiritual Fathering* not be integrated into church like a program or a class, rather, it should be the foundation of the church program (Murrow, 2005). This model seems to be the most effective and long-term, but it would require in existing churches a major overhaul of ministry philosophy.

**Men’s Ministry to Minister to men**

Sonderman offers a shift in thought to men’s discipleship, advocating “ministry to men” versus “men’s ministry” (Sonderman, 2010). The subtle shift in language provides the basis for a men’s ministry philosophy that is not driven by events and programs. The problem with program driven men’s ministry is that:

It also wrongly reinforces the idea that men's ministry is just another program—a piece of the church pie, getting a share of the resources, pulpit time, and participants. But this view is very limiting. You will tend to judge your ministry by how many men show up for events and look at ministry only in terms of what happens related to the pie. This view of ministry also leaves your church with numerous ministry silos, with everyone competing for space, money, leaders, and prime time. (Sonderman, 2010)

The notion is that ministry to men versus men’s ministry is more successful because it is intentional and organic versus programmatic. For example, Sonderman says, “This may seem like semantics, but it is much more. When we view what we do as ministry to men, it becomes all-inclusive. It is no longer what happens at certain meetings
or events, but what happens throughout the church and its overall ministry (Sonderman, 2010). The practical advantage for this paradigm shift in men’s ministry is that the size of one’s church never would prohibit someone from having “ministry to men,” although they may not have or be able to afford a “men’s ministry.” The implication of this is that a movement away from attractional ministries that are dependent on men coming to events to a more incarnational ministry where ministry to men is lived out in the community where men live, work, and play (Sonderman, 2010). This methodology is most practically lived out in small group settings.

Discipleship Strategies for African-American men

In order to understand discipleship practices toward African-American men, we must examine it within the context of the African-American Church. There exists very little written material within the Black church context about the discipleship of men (Johnson, 2001, p. 9). Much of the discipleship work that is done is literally invisible.

Much of the discipleship in the African American community has occurred through the oral tradition. It is not the uncommon in the African American church to see young men being instructed in righteousness by older men and older women sharing with younger women. This is particularly true as it relates to older more experienced pastors instructing younger ministers (pastors) and church officers such as deacons, trustees and various laity ministries instructing those coming on behind them. This is also true for ministers’ wives, deacon’s wives) and other laity led ministry positions. The discipleship or mentoring relationship has been present although narrow and not systematically structured. When looking for discipleship resources for the needs of African American congregations, the resources are greatly limited. When farther narrowed to meet the needs of urban African American men, the resources are almost non-existent. (Johnson, 2001, p. 9)

In this section, literature will be reviewed regarding the discipleship practices in the Black church toward Black men. Three practices will be examined: (a) The Sermon, (b) Men’s ministry program-based discipleship, and (c) Rites of Passage.
Historically, the Black church’s method of discipleship has been the worship service (Johnson, 2001). Because discipleship is primarily worship driven, the Black preacher and Black preaching has been the centerpiece of ministry, evangelism, and discipleship since slavery. In the Black church the Black pastor has been and still is the primary discipler of the members and men through the pulpit (Johnson, 2001). The prominence of the Black preacher’s role in the discipleship of his members is a historical and cultural idiom (Mitchell, 1990).

One errs in assuming that the slave preacher was primarily Christian and did not play a variety of roles, especially that of African priest…The preacher’s priestly or African function, and that of deacon, and class leader, was guarded from whites, who thought anything African of a religious nature was pagan or heathen, an insult to Christianity. Therefore, if the African religious leader was to operate in the open, the safest cloak to hide behind was that of Christianity. African religious leaders predominated in slavery and in that oppressive environment orchestrated their people’s transformation into a single people culturally. James Weldon Johnson makes the penetrating observation that it was through the Negro preachers that “people of diverse languages and customs who were brought here from diverse parts of Africa and thrown into slavery were given their first sense of unity and solidarity.” (Stuckey, 1987)

As the primary discipler of the members, the Black preacher, even to this day, is culturally compelled in every sermon to “make it plain” or to provide principles to live by in the congregation’s daily life (Johnson, 2001). Thus, the sermon is often seen to be the most notable and visible methodology of making disciples in the Black church. Preaching as the discipling tool in the Black church is largely due to the fact that the Black culture is characterized by oral tradition (Hamilton, 1972).

Knowledge, attitudes, ideas, notions are traditionally transmitted orally, not through the written word. It is not unusual then, that the natural leader among black people would be one with exceptional oratorical skills. He must be able to talk, to speak—to preach. In the black religious tradition, the successful black preacher is an expert orator. (Hamilton, 1972)
The slaves, upon hearing the Black preacher, understood and were aware that he was a Bible-centered preacher, but also a very life-oriented preacher (Mitchell, 1990). Just as the slave exhorter spoke to life issues in his time, the Black preacher is expected in this time to speak to the life issues of today (Johnson, 2001).

Several Black preaching scholars describe the Black preaching moment as more than a monologue, but rather a dynamic dialogue that catapults the Black preaching moment to a viable realm of discipleship. LaRue offers several contemporary characteristics of Black preaching: (a) Strong biblical content, (b) Creative uses of language, (c) Appeal to emotions, and (d) ministerial authority (LaRue, 2000). Henry Mitchell argues for a distinctiveness in the emotive/celebrative encounter between preacher and pew that has historically characterized the Black worship experience (Mitchell, 2008). It is important to understand that the Black preaching moment as a discipleship method is a communal event (LaRue, 2000). LaRue, demonstrating the discipling nature of Black preaching, explains that the holistic nature of the preaching moment having a dual capacity to both inform and inspire:

Black preachers approach the text with two fundamental questions in mind with respect to the creation and organization of their sermon: (1) How do I demonstrate to God’s people this day through the proclamation of the Word the mighty and gracious acts of God on their behalf? And (2) How best shall I join together scripture and their life situations in order to address their plight in a meaningful and practical manner? The first questions initiates the search for that portion of scripture that will conform to the template growing out of their sacred story; the second question helps the preacher to focus on a particular aspect of black experience. (LaRue, 2000 p. 19)

Although preaching in the Black context seems to be the predominate method of discipleship, holding the Black preacher as the principle disciple maker, this model presents several weaknesses. First, the discipleship process is totally in the hands of the preacher and is dependent upon him. It is, for the most part, preacher-centered and driven
and presents the possibility of Black men becoming disaffected with God if they are disaffected with the preacher. Many Black men have highlighted the Black preacher as one of many reasons why they left the church (Kunjufu, 1994). The other issue with preaching being the predominant method of discipleship is that it is attractional and not missional. The sermon is dependent on the worship service and the worship service, in most instances, happens once a week. So discipleship is dependent once a week and on one person.

**Men’s Ministries Program Based**

Other than preaching as a discipleship method dominant in most Black churches, the other most notable strategy is men’s ministry programs. This methodology is often based upon the size of the church or availability of men in the church. African-American men’s ministries are generally led by a male lay person who essentially organizes programs and events to foster spiritual growth and fellowship for the men in the church. For example, in my congregation our men’s ministry is predominately an event-driven ministry offering the following: Men’s Day once a year and a Super Bowl party, as well as occasional social gatherings with meals such as “prayer breakfasts.” In this section we will analyze some of the most prominent African-American men’s ministries in Black churches in the United States.

The men’s ministry model generally works to develop and strengthen the men within the church. Macon says one should start this ministry by invitation with three strategies:

1. **The Andrew Method**—The pastor can invite men individually to the church, or he may extend a personal invitation to the membership to bring men to church.
2. Two-By-Two Visitation—After the pastor has expressed his concern for the lack of male church members, he can challenge the entire congregation to bring men into the church and encourage the men to invite other men to church.

3. Deputation Teams—Groups of men are trained to work together to reach other men and bring them into the church. The advantage in creating such groups is that a core group of men evolves and grows in their own discipleship as they work to disciple other men (Macon, 2003).

This gathering of the men is generally followed by a meeting of all the men for them to gather and talk about relevant issues (Macon, 2003 p. 28-29). Suggested topics are: (a) Racism, (b) Drugs, (c) Identity Crisis, (d) Education, (e) Black men, (f) Communication, and (g) Family, (Macon 2003 p.28-30).

This list of topics is comparatively similar to Kunjufu’s list: (a) Spiritual Growth, (b) Bible Knowledge, (c) Evangelism, (d) Missions, (e) Mentoring, (f) Marriage, (h) Fathering, (i) Friendships, (k) Sexuality, (l) Physical Fitness, (m) Life purpose, (n) Jobs/career, (o) Finances, (p) Time/priorities, (q) Male passivity, (s) Emotional balance, (t) Domestic violence, (u) Pornography, (v) Substance abuse, (w) Crime, (x) Prison, and (y) AIDS (Kunjufu, 2006).

Once the needs have been assessed and discussed, the next step in this process is to establish a class for the men for the purpose of developing skills in family, community, personal empowerment, and career planning (Macon, 2003).

Youngblood of St. Paul Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn, NY, grew concerned about the number of men in his church and implemented the “Eldad Men’s Ministry” (2012). The stated purpose of this contemporary men’s ministry is to be: an intentional ministry to Black men, which challenges and empowers them to be strong leaders of our communities, Bible-based vanguards who are politically aware, involved in
social action, and are the cord that bonds family (Youngblood, 2012). This ministry has
two components: (a) Growth groups, and (b) monthly events. The growth groups are
comprised of small group ministries based on interests. The monthly events have
gatherings for prayer, Bible study, and fellowship.

**Rites of Passage**

Many African-American churches also use rite of passage programs as methods
of discipleship for youth and often for men.

The term rite of passage was coined by the Belgian anthropologist, Arnold van
Gennep, who observed that in all societies there are certain ceremonies whose essential
purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another, which is
equally defined (Courson, 1998). Van Gennep’s model is marked by three phases,
characterized by: (a) rites of separation, (b) transition, and (c) rites of incorporation
(Courson, 303).

Although, within the context of the church, it is described as a transition program
from boyhood to manhood.

Ceremony should be one of the crown jewels for helping a boy become a man. In
many cultures throughout history, a teenage boy is taken through some type of ritual
to mark his official passage into manhood. I believe one of the great tragedies of
Western culture today is the absence of this type of ceremony. I cannot even begin to
describe the impact on a son’s soul when a key manhood moment in his life is forever
enshrined and memorialized by a ceremony with other men. (Lewis, 2007)

However Hill argues a more discrete definition.

Rites-of-Passage are those structures, rituals, and ceremonies by which age—class
members or individuals in a group successfully come to know who they are and what
they are about—the purpose and meaning for their existence, as they proceed from one clearly defined state of existence to the next state or passage in their lives (Anthony Mensa). (Hill, 1992)

Rites of passage programs within the African-American church context is a response to the historical racial oppressive socialization of African-Americans. These programs are seen as support systems for self-determination and self-actualization in young people’s growth and development (Hill, 1992). Hill further asserts why it is needed:

Today African Americans have less effective control over the machinery of childrearing and the education/socialization of its youth than ever before. Any group which fails to consciously and systematically frame the parameters in which these processes occur elevates the vulnerability of their young, promotes discontinuity, and worse, sets the stage for potential group demise. (Hill, 60)

It seems that the origins of rites of passage are more cultural than theological arguments for adaptation to the Christian rites of baptism and ministry are instructive. The life of Christ follows a Rite of Passage phenomenology: (1) Separation from parents (Luke 2:41-52; (2) Baptism (Luke 3:21-22); (3) Solitary Ordeal (Luke 4:1-13); (4) Proclamation in the Power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14-30), all of which parallels the cultural rite of passage models of separation, liminality, reincorporation (Zahniser, 1991). To this end, the argument is made that Rite of Passage represents a pedagogical resource amongst Christian churches as a means of discipleship (Zahniser, 15).

**Summary of Literary Findings**

The above works are exhaustive regarding men’s ministry, however, there was difficulty finding literature directly related to African-American men’s ministry methodologies. The works cited did offer a broad perspective to the overall approach to the current issues affecting the discipleship of men.
The literature gave insight to the universal problems with men and church participation and the challenges with formulating discipleship strategies. African-American men’s involvement in the church is largely due to their current social standing in society. According to the literature, African-American male demographic in particular shares the same inhibitions about church as their White counterparts, but the sociological pathologies are graver for Black men.

The strategies offered in the literature show that discipleship is not just a mission, but a method. There seems to be a paradigm shift in contemporary men’s ministry literature away from event-centered discipleship to relational and lifestyle-driven discipleship.

It seems that the Black church has very little literature to offer on what it is doing to disciple Black men, but there are current models that offer some scrutiny. This apparent absence of literature seems to suggest that there is very little intentional effort made by the many Black churches to disciple their men. The predominant historical method of discipleship in the Black church seems to be its worship services. Programs are offered and used in some churches but, by and large, the worship service and the preaching moment have been the most consistent strategy offered. There are some exceptions to this, where discipleship is taking place for African-American men, but almost all of these models are not within the Seventh-day Adventist context.

The collected wisdom of the works simply reveals the need for a new model of discipleship that closely resembles the biblical paradigm of Christ’s method.
CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEADING LIKE JESUS CURRICULUM

Introduction

In this section I will discuss how the Leading Like Jesus curriculum will be implemented. The impact of the assessment will be assessed and analyzed toward the development of the participants in the 10 core spiritual leadership competencies of the curriculum. We will also apply the assessment instrument to ascertain relevant data.

Description of Participants

In order to implement the Leading Like Jesus curriculum, participants were recruited. The criterion for inclusion was based on pastoral recommendation and from the local church leaders of the 2011 church nominating committee process. The names were voted by the church at large in business session, the researcher sent a letter of invitation to the participants inviting them to an introductory meeting where the details of the program was shared and the participants decided whether or not to sign up and participate. The participants recommended were males between 18-50 years of age who demonstrated potential and willingness to develop as leaders.
Instrument

Each participant was given the Holistic Spiritual Leadership Growth Assessment before delving into the leadership curriculum. The HSLGA was also administered at the completion of the competencies in order to determine the level of impact the intervention had made on the participants’ lives. The assessment’s questions was based on 10 selected areas of spiritual leadership: Purpose, Worship, Servant Leadership, Health, Witnessing, Professional Development, Women (Sexuality), Family Leadership, Economic Empowerment, and Community Impact. The purpose of the assessment was to gauge whether the intervention (Leading Like Jesus Curriculum) had made any impact on the 10 selected areas of spiritual leadership. The assessment contained two sentences of instruction and the response scoring was based on a five-point continuum. For example, in section one, the first statement is: “I spend time thinking and planning for my purpose in life.” The possible response to this statement is based on a five-point scale, with 1 (never) being the lowest and 5 (always) being the highest. There are four statements in each of the 10 sections, providing a total of 40 statements in all that the participants are required to rate. A high total score on the assessment would indicate an effective impact of the spiritual leadership curriculum on the participants. It is hoped that the curriculum will make a positive difference in the individual lives and not only on their scores. A score of 200 = making excellent leadership impact; 160-199 = above average leadership impact; 120-159 = average leadership impact; 80-119 = below average leadership impact; 41-79 = poor leadership impact; 40 = no leadership impact.
Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop and test a leadership development curriculum that would help move apathetic, marginalized, and uninvolved Seventh-day Adventist African-American men to spiritual leadership. The preceding chapters have sought to explain, theologically and from current literature, the need for an intentional strategy to help marginalized men become strong leaders. There is precedent for this from the life of Christ in scripture with His discipleship of the twelve, however, there are not many current models available for the specific development of Black men in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Leading Like Jesus curriculum was tested for ten months, from January 2012 to November 2012. The Glenville SDA Church served as the laboratory.

The methodology of this project and its implementation were built on a number of motivating factors. This section of the project will describe the programs impetus, initiation, and implementation within the context of the church community.

Impetus

The Glenville Church did not have a culture of intentional leadership development. Out of the 1300 members on the books and 400 regular attenders, in fifteen years, from a positional standpoint, the church had only elected one new elder to its elder’s board of nine. The average age of the elder’s board was 65 years of age. The deacon board was not much different, although larger, with 23 deacons; the average age was 58 years old. This lack of youthfulness in leadership was a red flag that leadership
development was not intentionally taking place, as well as the fact that there was such a disparity in the amount of deacons (23) compared to elders (9). In my quest to understand why there hadn’t been any “new” leaders, I discovered that in the church a culture had been established where the deacon board was seen as the men in the church who were not worthy to become elders. The elders were seen by the church as an elite group that only few could measure up to. The result of this was a pool of about 30 men in the church who were either “stuck” as deacons or “stuck” as members, with no real sense of purpose or leadership capital in the church. For the most part, they had position but no influence or no position and no possible opportunities for leadership development. If someone were a deacon or an elder who had a position and a title, then that person would not intentionally engaged in leadership development opportunities. This possible lack of intentional leadership development and a sympathetic interest in the “marginalized” men of the church who attended but were not being disciple, sparked an interest to create a program based on the discipleship strategy of Jesus to inspire and develop men to become spiritual leaders.

**Initiation**

In order to begin this process, I preached a series of sermons entitled “What Would Jesus Do?” examining the ministry methods of Jesus. One of the sermons, preached in March 2011, entitled “Desiring the Despicable,” dealt with the calling of Levi-Matthew (Matthew 9:1-13) into discipleship. I used this message as a description of how Jesus called people into spiritual leadership. It was also preached to stimulate the church’s thinking about the need to see the best in people and develop them into spiritual leaders. The membership was inspired and we took action in our subsequent board
meeting to require all board members to find someone to mentor and train to take their place at some point. This decision was voted by the church board. In the meantime, I began to formulate the curriculum specifically for the men. As the leadership began to embrace the idea of leadership development, they were ready to receive my recommendation for a specific program to engage the men of the church in the “Leading Like Jesus Leadership Development Program.” The men I suggested were of the same standing as men like “Levi-Matthew (Matthew 9:9-13), who were not perfect but were willing to be discipled and open to growth and development.

Participants

The participants were to be African-American (Black) males between the ages of 18-50 years old. The criterion for inclusion was based on pastoral recommendation and from the local church leaders through the 2011 church nominating committee process. The sample size consisted of 14 males between the ages of 18-55.

Formation

On June 1, 2010, I shared with the church board my doctoral project and how it could possibly impact the church for the better. I made the church aware of the fact that there was a need to develop leaders out of the large amount of inactive men in the church. Since the church does not have within its infrastructure, corporately or locally, a leadership development vehicle other than the position of elder and deacon, we framed the argument to the church to begin under my observation and responsibility—a Deacon-In-Training (D.I.T.) and Elder-In-Training (E.I.T.) program. After this recommendation was approved, we collected recommendations of men who had potential for spiritual
leadership development as either D.I.T.s or E.I.T.s from the Head Deacon and Elder’s board. Once the names were gathered, they were introduced to the Nominating Committee and additional names from the committee were added. Names of men were collected from the pastor, local leadership, and the nominating committee in the formation of the overall group. Altogether, we had 14 men in our group, ranging from age 18-55 years old. A letter was sent out to the potential participants on November 29, 2011, inviting them to the introductory meeting held December 22, 2011, at 5 pm at the church. See Appendix A for the Invitation letter.

Implementation

In order to develop the participants into leaders, a specific curriculum had to be developed. The sphere of leadership development would be assessed based on growth in the home, church, and community. The strategy of the curriculum would be to take the participants through a ten-month process of leadership development and deployment. Each month was organized based on topics pertaining to manhood and spiritual leadership. Attendance was required at the meetings, where interactive seminars were presented, as well as homework assignments given to reinforce the information. The development phase of the men would be based on attending leadership development meetings three times a month: twice during the week (1st and 3rd Wednesdays 1 hour before prayer meeting) and once a month on the fourth Sabbath for food, fellowship, and interactive discussion on the selected leadership development topic. The deployment phase of development was based on the participants doing homework assignments in three areas of life: home, church and community.
Assessment

Assessment Intent

A questionnaire was created by the researcher, entitled The Holistic Spiritual Leadership Growth Assessment. This assessment was designed to gauge through pre- and post-assessment if the participants had experienced any growth in spiritual leadership impact in their home, church, and community as a result of participating in the Leading Like Jesus Leadership Development Program. It was given at the first meeting of the participants and at the end of the ten-month program. Before the completion of the training, toward the end of 2012, the pre-assessments were lost, which forced the researcher to strategize an alternative way to assess the participants. So it was determined that, shortly after the conclusion of the curriculum, the post-assessment of the Holistic Spiritual Leadership Growth Assessment be given, including a qualitative question “How has your life been impacted by attending the Leading Like Jesus Growth Seminars?” On the same day, immediately following the post-assessment, the pre-assessment was given again in order to gauge the state of mind and practice of the participants prior to participating in the Leading Like Jesus growth curriculum.

The informed consent provided a written explanation of the study, which included participant expectations, risks, benefits, and the right to withdraw without penalty. Participants received a copy of the informed consent agreement and were asked to sign it at the first session.
Assessment Structure

Each participant was given the post-test version of the Holistic Spiritual Leadership Growth Assessment at the conclusion of the curriculum. Immediately after the post-test, they were given the pre-test in order to extrapolate the state of mind of the participant concerning their leadership impact at the beginning of the curriculum. This method was the alternate plan chosen because the first pretests given to the participants at the beginning of the program were lost. The assessment’s questions were based on ten selected areas of spiritual leadership: Purpose, Worship, Servant Leadership, Health, Witnessing, Professional Development, Women (Sexuality), Family Leadership, Economic Empowerment, and Community Impact. The purpose of the assessment was to gauge whether the intervention (Leading Like Jesus Curriculum) had made any impact on the ten selected areas of spiritual leadership. The assessment contained two sentences of instruction and the response scoring was based on a five-point continuum. For example, in section one, the first statement is: “I spend time thinking and planning for my purpose in life.” The possible response to this statement is based on a five-point scale, with 1 (never) being the lowest and 5 (always) being the highest. There are four statements in each of the 10 sections, providing a total of 40 statements in all that the participants are required to rate. A high total score on the assessment would indicate an effective impact of the spiritual leadership curriculum on the participants.

Session Times

Each month there were a total of seven sessions. I conducted two sessions a month on every other Wednesday, an hour before prayer meeting at 6 pm. Every fourth
Sabbath, a potluck and extended session took place from 3 pm-5 pm, and every Sabbath morning a conference call prayer season took place from 6 am-7 am.

**The Setting**

On Wednesday nights and Sabbath afternoons the sessions took place in one of the church classrooms, fellowship hall, or pastor’s office. Participants were given binders with all the session materials and assignments in them. I utilized various seating arrangements, from a circle-shaped format to tables facing the presenter, depending on the topic. Sometimes refreshments or dinner was provided.

**Teaching Style**

Various teaching styles and tools were used. Lectures were given using Keynote presentations, as well as handouts, and videos. The participants were often engaged in presenting the material for the chosen subject matter. Primarily, the small-group approach of interactive teaching and discussion was utilized. All of the information discussed was given in handout form so they could be put in the binders. Often the sessions were full of impassioned discussion, provoking the full range of emotions from laughter to tears.

**The Curriculum**

The example of Jesus in the development of the disciples was the motivating format for this curriculum, albeit Christ was with the disciples constantly for at least three years. Thus, it would be important, in order to see real change and progress in the participants, to have consistent contact with them throughout the ten months. Built into the curriculum were regular opportunities for social connection throughout the week.
during the ten months. Each month had within it teaching, homework, group prayer, and practice.

Each month I focused an area of spiritual leadership that I taught, gave reading and homework on, prayed about, and practiced within the selected laboratories, such as the home, church, and community. In the first three months participation was strong. Most of the participants would attend the Wednesday sessions faithfully, Saturday sessions at the end of the month, and we had great participation during the Saturday morning prayer sessions.

Session 1, January: Leadership and Purpose

The focus for the first month was “Leadership and Purpose.” The goal was to inspire in the participants a sense of identity and responsibility to something greater than themselves. Each of the sessions, reading assignments as well as writing a personal vision and mission statement, was designed to motivate the men to feel a sense of calling in life.

Session 2, February: Leadership and Worship

Following and building on the premise of purpose, the topic of worship was our next area of discussion. Participants were taught how to pray and study the Bible effectively. The idea was that, in order for the participants to become spiritual leaders, they need to know how to practice the spiritual disciplines. Spirituality in the Christian sense is motivated by a relationship with God. Cultivating a relationship with God through prayer and the study of the Word is foundational to being a spiritual leader. The disciples asked Jesus early on “Lord teach us to pray…” (Luke 11:1 NIV).
Session 3, March: Servant Leadership

Next we looked at the issue of Servant Leadership as the preferred philosophical approach to what a leader looks like and how he should behave. Leadership is influence. (Blanchard, 2010). Spiritual leadership is servant leadership. Christ, being the model leader for the Christian, came to serve not to be served. Servant leadership is to be a living statement of who we are in Christ, how we treat one another, and how we demonstrate the love of Christ to the whole world (Blanchard, 2010). This topic became the driving force behind the conceptualization of Leading Like Jesus. Through dialogue and discussion during our sessions, it was discovered that the leadership style of Jesus is not only relevant in the church but also in the home and marketplace.

Session 4, April: Leadership and Witnessing

In order to be a leader like Jesus, the participants would need to embrace evangelism as a way of life. We called it “evangeliving.” The goal of this month was to teach principles of how to live a lifestyle of witnessing. We sought to distinguish between evangelism as an event versus evangelism as the way of life as a follower of Christ. The participants were challenged to be intentional about sharing their story of God’s grace with as many people as possible. The participants were exposed to new methods and concepts to sharing their faith.

Session 5, May: Leadership and Personal Development

There are more African-American males in prison than in college and they are more likely to go to prison than college (Alexander, 2010). A part of being marginalized
is a mindset that is steeped in mediocrity and fear. During this month, the participants were encouraged to maximize professional readiness and opportunities based on the gifts that God has given them. Many of the participants expressed a desire to pursue better professional opportunities. I taught them that “What a man is has more influence than what he says” (White, 1909). In order to lead their families, churches, and communities, they should demonstrate industry in education and professional development.

Session 6, June: Leadership and Relationships

The scripture says, “It is not good for man to be alone” (Gen 2:15). Often men struggle to form deep friendships with other men. This month, intentional effort was put forth to teach the need for friendship, as well as create environments where relationships could be formed.

Whereas three or more incidents of intense stress within a year (say serious financial trouble, being fired, or a divorce) triple the death rate in socially isolated middle-aged men, they have no impact whatsoever on the death rate of men who cultivate many close relationships. (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002)

Up until this point, many of the men had superficial relationships or didn’t even know the other men personally. So on June 15-17, Father’s Day weekend, we took a trip with all the participants as well as other men and their sons from the church and community on a camping trip to Ohiopyle, PA. This trip was designed for fellowship as well as bonding with our sons. Over thirty men and their sons attended. The highlight of the weekend was the white water rafting excursion as well as the worship services, where the men were transparent and vulnerable with each other,. Many of the men bonded and created strong friendships that transformed the social dynamics of the group to the extent that a sense of synergy was felt in subsequent gatherings based on all the positive memories created during the trip.
Session 7, July: Manhood and Family Leadership

This month was dedicated to teaching the men how to be spiritual leaders at home. One of the main lessons taught was the pragmatics of leading in household devotional exercises.

In a typical week, fewer than ten percent of parents who regularly attend church with their kids read the Bible together, pray together (other than at meal times) or participate in an act of service as a family unit. Even fewer families—1 out of every 20—have any type of worship experience together with their kids, other than while they are at church during a typical month. (Barna, 2003)

The men were given a 40-day challenge to conduct family worship in their homes (Edmonds, 2012). It seemed as if the participants experienced greater influence spiritually as a result of leading their families in devotional exercises.

Session 8, August: Leadership and Health

Life expectancy in America is due to race and educational difference. African-American men are at the bottom in the U.S. for life expectancy (Olshansky, 2013). For this reason, we spent time discussing and educating the participants on health-related subjects. All the participants were encouraged to get a physical if they had not done so.

Session 9, September: Leadership and Economic Empowerment

The participants joined the whole church in a seven-week stewardship emphasis. The focus of this month was to teach biblical principles of money and how to manage their resources wisely. Emphasis on giving, saving, and how to spend were discussed. The participants were encouraged to live on a written budget, increase their giving to the church, and build wealth in an effort to leave a positive financial legacy to posterity.
Session 10, October: Leadership and Community Impact

The main objective in this month was to engage the participants in meaningful community service. The participants were organized in two teams and given a community-based project. They were asked to create, organize, and execute a simple and sustainable ministry to the community. They were to report on the progress of their community project at each meeting and would give a formal report at the end of the curriculum. Both teams formalized plans and put forth an effort, but neither team actually finished the project or established a simple and sustainable ministry. The failure to follow through was due largely in part to the lack of accountability to the researcher.

Session 11: Reflection and Celebration

The participants were notified of a celebration meal and fellowship gathering at the church to reflect and talk about the Leading Like Jesus Experience. In this meeting they would have the chance to express their fondest memories and affirmations of fellow participants’ place in their life since being apart. The participants were notified of the date, place, and time of the post assessment.

Evaluation

On February 17, 2013, at 10 am, the post-test and pre-test were given to the participants. Post-test assessment of the Holistic Spiritual Leadership Growth Assessment was first in the fellowship hall of the church. Once the participants were finished, they were immediately given the pre-test that would look back to their state of mind at the beginning of the curriculum. The data was gathered in this way because the original pre-test was misplaced. The data was gathered and processed.
The Leading Like Jesus Curriculum is to be seen as an intervention in solving the problem of the lack of presence and participation of the African-American males as spiritual leaders in the home, church and community at the Glenville SDA Church. The HSLGA, given as pre- and post-assessments, will reveal to what extent, if any, variation occurred in the lives of the participants and its efficacy.

To support the argument that the intervention is primarily responsible for producing the change over time in leadership, it will be necessary to rule out other factors that could be responsible for the change. Put differently, it will be necessary to establish that the men in the study are more or less identical on the factors (i.e., education, church attendance) that could theoretically produce change in leadership over time. Arguably, the most important of such factors is church attendance. Table 1 provides descriptive statistics that are meant to establish the degree to which the men are equal on critical factors.
Table 1

Sample Descriptive Statistics (14 participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>57.14 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate or More</td>
<td>78.57 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate or More</td>
<td>42.86 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or More Children</td>
<td>78.57 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend Church Services 4 Times Per Month</td>
<td>85.71 (12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information within Table 1 first suggests that, for the most part, the men in the study are married (57 %), have at least a high school diploma (78 %), and attend church services fairly regularly. For example, fully 85 % of the men reported attending church services at least four times in the past month, suggesting high levels of religiosity. As such, we can be reasonably certain that if a change in leadership domains is detected over time, church attendance can be ruled out as a confounding factor responsible for such change, strengthening the argument that the assessment is responsible for the change.

Each of the participants was given a biographical questionnaire (Appendix A) in order to gather basic information about the participants. Fifty-seven percent of the men are married. Almost 80 % (78.57) of the participants are educated beyond high school. Less than 22 % of the men did not have children. Church attendance was quite consistent across the board (85.71 %).

From a pastoral perspective, the participants all possessed the capacity to become strong spiritual leaders. They were all family men and not loners. All of the men were viewed as men of influence. They all attended church regularly and had been members of
the church for more than a year. Many of the men did not perceive themselves as “spiritual leaders.” To some extent, a lot of the men lacked confidence in their ability to lead and when asked to be a part of the group, they seemed surprised or even somewhat apprehensive based on their estimation of what a spiritual leader looked like. Much of the group had a sense of unworthiness of being considered as potential spiritual leaders. So it was important to spend time early on teaching them from scripture, specifically from Christ’s selection of the twelve, the kind of person who qualifies as a spiritual leader.

The group reflected a growing population in our church of gifted, influential, educated, and relatively young people who were not being utilized and developed to their fullest potential. Many of the men were marginalized because they were not conventional spiritual leaders to the culture and history of Glenville SDA Church. For example, some of the men had children but were not married, divorced, recent converts, perceived as “rough around the edges,” and not a part of the religious “in crowd” of the church and fairly young. All of these, heretofore, were not the kinds of people perceived as possible spiritual leaders. Of all of the attributes the participants possessed, the most important to the research was their willingness and commitment to grow.

The aim of this analysis is to determine whether there is a change in the 10 dimensions of leadership variables over time, based on the data from the pre and post assessments of the Leading Like Jesus intervention.
Figure 1 seeks to answer the question, “Did the Leading Like Jesus Curriculum make a difference in lives of the participants?” If there was a change, how significant was it? Based on Figure 1, all 14 participants demonstrated an increase in the measures of spiritual leadership. The post-test scores in each dimension of manhood registered higher after the intervention was given than the pre-test scores. This is significant, because it shows that once the men participated in the curriculum, their overall outlook toward their personal impact in spiritual leadership improved over time. Figure 1 demonstrates that there was a change in leadership outlook over time and that the change in the outlook of the participants was consistent in each category. It seems then that it was not by chance that the change occurred in the lives of the participants. There isn’t one category where the participants didn’t register an improvement. The group benefited from the curriculum...
not just in singular areas, but in every area there seems to be a benefit to the participants’ leadership growth and development. Table 2 gives dependent variables on the pre- and post-tests.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean or Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Purpose – T1</td>
<td>10.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Purpose – T2</td>
<td>14.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Worship – T1</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Worship – T2</td>
<td>13.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Leadership – T1</td>
<td>12.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Leadership – T2</td>
<td>17.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Health – T1</td>
<td>11.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Health – T2</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Witnessing – T1</td>
<td>11.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Witnessing – T2</td>
<td>14.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Professional Development – T1</td>
<td>11.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Professional Development – T2</td>
<td>14.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Women/Sex – T1</td>
<td>12.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Women/Sex – T2</td>
<td>16.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Family Leadership – T1</td>
<td>12.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Family Leadership – T2</td>
<td>16.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Economic Empowerment – T1</td>
<td>12.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Economic Empowerment – T2</td>
<td>14.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Community Improvement – T1</td>
<td>10.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Community Improvement – T2</td>
<td>12.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 indicates that, statistically, there was a significant improvement in each area when comparing the pre-test with the post-test over time. The data seems to suggest that Leading Like Jesus intervention produced a consistent increase over time in measures of leadership impact.
Table 3

*T-Test for Dependent Samples: Changes in Measures of Leadership*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures of Leadership</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Purpose</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Worship</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Leadership</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Health</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Witnessing</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Professional Dev.</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Women/Sex</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Family Leadership</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Economic Emp.</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Community Impr.</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leadership and Purpose**

There was mean improvement in the area of leadership and purpose. This change seems to suggest that the intervention helped the participants to spend more time giving thought to their purpose in life. The magnitude of this dimension’s effect on the rest of the program was important because it was crucial for the participants to accept that God had called them to be leaders and that being a leader was intricately connected to their purpose. It was important to begin with purpose so that the participants would embrace the rest of the dimensions of spiritual leadership. Once the participants saw themselves as having purpose, they were motivated to grow. The subsequent subject matter was then seen as complimentary to their identity.

**Leadership and Worship**

With respect to the dimension of Leadership and Worship, an improvement of 2.71 occurred from 11.00 to 13.71. What this means is that the participants seemed to
experience an increase in personal devotional exercises (prayer, Bible study, journaling) based on the improvement of their pre- and post-test scores in this area. It also seems to suggest that the participants had an increase in their burden for others to spend time with God. Once the participants got a sense of the importance of purpose, they would now need to connect with God, who is the Source of their purpose. This was an especially meaningful track with the participants, in that we saw an increased fervor and passion in our group meetings during the worship. As the participants began to spend more time with God in private worship, it had an immediate effect on our group worship gatherings. It was during this track that they were taught principles on how to pray, study the Bible, and connect with God through devotional exercises. The information they gained seemed to empower them to want to spend time with God.

Leadership and Servant Leadership

The dimension of Servant Leadership exhibited a change of 4.35, from 12.92 to 17.28. This reflects the largest increase out of all the dimensions. The data reflects that the participants showed improvement in their attitude toward serving others, making sacrifices for others, living unselfishly, and being involved in service in the church. Key to this shift in thought was introducing them to the idea of Jesus as the ultimate Servant Leader. Christ’s example resonated with the group as we sought to redefine leadership as not controlling and being over others, but more so serving others and walking beside them.
Leadership and Witnessing

A rise in this variable from 11.50 to 14.07 shows an improvement of 2.57. Participants embraced the notion of “evangeliving,” which is witnessing as a lifestyle versus an event. The increase shows that the participants began to share their faith, pray for non-believers, build relationships, and engage in soul winning moreso than before.

Leadership and Personal Development

The dimension of Leadership and Personal Development improved 2.85, from 11.28 to 14.14. This subject matter encouraged the participants to pursue excellence and success in present and possible opportunities, professionally and vocationally. This shows that the participants showed signs of increased activity in pursuing professional opportunities, networking, reading, and encouraging others to grow.

Leadership and Relationships (Sexuality)

Leadership and Relationships dealt with sexual purity. Table 3 shows an improvement of 3.50, moving from 12.57 to 16.07. This is another one of the high growth areas. The participants answered that they experienced growth winning the battle against lustful thoughts and practices. They also answered to increased respect for women, privately and publicly. This increase also encompassed involving the men being in relationships of accountability with other men. This element was largely stimulated by being a part of the larger group and the larger group, in many cases, represented the accountability relationship.
Leadership and Family

Participants showed growth from 12.93 to 16.14, a total of 3.21 points. The family dimension reflects that the participants increased quality time with family members, led out in family worship, prayed for family members more regularly, and encouraged others to value family.

Leadership and Health

Leadership and Health draws the connection between being a person of influence who views health as important to the ability to lead effectively. The participants showed an increase of 3.07, rising from 11.93 to 15.00. The health variable reveals that the participants showed growth in eating healthfully and exercising, physical examinations, getting adequate rest regularly, and practicing a healthy lifestyle.

Leadership and Economic Empowerment

The Leadership and Economic Empowerment variable showed a 2.78 improvement, from 12.14 to 14.93. A considerable amount of time was spent focusing on the biblical principles of money and stewardship. A change of 2.78 shows the participants approaching a biblical worldview of money management, such as returning tithes and offerings faithfully, living on a budget, saving money, and encouraging good stewardship in others.

Leadership and Community Impact

The final dimension of spiritual leadership is Community Impact. The participants here were challenged to broaden their spiritual leadership influence outside of the home and the church. Recognizing the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19 to “make disciples
of a nations,” the group was motivated to make a difference in the community. This variable showed an increase of 2.21, moving from 10.64 to 12.86. Although the smallest area of growth by comparison, the participants demonstrated growth in thinking about making the community a better place, getting involved in making the community a better place, and connecting with those who are currently improving community issues.

**Collaborating Variables**

Collaborating variables are the dimensions that possibly had a mutual effect on other dimensions. It is interesting to note that out of all the dimensions of leadership, the greatest increase was in the area of “Leadership,” showing a change from 12.93 to 17.28 out of a mean of 20. The narrative behind this is that many of the participants did not perceive themselves to be spiritual leaders. Once they went through the program, they seemed to see things differently, to a larger degree. When the participants began, they scored lowest in the areas of “Purpose” (10.43) and “Community” (10.64). What this means is that, initially, the participants did not have a clear sense of purpose for their lives nor were they involved in any meaningful service to the community. In order to lead like Jesus, it was constantly emphasized and reinforced throughout the program that purpose will most often lead to service to others. After the intervention in the area of purpose there was a jump in the numbers, which suggests that the participants significantly changed their outlook on their understanding of their roles as spiritual leaders and, to some extent, suggests that they embraced the notion of being servant leaders. Many of the dimensions had a collaborative effect on the others.
Curriculum Conclusions

The data suggests that the Leading Like Jesus Curriculum was an effective intervention toward moving the participants to have greater leadership impact in the home, church, and community. The evidence shows that in all ten dimensions of leadership, the outlook of the participants changed. Based on the statistical data, it is very unlikely that anything else other than the curriculum made the difference reflected in the data. It is safe to say that the consistent conversation and investment in the spiritual success of men will yield positive results.

The curriculum was also a success beyond the numerical data. The intention of this process was to try and imitate Christ’s model in the training of the disciples. As explained in the theological section, discipleship is not just a theological idea, but also a methodology. Christ’s ministry model was based on three concentric circles of influence. Christ was closest to Peter, James, and John; then He was closer to the other nine disciples and, finally, He was accessible to the crowds (Malphurs, 2009). Christ’s strategy to save the world was rooted in His discipleship strategy to make twelve men like Himself. In making the twelve like Himself, they would do the same. In other words, the strategy of Jesus to change the world was to invest in a small group of willing and teachable men. The men were not perfect or polished, but were willing. The attempt of this curriculum was to come as close as possible, in this context, to Christ’s discipleship model of investing in a small group of marginalized, underachieving men who had a desire to become stronger spiritual leaders. In retrospect, the two key ingredients to the relative success of this program were: (a) intentional, sustained spiritual investment in men and (b) willing men. These two components gave strength to the process and
ultimately success. If there is a stated goal to grow the lives of the men with a plan to do it and agreeable men, there will be some growth in the men. Of the two, the most important is when the pastoral leadership of the local church is unrelentingly committed to grow the lives of their men.

Many of the men in the group did not have biological or spiritual fathers in their lives and were hungry for a paternal relationship. It was not the attempt of the researcher to become fathers to the men, but what was appreciated by the participants was the passion and commitment of the pastor to see to it that they reached their potential in God as leaders. This was especially true in the case of some of the men who were viewed by some in the congregation as “unworthy” to participate in the process. These men particularly were inspired to grow because they felt the pastor believed in them notwithstanding their past or reputation.

According to the data, the top areas of growth were in Purpose, Servant Leadership, Health, and Sexuality. Ironically, these were the areas in which we spent the most time discussing and engaging. This showed me that the more time we spent on a particular area, the more beneficial it was to the participants’ outlook. Over the ten months, it should be noted that each dimension did not receive the same amount of time and attention. Some subjects resonated with the participants, so we gave them ample time even to the slight of other topics. We did not want to be so structured that we did not meet the needs of the participants as they came up.

This study has taught me that the more intentional we are about growing the lives of our men, the more our men will grow. Human beings want to be loved and valued. This program appealed to that human need. The men felt loved and valued because an
intentional investment was made in them consistently. I also learned that men want to be challenged. Men seem to perform based on the expectations put on them. The program sought to raise the expectations for the participants. The expectations were not legalistic, but rather relational and inspirational. The key virtue we wanted to inspire in the men was hope that they could become better. They could reach their potential and there was no proverbial ceiling looming over their head to hinder their growth. Thus, it was important to mingle every session with encouragement. We wanted to constantly push the participants to see what they could not see in themselves through steady encouragement. The Leading Like Jesus curriculum was a relative success because of the intangibles like love and hope moreso than the homework, seminars, and session topics.

Observations

The following are observations that were made about the program

1. When churches seek to strengthen their men, it will indirectly strengthen the family. When the family is strengthened, the church is strengthened. When the church is strengthened, the community is strengthened.

2. I also found that involving the church in the process through the nominating committee added value in that it showed the participants that not only were they wanted by the pastor, but also the church. The negative part of involving the church is that it often puts social pressure on the participants from their peers to fit the conventional mold of a spiritual leader.

3. We tried to cover too much ground in a short amount of time. Instead of having ten topics over ten months with ten different books to read, homework assignments, and projects, we should have cut that in half so as not to have information overload. It seemed
to me that the required reading and assignments was overwhelming to the men and many of them could not keep up.

4. Like attracts like. African-American men will gravitate to environments and churches where there are other strong and spiritual men.

5. Men will go where they are celebrated. Not only will men go where there are other men, but they will especially go where they are celebrated and valued.

**Recommendations**

The Leading Like Jesus curriculum was designed to be duplicated in the local church as a model on how to move Seventh-day Adventist African-American males toward spiritual leadership in the home, church, and community. After piloting this program at Glenville, a lot of valuable lessons have been learned that would help to improve this program. The following recommendations might prove helpful should another pastor or researcher want to utilize this template.

1. More research needs to be done on African-American men and their relationship to the church. We need more empirical data on why Black men are leaving the church and not joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2. When attempting a program like this with such a long time commitment (ten months), there should be a team of leaders who lead the process rather than just one person. In this case, the pastor did everything and sometimes the group suffered from the researcher being overwhelmed with the rigorous nature of organizing such a large responsibility.

3. Find ways to engage participation from the men in all aspects of the program, including the topics, to ensure that you are meeting their needs.
4. This process was missing the key element of an accountability strategy. Specifically, accountability to see that the participants are staying faithful to their homework assignments, reading, and projects. Many times these things fell by the wayside because we didn’t have an accountability process in place.

5. More emphasis should have been spent on African-American male specific issues such as: (a) Black history; (b) Black fatherhood; (c) Black family. The subjects were general and not specific enough to the population.

6. More time should have been spent in informal fellowship activities than simply information sharing and seminar sessions. The camping trip proved to do more in three days than one month of discussing a particular subject. Regular social activities should be scheduled to offset all the information sharing and study.

7. Further study should be given to discipleship as a methodology. In other words, we need to more thoroughly answer the question, “How do we make disciples?”

8. In the Black church we need to be more intentional about men’s ministry on every level of church governance. Most churches have women’s ministry, but very few Black churches have vibrant men’s ministries.

9. Evangelistic strategies need to be developed to reach African-American men, especially in our urban centers.

10. Current Black church evangelism and discipleship strategies need to be examined to find out why our churches are disproportionately female to male. Are our churches feminized and thus repulsive to the African-American male?

11. Christ’s method of calling and training the disciples should be employed as the standard template for reaching any marginalized population, especially Black men.
12. Men connect value with duty and responsibility. Men need to be working to feel value. The church needs to create ways to provide employment for men, especially in the Black community where unemployment and recidivism numbers are high. When Christ called the disciples from their jobs He gave them another livelihood.

13. Be patient with the men. There were many times during the process that I wanted to give up on some of the men because they were not moving fast enough toward being what I wanted them to be, but I had to remember the patience of God with me. In not giving up on them, many of the hardest experienced the greatest amount of growth and became the strongest leaders.
APPENDIX A

GENERAL INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE
Appendix A

General Information Questionnaire

A. Birth Year________

B. Marital Status

1) never married ___
2) widowed ___
3) divorced ___
4) married ___
5). Other ___

C. Number of Children _____

1) Birth year, child 1 ______
2) Birth year, child 2 ______
3) Birth year, child 3 ______
4) Birth year, child 4______
5) Birth year, child 5 ______
6) Birth year, child 6 ______

D. How many times per month do you attend Sabbath services _____?

E. How many times per month do you attend mid-week prayer services _____?

F. How many times in the past month have you had family worship with your family _____?

G. How many times per week do you have personal devotional exercises (Bible Study & Prayer) _____?

H. What is the highest grade in school you completed?
    1). 6th grade ___
    2). 7th grade ___
    3). 8th grade ___
    4). 9th grade ___
    5). 10th grade ___
    6). 11th grade ___
    7). 12th grade ___
    8). 2 years of college or technical training ___
    9). College degree ___
   10). More than college ___
APPENDIX B

PRE-ASSESSMENT
HOLISTIC SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP GROWTH ASSESSMENT

As you complete the assessment, avoid rushing. Listen for God’s voice to encourage and challenge you. Use the scale below to respond to each statement based on your experience before the Leadership Development Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manhood and Purpose</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I spent time thinking and planning for my purpose in life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I reviewed my personal mission and vision statement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I sought to implement strategies to pursue my purpose.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I journaled my personal time with God.</td>
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<td>4. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group I was concerned that the people in my life were spending time in personal worship.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Manhood and Personal Worship Total</strong></td>
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<td>3. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I was actively involved in a ministry in my church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I was seeking to help others become unselfish and service minded.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manhood and Servant Leadership Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manhood and Holistic Health</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I sought to eat healthy regularly and exercise</td>
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<td>2. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I would get physical examinations.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I get adequate rest regularly.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group I was looking for ways to improve my health and those around me based on the Creation Health model?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manhood and Health Total</th>
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</table>

**Manhood and Witnessing**

1. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I would share my testimony and my faith with non-believers.
2. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I pray regularly for non-believers that I know.
3. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I was actively in building relationships with non-believers in order to lead them to Christ.
4. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I would encourage family and friends to engage in soul winning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manhood and Witnessing Total</th>
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</table>

**Manhood and Professional Development**

1. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I was actively pursuing my professional career and objectives.
2. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I was networking with people in my profession.
3. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I was regularly reading information that would strengthen me professionally.
4. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I was influencing and inspiring those around me to follow through with their professional aspirations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manhood and Professional Development Total</th>
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</table>

**Manhood and Relationships (Sexuality)**

1. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I was winning the battle against lustful thoughts and practices.
2. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I would respect women privately and publicly.
3. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I was in an accountable relationship with a Christian male.
4. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I sought to encourage other males toward the respect of women and sexual purity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manhood and Women (Sexuality) Total</th>
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</table>

**Manhood and Family Leadership**

1. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I spent quality time with my family members.
2. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I prayed for and with family members.
3. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I led out in family worship.
4. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I encouraged others to value family.

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<tr>
<th>Manhood and Family Leadership</th>
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</table>

**Manhood and Economic Empowerment**

1. Prior to participating in the Leadership Development Group, I gave
Tally Your Score

1. Add the scores from each section and write in its corresponding total box
2. Write the subtotals below
3. Finally add all the subtotals together for your Holistic Spiritual Leadership Growth Assessment grand Total.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Subtotal Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manhood and Purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manhood and Worship</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhood and Servant Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manhood and Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manhood and Witnessing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manhood &amp; Professional Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manhood and Relationships (Sexuality)</td>
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<td>Manhood and Economic Empowerment</td>
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<td>Manhood and Community Impact</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HSLGA Grand Total</strong></td>
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</table>

**Growth Section**

**3 Lowest Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Title</th>
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</table>
How Are You Doing?
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HSLGA = 200 -- Making Excellent Leadership Impact
HSLGA = 160 – 199 Making Above Average Leadership Impact
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HSLGA = 40 Making No Leadership Impact
APPENDIX C

POST-ASSESSMENT
Appendix C
Post-Assessment

HOLISTIC SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP GROWTH ASSESSMENT
As you complete the assessment, avoid rushing. Listen for God’s voice to encourage and challenge you. Use the scale below to respond to each statement based on your experience after the Leadership Development Program.

| Never - 1 | Seldom - 2 | Occasionally - 3 | Frequent – 4 | Always - 5 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manhood and Purpose</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I spend time thinking and planning for my purpose in life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I review my personal mission and vision statement.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I seek to implement strategies to pursue my purpose</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am concerned that people around me understand their purpose.</td>
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**Manhood and Purpose Total**

| **Manhood and Worship** | |
| 1. I spend regular time in personal worship and look forward to time in God’s presence. | |
| 2. I spend meaningful time reading scripture and seek to apply it to my life | |
| 3. I journal my personal time with God. | |
| 4. I am concerned that the people in my life are spending time in personal worship. | |

**Manhood and Personal Worship Total**

| **Manhood and Servant Leadership** | |
| 1. I seek opportunities to serve rather than be served. | |
| 2. I get a sense of fulfillment in giving up my personal comfort for others. | |
| 3. I am actively involved in a ministry in my church. | |
| 4. I am seeking to help others become unselfish and service minded. | |

**Manhood and Servant Leadership Total**

| **Manhood and Holistic Health** | |
| 1. I seek to eat healthy regularly and exercise | |
| 2. I get physical examinations. | |
| 3. I get adequate rest regularly. | |
| 4. I am looking for ways to improve my health and those around me based on the Creation Health model? | |

**Manhood and Health Total**

| **Manhood and Witnessing** | |
| 1. I share my testimony and my faith with non-believers. | |
| 2. I pray regularly for non-believers that I know. | |
| 3. I am actively in building relationships with non-believers in order to lead them to Christ. | |
| 4. I encourage family and friends to engage in soul winning. | |

**Manhood and Witnessing Total**

| **Manhood and Professional Development** | |
| 1. I am actively pursuing my professional career and objectives | |
| 2. I am networking with people in my profession. | |
| 3. I am regularly reading information that will strengthen me | |

| 99 |
4. I am influencing and inspiring those around me to follow through with their professional aspirations.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Manhood and Economic Empowerment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I give faithfully my tithes and offerings to my church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I live on a budget (include family if applicable).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I regularly save money.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I am seeking to help others become better stewards with their finances.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manhood and Economic Empowerment Total</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manhood and Community Impact</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I often think about how to make my community a better place.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am involved in activities that make the community a better place.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I connect with people that are making a difference in the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I am encouraging others to get involved in their community.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manhood and Community Impact Total</strong></td>
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**Qualitative Question**

How has your life been impacted by attending the Growth Seminars? (Please be specific)

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Growth Section

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Strength Section
3 Highest Scores

Section Title     Score Number

__________ score = _______________

__________ score = _______________

__________ score = _______________

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Appendix D

Leading Like Jesus Curriculum Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Track #</strong></th>
<th><strong>Subject</strong></th>
<th><strong>Seminar Topic</strong></th>
<th><strong>Book Titles</strong></th>
<th><strong>Author</strong></th>
<th><strong>Homework</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track 1</strong></td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Purpose</td>
<td>“Know Yourself”</td>
<td>Character Construction</td>
<td>Ellen White</td>
<td>Write a Personal Mission and Vision Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track 2</strong></td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Worship</td>
<td>“The Leaders Edge: Personal Worship”</td>
<td>Secrets of the Secret Place</td>
<td>Bob Sorge</td>
<td>Journal 15 days w/God. SOAP METHOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track 3</strong></td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Servant: Conflict Resolution &amp; Spiritual Leadership</td>
<td>Lead Like Jesus</td>
<td>Ken Blanchard</td>
<td>Interview an admired Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track 4</strong></td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Witness</td>
<td>“Evangeliving” &amp; “Preaching with Power”</td>
<td>Just Walk Across the Room</td>
<td>Bill Hybels</td>
<td>Invite non-Adventist to your home/church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track 5</strong></td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Personal Development</td>
<td>Maximizing Your Potential</td>
<td>Good to Great in Gods Eyes</td>
<td>Chip Ingram</td>
<td>Camping Trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track 6</strong></td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Relationships (Sexuality)</td>
<td>“Sexual Purity”</td>
<td>“Sex is not the Problem Lust Is” &amp; “Every Man’s Battle”</td>
<td>Joshua Harris/Stephen Arterburn</td>
<td>Share a meal with brother from the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track 7</strong></td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Family</td>
<td>“Courageous” Movie</td>
<td>40 Days to Life Changing Family Worship</td>
<td>MyRon Edmonds</td>
<td>Conduct Family Worship for 40 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track 8</strong></td>
<td>Leadership and Health</td>
<td>7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders</td>
<td>Creation Health Breakthrough</td>
<td>Monica Reed/Reggie McNeal</td>
<td>Get a Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track 9</strong></td>
<td>Leadership and Economics</td>
<td>“Possessed”</td>
<td>7 Weeks to a More Generous Life</td>
<td>Bob Sleuth</td>
<td>Create/Live on a Budget. Increase Giving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vision: To disciple individuals into spiritual leaders after the example of Jesus Christ in the Home, Church and Community.

Requirements for Participation:
- Be faithful in attending all worship services Power Night and Sabbath Services (can miss one a month)
- Be faithful in attending all meetings (Elders Meeting/Deacons Meeting and Monthly Sabbath Sessions)
- Be faithful in returning tithe and offering (failure to comply in this area is cause for immediate release from program)
- Be faithful in participating in Prayer Ministries (See Violet Cox)
- Be faithful in participating on Prayer line
- Be faithful in completing assignments

Assigned Devotional Books:
- Humility by Andrew Murray
- Character Construction by Ellen White
- George Knights Devotional on the history of SDA’s
- Participants will be asked to Read through the Book of Matthew and Journal daily following the S.O.A.P. Method

Sabbath Worship Responsibilities:
- Greet and Good bye Ministry-participants will be asked to assist the greeter ministry by welcoming the members as they come in for worship and as they go home from worship.
  - Purpose: The purpose of this ministry is to build rapport with the membership and remind the EIT/DIT that the foundation of leadership is building the lives of people.
- Worship leadership-participants will be asked to lead out in various portions of worship which will include leading seasons of prayer, invocation and welcome, telling children’s stories, and benedictions. Also participants will be asked to assist the Bible workers in ministering to individuals who have made decisions following the sermon.
  - Purpose: The purpose of this ministry is to equip the participants with the skills necessary to lead worship effectively.

Wednesday Power Night:
• Greet and Good bye Ministry-participants will be asked to assist the greeter ministry by welcoming the members as they come in for worship and as they go home from worship.
  o Purpose: The purpose of this ministry is to build rapport with the membership and remind the EIT/DIT that the foundation of leadership is building the lives of people.

• Prayer Garden Facilitation-Between the 6pm-7pm participants will be asked to make sure the sanctuary atmosphere is set for prayer. Participants will be asked to set the example by taking the hour to pray with individual people.

**Big Project:**

• As a group the participants will be asked to choose do work together as a team to do the following:
  1. Start a new ministry in the church that is evangelistic and yields baptisms OR
  2. Organize and Conduct an evangelistic meeting run by the participants that yields baptisms.
REFERENCE LIST


Davis, M. P. (2010). *Bill Cosby is right: But what should the church be doing about it*: A member of Cosby’s family speaks out in his defense and provides spiritual solutions. Longwood, FL: Xulon Press.


VITA

MYRON P. EDMONDS

3802 Shannon Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118 janepelotel1@me.com

PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY
To Provide Christ-like, Spirit-led leadership to Seventh-day Adventist congregations in accordance with the spiritual gifts that God has given me, in an effort to equip members toward spiritual maturity in preparation for the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

ORDINATION
Ordained June 2005 South Central Conference, Benjamin Browne, President

EDUCATION
Present  Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI – D.Min Family Ministries
1999-2001 Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI -- M.Div
1995-1999 Oakwood University, Huntsville, AL -- B.A. Theology

EXPERIENCE
2013 – Present Young Adult Ministries Director Allegheny West Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
2009 – Present Lead Pastor, Glenville SDA Church (Cleveland, OH)
2003 – 2009 District Pastor, District Pastor, Oaklands Park (Murfreesboro, TN); First SDA Church (Shelbyville, TN); New Birth SDA Church (Franklin, TN).
2001 - 2003 Assistant Pastor, First SDA Church (Huntsville, AL)

Authorship
• Author 40 Days to Life-Changing Family Worship

Personal
• Wife of 11 years Dr. Shanee’ Edmonds; General Dentist
• Children--Teylor (girl) 9 years old and Camden (boy) 8 years old
• Active interests in athletics, technology, reading, music, people and the outdoors