A Model For Reaching African American Males In Southeast Atlanta With Seventh-day Adventism

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ABSTRACT

A MODEL FOR REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN SOUTHEAST ATLANTA WITH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

by

Ralph P. Peay

Adviser: Clifford Jones
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A MODEL FOR REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN SOUTHEAST ATLANTA WITH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

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Problem

Churches in America are on average 60-70 percent female. Attracting and integrating African American males into church life is a grave challenge. This study focuses on African American males in Southeast Atlanta and seeks to design a model for addressing their sociological and spiritual needs in anticipation of their accession into church membership.

Method

The setting for this study is the Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church in Southeast Atlanta. The method employed in this project is an exploratory research approach that is designed to identify the social, economic, and other needs of African
American males.

In order to ascertain basic information for this study, I pursued a number of steps. I designed an African American Male SDA Membership Questionnaire. I administered the questionnaire to all the males (115) in the Atlanta Boulevard Church. I collected and analyzed the questionnaires before developing the African American Male Study Guides. Members shared the study guides with relatives and friends and reported on responses to the study guide prospects. The research method facilitated the development, implementation, and evaluation of a model mandated by both the African American Male SDA Membership Questionnaire data and my overall findings.

Results

Forty-nine members received study guides to share with relatives and friends. A total of seven students completed the series of twenty lessons. Five of the seven indicated an interest in Seventh-day Adventist membership. Two persons have been baptized. This ratio of baptisms to study guide completion is 28 percent. It appears that African American males will respond positively to the Gospel when approached by friendly, affirming persons with culturally sensitive materials addressing the Black man’s needs for physical survival.

Conclusions

This document describes and records the development, implementation, and evaluation of a model for reaching African American males in Southeast Atlanta with Adventism. It has been evaluated as to its practicality and potential for successful evangelism among Black males. The result is the conclusion that the African American
Male Study Guides achieved their intended purpose. This model is an approach that complements rather than competes with other methods to draw males into the congregation. The experience of the Atlanta Boulevard Church is one that may be adapted to the needs of other congregations with customized revisions.
A MODEL FOR REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN SOUTHEAST ATLANTA WITH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Ralph P. Peay
August 2005
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IN SOUTHEAST ATLANTA WITH SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISM

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This work is lovingly dedicated to the members and friends of the Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church, who have taught me more than they will ever know, and to my loving wife, Juanita; daughter, Ralita; and grandchildren, Vinita, Marianna, and April; who also believed, trusted, and encouraged me in the ministry.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Historical Background

On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, an announcement to three million slaves, many of whom were African American males, that they would be free if their masters were still in rebellion on the coming New Year’s Day. During the period between this date and December 31, 1862, northern armies captured the southern states that had been in rebellion, and this memorable proclamation was honored. These slaves were given their freedom. The remaining slaves in the United States were freed by the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution, which was ratified on December 18, 1865.¹

Close to 150 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, African American males continue to suffer from psychological, cultural, social, and spiritual problems. The consequences are complex and widespread. Those of direct interest to us in this dissertation are the results for Christian church membership in general and Seventh-day Adventist church membership in particular. Understandably, there has long been the sense on the part of many Black males that the church and the Bible are tools of the dominant culture to maintain control over African Americans. Consequently, many Black

men have had little desire for the religion advanced by White Christians. The reasons they are less likely to attend church than their female counterparts are obviously more complex than this, but this is certainly part of the problem. Our challenge is to figure out how to overcome this.

Christian churches in America are on average 60-70% female.¹ This number is likely to be even higher with respect to the African American population. Church attendance at the Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, where I pastor, reflects the nationwide problem. Of the 390 members of the church, 275 are females and 115 are males. Official church records indicate that fewer African American males in the Atlanta area are converting to Adventism as compared to African American females. Furthermore, attendance records at our church worship services support this disparity, with far more women in regular attendance. Attracting and integrating Black males into Christian church life is a grave challenge.

Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation project is to raise the level of awareness of the inherent value of African American males; introduce them to biblical concepts that address in a practical way the researched felt needs of Black men in Southeast Atlanta; and invite them into the membership of the Atlanta Boulevard Church. This study seeks to design a model for addressing the sociological and spiritual needs of African American males in anticipation of their accession into church membership. Furthermore addressing

¹William J. Harris, “Why Most Black Men Don’t Attend Church: Church Attendance Among Afro-American Males in the South” (Doctoral dissertation, Interdenominational Theological Center, 1994).
the problem in Southeast Atlanta should also help provide answers to the question of how to best take the Gospel of God to African American men across the United States. Thus the larger purpose of this study is to identify why Black men are not attending church and how we can solve this problem.

With this goal in mind, my thesis is that African American men would be more open to accepting the Gospel message if it did not threaten their manhood. The question then is how the Gospel can be presented to Black men in a culturally sensitive way that affirms rather than threatens them. One purpose of this study is identifying what the Black male considers traits of manhood and using this knowledge to help develop a model for the Seventh-day Adventist Christian to use when sharing the Gospel with him.

While the target population is the African American male, the data-producing sample is the group of African American males I have worked with in Atlanta, Georgia. The Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church in this urban community senses its unique opportunity for ministry to this target population of Black males.

**Justification for the Dissertation**

Our faith teaches that all people have worth. Whatever their race, color, ethnic background, or gender, all people are precious in His sight. They are created in the image of God, and they are persons for whom Christ died (John 3:16). Considering the special problem with respect to Black men, the church simply must recruit more African American males if it is to fulfill its mission. In turn, African American males need what the church is poised to offer. It is my strong conviction that a decent and democratic society develops with the propagation and expansion of Christianity in general, but of Seventh-day Adventism in particular. Civic life and the moral character of citizens in
southeast Atlanta would be enhanced by their conversions to the Atlanta Boulevard Church.

With the above in mind, the Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church has for many years employed various types of outreach and evangelistic programs and methods to attract, interest, disciple, and invite males into membership. These include church revivals, home Bible studies, and radio and television programs. Full-scale six-to-eight-week evangelistic tent campaigns have also been conducted as well as Revelation Seminars (a public soul-winning seminar, a popular evangelistic Bible study course, focusing on the book of Revelation). The results have been more females than males joining the Adventist Church. Therefore, this research study was clearly needed. Documented research and empirical data needed to be gathered to assess and address this important issue. African American men are part of God’s family and must be reached with His word.

Limitations of the Dissertation

This dissertation is an extensive, but not exhaustive, study of African American males. In order to ascertain the best way to take the Gospel to Black men, I focus on a smaller, data-producing population: members of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Southeast Atlanta. My primary focus is to ascertain the factors that have been most influential in attracting Black males to this church. These factors might include the witness of a family member, dynamic preaching, a Bible study series, friendly church members, the prospect of a date or mate, community services, a youth ministry program, or a health outreach activity. I believe that the results could then easily be adapted and applied to the African American male in general.
Description of the Dissertation Process

The goal was to ascertain basic information for the proposed model for reaching African American males in Southeast Atlanta with the Gospel as interpreted by Seventh-day Adventists. To this end, my research methodology for this dissertation included the examination of historic documents and scholarly journals as well as a review of literature. The sources include biblical, religious, and secular, covering biblical passages and scholarship, the work of Ellen G. White, and the research of prestigious Black scholars and others on the characteristics and needs of Black males.

I explored the theological and biblical foundations for designing a model to reach African American males with the Gospel of Adventism and identified two models, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New Testament of the Holy Scriptures. The implementation of the biblical texts, biblical theology, and contextualization assisted in establishing the model for reaching the African American male in Southeastern Atlanta. The two biblical models under consideration in this dissertation are of sufficient import to be extensive, though not exhaustive. Models for African American men in the Bible, as outlined by Richard A. Morrisey, include Caleb, Gideon, Nimrod, Hosea, Simon the Canaanite, Simon the Cyrenian, and the Ethiopian eunuch.1

A review of the writings of Ellen G. White reveals an idealistic profile of the African American male. At the time of her death, her literary productions consisted of 100,000 pages: in the form of twenty-four books, two book manuscripts ready for

1Richard A. Morrisey, Colored People in Bible History (Hammond, IN: W. B. Conkey Company, 1925), 3.
publication, and five thousand periodical articles in the journals of the church.¹ In this
research project, I reference only eight of the books. The wealth of pertinent information
on the Black male in these volumes is further detailed in the review of literature (see
chapter 2).

In addition to the review of sociological and psychological factors influential in
the lives of African American men undertaken in the review of literature section, for the
purposes of this project, I have gathered original data in this area of research. In order to
identify the major factors contributing to African American males converting to Seventh-
day Adventism in Southeast Atlanta, I consulted membership questionnaires from various
denominations before finalizing my own customized version: The African American
Male SDA Membership Questionnaire. Only five questions would provide the data from
which to develop or generate a strategic response:

1. How did you first hear about the SDA Church?
1. Where were you when you first heard about the SDA Church?
1. What are the best three ways to attract Black males to the SDA Church?
1. In what year were you baptized?
1. What were the greatest factors in your decision to join the SDA Church?

Originally, I had questionnaires sent to all of the 105 churches in the South
Atlantic Conference, which includes churches in North Carolina, South Carolina, and
Georgia, but I later revised my project to localize the territory to Southeast Atlanta. We
administered the questionnaire to all the males (115) in the Atlanta Boulevard Church,

differentiating questionnaire takers by five age categories: (1) under 20 years, (2) 21-30 years, (3) 31-40 years, (4) 41-50 years, and (5) 50-plus years.

The next step was the collection and analysis of the questionnaires. I consulted, studied, and analyzed the official church clerk records for the past fifteen years. The findings of the church records and the questionnaires revealed some framed issues, which mandated the development of the African American Male Study Guides (see Appendix D). The next step was the act of ministry or implementation of the model which involved the members sharing the study guides with relatives and friends. The members then reported back on the responses of the study guide prospects. The results were evaluated and conclusions drawn.

Definition of Terms

Adventism: A term used primarily among Seventh-day Adventists as a shortened form of the official denominational title and defined loosely as the doctrine of the nearness of the Second Advent and the end of the world.

Public Evangelistic Campaign: The presentation of the doctrinal beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists in a public forum to fulfill the mission of the church to carry the Gospel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people and as a soul-winning effort.

African American: The preferred designation for Black males—versus Negro and Colored.

Atlanta Boulevard: The official name of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Southeast Atlanta. Originally the church was located on Boulevard Drive in Southeast Atlanta. The current address of the new Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church is 240 Maynard Terrace.
Church Clerk: The elected officer in the Atlanta Boulevard Church who serves as the secretary of all board and business meetings. The minutes and records of the church clerk/secretary are recorded in the official church record book.

Community Services: The generic name used to designate social and emergency services given by the Adventist Church to individuals, families, and larger groups in the community.

Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP): A planning tool used to guide the growth and development of the city of Atlanta.

Model: An example for imitation or a design to be implemented. It is a plan of action based on data received. Dr. Leo Rippy of Scarritt College for Christian Workers, in Nashville, Tennessee, defines model as a construct.

Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU): A citizen advisory council that makes recommendations to the mayor and city council of Atlanta on zoning, land use, and other planning issues. Established in 1874, the program has been effective in achieving citizen participation at the local neighborhood level. Many recommendations received from the NPUs have been incorporated into the city’s CDP.

Revelation Seminar: A popular evangelistic Bible study course focusing on the book of Revelation. It is a public soul-winning seminar.

Expectations from the Dissertation

With this dissertation project, I expect to move to another level beyond routine maintenance of church membership at the Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church to an active mission designed to reach a specific target population. This project
should result in a simple, friendly outreach approach with specific materials designed for African American males in Southeast Atlanta.

Although this research project is limited in scope to the local experiences, responses, and needs of the community and the Neighborhood Planning Unit of Southeast Atlanta and the Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church, the profile of the African American male should be fairly consistent across the United States. This research should provide a basis for affirming the African American male and, more broadly, raise the level of awareness of all African Americans.

This dissertation could provide the motivation for the initiation of more creative ministries by the African American church community to enhance the image of the African American male. Furthermore, it will help to provide African American pastors with a basis for a marketing strategy designed to affirm the roles of African American men in their families. The post-modern African American male is more likely to convert to Seventh-day Adventism when he is targeted with a culturally sensitive and relevant appeal that respects his self-perceived gender identity, meets his practical economic, social, cultural, and physical needs, and offers him hope for the hereafter. Converting to Adventism, in turn, will result in a better quality of life for African American males and the community at large.

It is also my expectation that the results of this research project will stimulate more active involvement in evangelism by local congregations. The more individual church members are involved in evangelism, the more successful these efforts will be. And the more involved individuals become, the more their own spiritual growth will be stimulated.
I expect, at the end of this dissertation process, to find ways of promoting the effective recruitment of African American men to the Seventh-day Adventist church without compromising Adventist essentials.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The African American male in many areas is a buzzword, and mention of him typically brings into focus certain standard stereotypes. Until the late 1900s, little could be found in sociological research on what some have referred to as this “endangered species” or the “phantom of the Black family.” During the latter part of the twentieth century, the topic of the African American male gained serious attention in the academic community. Since then, the amount of material on the African American male has grown dramatically and continues to proliferate. A 2002 profile of the African American male produced some noteworthy observations. When survey respondents were asked about “the most important (current) issues facing young African American males,” the answers were consistently as follows: “Maintaining the family unit, improving education, better job opportunities, improving race relations, (and) reducing crime.”

The purpose of this chapter is to offer an overview of the contributions brought to the study of the African American male by a variety of secular, religious, and biblical authors. This compilation of literature, on the past, present, and future roles, expectations

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and perceptions of African American males, covers an extended period of time, from early twentieth century to early twenty-first century work.

My goal is to develop and articulate a strategy for recruiting African American men into the Seventh-day Adventist church. With this goal in mind, I begin this chapter by exploring the background of the problems faced by Black American men: exploring the climate of racism and its affect on this segment of the population, looking at early attempts to address the problem, Ellen G. White’s call for outreach to African Americans, and the Black Power Movement. I also examine ways in which the problem of racial injustice and exclusion persists today before turning to contemporary solutions to the problem. These solutions include fostering social justice and cultivating a sense of dignity and worth in African American males and affirming and strengthening the Black family. I consider some other, current approaches to addressing the special concerns of Black men and approach the issue of loaded language. Finally, I explore factors relevant to the recruitment of African Americans into the Adventist church. I examine arguments for the need to increase evangelistic efforts, explore the strategies of Black Muslims as a successful model for recruitment, and explore contemporary non-Adventist Christian approaches to recruiting Black men.

**Background to the Problem**

No study of the situation of the Black man in America can be undertaken without an exploration of the extreme racism and prejudice he has experienced and the resultant barriers to meeting his needs. The major problems include sociological, economic, and psychological factors. Looking back to some of the earliest scholarship included in this review of literature, it is clear that White authors, especially up until the mid-twentieth
century, tended to be condescending toward people of African decent, seeing them as less capable or developed than their White counterparts. Black authors, on the other hand, fought back with a view of the equal potential of all people and a fight for the dignity and self-respect of the African American.

A Climate of Racism and Negative Stereotyping

Long after the Emancipation Proclamation, negative stereotypes of Blacks continued to be the norm. In his 1944 book, *Characteristics of the American Negro*, Otto Klineberg, a Caucasian, edited the independent investigations of the social scientists of his day. This work provides a survey of the then-common perceptions of African American intelligence and personality. It also covers what were thought of as the psychological differences between Blacks and Whites and the kinds of mental diseases common to African Americans. The information was far from complimentary.¹

In his book *The Roots of Prejudice Against the Negro in the United States* Naomi Friedman Goldstein explains that stereotypes are pictures in the head that arise from the limitation in the accessibility of facts.² According to Goldstein, into the 1940s, White Americans held the following stereotypes of Blacks:

1. That every colored cook has a lover who never works.

1. That every Negro (male) who went to France had . . . a White woman.

1. That a Negro's vote may always be readily bought for a dollar.


1. That if one hits a Negro on the head with a cobblestone, the cobblestone will break.

1. That whenever a Negro is educated, he refuses to work.

1. That all Negro prizefighters marry White women.

1. That all Negroes who show any intelligence are two-thirds White and the sons of United States senators.

1. That whenever probation is enforced, Negroes take to morphine, heroin, and other powerful drugs.

1. That the moment a nigger (derogatory term for African Americans) gets eight dollars he goes to a dentist and has one of his teeth filled with gold.

1. That a Negro ball always ends up in a free-for-all fight, in which several 'coons' are mortally slashed with razors.¹

Inevitably, the victims of such abhorrent stereotypes are going to suffer the psychological and, in turn, sociological consequences of such attitudes. A rich and informative source for exploring the results of such negative thinking is a 1971 publication edited by Roger Wilcox, *The Psychological Consequences of Being Black*. This collection of research by African American psychologists suggests, based on empirical evidence, that even more than a hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation, being Black in America could result in being culturally and racially

¹Ibid., 136-137.
deprived. The articles include discussions of the specifics on intelligence disadvantage, achievement disadvantage, and cognitive disadvantage.¹

Focus on a Vibrant Cultural Past for African Americans

During the first part of the twentieth century, several African American scholars reacted to the dire situation of Black Americans with a call for a better awareness of themselves as a strong people with a rich cultural past. In his 1941 book, Melville Herskovits set out to accomplish this task. The first step was to debunk the racist myth that Black Americans have no cultural past. The result is his unique volume, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, a work that successfully discredits the concept of Black inferiority. The original publication of this book produced an unprecedented study of Black history and culture based on a rich African heritage in religious and secular life. At the beginning of the text, Herskovits lists five concepts in support of the myth that African Americans have no past, a myth which in turn validates the concept of racial inferiority:

1. Negroes are naturally of a childlike character, and adjust easily to the most unsatisfactory situations, which they accept readily and even happily in contrast to the Americans, who preferred extinction to slavery;

2. Only the poorer stock of Africa was enslaved, the more intelligent members of the African communities raided having been clever enough to elude the slavers’ nets;

3. Since the Negroes were brought from all parts of the African continent, spoke diverse languages, represented greatly differing bodies of custom, and, as a matter of policy, were distributed in the New World so as to lose tribal identity, no least common denominator of understanding or behavior could have been worked out by them;

4. Even granting enough Negroes of a given tribe had the opportunity to live together, and that they had the will and ability to continue their modes of behavior, the cultures of Africa were so savage and relatively so low in the scale of human civilization that the apparent superiority of European customs as observed in the behavior of their masters, would have caused and actually did cause them to give up such aboriginal traditions as they may otherwise have desired to preserve;

5. The Negro is thus a man without a past.¹

Approximately two decades before Herskovits's book and sixty-two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, Robert A. Morrisey had written a book entitled *Colored People in Bible History*. In this 1925 publication, Morrisey, just as the later Herskovits, argues for the better awareness of a rich cultural past. He suggests that African American people, even many among the learned, had as yet a poor, and at best a partial knowledge of what people of African decent had accomplished in the remote past. Many still had much to learn and appreciate about their own race. Morrisey asserts that every race of people has its history written by its own members and that people of African decent should be no exception. Morrisey reaches back to the sacred Scriptures, noting that many Bible characters are Black, including Caleb, Gideon, Nimrod, Hose, Simon the Cyrenian, and the Ethiopian eunuch.²

Clearly Morrisey is right that the scriptural authority makes it amply manifest and undeniable that people of all colors and races occupy a place of renown in Bible history. This rare book affirms the fact that the African American has a history of which he need not be ashamed. Sixty-eight years after Morrisey published his work, John L. Johnson published *The Black Biblical Heritage*, in which he outlines four thousand years of Black biblical history.³ African Americans have a rich cultural history—even in antiquity.


²Morrisey, 3.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, a time when racism against Black Americans was raging, one Christian pioneer stands out in her fight to reach out to people of African decent with the Gospel message. Ellen G. White’s book, *The Southern Work*, is a body of material with keen historical interest. At the time of its writing, the nation was separated from slavery by about twenty-five or thirty years. The plight of people of African decent in general, and the Black male in particular, was deplorable. The Seventh-day Adventist Church needed to be challenged for its apparent neglect of the south. This book reflects a decade of repeated appeals to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, urging its evangelistic forces and church growth resources to enter the great harvest field in the southern states and work for African American people. In 1902, William Patrick wrote the following:

In 1865, the citizenship or population of the United States was increased by the addition of six million souls in the shape of the Negro, raised from the degraded position of a slave, uneducated and uncivilized, to the position of the equal of the high-toned, civilized and educated Caucasian. It was a new and untried experiment, when the great differences in the two races are taken into consideration. Slaves in former ages have been freed, but they were of the same race and blood of their masters, and there was naturally, no great risk in freeing them, and the task of putting them on a legal and social standing with their former masters was in the bounds of reason. In this case before us, we have undertaken to assimilate two races the most divergent in every respect, and the wisdom of it has been on trial for upwards of thirty-five years.¹

White’s *The Southern Work* stirred the Seventh-day Adventist Church to an understanding of its duty to people of all racial backgrounds. It enunciated great basic principles of human relations. The first chapter is entitled “Our Duty to the Colored

People.” Other chapter headings of interest to this research project are “The Bible: The Colored Peoples Hope” and “Proper Methods of Work in the Southern Field.” While many secular historians wrote about African Americans as “the Negro Question,” the “race problem,” or the “American Dilemma,” White was impressed with the economic, social, and spiritual needs of African Americans. While she may not have read Calhoun’s above-referenced book, she clearly would have responded favorably towards one of his statements: “The Negro is here, and under the laws of the land he is a full-fledged citizen, with all the social, political, and other rights of the Caucasian guaranteed to him.”

The number of references to the African American male to be found in White’s *The Southern Work* is striking. Prior to 1949, African American males faced some very demeaning social patterns in the south, including exclusivism, designed to degrade the underprivileged, and Jim Crowism, reflecting the south’s version of a so-called master race. White challenged the conventional wisdom of her time with a very high regard for the value of Black males, whether free or bound. She published several books that provide additional insight on her views about the African American male. Perhaps the most significant for the purposes of this research project is *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 9. In this book, focusing on the period between 1904 and 1909, she explores important issues including those regarding health and medical treatment, church organization with the appropriate distribution of responsibility, evangelizing the millions (primarily White) in the great metropolitan centers, religious liberty, and the work among

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2 Calhoun, 3.
people of African decent,\(^1\) most of whom had recently been freed from slavery. She also makes a call and appeal for Black workers to proclaim the Gospel truth in areas of antagonism between the races.

Evangelism and outreach have always been high priorities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to which White belonged. White is credited with writing an over-seven-hundred-page book entitled *Evangelism*. In this work, she outlines the importance and challenges of evangelism, describes organizational strategies, discusses the preaching of distinctive truths, and explains how to clinch the interest of the listeners. She describes how to establish and hold new converts, offers outlines for the selection and quality of staff, underlines the importance of emphasizing music and health during evangelistic efforts, and offers guidance for approaching cults and secret societies. She concludes her book with a section on the success of outreach or the assurance of triumph. Based on the entire body of her work, White clearly intended this book to include outreach to the least, the lost, and the left out.\(^2\)

In *Testimonies for the Church*, she challenges church leaders of the entire denomination to keep before themselves in the clearest terms the truth that all mankind is bound together in a close brotherhood. She underlines the point that the circumstances of the day (1904-1909) were such that if the church were to fulfill its mission in reaching all peoples and classes, especially African Americans, that customs and prejudices existing in certain areas could not be ignored. Consequently, there is a segment on "proclaiming

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the truth where there is race antagonism," with a sub-topic "in all wisdom and prudence."\(^1\)

In a society which still practiced gross segregation of the races, and in which many people of African decent were suspect of what they saw as the God of the oppressor, it was critical that wisdom above that which is human be exercised, whatever the race of the evangelist or messenger. In *Testimonies for the Church*, White outlines a course that was to be followed to the best advantage until the Lord showed a better way. Perhaps largely thanks to the early leadership of White, early twenty-first-century records and statistics in the international headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination reflect the ongoing success and progress among African Americans and particularly African American males in leadership.

The Black Power Movement

In 1961, the African American scholar, C. Eric Lincoln, published a landmark study entitled *The Black Muslims in America*. It is considered the first comprehensive study of the Black Muslims who preached Black autonomy, Black union, and Black supremacy against the White world. While the Black Muslims have most often been characterized as extremists, this work by Lincoln demonstrates that the movement they led and the ideals for which they fought in fact provide an accurate gauge of the racial tension in the United States during their day.\(^2\) In his autobiography, written in 1964, Malcolm X makes reference to Lincoln as a "Negro scholar" who in 1959 had selected


the Nation of Islam as the subject of his doctoral dissertation. Malcolm X further explains that Lincoln’s interest had been aroused the previous year at Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia, when a student had written a term paper suggesting that the Christian religion is incompatible with the Black man’s aspirations for dignity and equality in America.¹ The succinct paragraph of the student’s term paper has become a historical reference. Malcolm X quotes it as follows:

> The Christian religion is incompatible with the Negro’s aspirations for dignity and equality in America. It had hindered where it might have helped; it has been evasive when it was morally bound to be forthright; it has separated people on the basis of color, although it has declared its mission to be a universal brotherhood under Jesus Christ. Christian love is the White man’s love for himself and for his race. For the man who is not White, Islam is the hope for justice and equality in the world we must build tomorrow.²

Lincoln argues that behind an alleged tie to Islam, the Black power organization reflected discontent with the way things were and a determination to change them.

Lincoln’s book is a landmark study on the Black power movement and was once required reading in many college and university courses. This work was in turn a catalyst for increased interest in Malcolm X and partly responsible for making him, by 1964, the second-most-sought-after speaker on college campuses.³

Lincoln’s epic study provides valuable insights into ways of reaching out to African American males. The Black Muslims successfully attracted this segment of the population in record numbers and clearly provide a model worthy of review in the

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²Ibid., 239.
³Ibid., 285.
context of this dissertation. The direct appeal to the poor, the economically deprived, the prisoner or parolee, and the marginalized resulted in consistent growth in the Black Muslim community.

Psychological and Cultural Effects Today

Although tangible progress was made as a result of the amazing efforts of early twentieth century activists and scholars and arguably the vigorous efforts of the Black Power Movement, African Americans continued to face severe and crippling challenges into the late twentieth century. A 1984 work by C. Eric Lincoln, *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma*, provides useful insights into identifying these challenges facing the African American male. Lincoln quickly identifies the “Continuing American Dilemma” as “the problem of the color line.” Although this book was written in 1984, the problem persists into the twenty-first century, albeit showing itself in more subtle ways as compared to the years of legal Jim Crowism and White exclusivism. The ongoing challenge of the excluded Black contingent and the embarrassment of racism is seen in segregated churches, differing worship styles and music tastes, the higher levels of violence in predominantly Black neighborhoods, the divergence in the quality of public education, and government policy. The title of the book emphasizes the obvious. Whether we call it the race problem, the color question, or a dilemma, it is an ongoing challenge in the American system.

A good source for perspectives on the status of the Black male in contemporary society is *The Black Male in America*, edited by D. Wilkinson and R. L. Taylor. This work focuses on the social condition of African American males. The public image of the Black male coalesces around three concepts. The first is that the Black male has been
emasculated by White society both literally and figuratively. The second is that the emasculation process has prevented him from coming to full emotional maturity. The third concludes that, as a result of these processes, the Black male tends to be a poor husband and father.\footnote{D. Wilkinson and R. L. Taylor, eds., \textit{The Black Male in America} (Chicago:}

I would like to note here that perceived “functional inferiors” are not all psychologically impotent. Many African American males are self-fulfilling prophecies because of the residual effect of pejorative names and designations. Notwithstanding, there are some discreet Black males in this post-modern industrial and technological society.

Like Lincoln and Taylor, Ellis Cose is direct about the frustrated opportunities for the African American male in his 2002 book, \textit{Envy of the World: On Being a Black Man in America}. While, according to Cose, the Black man has never had more opportunities for success than he has in the early twenty-first century, he, nonetheless, continues to stumble through life with a ball and chain around his legs. Not only are the lives of African American men ravaged by aids, murder, poverty, and illiteracy, but far too many of them are wasting behind bars. Cose points out that if we brought together in one region the population of Black males in prison, we would have the twelfth largest urban area in America. To make matters even worse, there is a kind of warfare going on between Blacks. Take the raging anger between Black men and women and the widening gap separating the Black elite from the underclass, and we have a prescription for a paralyzing pessimism. Nonetheless, Cose argues, Black men are surviving, and they ought to be envied because of their clear resilience and determination in face of
tremendous obstacles. Cose's solution to the problem entails a list of pragmatic approaches to challenging negative stereotypes and solving the problems outlined above, including such things as working toward eliminating involvement with drugs.¹

In spite of the enormous obstacles facing Black men today, much of the scholarship on the question of being Black in America nonetheless advances a positive forecast. Opportunities for cultural expression and racial dignity can improve the outcomes for Blacks in this country. In my own journey, growing up in North Carolina, I often felt deprived of opportunity. I nonetheless never felt mentally inferior to anyone. While school facilities were not equal, my African American male and female teachers were above average and took a special and personal interest in me. They made the subject matter they were teaching so interesting that it was exciting to learn. Clearly, there are psychological consequences of being Black, but one can rise above the negatives by focusing on the positives.

**Responding to the Problem**

**Fostering Social Justice and Cultivating Dignity and Self-Worth**

Enhancing self-respect and self-worth is key to successfully responding to the problems associated with being Black in America. In his 2004 book, *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity*, Bell Hooks challenges the popular description of Black masculinity as one of dominance, brute strength, and power (money and control, etc.). Hooks argues his points through a historical perspective suggesting that the Africans who

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predated Columbus to the new world were men who did not seek to reveal their masculinity by the will to dominate and colonize people who were different from them. Rather, argues Hooks, they were sensitive, spiritual, learned men of feeling. In fact, early Blacks in the new world had to struggle to cope with the alien ways of colonizing characteristic of white settlers. Hooks suggests that the stereotype now so commonly associated with Black men of dominance and brute strength is actually a tool of the dominant White culture, as are the adjectives usually associated with Black men: untamed, uncivilized, unfeeling, and unthinking. Hooks offers real hope for any Black man who wishes to defy the negative stereotypes. If Black men work toward healing their wounded psyches and engage in courageous decision making, they can defy the negative stereotypes and create better lives for themselves and their communities. Hooks points out that masculinity is not enhanced by brute force, violence, or rape but rather by such things as protection and provision.  

Garth Kisimu Baker-Fletcher, in his 1996 book, *Xodus*, expresses concern about bringing social justice for African American males. *Xodus* is a journey African American men take to affirm their dignity, self-worth, and hopes. Even when they “make it” in America, argues Baker-Fletcher, it is a “highly dangerous business because [they] are never accepted.”² He proposes four principles that are necessary for the journey toward dignity and self-worth, both necessary conditions for a hopeful future. First, African American males must embrace the concept that their bodies are for the community. One

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thus has a responsibility to care for his body. This is in accordance with 3 John 2, where we are told that it is important to be physically sound, mentally alert, socially concerned, and spiritually committed. Second, it is important for people to remember that humor is helpful in expressing rage. Third, African American males must dream, hope, and cast a vision. There must be a cause, aim, or goal that is worthy of one’s best efforts. Fourth, all African Americans must unite to fight oppression. Even when it is difficult to unite as a people, the individual must unite his or her personal resources to battle, with success, the personal oppression that is felt at times. Baker-Fletcher emphasizes that the family is the principle catalyst for re-visioning our communities, but he also challenges the church to take an active role.

Affirming and Strengthening the Black Family

Consistent with the thinking of Baker-Fletcher on the importance of the role of the basic family unit, whether it is traditional, nuclear, or otherwise, is the philosophy of Ellen G. White, who wrote the following:

Society is composed of families, and what the heads of families make it. . . . And the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation, is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.

The influence of a carefully guarded Christian home in the years of childhood and youth is the surest safeguard against the corruptions of the world. In the atmosphere of such a home the children will learn to love both their earthly parents and their Heavenly Father.¹

Robert Hills’s book, The Strengths of the American Families, succinctly and factually affirms the Black family and in so doing, the Black male. Countering many

common stereotypes, Hill states specifically that Black families have a strong achievement orientation, strong work orientation, flexible family roles, strong kinship bonds, and strong religious orientation. Hence, in spite of the stereotypes, it is clear that many Black males are responsible protectors, providers, and priests in their families. To be sure, the strengths advanced by Hill are corroborated by a statistical profile in the 2002 book *Wake Up and Start to Live*.\(^1\) Among the seven strengths and assets mentioned in the statistical profile are the tendencies of African American males to be hardworking, good at sports, as educated and/or intelligent as other segments of the population, ambitious and motivated, determined, and furthermore possessing a rich heritage.\(^2\) Surprisingly, perhaps, the latter has not always been affirmed.

**Addressing the Needs and Concerns of Black Men Today**

A late twentieth-century scholar who provides useful guidance toward solving the problems of the African American male is Jawanza Kunjufu. Kunjufu is a prolific author who has written about these problems in a number of books, including the following:

*Restoring the Villages, Values, and Commitment: Solutions for the Black Family; Developing Positive Self-Images and Discipline in Black Children, Lessons from History: A Celebration of Blackness; Motivating and Preparing Black Youth for Success; Black Economics: Solutions for Economic and Community Empowerment; and The Power, Passion, and Pain of Black Love.* Throughout his works, Kunjufu expresses grave concern for the survival of the Black male. His belief that there is a conspiracy to destroy


\(^2\)Ibid.
African Americans motivated him to produce a counter model in his book *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*, vol. 2. Herein he details some not-so-subtle common societal strategies that work against Black boys developing into responsible men. These strategies include portraying the Black male as the problem that Black females face in trying to overcome racism, sexism, and (Black) male oppression. Another strategy is the female teachers (often White) who demonstrate little or no love or respect for, nor desire to bond with the Black male student.

Kunjufu offers practical suggestions for countering the perceived conspiracy including hiring male teachers in the lower grades, developing responsibility in Black boys, and suggesting minimal components for “rites of passage” via decision-making skills. Kunjufu offers nine minimum essentials for “rites of passage” programs to counter the conspiracy: spirituality, African history, economics, politics, career development, community involvement, physical development, family responsibilities, and values.¹ This is a construct which offers role model development, Black culture, and male socialization that will provide a positive transition from boyhood to manhood.

Of the essentials presented by Kunjufu, I would suggest that the most critical are spirituality, physical development, and family responsibility. If a working definition of spirituality is the belief that all human beings were created by God, that we are here for a purpose, and that there is a preferred future, this then influences my choices and decisions in every situation in life. I will not abuse my body in any way. Rather, I will care for it because proper physical development provides the health to do meaningful work and

¹Jawanza Kunjufu, *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*, vol. 2 (Chicago: African American Images, 1992), 43.
Kunjufu asserts that the dominant culture does not want to save the "Black male seed." One of the best ways to destroy the Black family is to destroy Black boys before they become men. He further rightly asserts that it is not sufficient to leave the training and education of boys or girls to the public school system. Children are better served when the schools, public or private, supplement what the parents do at home, not the other way around. Another good point that Kunjufu makes is that Black mothers tend to "raise their daughters and love their sons." They clearly need to raise both. Clearly, Kunjufu is right that we need more Black male teachers in elementary schools, ones who will be both relational and analytical. In many African American families, the head of household is female. The absence of male figures in the family setting leads to a greater need for male mentors and role models on all levels of the child's education.

Janet Billson's 1996 book, Pathways to Manhood: Young Black Males Struggle for Identity, is another source rich in insights into how to positively nurture and guide young Black males so that they can achieve successful transition from their critical preteen and adolescent years through to manhood. Billson focuses on the coping and/or survival skills employed by young Black inner-city youth, who tend to feel trapped by a system of education and an economic situation that has failed them. Billson offers strategies for helping at-risk and high-risk, urban, pre-teens better cope with life.

Based on her research, which includes extensive interviews, she argues that typically young Black males cope using one of several definable styles or skills. These include retreatism, which is simply giving up on the system. Another style is ritualism or...
playing it safe by cultural norms even though felt needs are not satisfied. A third coping style is rebellion. This is the utilization of violence when the culturally accepted goals and conventional means of achieving them are completely rejected. In order to counter these generally self-destructive approaches, Billson offers some success factors for pathways to manhood. She suggests that providing (1) a safe environment, (2) real responsibilities and work, (3) clear rules and discipline, (4) a focus on the future, and (5) positive role models can help nurture and empower young Black males. This will in turn enable them to be better able to reach their potentials and less likely to end up in prison.¹

Paying Attention to Language

Another book written as a part of the search for understanding and strategies to combat racism is Richard B. Moore’s The Name Negro. Moore contends that the names we use to call people make a real difference in our perceptions of them and their perceptions of themselves. Using credible sources, Moore explains and contends, in this 1992 book, that there was never a time when the term “Negro” was uncontested. It has in fact never been fully accepted.² Moore, a Caribbean militant who lived in Harlem, more than anyone else has provided the research that documents support for the change from “Negro” to “Afro-American” (now “African American”). Moore did not even encourage the use of “Black.” Moore did more than any other individual to educate the American public in the proper distinctions between “Black,” “Negro,” and “Afro-American.”


Indeed, in support of Moore's arguments, when the reference to African Americans is evaluated in terms of relations, the statistical profile reveals that relations between African Americans and Whites have improved as of 1999-2000.¹

On a personal note, the term "Negro" did not seem offensive to me in my early years. However, since the civil rights days and riots, and the exposure to more information and history, I can certainly better identify with "Black" and/or "African American," the latter of which does not carry the stigma of color or complexion.

An important source for understanding the meanings and implications of the kinds of words used to refer to African Americans as well as words used by African Americans is Clarence Major's 1992 dictionary of African American slang, *Juba to Jive*. Major's book is interesting in terms of using slang to interpret an experience. Major contends that "slang cuts through the logic and arrives at a quick, efficient, interpretative solution to situations and things otherwise difficult to articulate."² He provides an extensive list of slang names for the African American male, most of which were clearly never intended to facilitate the acceptance of the Gospel by their referents. Considering that the vast majority of these names originated with White use, it may not be surprising that what were perceived of as the religious beliefs of the White man were not readily accepted or embraced by many people of African decent. Even into the twenty-first century, many African American males have a problem with a God who had been that of the White slave owners.

¹Austin, Gilmore, and McCormick, 40.
The format of the publication is simple. First, there is the entry. Second, a date follows the entry referring to the time period when the word or phrase was most popular. Third, the entry is identified as to the part of speech. Fourth, the definition of the term or entry is noted. Fifth, an example of usage is included, and, finally, the area of the country where the word or entry was first most popular. The entries represent the input of African American speakers from as early as 1620 through the 1990s. This book is an excellent source for documenting the names and depictions of the African American male. Pejorative names, whether used by Whites or Blacks, are met with mixed reaction by Black males when they are approached about religion and church.

A Focus on Academia

Ronnie Hopkins argues that a focus on education is key to meeting the needs of Black men in America today. In his 1997 book, *Educating Black Males: Critical Lessons in Schooling, Community, and Power*, he argues that the traditional public school is not meeting the education, cultural, and economic needs of Black males (who he refers to as “American African males”). In response to the devastating crises facing the American African male, Hopkins argues that we need to rethink the educational system. Hopkins’ research entailed interviewing educational administrators, secretaries, students, parents, and teachers. His analysis of the data gathered led to his conclusion that we need to better understand Black male, inner-city cultures and that we need to encourage school personnel and members of the community to partner in the solution. Nonetheless, Hopkins places a large share of the responsibility on teachers. He concludes that the attitudes of teachers toward American African males and their needs must be re-

\[1\] Ibid.
evaluated. He points out that the teacher, who is the catalyst in the educational process, has the power to educate or "miseducate," to empower or disenfranchise the student. With compassion, understanding, and commitment, the teacher has the power to help convey confidence that the American African male will learn academically and survive economically. This confidence, in turn, can function as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Hopkins suggests that alternative, all-male schools geared toward American African males would best accomplish these goals. He argues that these kinds of schools would be best able to function as early interventions, infusing Black boys with positive male role models. Gender separation is key to Hopkins' idea of the ideal school for Black males as is a curriculum which incorporates Africentricity throughout. In addition to this, these schools would need to recruit strong American African male role models, and incorporate class and teacher rotations, mandatory parental volunteer programs, extended day programs, and an extended academic year.¹

While I believe that Hopkins provides valuable insight into providing a better education for African American males, I am not convinced that his model is the only option worthy of consideration. (Another successful model is the Seventh-day Adventist education program, which does not entail, for instance, gender separation.)

An aggressive critique of American academia is offered by sixteen leading scholars in a 2002 book entitled Making It on Broken Promises and edited by Lee Jones. These scholars make a strong argument that the American educational system tends to support White supremacist realities and that people in higher education appear to be

threatened by the presence of brilliant Black men. Some of the authors, including Charles Rankin, William H. Watkins, and Cornel West, seriously challenge the claim that American academia is open to diversity and divergent traditions. Of particular interest to this research project is the chapter by Dr. Frank Hale, Jr., “Visualizing the Framework for Access and Success.”

Hale argues that the dramatic shifts in the nation’s demographic profile require that we plan for access and success for Black males in higher education. Far from having already arrived at a time when efforts at integration and increased access have achieved their objectives, Hale contends that it continues to be crucial for institutions of higher education to be pro-active in their efforts to increase diversity in both student bodies and in educational content. He argues that these efforts should include the following five concepts or stages: (1) a better awareness of history; (2) an analysis of philosophy, policies, programs, and practices; (3) an unconditional acceptance of the purpose of diversity; (4) a willingness to adopt and/or revise plans as needed; and (5) a constant effort to actualize new paradigms for embracing diversity. The problems with education today and the real and challenging pitfalls that face African American men, even in higher education, have meant few Black men graduate from high school and even fewer from college. Hale outlines twenty changes that would facilitate better access and increased success in higher education. His proactive approach with practical solutions offers real hope for raising expectations for Black males in education. This text, edited by Lee, is a rich source of ways in which American academia can work toward increased inclusion and diversity and thus improved opportunities for African American men.1

1Lee Jones, Making It on Broken Promises (Sterling, VA: Styluss, 2002).
Summary

The above works all demonstrate ways in which we can successfully address the problems facing African American men today. The self-respect and self-worth of Black men must be enhanced. The Black family must be strengthened. The educational system needs to be evaluated in order to make it more inclusive and diverse. We must pay attention to the words we use. We must focus on the physical and spiritual development of Black men, and carefully nurture Black boys as they transition into adulthood. Most of the above are addressed in a 2003 book entitled Disability and the Black Community and edited by Sheila Miller. The various authors in this book contend that family support, religious faith, and participation in religious life, as well as increased self-esteem are all protective factors against barriers to successful lives for African Americans. They protect against physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities. In a chapter devoted exclusively to the Black male, Normal Gray Jones points out that factors such as employment, family support, self-esteem and religion all work as buffers against the risk factors facing Black men. Through these protective factors we can reduce violence and provide healing.¹

Bringing African American Men Back to Church

We now turn more directly to the topic and purpose of this research project: the problem of taking the Gospel of God to African American males. I hold that not only do Christians have a moral obligation to reach out to the African American male with the Gospel, but also being more active members of churches is one of the best ways to solve

the above-explored problems of the African American male. In this section, I deal with the need for increased evangelism directed toward this segment of the population, the reasons why African American males do not attend church and the ways in which we can solve this problem.

The Need for More Outreach by Christian Churches

An argument for the need of increased evangelistic efforts by African American churches is articulated by J. Herbert Hinkle in his book, *Soul Winning in Black Churches*. Hinkle criticizes all Christian denominations for being negligent in the New Testament mandate to evangelize. Not only do churches have an obligation to reach out to African American males but also they need to better engage individual African American male members in positions of leadership, discipleship, fellowship, and outreach.¹ As Ellen G. White writes:

> The leaders in God's cause, as wise generals, are to lay plans for advance moves all along the line. In their planning, they are to give careful study to the work that can be done by the laity for their friends and neighbors. The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.²

Outreach is the first step in this process. African American males who are exposed to Christian values and respect for human life are more likely prospects for joining a church or identifying with a particular denomination. Nonetheless, Hinkle admits that there are some very real barriers and obstacles to evangelism in the Black


community resulting in the limited appeal and low conversion rate of African American males, and he is bold enough to specify these. They include lack of emphasis by pastors, lack of spirit-filled Christianity by elected church officers, and church auxiliaries that are busy with programs but not with soul-winning. These barriers directly and negatively impact soul-winning in general and the conversion of the African American male in particular. Hinkle concludes that the test of whether the Holy Spirit is in the church is not one of emotion. Rather, it is one of devotion and commitment to the purpose of soul-winning. Singing in Black churches, suggests Hinkle, is filled with soul, but does not win souls.¹

While I would agree with much of what Hinkle writes, I would tend to disagree with his comments on singing. There are few means more effective for fixing the Gospel truth in minds than by repeating them in music and songs. In my pastoral journey of forty-nine years, music has proven to be a clear asset in the devotional experience. Nonetheless, although written over thirty years ago, the content of Hinkle’s book is current in its praxis. Perhaps this is because the fundamental premise is biblical. It is supportive of qualitative and quantitative church growth and evangelism.

The Muslim Model

A rich source for understanding the plight of the African American male and strategies for improving his future can be found in Na’im Akbar’s 1991 book, *Visions for Black Men*. Although Akbar is a Muslim, his vision for moving African American men forward into full self-development is a useful model for Christians who are working to bring this segment of the population back into the church family. Akbar recognizes the

¹Hinkle, 47-48, 88-94.
crisis of the African American male, who is in many ways an endangered species, a victim of genocide, and the most vulnerable American. Akbar addresses the matter from both an historical and a spiritual perspective, taking a positive approach in describing a preferred future for African American males. This preferred future can happen only if a strategic plan is implemented to make it happen. Akbar is striking in his approach, recommending a holistic, comprehensive vision for the African American male. This vision takes into account physical and material realities, mental and social realities, and finally, spiritual and/or moral realities.

Akbar observes that the vision must be panoramic in its integration of ancient and pre-European intervention. It must recognize the consequences of slavery, racism, and White supremacy. The suggestion of pre-European intervention implies that Black males were doing well at surviving long before they were subjected to involuntary servitude in this country. Akbar argues that the American dream is a “decree” that all Black men should be killed one way or another, whether physically, institutionally, or psychologically. The best way to counter this threat is to envision a preferred future and develop a strategic plan. Akbar’s strategic plan includes nine phases in sequential order: (1) planning to plan, (2) values scan, (3) mission formulation, (4) strategic business modeling, (5) performance audit, (6) gap analysis, (7) integrating action plans, (8) contingency planning, and (9) implementation. It would also be useful to further add an evaluation phase to this plan. The utilization of these practical steps would be overall helpful on both the corporate and personal levels.

Akbar focuses on the character development of African American males from infancy to manhood. For Akbar the model of progression for the Black male includes stages of development from boy-dreamer to an instrument of change in manhood, with this transformation being largely facilitated by knowledge. Knowledge is the key to getting where the African American male needs to go. He refers to a biblical passage as a model for development: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). The bulk of the responsibility for facilitating the necessary character development in young Black children rests with parents, argues Akbar. Furthermore, in order to successfully complete their transformation, African American males must recognize their chosenness, have faith in God, recognize the power of moral values, believe that history is on their side, and value Black life.¹

A calm confidence in an unseen reality has been a source of encouragement to many persons of any race. Basic moral values are inherent seeds of self-respect and appreciation for human life. It is challenging at times, but belief in sacred history will result in benefits to those loyal to its principles. Black-on-Black crime tends to be reduced in proportion to people’s commitment to basic moral values and respect for divine laws. Clearly, as suggests Akbar, we must educate and celebrate African American males.

Two of the most dynamic forces in the world today are Islam and Nationalism. Clifton E. Marsh addresses these in his 1995 book, From Black Muslims to Muslims. The author’s primary focus is an investigation of the origin, development, and change of the

Nation of Islam from a Black separatist movement to an orthodox Islamic organization. Elijah Muhammad led the organization for over forty years and advocated changes through racial separatism. Since Muhammad’s death on February 25, 1975, the organization has changed dramatically. Under the leadership of his son, Wallace D. Muhammad, the former Nation of Islam has evolved into a world community of Al-Islam in the West.

Marsh’s book is an important resource for this research project because of the strong attraction the Nation of Islam has had for so many African American males. It seems to offer answers to fundamental dissatisfaction prompted by societal conditions. Increasing numbers of African American males are joining the Nation of Islam because it offers protection, security, a sense of dignity, and economic well-being.\(^1\) Christian churches would be well-served to study the Nation of Islam as an evangelistic model.

Why Black Men Do Not Attend Christian Churches

In his 1994 book, *Adam! Where Are You? Why Most Black Men Don’t Go To Church*, Jawanza Kunjufu explores answers to the question made explicit in the work’s title. In order to analyze this problem, Kunjufu gathered together responses from a questionnaire and put together twenty-one primary reasons why Black men do not attend church: (1) the hypocrisy and double-standards found in church members and leaders as well as the dictatorial nature of churches; (2) the faith-submission tension; (3) the forgiveness-anger cycle; (4) passivity; (5) tithing; (6) irrelevance of church services and messages; (7) Euro-centric nature of services and messages; (8) length of service;

\(^1\)Clifton E. Marsh, *From Black Muslims to Muslims* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1995).
(9) excessive emotional nature of services; (10) sports conflicts; (11) dress code; (12) employment conflicts; (13) education or literacy; (14) sexuality and drugs; (15) homosexuality; (16) lack of or problems with spirituality; (17) heaven; (18) inadequate evangelism; (19) lack of Christian role model; (20) streets and peer pressure; and (21) having been forced as a child to attend.\footnote{Kunjufu systematically answers all twenty-one excuses for staying away from church and does so with logic and reason, while taking care not to threaten the self-worth of males.}

Kunjufu’s findings are similar to those of William Harris, who, in the same year that Kunjufu published the above book, completed a doctoral dissertation in which he explored why Black men do not attend church. Harris found that the primary reason for this phenomenon is poor, irrelevant messages. Sermons, argues Harris, do not speak to current issues and concerns, and this leads to a less meaningful worship experience. The secondary reason for which Black men stay away from church, suggests Harris, is a predominant lack of belief in God. This, in turn, is a result of having not been taught to value spiritual things while growing up and the resultant view that attending church was a waste of time. The third problem isolated by Harris is that church services take up too much time with announcements, choir encores, and the like. Furthermore, they rarely start on time, an annoyance to many men who would rather be enjoying sports or making money. The fourth reason Black men stay away from church, argues Harris, is because of the prevalence of hypocrisy, in both members and pastors. Fifth, there is a perception that churches place too much emphasis on money. The sixth reason is that the regular

\footnote{Jawanza Kunjufu, \textit{Adam! Where Are You? Why Most Black Men Don’t Go to Church} (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 1994), 56-70.}
activities of the church do not meet their personal needs (jobs, social life, excitement, etc.). The seventh reason is just poor leadership. Pastors are often perceived as egotistical and controlling and having little or no credibility. The eighth reason is that the church is not meeting the needs of the community. It has an ineffective outreach approach. The ninth reason has to do with the predominance of the perception, on the part of Black men, that churches tend to lack respect for the value of men, with pastors seen as primarily catering to women. Finally, argues Harris, the African American male has a problem with spiritual oppression. Satanic forces are at work to keep him away from church.1 Clearly, an awareness of these factors is the first step toward working to resolve the problem.

Recruiting Black Men to Church: Contemporary Approaches

The Black Family, Past, Present, and Future, edited by Lee N. June, is another useful and very informative source. This document is comprised of the perspectives of sixteen Black Christian leaders, most of whom hold doctorates or master’s degrees. The topics include many aspects of Black family life. Of particular interest to this research project is the chapter by Willie Richardson, “Evangelizing the Black Male: Critical Issues and How Tos.” Richardson rightly observes that Black males truly are open to the Gospel message. Our challenge is to become more serious and systematic in reaching them with a Gospel message that is culturally sensitive and that also enhances and affirms the African American male. Richardson is thoroughly convinced that we must go where the Black men are, we must go with what they need, and we must package the need in a non-threatening model.

1Harris, “Why Most Black Men Don’t Attend Church,” 110.
Certainly, the Great Commission is applicable in this setting. In Matt 28:19 and Mark 16:15, we are commanded to “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” This mandate includes all people of all races and nationalities and of both genders. Black men clearly must have the opportunity to register their belief in or rejection of God’s gracious offer of the Gospel of salvation.

Richardson, who is the pastor of the Christian Stronghold Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the president of Christian Research and Development, reminds us that the Black church is the institution best able to provide leadership in carrying out the mandate to evangelize Black males. His informed research shows that the Black male must hear that God has an attitude of love toward him and desires to have a relationship with him. He must know that while sin stands in the way of this relationship, something can be done about this problem. Ultimately, pastors, spouses, and other Black men must be involved in the effort to reach African American men with the Gospel message. The personal approach with a term of address that affirms is clearly the best approach. Too often, argues Richardson, instead of an affirming approach, an accusatory one is taken, one that blames the Black male for many of the ills of society and particularly those in the Black family.¹

In Evangelism in Black Churches, author James O. Stalling identifies the use of a story as a primary vehicle for evangelism in the Black church tradition. Stalling points out that the evangelistic methods employed must be both public and personal. Public evangelism includes testimonies, preaching, public worship, prayer meetings, experience

meetings, regular church worship, and conversion stories. Personal evangelism is primarily accomplished through mutual storytelling and story listening. The overall motivation for evangelism, according to Stalling, is the freeing of Black people from sin and their bodies from physical, political, and social oppression. When this is accomplished, Blacks may then achieve their full humanity.

Exposure to the Judeo-Christian values as outlined in the sacred canon of sixty-six books will improve the life experiences of all who practice the principles enunciated therein. I have seen this repeatedly during my forty-nine years of pastoral work. The mind is clearer, the heart is lighter, the body is healthier, and even the pocketbook is heavier. The hymn writer said it well when he composed the song “It Pays to Serve Jesus.” Stalling’s emphasis on personal sharing is consistent with the New Testament model of Jesus and His followers. The personal story of a Christian and his or her conversion is a powerful evangelistic tool. This witness simply told has three aspects. The first is one’s life before meeting Jesus. The second is how one met Him. The third is one’s life since meeting Jesus. An African American telling his story with enthusiasm and appreciation is a wonderful method to reach other Black men.

One final work of special relevance to this research project is Men to Men, a 1996 book edited by Lee N. June. In this book, sixteen Christian, African American scholars speak to the critical issues facing the African American male community. These writers offer biblical solutions that can be contextualized for contemporary Black families. It is interesting to note that these writers, like most Christian scholars, believe that most

problems and questions facing humanity have solutions and answers in the Holy Bible. The outline of the text provides four distinct sections. The first focuses on “dealing with life-enhancement skills.” The second discusses “strengthening relationships within families.” The next is about “dealing with the criminal justice system.” And the final segment deals with “facing contemporary challenges.”¹ This latter section provides a model for “rebuilding the walls.” The walls are defined as the “strength, stability, and level of responsibility assumed by . . . men.”² This model, based on the experience of Nehemiah, could and should result in the empowerment of the African American male, guiding him toward resuming his historic and biblical role as provider, protector, and priest to his family. This model is referenced with some detail in this research project.

Chapter 15 of this book appears to be the utilization of or the adaptation of a model advanced by Goodstein, Noland, and Pfeiffer in *Applied Strategic Planning*. Strategic planning is defined by these authors as “the process by which the guiding members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future.”³ Dr. Leo Rippy of Scarritt College for Christian Workers in Nashville, Tennessee, outlines a model that reflects this concept of strategic planning. Rippy proposes only six steps: (1) state the problem clearly, (2) list the possible answers and alternatives, (3) note the consequences of each option, providing a cost benefit analysis, (4) select the best alternative or option, (5) implement number 4, and

¹Ibid., 11, 12.

²Ibid., 246.

(6) evaluate. This construct is so basic that it might be used to plan and create a preferred future.¹

The final chapter of *Men to Men* outlines why it is so vital to show that Blacks in general and Black males in particular are represented in the Scriptures and have made important contributions to Christianity. First, all of us profit from having access to the truth. Second, when we see Blacks in Bible history, it debunks the idea that Christianity is a White man’s religion. It also reinforces the message that Blacks were involved in religion and Christianity from its inception. A fourth highly significant matter is that the Bible provides positive role models for African American men. The fifth reason is that it takes away any validity to the argument that Christianity is not the religion of Black people.²

Looking at the history of Christianity and Black people brings to light several important truths, including but not limited to the following. Christianity was in fact practiced in Africa long before slaves were brought to the United States against their wills. True Christianity does not permit its adherents to dehumanize human beings with dark skin. The stereotypes of African American males are in marked contrast to what is recorded in the Holy Bible about those of Hamatic extraction and mixed race parentage.

Regardless of the stereotypes, when the consistent Christian life is characterized by the example of Christ, it has international appeal. It crosses racial and cultural barriers

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and respects human beings as creations of God and speaks to them in a manner which
affirms and enhances self-worth and self-respect.

**Conclusion**

In order to formulate a strategy for recruiting African American men into the
Seventh-day Adventist church, it is important not only to explore the problems faced
today by Black men, and the ways in which other religious groups are addressing these,
but also to delve into the historical background to these problems. The abhorrent and
demeaning stereotypes that have permeated twentieth-century thinking have left long-
lasting impressions on the Black male. As pointed out by a number of the scholars in this
review of literature, victims of such treatment inevitably suffer psychologically, socially,
economically, and spiritually. Early in the twentieth century, African American scholars
tried to address the situation of Black Americans by pointing out the importance of
cultivating the awareness of the richness of Black culture and history, one that even stems
back to Bible days. This awareness, in turn, can help increase people’s sense of self-
worth and dignity. A short while after the end of slavery in America and in a context of
extreme racism and prejudice against Blacks, Ellen G. White stands out as a remarkable
Christian pioneer in her outreach to African Americans. Her work has clearly yielded
fruit and provides us with an early model for the evangelistic outreach so important
today. Much later than Ellen G. White comes the fight of the Black Power Movement and
the Nation of Islam, a movement attempting to restore dignity, cultural identity, and
autonomy to African Americans.

Unfortunately, the psychological, social, and cultural problems of the Black man
persist today despite the great fights in the past. Solutions to these problems include
fostering social justice and cultivating a sense of dignity and worth in African American males and affirming and strengthening the Black family. It is also important to be keenly aware of the words we use and their implications. Today there is a great need to reach out to African American men with the Gospel message. While the Black Muslims have been very successful at evangelistic efforts toward Black men, Christian churches have been far less so. This problem does not stem from lack of information, however. Not only do the Black Muslims provide a useful model, but also contemporary scholarship, by both secular and religious, provides the results of research and investigation and offers solutions to the problem. Products of these authors' work can have a real impact on gaining an understanding of the African American male profile and for some suggestions and recommendations for addressing the physical, psychological, economic, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of the Black male. My hope is that the products of this research project can help in formulating a plan for evangelistic outreach to African American men.
CHAPTER 3

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR
REACHING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE

The Book of Mark

The theological foundations for a model to reach the African American male in Southeast Atlanta with Adventism are based on the biblical text, Mark 5:1-20, with specific attention to Mark 5:19-20. Mark 5 provides a number of biblical theologies, including the following: the theology of demon possession (vs. 2); the theology of worship (vs. 6); the theology of the Son of God (vs. 7); the theology of exorcism (vs. 8); the theology of devils (vs. 12); the theology of truth rejection (vs. 17); the theology of sharing the Good News (vs. 19); the theology of compassion (vs. 19); the theology of decision-making (vs. 17); and the theology of gratitude (vs. 18). Additional Mark 5 theologies mentioned by Ellen G. White in The Desire of Ages include the following: the theology of praise; the theology of omnipotence; the theology of mercy; the theology of fellowship; and the theology of transformation (of character).¹

¹White, The Desire of Ages, 338-341.
The four Gospels were written by a publican, a citizen, a physician, and fisherman, with varied aims. Matthew was writing for Jewish people. Mark was addressing Gentiles in his Gospel. Luke wrote as a careful and full historian. And John wrote as a defender of the faith.\(^1\) The writing style of Mark was once thought of as inelegant and unsophisticated, credited to someone who was incapable of writing better literary Greek. Those same features are now identified as giving Mark its story-telling quality. The style suggests the vitality and immediacy of an oral setting. Mark uses simple, short sentences connected by the common punctuation “and.” One of his most distinctive words is *euthus*. This term means “right away,” “right then and there,” or “suddenly.”\(^2\) Another marked feature of Mark’s style is a fondness for duplication and iteration. There are duplications in most of the chapters.\(^3\)

Mark is more than a digest of Jewish-Christian traditions. It is a Gospel for a church which contains a significant proportion of Gentiles.\(^4\) F. P. Badham explains that the purpose of the book of Mark is threefold: (1) to produce a more concise Gospel than his predecessor, (2) to avoid matter unsuited to a Gentile audience, and (3) to focus on Christ as the Son of God.\(^5\) Mark indeed differs from the other Gospels in several distinct


ways. The book is characterized by brevity, both in the number of chapters and in the actual sentence construction. Mark's emphasis is on action. He focuses on the deeds of Jesus rather than His discourses. Indeed, Mark quotes Jesus fewer times than any other Gospel. He sees Jesus less as the Messiah and more as the Son of God.

Jesus Reaches Out to Those Rejected by Society

The fifth chapter of Mark contains three miracles. The first is the casting out of the legion of devils from the Gerasene demoniac, a confrontation which, according to Chad Myers, contains more detail and embellishment than any other episode in the Gospel of Mark prior to the trial narrative. The second is the healing of the woman with an issue of blood. The third is the raising to life of Jairus's daughter. Of particular interest to this research project is the first miracle about healing the man of unclean spirits primarily because in this text Jesus reaches out to someone considered socially and spiritually lost.

Robert Gundry suggests dividing the story as follows: (1) Jesus' arrival in the region (v. 1); (2) the demoniac confronts Jesus but the emphasis is on the past condition of the demoniac (vss. 2-5); (3) a repetition of the demoniac's confrontation with Jesus, however, emphasizing in the verses the present contest between Jesus and the unclean spirits inhabiting the demoniac (vss. 6-10); (4) Jesus' victory over the unclean spirits

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(vss. 11-13); (5) the response of the people in the region (vss. 14-17); (6) proclamation by the ex-demoniac and its doxological effect with regard to Jesus.¹

It might be helpful to look at a relational paraphrase of Mark’s pericope on the demoniac (Mark 5:1-20) before moving on to an analysis. (A paraphrase is defined by Johnson as “encountering the Jesus of history, and translating the meaning of that encounter into relevant, contemporary language.”)² The following paraphrase, entitled “Jesus reunites a fragmented personality,” is offered by Ben Campbell Johnson:

They crossed the lake and landed in the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, he was immediately accosted by a demented man who was living in the cavelike tombs common in that area. He came dashing up to Jesus—he was so fierce that no person had been able to control him, not even with chains. His countrymen had repeatedly tied him with chains and shackles, but each time he got loose. Nothing could restrain him. Night and day he was in the mountains or inside the caves, screaming and cutting himself with stones.

When this tortured man saw Jesus at a distance, he ran to him and worshipped him. Then he cried out at Jesus, ‘How am I related to you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, please don’t torture me any more.’ Jesus responded, ‘Come out of this man, alien destructive spirit.’

Then he said to that separated part of the man, ‘What is your name?’ That part of him answered, ‘Many, because my personality is split into many parts.’ That separated portion of the man begged, ‘Do not banish me from this country’.”

Near the mountain a herd of pigs was feeding. ‘Let us enter the pigs,’ making them dash headlong down a steep slope into the lake where they drowned. (There were about two thousand of them.)

The men who tended the pigs fled into the city and told what they had seen. People from the city and surrounding countryside went out to witness the incident for themselves.

They first came to Jesus; then they saw the demented man quietly sitting beside Jesus, fully clothed and mentally together. They were frightened. The witnesses related what they had seen happening to the man separated from himself and what had happened to the pigs. The crowd began urging Jesus to leave their community. Jesus responded by getting into the boat. The man who had been united with himself pleaded with Jesus to permit him to accompany him. Jesus refused. ‘Go back home to your friends and tell them what God has done for you and how he has cared for you.’


The healed man left and traveled throughout the region of the ten cities, telling his remarkable story of what Jesus had done for him. His hearers were awestruck.\(^1\)

The story of the healing of the Gerasene demoniac is indeed an interesting one. It provides at least five themes for Mark’s community to consider. First, Jesus is portrayed as the stronger one. He is more powerful than two thousand demons in pagan territory. Second, God takes the initiative in offering salvation even to Gentiles who were regarded as ritually and morally unclean. Third, God desires to liberate the person who appears to be hopelessly lost. Jesus drives out a host of demons. The restoration of one man is worth more than two thousand pigs. A fourth theme is that Jesus has permitted the demons to do what they requested (to enter the swine). The fifth theme is that the mission to the Gentiles finds a paradigm in the preaching of the healed demoniac.\(^2\) The second, third, and fifth themes are of primary importance for this research project.

Reaching Out to the Descendants of Ham

When Mark 5 begins, the storm from Mark 4 is over. The question is still in the air. “Who is this?” (speaking of Jesus who had calmed the storm). The boat comes ashore on the east side of Galilee. The scene is near the lake, a cemetery, a hillside where swine are feeding, and the town.\(^3\) As Jesus disembarks “on the other side” of the sea, He enters a land abounding in unclean images. He sees mobs of demons running naked among the

\(^1\)Ibid.


tombs and mountains. He observes grazing swine and a fearful, inhospitable population.\(^1\)

This is the land of the Gentiles.\(^2\) On the other side of the Sea of Galilee, the elements of the setting contribute to its unmistakably Gentile character.

In the book of Mark, the sea is more than a geographical location. It is a place of withdrawal, revelation, and understanding. It is also a dwelling place for demons and evil hostility to the Lord. It is a barrier, or at times a transitional zone, to new stages in understanding the ministry of Jesus. The sea is a place to reach by word and miracle. It is used as the focal point of a ministry that alternates between Jewish and Gentile locations.\(^3\) This body of water separated Jewish and Gentile lands. In the book of Mark, the same water becomes a symbol of the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the kingdom. The boat trips, alternating between the two sides, giving each side due respect and blessing, dramatize a unitive movement.\(^4\) In this first miracle of Mark 5, Jesus comes to minister to Gentiles. To these people Jesus comes as a kind of intruder. The argument of this story is that unless He makes incursions into foreign territory, there is no hope of rescue.\(^5\) But these are not just any Gentiles. The local setting of this miracle is Gergesa, which is near the Lake of Tiberias. The meaning of Gergesa is “dwelling of the casters out.” Gergesa is

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\(^1\) Broadhead, 51, 52.


\(^4\) Ibid., 132.

also the place from which come the Girgashites, most likely the descendants of Ham—one of Noah's three sons. These people could thus be identified as Black.

The Gadarenes were so called because of the “City of Gadara.” This city was located about six miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee and was inhabited by the half-tribe of Manesseh. Further research reveals Manesseh to be the elder son of Joseph, by Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of ON (Gen 41:50-51). Hence, Manesseh was half-Egyptian, unless that priest of ON was one of the Semitic Hyksos. Notwithstanding, Ham's son Canaan was the father of the Girgashites who located among the Gergensenes, according to the Seventh-day Adventist Dictionary. Girgashites is one of the tribes of western Palestine who were descendants of Canaan (Gen 10:15, 16; 15:21; Deut 7:1; Josh 3:10; 24:11; Neh 9:8). Canaan is the son of Ham. The man that Jesus heals in this miracle thus appears to have been, just like the people of the area, of Hamitic extraction with mixed blood.

In this miracle, Jesus is not only shown as ministering to Gentiles or to the descendants of Ham, but to someone from within that community who is the quintessential lost individual. This man has been referred to as a lunatic or a maniac. He has been described as having a demoniac superseded personality, a psychic disorder, or schizophrenia. All descriptions appear to be apt. In fact, as explained by Gundry, this

\[1\] Allen, 88.
\[4\] Ibid., 403.
man apparently fits the profile of madness as found in rabbinical literature. The rabbis
detailed four characteristic of madness. Mad men were running about at night, staying
overnight at burial places, tearing apart their clothes, and destroying what they were
given. His behavior matches the first two characteristics, and exceeds the third and
fourth.\footnote{Gundry, 258.} The Bible records that he was “a man with an unclean spirit” (Mark 5:2).
However that “unclean spirit” is described, he is clearly someone at the lowest levels of
society, a “hopelessly lost” individual. Facing him, Jesus is in a situation in which
opposition to God’s will has gotten the apparent advantage.\footnote{Johnnie C. Godwin, Layman’s Bible Book Commentary, Mark, vol. 16
(Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), 50, 51.}

It seems that the possessed man had just enough volition left to run to meet Jesus.
His habitat of tombs, his diagnosis of an unclean spirit, his uncontrollability with
shackles and chains, and his self-mutilation, plus possible suicide attempts, did not
discourage him from coming to Jesus.\footnote{Geddert, 115.} This pitiable figure, dirty, filthy, almost toothless,
hair and beard matted, ran to Jesus (Mark 5:6). He caught sight of Jesus from a distance
and came bounding toward Him in a frenzy. When he drew near, his mood changed.
Calmed, and in part subdued by the charm or spell of the Master, he prostrated himself
before Jesus.\footnote{Ernest Trice Thompson, The Gospel According to Mark (Richmond, VA: John
Knox Press, 1954), 99, 100.}
The story is told in vivid fashion to make possible an experience of Jesus' power, which is as dangerous as it is promising.\textsuperscript{1} Conditions characterized by great activity, combativeness, and destructiveness are all subject to the power of Jesus. The ministry of Jesus is marked by some cases of demon possession and their cure. However, none is related with such detail and fullness as this of the pitiful man who meets our Lord on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. If the scene terrifies us by revealing dread forces of evil, much more should it inspire us by its vision of the omnipotent strength of Christ.\textsuperscript{2}

According to Detzler and Doty, demons and unclean spirits in the Gospel of Mark serve to identify Jesus and to show the ability of Jesus to control forces of the world and beyond it. An example is in the previous scene to the Gerasene demoniac. During a storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus commands the forces of nature by calming a physical wind. Now He expels the supernatural forces of evil, thus allying Himself with the power of good. Third, His casting out of unclean spirits underscores the dichotomy between unclean spirits and the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{3} Jesus is shown as having the power to release human beings from physical, mental, emotional, and social bondage. In spite of the barriers of physical need, economic suppression, or racial prejudice, the message of freedom and hope would prevail.

The story of Jesus casting out of demons from the Gerasene demoniac provides a model of behavior. In this story, Jesus reaches out to the Gentiles, but not only that. He

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}Donald H. Juel, \textit{The Gospel of Mark} (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 113, 114.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}Detweiler and Doty, 48.
\end{itemize}
reaches out to the most lost among them. Outstanding significance may be attached to the conquest of evil spirits as presented by Saint Mark. The conquest signals a message of hope to those suffering from the dread demons of disease. Second, it gives the assurance of protection and great satisfaction in social relationships. Then it guarantees victory over the ills of the current political order. Finally, it makes available the highest possible religion—ethical values. Mark shows that the followers of Jesus might also conquer evil spirits. The methods available include the use of the name of Jesus, anointing with oil, faith, prayer, and the endowment of the Holy Spirit. It was in the despair and failure of human treatment that the Lord Jesus acted decisively. The exorcism resulted in restoration and re-integration into society of the individual involved.

The Importance of Labels and Names

The story of the healing of the Gerasene demoniac offers us a further lesson in the importance of the names and labels we assign to people. During the confrontation with the man and the unclean spirit, Jesus asked the question, “What is your name?” (Mark 5:9). Why would Jesus ask such a question? That a name is important is common to many cultures. The same interest is reflected in modern medicine. Giving a malady a name is an essential part of the healing process. R. A. Cole’s explanation for why Jesus asks this question is worthy of note. Cole suggests that Jesus might have wanted to make the man’s needs apparent to all as well as to bring home to the man’s own clouded mind

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2Ibid., 555.
3Juel, 111.
the awful plight in which he stood. Furthermore, in the Bible, a name stands for a nature. This is equally true of demonic powers, as of God. Therefore, the man was virtually asked to confess the nature of the powers of evil by which he was enslaved and gripped.¹ (As it turns out, the name of the unclean spirit is “legion.” This further explains why there had been so much difficulty in binding the demoniac. A whole legion of devils—2,000-6,000—is a formidable adversary to overcome.)²

An interesting twentieth-century response to the question has been offered by Dorothy Minchin-Comm. She writes: “What is in a name? A great deal really. It’s a major means of identity, and we take much care in giving names. . . . Prospective parents spend time discussing name options long before the baby’s birth.”³ Our personal name is a very special, very private possession—part of the very fiber of our lives, our identities. Even a child becomes angry when someone mocks his or her name. Humans and animals alike respond acutely and instinctively to a name’s sound. Moreover, our name does more than simply identify us in a crowd. It often calls up a specific image and ties events, hopes, and joys to a certain person.⁴ A name is a very special gift. We sign our names on documents to ensure the sincerity of our intentions. Our names, in fact, signify the

²Hennelly, 312.
⁴Ibid., 341.
essence of all that is particularly ours. It separates us from everyone else, on the one hand, but joins us to our family and nation on the other.\(^1\) It confers power and identity.

All of this is relevant not only for the name of an individual but for the name or label assigned to a particular group of individuals. Clearly, the words used to describe a certain group call up particular images that reflect on the individuals in that group. It follows that certain terms, labels, and names are less desirable than others. Under a bill making its way through legislature in 2004, the Washington state government would have to change the way it refers to people with disabilities. Under a proposal backed by a group of disabled persons, the state would have to use “people first” terminology in its laws and official documents. For example, “the disabled” or “the mentally ill” would be replaced by such phrases as “individuals with disabilities” and “individuals with mental illness.”\(^2\) While it is a simple arrangement of words, it is important because it shows that they are people first, and that disabilities are secondary. “The outdated language, currently used in laws, attaches negative labels to the self-esteem.”\(^3\)

Clearly the implications of the ways in which labels used for groups of people such as the disabled are dissimilar in key ways from those used to describe people of particular races or colors. But they are nonetheless similar in important ways. In both cases of naming, there are terms that attach negative labels and thus negatively impact the self-esteem of those being labeled. For centuries, African American males have been referred to by pejorative terms. Since these labels were primarily introduced by White

\(^1\)Ibid., 340.


\(^3\)Ibid.
people, it is not surprising that what is perceived to be the God and religion of the White man would not be considered as desirable.

A marketing strategy that affirms Blackness and supports freedom and liberation, self-worth, and self-esteem, could get the attention and interest of more African American males. Potentially, this could result in accepting religion in general, and Adventism in particular. Addressing a Black man by his proper name is also vital is caring for psychological wounds inflicted by centuries of pejorative terms of address used against him.

The Local People Reject Jesus

The next scene has Jesus commanding the demons to leave the madman who is then restored to health. Meanwhile, Jesus allowed the demons, per their request, to enter a herd of pigs that were feeding nearby. The pigs then dashed headlong into the sea, where they were drowned. This part of the miracle left not only the local people perplexed but has provided a conundrum for biblical scholars to this day. Mark intensifies the story of demon possession by his extensive and dramatic description of the problem and the effects of the demons. He also emphasizes the cure by mentioning the restored man as sitting, clothed, and in his right mind. Intensity is observed in the discussion of how the townspeople responded. It is seen in the healed man’s assignment to go and tell his own family the good news.1

The exorcism of Mark 5:1-21 employs the elements expected in such accounts. A transition brings Jesus onto the stage. He is confronted by a difficult case of possession

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(5:2-8). The demons are expelled by His command (5:8, 13). There is a demonstration of the healing (5:14-16). The miracle is accompanied by awe and acclamation (5:15, 16). The report of the deed is spread (5:14, 20). Jesus departs to another scene (5:21).¹

In this case, as the report of the deed is spread, the local townspeople react in fear, praying for him to leave. Perhaps they simply did not want a savior in their country who saved men at the expense of pigs. Let the devils have the man, but save the hogs. Perhaps it was out of fear that he might save more men at the cost of more pigs that they invited Jesus to leave their coasts.² And perhaps there was real reason for concern here. According to one author, it took four times as many people to keep pigs as it did to keep sheep. For a herd of two thousand independent, ungovernable, and dangerously aggressive swine, there must have been quite a few herders.³ The apparent threat of high unemployment was obvious. Based on this, we too may find ourselves wondering whether the pigs needed to be lost for the man to be saved. Perhaps the lesson for us is that if we mourn the economic loss more than we rejoice in the man’s full salvation, we side with the Gerasenes. Mark’s goal here might be to draw us to side with Jesus, and also to speak to our family and friends of the Lord’s great mercy.⁴

Some reasons have been suggested as to why Jesus permits the destruction of property, the drowning at sea of the herd of swine. The first reason is that a herd of swine was a place more fit for the habitation of demons than was a human body. Second, the

¹Broadhead, 50.
³Gundry, 263.
⁴Geddert, 118.
man was relieved of the parting cruelties usually associated with the dispossession of evil spirits. Third, when the man saw the madness and death of the swine, he realized more fully the fact and the greatness of his own deliverance. Finally, Jesus may have seen an opportunity for getting a startling and arresting message to the people. It did involve the loss of some property, but it was calculated to arouse them to their peril and to announce to them their privilege.\(^1\) The destruction of the swine by demons was a warning that the country was infested by unclean spirits and that no man was safe from their attack. And the power over the demons manifested by Christ was a sign that a savior was near.\(^2\)

While the pig owners might have been primarily concerned with the economic consequences of Jesus’s actions, it is clear that the people in general had another reason for wanting him to leave. Aside from the economic benefit of having pigs, these creatures were also used for religious sacrifices. Furthermore, the very act of this miracle terrified the people. They clearly feared Jesus Himself.\(^3\) When the townspeople thoroughly surveyed the situation and saw (the verb "see"—\(\text{theóreo}\)—means to look at carefully) the man who had been possessed of demons "sitting and clothed, and in his right mind" (vs. 15), they were afraid. Heretofore, they had been afraid of the insane man. Now they were afraid of the same man who is sane.\(^4\) And they were afraid of the force that had made him sane. The people from the city were both awed and fearful at the suddenness and the

\(^1\) Erdman, 92.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Gundry, 254.

completeness of the ex-demoniac's radical transformation. The people did not need to have been fearful. While the act of mercy was momentary, the consequences would be visible to those who listened to his story. But the Gentiles or pagans of this area lived in fear of their gods. Supernatural power struck terror in them. For these reasons, they asked Jesus to leave. They rejected Him who in love would have saved them.

The reaction of the local people to Jesus having performed this miracle provides us with an example of the kind of reaction we might face when spreading the message of the Gospel. Even into the twenty-first century, the saving power Jesus reveals in transforming humanity does not always lead people to faith in His divine mission. Unfortunately, people still prefer swine to their Savior. The choice between holding on to capital or investing in making people and the world well is not always as easy as it sounds. In the story of the Gerasene demoniac, the local people were afraid in the presence of Jesus. They felt neither trust nor love. In their confidence and self-trust, they had less affinity for Jesus than for the demoniac while he was still howling and naked among the tombs. That tragedy continues to be repeated. There are many who feel terror in the presence of the Lord. They reject His messages. They invite Him to leave their territory. They fear His fellowship may occasion some social or financial or personal loss. Seeking to save their possessions, they lose their souls.

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1Hennelly, 314.

2Henry Barclay Swete, Commentary on Mark (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1977), 100.

3Hobbs, 83.


5Erdman, 93.
Lessons on Evangelism

The first miracle of Mark 5 offers us important lessons on evangelism. In marked contrast to the townspeople, the healed man desired to follow Jesus. As conclusive proof of a wondrous transformation, the healed demoniac desires to be a disciple of Jesus. In fact, every soul that is truly delivered from Satan’s bondage desires to be with Christ.¹ Perhaps the man was moved by fear lest the demons return. He might have felt that he would be safe only in the presence of Jesus. But he was also obviously moved by gratitude and love to offer his services to his Lord.² As sincere as it must have been, Jesus denied the request of the healed man. Why would Jesus do this? Perhaps he wanted to affirm the legitimacy of this man’s openly proclaiming the good news of his liberation from bondage. This pericope (Mark 5:1-20) affirms the beginnings of activity on Gentile soil.³ In refusing the man’s request, the Lord was ensuring a continuity of witness in a needy area.⁴ From this, we are given a lesson in the importance of not only remaining among the saved, but also focusing on evangelism in areas of need. Jesus also gives us a lesson in the need for evangelism at home.

It was not the will of the Lord that this man should be numbered among the Twelve or even the Seventy. His sphere of service was to be at home in the place where he was so well known. His witness for Christ there would count far more than if he traveled farther afield. Through this man’s testimony, the attitude of the Decapolis

¹Jacobs, 38.
²Erdman, 93.
⁴Cole, 100.
population was changed by the time Jesus revisited the district. He was welcomed in a
very definite manner.\textsuperscript{1} The capable witness of the redeemed man was enthusiastic and
impressive. Jesus was not disappointed.\textsuperscript{2} The man spoke openly of the great things the
Lord had done for him and he did so in Gentile territory.\textsuperscript{3} His testimony not only helped
his community, however, it was also important for his own spiritual life. To remember
and proclaim what God Almighty had done for him will best preserve him from falling
back under the power of demons.\textsuperscript{4} Again, this is an important lesson for us today.

In the testimony of experience, the healed man had no theology or doctrines to
teach. He gave the testimony of personal experience. The man who cannot witness for
Christ at home may be unfit for any wider service or mission. It is possible that the healed
man needed the normal influences of his home life. A return to commonplace things and
associations is wise. Service, like charity, begins at home, but it does not end there. The
man went home and to Decapolis.\textsuperscript{5} He shared that he had been a recipient of divine
mercy. This much he knew. This much he told. It was enough.

The family organization is destined to afford manifest assistance in the conversion
of souls. The first obligation lies here for us all. No apology of zeal exhausted elsewhere

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\textsuperscript{1}H. H. Ironside, \textit{Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark} (New York: Loizeaux
Brothers, 1948), 79, 80.

\textsuperscript{2}John L. Hill, \textit{Outline Studies in Mark} (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press,
1945), 67.

\textsuperscript{3}C. Leslie Mitton, \textit{The Gospel According to Saint Mark} (London: Epworth Press,
1957), 40.


\textsuperscript{5}J. H. B. Masterman, \textit{In the Footsteps of the Master} (London: Church Family
Newspaper, 1922), 30-32.
will be accepted for deliberate rejection of this. The human soul needs truth more than argument, personal sympathy more than exegesis, and a radical righteousness more than a mere pattern for conduct. ¹ Jesus sent the healed man to his home. Home is the place above all others where the child of God ought to make his first endeavors to do good. Home is the place where he is most continually seen, and where the realities of his grace ought most truly to appear. Home is the place where his best affections ought to be concentrated. Home is the place where he should strive daily to witness for Christ. Home is the place where he was doing harm by his example. It is the place where he is bound to be a living epistle of Christ, as soon as he had been mercifully taught to serve God. ²

When the healed man returned home, it must have been a happy reunion. The friends of the man had probably not seen him for some years, except under the influence of Satan and unclean spirits. Most likely, he had been as one dead to them, or worse than dead, and a constant cause of trouble, anxiety, and sorrow. Here then was the path of duty. Here was the way by which he could most glorify God. Go home to friends and family and be a living witness before their eyes of the compassion of Christ. Let him deny himself the pleasure of being in Christ’s bodily presence in order to do the higher work of being useful to others. ³ “Your friends” as a rendering of the Greek *tous sous* is


³ Ibid., 96.
equivalent in many languages to "your clan," implying the man's family, both immediate and extended.¹

Here then is what the ex-demoniac's discipleship means. The Lord has had mercy on him and he is instructed to go and tell his own people about the acts of God's mercy. That discipleship is very much like that of the present Christian community. Even though we are not "with Jesus" in the same way that His first disciples were, we have the vocation to go and tell our own people about the Lord's mercy to us. This narrative (Mark 5:1-20), with its revelation of who Jesus really is, with its dramatic manifestations of the power of Jesus in overcoming a vast multitude of demons whom no one else could subdue, with its vivid description of Jesus' mercy in healing the tormented man and transforming him into a missionary disciple, all this gives a renewed challenge and inspiration to the present Christian community in Southeast Atlanta to fulfill a like vocation in witnessing to the Black male.²

William Barclay also contends that there are good reasons why Jesus sent the healed man back home. In the first place, he was to be a witness for Christianity. He was to be a living, walking, vivid, unanswerable demonstration of what Christ can do for a man. The unanswerable proof of Christianity is a re-created man. Second, the healed demoniac was to be the first seed, which in time was to become a mighty harvest. The first contact with Greek civilization was made in the Decapolis. Everything must start somewhere. The glory of all the Christianity which one day flowered in the Greek mind


²Hennelly, 316.
and genius began with a man (some may call crazy) who had been possessed by demons and whom Christ healed.¹

The ex-demoniac was to be the Lord’s forerunner for the mission among the Gentiles. John the baptizer, a Jew, had prepared the way for Jesus’ mission among the Jews. The Gerasene, a Gentile, would prepare the way for His mission among the Gentiles.² The Gospel, which was free to all, was not to be forced upon any. The healed man went beyond his home in Gadara or Gerasa. He witnessed in nine other cities as well. We need the zeal in Atlanta Boulevard of a grateful, healed demoniac so that it will be said in Southeast Atlanta that “all men did marvel.”

Implications for the Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church

The biblical or theological foundation for reaching the African American male is amply modeled in the experience of the healed demoniac. Jesus goes into Gentile territory, heals a man belonging to a mixed race from the lineage of Ham, and commissions him to witness to his family and friends. We see in these verses (Mark 5:1-20) the possession of a man’s body by the devil. We see what an awfully cruel, powerful, and malicious being Satan is. But we also see how complete is our Lord’s power and authority over the devil.³ The exorcised demoniac provides us with an ideal model of evangelization. Having personally experienced how Jesus has freed him from an inhuman existence, he was sent by Jesus to recount to his own people how he was restored to


³Ryle, 88-91.
human living through God's liberating power and mercy. The healed man shows us what one witness for Christ can accomplish through his missionary work to those who were despised and rejected by many. Overjoyed by his new life and freedom from evil power, he publicly proclaims the good news of what Jesus has done for him. This example should inspire us to likewise share our experience of the divine liberating and humanizing power of Jesus with our fellow human beings. Indeed, the best proof of our devotion is our faithful witness to the great things the Lord hath done. The challenge of the Atlanta Boulevard Church is to mirror the example of the healed demoniac. We too must be witnesses for Christ to all people, to all races.

Summarizing the experience of the demoniac, Ellen White wrote:

The Lord desires that his word of grace shall be brought to every soul. To a great degree, this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ's method. He had a faithful regard for the one soul audience. Through that one soul, the message has often extended to thousands. We are not to wait for souls to come to us; we must seek them out where they are. . . . There are multitudes who will never be reached by the Gospel unless it is carried to them.

One further important lesson of Mark 5:19-20 is the conflict between duty and desire. Desire is not always duty, but that duty must come before desire, and then duty and desire will agree. It is important to understand that despite what our favorite fields

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2 Erdman, 94.
and projects may be, we must be willing to go where Christ orders us, and do the work He bids us. The demoniac, no longer a demoniac, but clothed and in his right mind, desired to be with Jesus. Jesus bade him “go home and tell” the story of his healing. He went and found his great pleasure in telling the news, at which all men marveled. We too may be certain that His unseen presence and power will attend us as we follow his commands. Furthermore, the surest safeguard against a return of our own demons is active service for Christ.

The miracle should give us hope. If Jesus can restore an insane man, to the amazement of the city, there is hope for African American males in Southeast Atlanta. The man of Gadara became a symbol of what can happen to distraught men and women when they submit themselves to the influence of Christ. The power of Jesus changed a naked, insane, cemetery dweller into a clothed, coherent man who could go home with a message of deliverance, liberation, and healing. The Atlanta Boulevard Church, much like the healed man of Gadara, has a sense of obligation to the African American males in Southeast Atlanta. Any model designed to reach, attract, or evangelize African American males must include the elements of information, affirmation, inspiration, and liberation. This research project attempts to accomplish this. We must “go and tell” what great things the Lord has done for us. We will do this with attractive, culturally sensitive Bible

1Jacobs, 39.


study guides. The guides are part of a strategic plan to assist African American males, appreciate their divine origin, their historic identity, and their future potential realities as respected, responsible, and renewed husbands and fathers. As such, they will be empowered to perform their biblical, moral, and legal roles as provider, protector, and priest in the Black family.

**The Book of Nehemiah**

The biblical principles used by Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem provide another biblical and theological basis for reaching the African American male with a focused and intentional ministry. For Dr. John M. Wallace, we have a biblical mandate to rebuilding the walls, which he defines as “Black males” who are heads of families and who have a clear sense of strength, stability, and level of responsibility.¹ A number of social problems and societal factors have helped facilitate the collapse of these walls. The Black male unemployment rate is two or three times that of Whites.² The income of Black males is less than that of White males. The net worth of African American males is $4,604, compared to $44,408 for Whites.³ The life expectancy of African American men is eight years shorter than for White males. African American men are more likely to die from HIV and homicide than are White men. The most highly visible social problem is the African American male involvement in the criminal justice

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¹June and Parker, 245, 246.
²Ibid., 241.
³Ibid.
system. One in four African American males is in prison, on parole, or on probation. Black males are only 6 percent of the U.S. population, but 44 percent of all prisoners.\footnote{Ibid.}

Based on the high rates of father absence in African American homes, divorce rates in our Black families, failure rates of Black children in our schools, incarceration rates in our nation's prisons, and crime rates in our cities, "the walls" of African American families (i.e., the responsible Black males) and communities have been torn down and are in disrepair. This lack of "the walls" should be a source of sorrow and disgrace. However, as it was with Nehemiah, the condition of "the walls" should be the impetus to action.\footnote{Ibid., 246.}

**Biblical Principles from Nehemiah**

Principles for "rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem" by Nehemiah are applicable to our contemporary situation in Southeast Atlanta and can be used as guidelines for "rebuilding the walls," that is, helping Black men become more responsible leaders as family providers, protectors, and priests. The first principle in the Nehemiah biblical strategy that can be adapted to our needs is to "become informed about the condition of the community" in general and the Black male in particular.\footnote{Ibid.} The book of Nehemiah begins with Nehemiah asking about the condition of the city and its inhabitants (Neh 1:1-3). Before Nehemiah could take any steps to resolve Jerusalem's wall problem, he had to become informed about the problems. To put this principle in context, in order to rebuild
the walls (our Black males) we must gain an informed understanding of their condition. This requires serious inquiry, especially of the socio-economic conditions of African American males.

The second principle necessary to rebuild the walls is to have or "develop a sensitivity for the problem." In Neh 1:4, Nehemiah records the following: "And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept." His response to the conditions reported to him caused him serious concern. He was moved to tears because of his love for his people. Our response to the situation of African Americans today should elicit the same response from us. The problems include homeless children, the homicide of African American boys, the impregnation of African American girls, and the physical abuse of African American women.

The third principle in the Nehemian biblical model is to "mourn, fast, pray, and seek God's direction" for God's plan of supernatural intervention. To mourn or lament is a first step in the process toward seeking divine guidance. According to Neh 1:4, Nehemiah not only "mourned certain days," but also "fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven," seeking out divine help to rebuild the walls. Fasting and praying is a worthwhile spiritual discipline. Fervent prayer should always be motivated by our intention to do something positive, however. As the saying goes, we must pray as if everything depends on God, but get up and act like everything depends on us. Prayer is a necessary prerequisite to action, not a substitute for it.

1Ibid., 247.
2Ibid., 248.
To “obtain the resources necessary”\(^1\) to build the walls is the fourth principle extracted from the Nehemiah model. Nehemiah was informed, he wanted to see things better, he was in serious prayer, but he lacked certain resources necessary to build the walls. According to Neh 2:1-9, Nehemiah submitted a proposal to the king for assistance. This proposal included a time line, official government letters for safe passage, and a request for lumber materials. Nehemiah had a plan with specific goals, measurable objectives, a projected time line for completion, a list of materials, and the expected cost. We too must have the same as we work to rebuild the walls in our community.

The fifth principle in Nehemiah’s model is to “examine the magnitude and extent of the problem.”\(^2\) When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he went out at night on a reconnaissance mission. He did a local needs assessment. Local planning requires realistic and manageable goals. Nehemiah’s plan was absolutely useless until he left the palace and went to the site where the walls were to be rebuilt. Addressing the problems that face our Black families and Black men will require us to leave the boardroom, the executive suite, and the ivory tower of academia.

According to Neh 2:17, the prophet exhorted the people with these words: “Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste. . . . Let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.” Nehemiah articulated “the plan to those who would be involved in the work.”\(^3\) This was step number six. Nehemiah did not come in as an outsider. He was informed. He had a burden. He had a plan from God. He had the

\(^1\)Ibid., 249.
\(^2\)Ibid., 250.
\(^3\)Ibid., 251.
support of the king and material resources. He had done the needs assessment. He was ready to work. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, in order to be received by African American men and rebuild their walls, we will need to be informed with a genuine burden. We will need to pray and receive a plan from God for this specific ministry, acquire the necessary resources to implement the plan, and effectively articulate the plan to those who will be involved and prepare ourselves to get busy.

In order to rebuild the walls in Jerusalem, it was important for Nehemiah to “build teams and coalitions to implement the plan.” The is the seventh principle we can take from Nehemiah. The prophet presented his plan to the priests, the nobles, and the various city officials, along with the rank and file. Because Nehemiah was so thorough in his presentation to the potential coalitions, the response was positive. Neh 2:18 reads, “And they said, let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.” Chap. 3 goes on to describe the success of the work effort, which was initiated by the priests and supported by the people. Part of the strategy was an appeal to the people to work on the wall in front of their homes.2

From this we learn that efforts to address the needs of the African American male must begin with and be initiated by the priests or religious leaders. But the gravity of “rebuilding the walls” demands all hands to accomplish the mission. Chapter 3 also highlights that in rebuilding the walls in Jerusalem, the people reused the old stones from the original walls. The theological implication is that we must use and re-instill the “old

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1Ibid.
2Ibid., 252.
stones" of respect for women and the elderly, responsibility, commitment to family, love, discipline, spirituality, and the value of hard work.

Nehemiah had to “pray, persist, and remain focused on the plan.”1 There would be many distractions and calculated opposition. There would be verbal ridicule, worker fatigue, possible war and persecution. But Nehemiah writes, in Neh 4:9, “Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.” Nehemiah had a settled determination to complete the task. There were times when he had to motivate the people to persevere. In Neh 4:14 he writes, “And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, be not afraid of them: Remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”

This eighth principle that we can take from Nehemiah is that it is critical to “pray, persist, and remain focused on the plan.” Those committed to improving the condition of the African American male may expect the dominant culture to question motives. It is a historical fact that most efforts by African Americans for self-definition and empowerment have been met with fierce opposition from factions within and without the African American community.2 Notwithstanding, we must be willing to fight to rebuild the walls for our families. This means posting guards and preparing for war. At all costs, we must be willing to pray, persist, and remain focused on the plan. Ridicule, fatigue, and threats may be made, but we must count the cost and pay the price.

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1Ibid., 253.
2Ibid., 253-254.
A ninth principle set forth by the Nehemiah model is the need to "make personal financial sacrifices to complete the work."¹ When the prophet learned that some enterprising Jews were charging their poorer brothers and sisters interest on money borrowed, he condemned the practice, expressing his strong opposition to extortion. Nehemiah even sacrificed his own rights for the sake of the work of rebuilding the walls. As governor, he was entitled to receive land, food, and taxes. He chose to demonstrate an unselfish example. Neh 5:17-18 reads, "Moreover, there were at my table a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us.... Yet for all this (i.e., feeding 150 people daily for the duration of the project) required I not the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon his people." The noble example of Nehemiah is instructive to us in "rebuilding the walls" of Black males. Often it is costly to address the needs of the stereotyped endangered species. The threat of insufficient funds could delay or possibly discontinue the ministry of rebuilding the walls. We may need to sacrifice our personal resources to see the "walls" finished. Personal resources may be understood to include time, talent, temple, and treasure.

After the walls were completed, Nehemiah was concerned for maintenance. Therefore, he had to "expect and prepare for a life of continued watchfulness and self-sacrifice."² Part of this tenth principle would include the appointment of his brother to be in charge of Jerusalem. This concept is documented in Neh 7:1-2: "Now it came to pass when the wall was built, and I set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
Levites were appointed, that I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many."

The loyalty of a blood relative was considered certain. Although the walls had been successfully rebuilt, the city still was not completely safe from attack. It was therefore necessary for the people to remain in a state of watchfulness, readiness, and even self-sacrifice.

Applications to the Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church

The use of Nehemiah's principles to rebuild the walls in the Atlanta community can help facilitate success. We must also be aware that we may experience similar challenges, difficulties, and problems. When success is achieved, we must remain on constant alert and do not take advances for granted. Efforts to "rebuild the walls" of Black males will necessitate numerous meetings, special commissions, forums, facilities, staff, finances, the organized collection and analysis of data germane to the Black male. We will need to put into place a strategic plan based on biblical principles. When we use the scriptural principles outlined in the book of Nehemiah, the "walls" will be built for many, and our Black communities will agree with Nehemiah in his statement of Neh 6:15-16: "So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of the Lord."

The principles outlined in Nehemiah and highlighted by Dr. John M. Wallace appear to be the biblical and spiritual basis for the strategic plans enumerated by Leonard D. Goodstein, Timothy M. Noland, and J. William Pfeiffer in the textbook, *Applied*
Strategic Planning. Applied strategic planning must answer three questions: (1) Where are you (the organization) going? This involves a mission or statement. (2) What is the environment? Assess the strengths, limitations, opportunities, and threats. (3) How do you get there? This means the development of a proposal or model to accomplish the answer to question 1. The process includes planning to talk about the process, clarifying mandates, identifying stakeholders, developing a mission statement, assessing the environment and resources, doing a gap analysis, framing critical factors, formulating strategies to manage the critical issues, presentation and adoption of the plan of action, and effective implementation, constant review, and/or revising to keep on course. After all, strategic planning is a set of concepts, procedures, and tools designed to cope with change. It is an informed method of dealing with reality. It provides the potential for positive results for a preferred future.

The model outlined in this research project for reaching the African American male, rebuilding the walls, includes similar steps. I was informed about the population demographics and social conditions. A legitimate concern for the survival of the Black male has been a lingering burden. A prayer has been, and still is, for God to help me reach the Black males in the area of the Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church community. I reviewed the city of Atlanta’s Comprehensive Development Plan. I conducted a survey to determine resources needed to attract Black males to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The analyzed data dictated a need for information on a series of study guides addressing the felt needs of this special male population. Once the African American male study guides were complete, I explained the plan to invite church members to be involved in the Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church during
the personal ministries period. Members, families, and even visitors received the study guides to share with Black men in the community. Not all students have completed the series, but some have. We remain diligent and vigilant after making personal sacrifices to pay for study guides. We will nurture those who have been “rebuilt” and hopefully protect them from a relapse.

I end this chapter with five compelling reasons for sharing one’s faith or witnessing. The first is because God has commanded us to do so as His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Second, it demonstrates our love for God (John 14:15). Third, our sharing is God’s chosen method to tell all people. Redeemed sinners must tell lost sinners about Christ (Rom 10:14-17). Fourth, God desires to save all people (Acts 4:12). Finally, someone shared his faith with us.
CHAPTER 4

SOCIOLOGICAL FACTORS AND CHALLENGES FACING THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE IN SOUTHEAST ATLANTA

Introduction

The term "sociology" has two stems—the Latin socius (companion) and the Greek ology (study of), and literally means the study of the process of companionship. In these terms, sociology may be defined as the study of the bases of social membership.1 As a study of human social relationships, sociology deals with how, why, and in what ways people form and change relationships and with the consequences of these relationships on people themselves.2 Sociology is the study of the ways in which human life is organized. It is essentially the study of people in their adaptation to the physical and natural environment along with the people in the environments. As a social science concerned with the systematic study of human society, sociology is concerned with the factors that influence human society: family, school, employment, and religion.3 Jonathan

3The Encyclopedia of Sociology (Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1974), 278.
H. Turner lists the basic institutions as family and kinship, religion, economy, government, and education.¹

Sociology is a science that synthesizes knowledge from other disciplines. Hence, it is a rigorous, scientific, and thus relatively objective study of human interaction. In this context, sociology deals with factors such as biological influences on behavior, the individual personality, group processes, social systems or institutions, and the impact of culture on behavior. The specific concern of the sociologist is the interaction that occurs within and between these factors and the resilient patterning of behavior.² We will note these factors on a national as well as on a local basis. Then we will note the challenges they present to African American males who need to be introduced to Adventism in Southeast Atlanta.

**Sociological Factors Concerning African Americans**

Social problems that plague the Black community are (1) increasing poverty of households headed by women, (2) increasing number of children born out of wedlock, (3) the concentration of children in poor neighborhoods, (4) escalating drug-related homicide rates among young Blacks, (5) the relatively high proportion of AIDS cases among Blacks, (6) the overall increase in *de facto* segregation, and (7) the re-emergence of violent racism.³ A response to this seven-point summary is reflected in the model to reach the African American male in Southeast Atlanta. Americans in general need to

¹Turner, 383.


³Ibid., XII.
believe that African Americans deserve access to social goods, which are food, housing, health care, child care, and jobs. These issues facing ethnic groups in America may be solved through the collective action of Americans acting from moral and patriotic interest.¹

Population and Race/Ethnic Statistics

By the year 2000, African Americans totaled 34.9 million, making up 13 percent of the total United States population. This is a 14 percent increase from 1990 to 1999. Most African Americans live in metropolitan areas in the south. Nine of the ten cities with the highest percentage of African Americans are Gary, Indiana; Birmingham, Alabama; Jackson, Mississippi; New Orleans, Louisiana; Baltimore, Maryland; Atlanta, Georgia; Memphis, Tennessee; Washington, DC; and Richmond, Virginia. A northern city with a high percentage of African Americans is Detroit, Michigan.²

The ten states with the largest number of African Americans are New York, with 3.2 million; California, with 2.5 million; Texas, 2.4 million; Florida, 2.3 million; Georgia, 2.2 million; Illinois, 1.8 million; North Carolina, 1.7 million; and Maryland, Louisiana, and Michigan, with 1.4 million each.³ Georgia has the fifth highest concentration of African Americans. With less than 25,000 Seventh-day Adventists in the state of Georgia, the very concentration of population is a reason to develop a model to reach the

¹Biddle, 5b:4.
³Ibid.
African American male with what Adventism has to offer in fulfillment of his basic needs.

African Americans face current challenges (2000) that impact their group status and advancement within the United States. These challenges involve employment, education, family, health, race relations, criminal justice, economic development, and the role of the African American church.¹

In 1977, the federal government needed uniform and comparable racial and ethnic statistics. Four categories or classifications were delineated: (1) White, (2) Black, (3) Asian and Pacific Islander, (4) American Indian, and two ethnic categories (Hispanic and Non-Hispanic).² In 1997, the classification was revised as follows: (1) White, (2) Black or African American, (3) Hispanic or Latino, (4) Asian, (5) American Indian or Alaskan Native, (6) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.³ Without including Hispanic origin as a question, the Americans of 2000 were 75.1 percent White, 12.3 percent Black, 5.5 percent some other race, 3.6 percent Asian, and 2.4 percent multiracial. When the Hispanic-origin question is included in the census, the White population becomes 69.1 percent; Hispanic, 12.5 percent; Black, 12.1 percent; and Asian, 3.6 percent.⁴ This means, statistically and population-wise, that the Hispanics are the largest minority in the United States, but not necessarily the most oppressed visually. The

¹Biddle, 5b:1.


³Ibid., 27.

⁴Ibid.
implications of losing minority status may have tremendous implications for future policies.

Visible difference is a sociological factor. Visible differences come in two varieties: mutable and immutable. Mutable or largely mutable factors include accents, attire, beauty, carriage, demeanor, and weight. Immutable or largely immutable factors include gender, height, facial features, hair texture, sexual orientation, and skin color. The most significant visible differences are skin color and physical characteristics, which often become inextricably intertwined with cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and socio-economic factors.¹ The challenge of visible difference is still an issue in some places. Racial differences in sheer biological terms present no problem. It is the attitudes and sentiments attached to physical differences that are important, sociologically, and which in large measure determine social superiority and inferiority.²

A History of Racism and Discrimination

When the reconstruction period ended in 1876, the legal emancipation of the Negro was denied him. He lived under legal, economic, and social limitations. These limitations were experienced in the form of segregation and discrimination. Segregation refers to categoric spatial separation. Discrimination refers to categorical unequal treatment.³ Discrimination sets into motion various types of minority/majority social relations. These include segregation, expulsion, and extermination. Discrimination is a

¹Ibid., 4.
³Green, 233.
type of interaction in which the rights and privileges enjoyed by most are denied to others.¹ During my lifetime, I have experienced this interaction via passive acceptance and organized protest. The former was as a teenager and the latter as an ordained minister during the Civil Rights struggle.

Overcoming "The Negro's Place" is still a challenge in some pockets of our country. For years there was an elaborate code of "racial etiquette" that was enforced. By act and manner Blacks were required to affirm their social inequality. A servile, placatory, shuffling, begging demeanor met with White approval.² This notion, of course, is an outgrowth of racism. Racism is a belief in racial superiority that leads to discrimination and prejudice toward those races considered inferior. In the United States, racism has most frequently taken the form of White antagonism toward Blacks. But other groups, such as Asians, have also been victimized.³

Racism is further defined as the determination of actions, attitudes, or policies by beliefs about racial characteristics. Racism may be overt and individual, involving individual acts of oppressions against subordinate racial groups or individuals. It may be covert and institutional, involving structural relations of subordination and oppression between social groups. While individual racism consists of intended actions, institutional racism involves the unintended consequences of a system of racial inequality.⁴ Many

¹Ibid., 381.
²Ibid., 233.
³Encyclopedia of Sociology, 236.
⁴Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner, 173.
African American males are still struggling with overcoming the remnants of racism. A model to reach the African American male will address this.

It is a historical fact that in his 1963 speech proposing what was to become the Civil Rights Act of 1964, John F. Kennedy became the first American president to declare that racism was morally wrong. If it took 343 years of the country’s history before the problem was officially acknowledged, it is understandable that the oppressed may need a period of time to overcome “The Negro’s Place.”

No other population has experienced the same degree of discrimination as Black Americans. Over 25 million Blacks can trace their ancestry to slavery. As slaves, Blacks had few legal rights. They were slaves for life. They were the property of others. Of course, marriages between Blacks and Whites were prohibited. Blacks could not enter civil contracts. Blacks could not testify against Whites or even engage in litigation. Until the end of slavery, Blacks in the South could not acquire property. They were kept out of the mainstream of society—the economy, government, education, and community. They were also subject to highly prejudicial beliefs about their inferiority and bestiality. A model to reach the African American male must include a component of self-worth and affirmation.

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2 Turner, 372.
Pejorative Terms and Slurs

Pejorative name-calling is an issue that has residual effects. African Americans and other people of color might disparage White people by calling them okies, crackers, honkies, rednecks, White trash, or in the case of White men, White boys. Whites and minorities alike frequently use the terms “White trash” and its analogue “trailer trash,” a derogatory term for Whites who live in mobile home communities, to describe the poorer members of the Caucasian race. White people often use such terms as hillbilly, cracker, and White trash among themselves as a way of denoting class distinctions. Of those terms, “White trash” is probably the most vicious. This contemptible slur takes into account race and socio-economic status as it analogizes garbage and human beings.

“Cracker” is not a positive term by any means, but it lacks the brute force of “White trash.” No one wants to be called a hillbilly either. However, the usage of the term would not precipitate a bout of fisticuffs (the surest barometer of the viciousness of a slur) as quickly as if someone started throwing around the epithet “White trash.” “Redneck” as a term is synonymous with the adjectives ignorant and racist.

The most controversial slur and pejorative term, however, is the one applied to African Americans—the word “Nigger.” All the other hateful epithets used by racists to disparage African Americans—coons, spooks, darkies, jungle bunnies, spearchuckers, and the like—pale in comparison to the N-word. This word has the force to pierce, wound, and penetrate as no other. It is so vicious that it has gained prominence for other

1Pulera, 186.

2Ibid.
ethnic groups. Bigots refer to Arabs as “Sand Niggers,” and they dismiss Great Plains Indians as “Prairie Niggers.” Disenfranchised people of all races use the term “Nigger” as a self-referential shorthand to express their feelings of oppression and marginalization. African American males are seeking to overcome the impact this name designation has had on its psyche.

Many African Americans believe that the N-word is so hateful that it should not be used by Blacks in any context. That is one of the reasons for launching an ultimately unsuccessful campaign in the late 1990s to remove the N-word from *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. In any event, everyone, even hard-core racists, realizes that the N-word is off limits to non-Blacks. Some Whites, therefore, delight in using it to offend people. Based on this research, Anthony Neal concludes that it would be incorrect to argue that what one is called does not matter.

African Americans used a wide variety of terms to describe the array of colors within Black America. An exceptionally insulting term is “high yellow.” This refers to those mulattos who mimicked the racial exclusion of White society and sought to distinguish themselves from other Blacks through social rituals and other exclusionary mechanisms. One such ritual was the blue-veins test, whereby only persons whose veins were visible through their skin could be members of specific social clubs. Another was

1Ibid., 187.

2Ibid.

the brown paper bag test, whereby only those individuals with skin lighter than the color of brown paper could join certain church congregations.¹

The cultural and political list of names for African Americans is long and complicated. They have been called other persons, Africans, slaves, Black, people of color, Negro, colored, Afro-American, African American, minority, at risk, inner city residents, under-represented, the undercabs, and the infamous nigger.² The residual effects still present challenges. Even Chinese, Japanese, Hispanics, and American Indian females do not wish to be addressed as “chines,” “japs,” “spics,” or “squaws,” respectively.³

Income and Education

As of 2002, 28 percent of African American families reported an income of $50,000 or more, while 26 percent of them had incomes that fell in the poverty index and are classified as poor. The historical income tables for the U.S. Census 2000 shows the median household income for African Americans was $34,204, compared to $56,442 for Whites, and $35,050 for Hispanics. Even so, this income was the highest for African Americans since census reporting began in 1959.⁴ The model for reaching the African American male needs a financial component to help improve the quality of life.

¹Pulera, 37.
²Neal, 50.
³Pulera, 181-183.
According to Daniel Thompson, as late as 1974, twenty-seven years after the Supreme Court’s 1954 decision, Blacks suffered the same relative deprivation as prior to 1954. This is ninety years after the Emancipation Proclamation (1863). He contends that Blacks still do not have equal protection of the law, equal economic opportunity, equal political participation, equal educational opportunity, equal access to health facilities and housing. They remain on the whole a disesteemed, disadvantaged, relatively powerless racial minority outside the mainstream of American life.\(^1\) Conditions have improved some since 1974.

With few exceptions, the more education an African American male had, the better his or her earning capabilities. By way of example, the median income of a person with a Bachelor’s degree was $62,188 in 1998, compared to $34,373 for a high-school graduate. The median for someone who did not complete the ninth grade is $16,154.\(^2\) Hence, schools are important; they form two basic functions, a manifest function and a latent function. The manifest function is to teach specific subject matter, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. The latent function is to teach social skills and attitudes such as self-discipline and obedience to authority.\(^3\)

Reaching the African American male in Southeast Atlanta with Adventism could significantly improve the realization of the two functions. It would be seen in well-ordered homes where the sanctity of life is highly regarded along with cultural capital.


\(^2\)Pulera, 126, 127.

Unfortunately, 50 percent of White America believes African Americans have parity in education. In reality, there is a 10 percent gap in high-school diplomas, an 11 percent gap in undergraduate degrees, and an even larger gap in postgraduate degrees. If we had achieved the quest for equality in education, 2 million more African Americans would have their high-school diplomas. Nearly 2 million more would have undergraduate degrees. Another 180,000 African Americans would have doctorates. Experience has taught us that education is a passport to the future. It is a fact of life that tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.

In 1999, the U.S. Census Bureau found that the majority of adult African Americans had completed high school. College enrollment among African Americans increased by 50 percent from 1990-2000, with 16 percent of African American women holding Bachelor’s degrees, compared to 14 percent of men. Even with progress, there are still noticeable gaps.

The issue of jobs and employment is a critical factor in the Black community, especially among Black men. The state of America would be considerably different if Blacks enjoyed the same status as the average White American. The research of Franklin Raines in 2001 concluded: “If Blacks and Whites had equal employment, it would mean that 700,000 more African Americans would have jobs today. It would mean that nearly two million more African Americans would be promoted to higher paying and


3Biddle, 5a:1.
managerial jobs." In the land of the free and the home of the brave, Blacks still suffer from a clear lack of equal opportunities. They are an oppressed minority. Their existence in a society valuing freedom and equality poses a severe contradiction and dilemma.  

Home Ownership

The Black male’s perceived low social status is influenced by his lack or low ownership of adequate land and housing. In a speech by Malcolm X, he states:

Revolutions are fought to get control of land, to remove the absentee landlord and gain control of the land and the institutions that flow from that land. The Black man has been in a very low condition because he has had no control whatsoever over any land. He has been a beggar socially, a beggar even when it comes to get an education. So that in the past the type of mentality that was developed in this colonial system among our people today is being overcome.  

My twenty-five-year-old granddaughter may or may not have read Malcolm X’s above referenced speech, but as a young Black, educated, hard-working, independent woman, she just purchased a home over which she has some control as a “homeowner.”

In a 1907 publication, the world famous Andrew Carnegie asked three questions: (1) Can the Negro adjust to a free and civilized society? (2) Can the Negro read and write and eliminate illiteracy? (3) Can the Negro earn a wage and save enough to own some land and a house? The answer to the three questions is a resounding YES. He documented his responses by affirming the positive. Blacks are still adjusting, surviving,

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1Raines, 15, 16.

2Turner, 373.


learning, and earning. The prospects are even better when a model accepts and affirms human values and potential.

Home ownership is without doubt the single most important means of accumulating assets for the typical American family. However, continuing segregation has had an enduring impact on Blacks' quest for asset accumulation. Three areas in which discrimination is known to be a factor are (1) obtaining credit, (2) assignment of interest rates, and (3) assessment of property taxes.¹ Unfortunately, there appears to be covert continuation of racial discrimination in some financial mortgage markets.² Blacks continue to be the most discriminated against in terms of residential segregation. They continue to have the greatest difficulties finding opportunities for socio-economic mobility.³

The national home ownership rate is nearly 68 percent. For White families, it is 74 percent. For African Americans, it is 48 percent, which was the national average in the early 1940s. Young African Americans are not buying homes in large numbers. It is mainly because of lack of wealth transfer from parents. Notwithstanding, home ownership does a lot for persons other than putting a roof over their head. It helps with a person's psyche and discipline. If we closed the gap between White and Black home ownership, there would be 3 million more African American home owners.⁴

²Ibid., 241.
³Ibid., 400.
⁴Raines, 19, 20.
Dan Biddle, African American home ownership increased 5 percent between 1995 and 1999.¹

Progress in home ownership has taken place, but the matter of homelessness still presents a very strong challenge. People do not become homeless suddenly. A homeless career develops in stages. Progression from one stage to the next is not inevitable, but depends on the individual’s actions and others’ reactions to him or her. The first stage in the homeless career is “the recently dislocated.”² They do not know where to turn, whom to trust, or how they will survive. They go to the helping agencies. If he/she does not find a job, they become “straddlers.”³ In this stage, they have learned how to get by and are less threatened by other homeless people. The third stage in the homeless career is “outsiders.”⁴ In this stage, there is a complete break with conventional society. They are oriented to surviving on the street and have adopted street identities.

Every year, some 1.2 billion adults become homeless at least temporarily. It has been estimated that in a given month about 350,000 Americans are homeless. About three quarters are male; about 60 percent are White and 40 percent are Black. Nearly all are unmarried. Most are relatively young. The median age is thirty-seven.⁵

¹Biddle, 5a:2.  
²Calhoun, Light, and Keller, 197.  
³Ibid.  
⁴Ibid.  
⁵Ibid., 196.
Poverty

After 140 years of legal freedom, African Americans still have a problem with poverty. In order to develop a systematic picture or index of poverty in the United States, the government calculates an official poverty line. This is based on the minimum amount of money that families of different sizes and compositions need to purchase a nutritionally adequate diet. The assumption is that the family spends one-third of their income for food. In 1993, the poverty line for a family of four was $14,763 per year, or a little over $1,200 a month. Above this level people may still be poor, but only those below this level are counted in official poverty statistics.\(^1\) Although African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to be poor, the majority of poor Americans (66.8%) are White. Based on the 1998 poverty line ($1,500 for a family of four), roughly a quarter of African Americans were poor. While there are more poor Whites than Blacks (20 million compared to 9 million Blacks), poverty has a more devastating impact on the Black community than on the White.\(^2\) As a matter of record, in 1988 the percentage of the United States population below the poverty level was 10.7 percent; for Whites it was 8.2%; for African Americans it was 29.9 percent.\(^3\) The poverty line in 1999 for a family of four was $16,700.\(^4\) This is an average of $1,390 per month. This is an increase of only

\(^1\)Calhoun, Light, and Keller, 189.


\(^4\)Smelser, Wilson, and Mitchell, 354.
$190 over a period of six years. A side effect of poverty and powerlessness is substance abuse.¹

A contributing factor to African American poverty is high unemployment. High unemployment also has side effects. Persistently high unemployment is one important cause, if not the principle cause, of the high rate of divorce, separation, and out-of-wedlock births in the Black community. Black male unemployment is one of the main reasons that African American families are so dependent on welfare.²

Popular explanations for the culture of poverty in the Black community include lack of education, chronic unemployment, teenage pregnancy and out-of-wedlock births, welfare dependency, gangs, drugs, crime, and the breakdown of the American family.³ Explanations of poverty in America tend to fall into three broad positions. One camp holds that the poor are poor because they choose not to work. They lack motivation. A second argument is that the poor cannot work because of age, disability, the need to care for young children, or other reasons. The third major explanation for poverty is that there are not enough jobs to go around.⁴

Black people, and particularly young African American men, must realize that they do not have to live lives of despair. They do not have to accept a world of poverty, disease, and hopelessness.⁵ After a half century as a minister, I have seen Black males

¹Pulera, 120.
²Walton and Smith, 270.
³Calhoun, Light, and Keller, 193.
⁴Ibid., 190.
move from poverty to middle class when they take seriously the tenets of Adventism. The credibility of Wickham's statement is consistent with my pastoral experience. In fact, my own journey validates the observation.

Crime

As of June 30, 1999, the number of Black young adult inmates in federal prisons and local jails was simply alarming. There were 466,000 Black men in prison who are between 18-34 years old. There were 40,700 Black women of the same ages who were also incarcerated. Notwithstanding, if we had equality in the criminal justice system, the prison system would lose 700,000 African American adults of all ages, and 33,000 fewer juveniles who are in detention. This would save the country over $15 billion in the cost of incarceration.

Crime is another side effect of poverty. Blacks are arrested, convicted, and incarcerated at far higher rates than are Whites. In 1990, a statistical pattern indicated that the chance that a Black male born in the United States would go to prison for a felony was about 28.5 percent. The chance for a White man was only 4.4 percent. It should not be surprising that frustration, anger, fear, suspicion, and even paranoia have seeped into the perceptions of many observers of the criminal justice system.

As of June 30, 1999, the Federal Bureau of Investigation issues annual reports about two major categories of crime. The first (type 1 crimes or index crimes) are crimes

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2 Raines, 18.

3 Smelser, Wilson, and Mitchell, 2.
that cause serious harm to people or property. These would include murder, rape, assault, burglary, theft, and arson. Type 2 crimes are less serious offenses. These would include prostitution, drug abuse, illegal weapons possession, gambling, vandalism, and receiving stolen property. Blacks are more likely to be the perpetrators and the victims of violent crimes than any other group in society. In 1993, fifty-one of every one hundred murders in America were Black.¹ With respect to homicides in 1995, there were 5.1 homicide victims per 100,000 non-Hispanic White men. By contrast, there were 57.6 homicide victims per 100,000 Black men. This figure is more than ten times the White rate.²

Work and spiritual values are greatly needed since there is no strong evidence that imprisonment acts as a deterrent, reduces the number of potentially violent criminals in the population, or reforms the convicts.³ The model for reaching the African American male in Southeast Atlanta will include moral and spiritual concepts.

Similar to the infant mortality rate, the death rate for African American men is the highest in the United States. Homicide remains the leading cause of death for Black males between the ages of 15 and 34.⁴

An objective review of income comparisons is revealing. When President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, he recommended that the slaves labor faithfully for reasonable wages. While many Whites today believe that African Americans earn as much as Whites, the reality is different. The poverty rate for African Americans is more

¹Calhoun, Light, and Keller, 158, 160.
²Smelser, Wilson, and Mitchell, 2.
³Ibid., 172.
⁴Asanta and Mattsom, 168.
than double the White rate. Nearly one out of every two Blacks earns less than $25,000 annually. Only one in three Whites earn that little. The median income of a Black household is $27,000 compared to $42,000 for a White household income. Equality would mean a 56 percent pay raise for the average African American household.¹

A further explanation of income deserves mention. Income is what the average American family uses to reproduce daily existence in the form of shelter, food, clothing, and other necessities. In contrast, wealth is a storehouse of resources. It is what families own and use to produce income. Wealth signifies a control of financial resources that, when combined with income, provides the means and the opportunity to secure the good life.² African Americans have made progress in eradicating the wage gap, but progress has not eliminated race as an important predictor of an individual’s income.³

The economic status of Blacks has improved during 1991-1999. In particular, poverty among Blacks is at the lowest level since 1959. However, there are still large employment and income disparities between Blacks and Whites. Even though household income among Blacks improved, it is 63 percent of Whites. Even though the poverty rate among Blacks might be the lowest on record, 30 percent of Black families still live below the poverty line. And while the unemployment rate among Whites is 3.7 percent, it is 9.2 percent for Blacks.⁴ Economic growth has not significantly reduced the referenced disparities.

¹Raines, 16.
²Smelser, Wilson, and Mitchell, 222.
³Ibid., 53.
⁴Ibid., 218.
Health Risks

Life expectancy for Black men fell during the years 1991-1999. The National Center for Health Statistics reports that the life expectancy for Black men fell from 69.5 to 69.2 years during the 1990s. Factors cited for the decline included homicides, car accidents, drug abuse, AIDS, inadequate access to medical care, higher infant mortality, high death rates from cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, liver trouble, and kidney failure.\(^1\) A model for reaching the African American male must include a health-oriented component.

The health of African Americans is impacted by poverty and other sociological factors. While the data show that the African American family is decreasing in size, the state of African American health seems to be increasingly jeopardized. African Americans still have one of the highest mortality rates of any ethnic or cultural group in the United States. As socio-economic levels decline, mortality rates increase. The condition of African American health is directly related to poverty factors such as the lack of medical care for children and poor nutrition. Added to these factors is the unequal access to medical care when it is available.\(^2\)

To the extent that racial minority group members are over-represented among lower-income groups, worsening health status linked to economic inequalities will disproportionately affect these populations. Health status is affected not only by socio-


\(^2\)Asanta and Mattsom, 167.
economic status, but by exposure to economic privation over one’s life course.\(^1\) Even the persistence of racism, whether overt or covert, suggests that the disparities in minority health may linger for some time.

There are health risk behaviors that the poverty population engages in to their detriment, such as smoking, poor dietary intake, little or no physical activity, and alcohol intake. These are particularly important determinants of health. Another determinant of health, though not a behavior, is obesity.\(^2\)

In 1994, the percentages of the United States population who smoked were: American Indians, 36 percent; Blacks, 26.5 percent; Whites, 26.4 percent; Hispanics, 18 percent; and Asians, 14.2 percent.\(^3\)

Another serious health problem among African Americans is AIDS. In 1996, the Black/White death ratio for HIV/AIDS was 5.75:1. The impact of AIDS on the Black population is revealed in the fact that in 1996, while HIV was the eighth leading cause of death in the United States overall, it was the fourth leading cause of death in the Black population, and the third leading cause of death among Black males.\(^4\) The values that Adventism practices could prevent, reduce, or change the statistics in favor of a better quality of life.

The CDC reports that the impact of HIV and AIDS in the African American community has been devastating. There have been a total of 733,347 AIDS cases

\(^{1}\)Smelser, Wilson, and Mitchell, 399, 400.

\(^{2}\)Ibid., 271.

\(^{3}\)Ibid., 272.

\(^{4}\)Ibid., 378.
reported through 1999. Thirty-seven percent or 272,881 of these cases are African Americans. This is certainly disproportionate in terms of their 13 percent representation in the country's population. African American men are the largest group diagnosed with HIV (37%), and intravenous substance abusers (34%) are the second highest group. Other diseases that affect African Americans disproportionately are hypertension, lupus, sickle cell, diabetes, and prostate cancer. Adolescent pregnancy is another very serious concern.¹

Black Family Values

The African American family has sustained its members through extended family relationships from slavery to the present. African Americans feel that the family is the most important institution for improving their status within the United States. Twenty-five percent of African American children are at risk, however, from challenges to the family that include the absence of one or both parents, poverty, welfare dependency, and lack of education of parents. These problems are addressed effectively through family resiliency. The resilient families are characterized by (1) having a positive outlook on life, (2) having a mission and vision for the future, (3) accepting responsibility and taking risks, (4) monitoring and controlling emotions, and (5) maintaining a sense of humor.² There were 8.4 million African American families in 1999, and 47 percent were married couple families.³

¹Biddle, 5b:4.
²Ibid., 5b:3.
³Ibid., 2, 3.
The research of Joyce Ladner is even more exciting about the pre-World War II Black family. In our traditional culture (1940s-1960s), a responsible Black man was a good provider who loved his children and was a good, morally upright role model for them. He worked hard to do the right thing by his wife, and he was true to her. He bonded with others to bear collective responsibility for the community at large.¹ The most enduring of relationships remained in order for many generations among African Americans. It was not until the 1960s that we began to see large numbers of Black marriages come unraveled. In 1950, 78 percent of Black families had two parents. In 1960, the rate had declined slightly, to 74 percent. But those rates continued to spiral chaotically out of control throughout the 1970s and 1980s to the present. In 1997, only 46 percent of Black families were married couple families.²

In terms of Black family values, there are some practical ways that Black males may transmit them to their children. To begin with, it is vital to show that a good reputation is critical and to treat authority figures with deference. Black males must put their families first and show that money is not everything. They must celebrate the major milestones in the family and carry on or create family traditions, highlight Black history, and even plan a family reunion; teach problem solving or conflict resolution skills; minimize the media's commercial input via television. They should model courage and emphasize the can-do, self-sufficient spirit; practice the art of always telling the truth; go


²Ibid., 145.
to church, and teach the old-fashioned values of respect, reputation, and responsibility.¹

Next to family in importance is church. African Americans feel that their churches are the second most important resources for their development. These churches have played a central role in securing political positions and protesting for civil rights for African Americans from reconstruction up until the present.²

Returning to the old traditional African American values is a sure means of restoring a value system that can inspire hope, trust, and a desire to achieve. As a sociologist for thirty years, Joyce Ladner observed traits in African American children that were not tolerated in her generation. She lists them as (1) selfishness, (2) slothfulness, (3) materialism, (4) an inability to cope, and (5) fragility of soul.³

Obviously, Dr. Ladner was reared at a time when the African American family was more stable and four basic principles permeated family values. These have been identified as (1) the power of self-identity and self-worth; (2) the power of the extended family, which undergirded resilience, resistance, self-reliance, and resourcefulness; (3) the power of the community to determine its future; and (4) the power of the past to influence the future. Ultimately, Black family values are centered in survival.⁴

Summarizing Black family traditional qualities, Ladner credits our previous generations with engendering in their young a sense of identity, faith in God, respect for others, honesty and self-reliance, hard work, belief in education, integrity, courage, and

¹Ibid., 164-171.
²Ibid., 3.
³Ibid., 6.
⁴Ibid., 9, 10.
resilience. These values molded the character of a people who fought their way out of slavery and the poverty that followed the Emancipation.¹

The family is considered so important because it responds to some of the most fundamental human needs, both individual and collective. These include the need for love and emotional security, the need to regulate sexual behavior, the need to produce new generations, and the need to protect the young and disabled.² Even though many current Black homes reportedly lack a male presence, the Black families have endured tremendous negative social deterrents and survived. It is thus a resilient family.³

Unfortunately, African American families are 20-30 percent more likely to divorce than White couples. The sociological research confirms this. The likelihood of divorce is highest when (1) the husband and wife live in an urban area, (2) when they both work and the combined incomes are not high, (3) they married early, (4) they have not been married long, (5) the wife has an egalitarian attitude about the division of labor in the home and the husband does not, (6) neither husband nor wife has strong religious convictions, (7) both husband and wife are liberal in their attitudes, (8) both spouses are rather pessimistic about life, and (9) one or both spouses have parents who are divorced.⁴ A model to reach the African American male will include a non-threatening exposure to a whole family experience.

¹Ibid., 8.
²Calhoun, Light, and Keller, 294.
⁴Calhoun, Light, and Keller, 311.
Summary

The sociological factors negatively impacting the African American community on the national level include a history of racism; regularly used pejorative terms and labels; stark income disparity; poverty; high levels of unemployment; limited possibility for home ownership; high levels of crime; disproportionate numbers of Black inmates; inadequate schooling; health-risk behaviors; low-life expectancy; high divorce rates; and single-family homes.

African Americans in Atlanta, Georgia

Sociological issues facing African Americans on the national level are also impacting African Americans in the state of Georgia, and in Atlanta particularly. Most people spend their entire lives as members of one group or another. They are born into the family group. Later they get together to study in school, to work, to play, to worship, or in some instances to commit crime or to make war. The tendency to form groups lies at the very foundation of human society. If we want to know why people act as they do, we must understand how the grouping process operates. The chief function of sociology is to study the rules that govern group living.1

Social control of groups raises inquiries. Such inquiries consider how government, religion, the schools, family discipline, and public opinion all combine to restrain individuals and make them obey the group’s rules of approved conduct.2 The

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2Ibid., 243.
social institutions of the group then must include the family, the school, the church, and the government.

While its first aim remains to know the facts about social life, the great service of sociology will be to promote human progress and a more rational human society. Sociological factors include the problems of crime, poverty, war, education or the lack of it, and immigration. Additional factors are race prejudice, leisure/recreation, housing, family life issues, employment/jobs, and health care.

The Atlanta region of ten metropolitan counties, the city of Atlanta proper, and Southeast Atlanta in particular, have a series of sociological factors impacting African American males. The greatest problem for African Americans is poverty. This in turn is both a consequence and a result of the other factors that will be addressed under the following six headings: (1) population and race, (2) schools and education, (3) employment, (4) affordable housing and living standards, (5) transportation, and (6) income. For the sake of clarity, these divisions have been made. In fact, most interact with each other, however.

**Population and Race**

During the 1990s, Atlanta gained about 12,000 residents. The city of Atlanta was home to 22.4 percent of the region’s population in 1980, but only 13.3 percent in 1999. A one-year growth snapshot is revealing. From April 1998 to April 1999, the region (ten counties) grew by 94,300 people. The city of Atlanta gained a mere 900 residents.¹

The region and city growth put enormous pressure on the infrastructure and natural resources. The water problem for the city of Atlanta is a critical issue. The water/sewer rates are scheduled to triple in the next few years. African Americans will be among the hardest hit by these proposals. Fulton and Dekalb counties are home to 74 percent of the Atlanta region’s non-White population. In 1999, almost one-third of the Atlanta region’s non-White population lived in the city of Atlanta. In addition to this, Atlanta had 30 percent of the region’s non-White population, but only 13 percent of the overall region’s population.

The racial divide in the city of Atlanta corresponds to great income disparities. In 1990, over 88 percent of the residents of extreme poverty neighborhoods in the city of Atlanta were African American. The average 1989 income of Black families in the city of Atlanta was $24,700, compared to $96,700 for White families. The poverty rate for Blacks in the city of Atlanta was 32 percent in 1989.

The racial divide and the income divide are often related, but are not identical. While the vast majority of the region’s population is Caucasian or African American, the Atlanta region has become home for a growing population of Hispanics and Asians. The rate of immigration attests to the fact that the prosperity in the area makes it a magnet for international immigration. Skilled immigrants are often employed where Black males could be working.

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2. Jargowsky, Appendix B, Table B.1 and B.2.
High-poverty students, minority students, and poor public school performance are found in the city of Atlanta and close-in suburbs of the region. The city of Atlanta and southern inner suburban districts have higher than average numbers of poor students. In the Atlanta school district, 86 percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch in 1995. In southern Dekalb County, 60 percent qualified.\(^1\)

The segregation of public schools in the region escalates in the higher grades. In the city of Atlanta, nine of the fourteen high schools were at least 98 percent African American in the 1997-1998 school year.\(^2\) An indicator of the trend toward increased segregation in the city of Atlanta is the rising percentage of White children enrolled in private schools. This number grew from 11.4 percent in 1970 to 54.3 percent in 1990.

A high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-cost school lunches are a strong indicator of neighborhood stress. There are three reasons for this. First, federal lunch subsidies may be a more reliable measure of stress because the poverty level is very low: $16,276 for a family of four in 1997. Second, the school populations more or less mirror the populations of the neighborhoods in which the schools are located. Third, schools with high proportions of low-income students have a significant impact on where families with children choose to live.\(^3\)


Schools with high numbers of poor students are more likely to be majority Black and lag behind in achievement tests. However, White flight, the concentration of Black poverty, and the lack of community resources in impoverished areas have made the low-income and segregation problems also school performance problems. The flight of middle-class families from distressed schools only further weakens neighborhoods that are on the verge of instability.¹

Inadequate public education systems make the children and young adults of the distressed neighborhoods of Southeast Atlanta (where the Atlanta Boulevard Church is located) and the southern suburbs ill-equipped to compete for skilled jobs. Without proper education and training, African American males are relegated to low-paying, unskilled employment that holds out less hope for job stability and career advancement. The fact that poor schools are disproportionately Black in their student population means that the opportunity gap created by educational inequity increases future economic challenges faced by African American youth.²

Employment

Most new jobs, and high-paying jobs, are on the north side of the Atlanta region. This is primarily in north Fulton County, north Dekalb County, Gwinnett County, and Cobb County.³ These jobs are far distant from the majority Black population in the city of Atlanta. Entry-level jobs are moving away from the city of Atlanta. Welfare recipients

¹Pugh, 17.
²Ibid., 18.
and the working poor are most likely to fill entry-level jobs. The city of Atlanta accounts for only 15.8 percent of entry-level jobs in the region. Only 20,000 or 5.7 percent of the 350,000 jobs gained during 1990-1997 in the Atlanta region were in the city of Atlanta. In fact, Atlanta is slipping overall in its share of jobs. There is little or no job growth in majority non-White neighborhoods. South Atlanta had a net loss of nearly 1,000 jobs in the 1990s.

The unbalanced growth and entrenched lines of racial segregation in the Atlanta region keep many African American residents isolated from the greatest concentration of jobs and affluence. There is great spatial separation and a social separation of majority Black areas from many of the northern job centers that have a large and increasing share of White-collar and blue-collar jobs. Central city job-seekers (who are mostly African Americans) face significant challenges endeavoring to match transportation strategies to suburban work sites. There is not only a north-south divide in the number of jobs, but also in the kind of job.

Affordable Housing and Living Standards

There is little housing that middle-class residents can afford in the core of the Atlanta region. There is almost no housing that low-income working families can afford

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2Pugh, 18.
4Turner, Rubin, and Blair, 16-21.
5Pugh, 20.
in the job-rich areas. The spatial distribution of affordable housing plays a central role in shaping metropolitan growth patterns. One reason that low-income families live in the southern part of the metropolitan area is that there is almost no affordable housing elsewhere. This is partly because subsidized housing tends to be located in distressed inner city and older suburban neighborhoods. Another reason is because wealthier suburbs practice exclusionary zoning and thereby limit affordable housing within their borders. The lack of affordable housing limits the educational and employment opportunities of many working and minority families. The housing deficit further worsens the areas’ congestion problems by forcing families to travel long distances to their place of employment.\textsuperscript{1} Many middle-class families are unable to afford to live in many of the city of Atlanta’s residential areas or in job-rich parts of the suburbs.

The poor in the Atlanta region tend to live in the southern parts of Atlanta and the close-in southern suburbs. The north side of the region has very low poverty rates and almost no areas of concentrated poverty.\textsuperscript{2} The Atlanta region’s poverty challenge has a strong racial dimension. A 1999 study found that 91 percent of the welfare recipients in the city of Atlanta are African American and only 4 percent were White. In the region as a whole, 70 percent of welfare recipients are Black and 19 percent are White. Welfare recipients who are African American are concentrated in predominantly Black, high-poverty neighborhoods. High-poverty neighborhoods are those in which 40 percent or more of the residents are poor.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., 10.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid.
Fulton and Dekalb counties bear a disproportionate share of the region’s burden of poverty. (The Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church is in Dekalb County.) In 1995, these two counties were home to 37 percent of the region’s population, but 66 percent of the region’s poor people. Most, but not all, of the poverty population of these two counties lives in the city of Atlanta. The city of Atlanta in the 1990s had only 16 percent of the region’s population. However, it was home for nearly 43 percent of the region’s poor.

Concentrated poverty has detrimental consequences for individual households and middle-class families. Poverty also affects the “geography of opportunity” for these people who remain in inner city neighborhoods. Neighborhoods of extreme poverty are isolated from economic and educational opportunities elsewhere in the city or region. Poor central city residents often lack the means to access distant opportunities. As a result of this isolation from opportunity, people who live in very poor neighborhoods are more likely to drop out of school, become a single or teenage parent, and receive welfare payments.

Being home to large numbers of poor people also places serious financial burdens on entire jurisdictions. That serves as a disincentive for middle-class taxpayers and firms to locate or remain in the city. Poverty drives up the cost of providing services such as police, schools, courts, and fire protection. This then reduces the resources cities have to

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2U.S. Census Bureau, 1995.

3Pugh, 10.
serve non-poor residents and simultaneously increases the tax rates they have to charge all their residents.¹

Public Transportation

The city of Atlanta operates a transportation system. It is called MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transportation Authority). MARTA’s riders are disproportionately non-White and MARTA serves only the two counties of Fulton and Dekalb. The fact that most transportation riders are African American has limited MARTA’s growth in predominantly White and well-off suburban areas.² Another factor of note is that MARTA is the only metropolitan transit system in the country that receives no funding from the state government.³ Incidentally, the current CEO of MARTA is an African American.

Unfortunately, many of the largest job centers are not served by public transit. MARTA has over 1,600 miles of rail and bus lines. MARTA serves over a half-million people each day and yet this public transit does not reach three of the five counties—namely, Cobb, Gwinnett, and Clayton, in which the region’s employment is concentrated.⁴ Overwhelmingly relied upon by minorities and low-income people who


²Atlanta Region Outlook, 1998, 41-56.


tend to live in the southern part of the city and the region, it is relatively underfunded and constrained by suburban resistance.¹

Income

The city of Atlanta and the close-in suburbs are home to most of the working poor and moderate-income families in the Atlanta region. The census tracts with the greatest percentages of single-mother households were in the city of Atlanta and the close-in suburbs of DeKalb and Fulton counties.²

In 1990, families with incomes below the regional median lived primarily in the city of Atlanta and Fulton, DeKalb, and Clayton counties. The city of Atlanta’s median household income was $22,275 compared to the region’s $36,640.³ Many of the challenges of the officially poor are shared by those with incomes well above the poverty line, but well below the median income of the city or region. As Margaret Pugh points out, in some ways, working families have to struggle harder than officially poor families. This is because their income is too high to qualify for government-provided or subsidized child care and medical care.⁴

As an ordained pastor in the 1970s, I worked for the Northeastern Conference in New York City. My residence was in Teaneck, New Jersey. Based on my income, I qualified for food stamps, but my application for them was denied because I was purchasing a home. This personal experience simply illustrates the challenge that some

¹Pugh, 22.
²Ibid.
³Ibid., 12.
⁴Ibid.
working families are encountering in the inner city of Atlanta. Margaret Pugh assessed it well in her observation referenced in the preceding paragraph.\(^1\)

**Summary**

The sociological factors negatively impacting the African American community in the Atlanta area include, high concentrations of non-White populations that put pressures on the infrastructure and natural resources; a stark racial divide and income disparity; racial segregation in public schools; an inadequate educational system in African American neighborhoods; limited employment opportunities; no affordable housing for poor in job-rich areas and little available housing for middle-income families in these same areas; little public transportation into job-rich areas; and most of all a stark income disparity that feeds into the cycle of poverty and lower standards of living.

**Conclusion**

Social problems that plague the African American community must be addressed if we are to successfully reach Black males with Seventh-day Adventism. As outlined in the above section, poverty, single-parent households, inadequate schooling, escalating drug problems and crimes, *de facto* segregation, and racial violence all contribute to making life difficult for African American members of the Atlanta community.

According to the 2002 Comprehensive Development Plan for the city of Atlanta, serious issues confront all levels of society in the city of Atlanta. One-third of the city’s population is at or below the poverty line. The number of persons in the city 65 or older has annually increased since 1990. The city’s dropout rate for high-school youth

\(^1\)Ibid.
continues to be high compared to surrounding jurisdictions in the region. While the unemployment rate for the city of Atlanta has dropped to the low single digits, the unemployment rate in those census tracts with the highest incidence of poverty remains in double digits.

Poverty in Atlanta is similar to that of other major urban areas and faces similar challenges. The social challenges for the city include an increase in the number of children in poverty. There is an erosion of the family. The number of female head of households is increasing. There is a continued increase in the low-moderate income elderly population without an adequate social support system. Affordable housing to support individuals in poverty is lacking. Inner-city jobs that allow the individual or family to escape the incidence of poverty are lacking. Affordable child care services for those most in need are hardly available. Innovative learning programs for students from low- and moderate-income families are minimal if not lacking. Affordable health care to support the needs of those in poverty is difficult to obtain. There is a lack of “reverse commute” and like transportation programs to allow inner-city residents the ability to access higher paying job opportunities in suburban counties. There is a serious deficit of resettlement programs for the diverse populations that are rapidly migrating to the city.

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1City of Atlanta, Comprehensive Development Plan 2002 (Atlanta: Department of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Conservation, 2001), 8-1.

2Ibid., 8-1, 2.

3Ibid.
Unfortunately, not much seems to be officially planned for human development and human services for the central city residents who are largely minority and/or African American.

Atlanta's challenge is to address smart growth. This includes transportation congestion, environmental concerns, economic development, resolution of social issues, racial inequities, school quality, affordable housing, and help the south side to grow.\(^1\) The city of Atlanta must consider the role of race in shaping the metropolis. Race has exacerbated the concentration of poverty in the central city. It has impeded efforts to expand MARTA beyond Fulton and Dekalb counties. Race has diminished the educational and economic opportunities of minority families. Race shapes growth patterns and drives business and residential decisions in ways that no other single factor can match.\(^2\) The racial divisions in Atlanta are not going to be solved overnight. But frank, open conversation about the causes and consequences of these divisions is helpful.\(^3\)

The sociological factors that the African American male faces in the city of Atlanta are real and challenging. While the major general issues are transportation, affordable housing, and economic development, the particulars of explosive population growth, the detrimental consequences of concentrated poverty, the disparity in household income, the impact of the racial divide, poor school performance of high-poverty and minority Black students, and the spatial separation of minority Black areas from the job centers are extremely critical and pressing. Therefore, survival from day to day, or from

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\(^1\)Pugh, 36, 38.

\(^2\)Ibid., 39.

\(^3\)Ibid.
poverty-level paycheck to paycheck, tends not to leave much time and interest for religious matters. Notwithstanding, the very nature of the social issues requires moral and spiritual resources to give meaning and quality to an existence at or slightly above poverty level.

These are the documented sociological concerns facing the African American males in Southeast Atlanta. These factors provide the basis for the development of a model for reaching the African American male in Southeast Atlanta with Adventism.
CHAPTER 5

SURVEY OF PROGRAMS TO REACH AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES

Introduction

As unequivocally expressed by the writer of the book of Acts: God “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17:26). Paul delivered his celebrated Areopagus speech in Athens, the intellectual capital of the ancient world. Significantly, he called attention to the consistent biblical theme that in the beginning there was one race, the human race, and in the beginning there was one family, the human family. Paul was very clear about the fact that this family includes both men and women and people of all races and nationalities. Thus, it includes African American males.

In this chapter, I focus on two programs that have experienced success in reaching the African American male. The first program I explore is the Black Muslim organization which provides a successful model for recruitment and retention of African American men. The second is the remarkably successful Black male ministry of the Saint Paul Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York.
The Muslim Model

In the 1930s, the Black Muslims began preaching Black autonomy, Black union, and Black supremacy against the racism and oppression of the White world. This began with the formation of the Nation of Islam in 1930. In 1934, Elijah Muhammad took over the group and began his forty-year leadership during which time the organization was remarkably successful at recruiting converts.¹ One of the organization’s most important ministers, Malcolm X, who joined the group at the end of that decade argued that while Christianity was the religion of White oppressors, Islam offered African Americans a hope for dignity, justice, and equality in America.² In response, African American males joined up with the Black Muslims in record numbers. After Elijah Muhammad’s death in 1975, the organization changed into a more orthodox Islamic organization. Disillusioned by this, a group split off in 1977, under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan, calling itself the true Nation of Islam.³

The success of the Black Muslims in recruiting converts makes them a model worthy of emulation. Christian churches would be well-served to study the Nation of Islam, especially during the period under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, as a evangelistic model.

²Haley and Malcolm X, 238-39.
Cultivating a Sense of Self-Worth and Belonging

Under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X, the Black Muslim movement was open and vocal about its discontent with the status quo. The Nation of Islam provided a workable and sufficiently flexible identity for an ever-expanding group of disenchanted African Americans. African American males have always tended to respond to the Black Muslim's straightforward articulation of what the organization took to be the etiology of the Black problem—White evil and intransigence. With a passion for group solidarity, the group focused on what it described as getting “the White man’s foot off our necks, his hand out of our pocketbooks, and his carcass off our backs.” The ultimate appeal of the organization in the middle of the twentieth century was the chance to become identified with a power that appeared strong enough to overcome the domination of the White man. The anti-Christian tone of much of the Muslim teaching also has a strong attraction for some Blacks. To be identified with a movement that openly rejects the fundamental values of the powerful majority could enhance one’s self-esteem and stature. Furthermore, the Muslim movement was perceived by its members as a cause worth dying for. Every Muslim held himself ready to die for his brother and, more especially, for his sister. This extreme solidarity attracted not only those in search of security, but also those in search of a cause. This provided an outlet for the hostility

1Haley and Malcolm X, 285.
3Ibid.
4Lincoln, 29.
5Ibid., 30.
that racial oppression breeds.\textsuperscript{1} The Muslim message was a voice challenging Blacks to recover their self-respect and to believe in their own worth—in this case, through the message of Black supremacy. It even offered a Black God and a Black nation.\textsuperscript{2}

**Social Activism**

The social activism of the Black Muslims has always included addressing some of the most significant and disabling social problems of the day, including domestic and gang violence, AIDS and health care, women’s and prisoner’s rights, community safety, and Black-on-Black crime.\textsuperscript{3} By the end of the 1960s, they were more successful than any other civic, religious, or government agency in social rehabilitation of Blacks in need.\textsuperscript{4}

The challenge of an ascetic ideal, balanced by the absence of social barriers to affiliation and services, brought thousands under the banner of Mohammed. Reaching out to those whom society had forgotten, the poor, economically deprived, pimps, prostitutes, con men, prisoners, ex-cons, the alcoholics, the addicts, and the unemployed, the Muslims have always welcomed the most unregenerate and then set about to rehabilitate them.

Into the twenty-first century, the Black ghetto has continued to be the principal source of Muslim recruitment. Where life is cheap and hope is minimal, where isolation from common values and privileges is most acute, the voice of the Muslim messenger does not fall on deaf ears. Membership is primarily male and lower class. The Nation of Islam has continued to adhere to its original mission to “uplift the so-called Negro in

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., 32.

\textsuperscript{2}Nelsen, Yokley, and Nelsen, 219, 222.

\textsuperscript{3}Marsh, *From Black Muslims to Muslims*, 154-155.

\textsuperscript{4}Nelsen, Yokley, and Nelsen, 231.
North America," with a continued emphasis on the regeneration of criminals. Consequently, the follower of Islam, with few exceptions, is from America's most underprivileged classes. They are denizens of the Black ghetto. They are mostly young, predominantly male, and ex-Christian.

Discipline, Involvement, and Neatness

The Nation of Islam, especially under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, demanded extreme discipline and active involvement of all its members. While one might have expected that this would turn people away, in fact it was a key part of the organization's success. What worked was that under their stern rules of conduct, no person was condemned for what he was—only for what he refused to be. During this period, the organization placed a strong emphasis on masculinity and neatness. Nation of Islam men were clean-shaven, close-cropped, and well dressed. They were polite and self-assured. They seemed alert to the present and confident about the future. Children too were raised according to strict guidelines and at least during the middle of the twentieth century, delinquency was almost unheard of among Muslim children in America. A large number of the children attended parochial schools where the curriculum emphasized the history of African Americans in America. It also included

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1 Marsh, 129.
2 Nelsen, Yokley, and Nelsen, 220.
3 Lincoln, 31.
4 Ibid., 32-33.
5 Ibid., 33.
emphasis on the Black African civilizations of the pre-colonial era in addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic. All the while, a heavy emphasis was placed on discipline.¹

Into the twenty-first century, the organization continues to emphasize self-respect, cleanliness and thrift, good dietary habits, homemaking, honest labor for pay, and obedience to "constituted authority."² With content and method packaged for timely distribution and implementation, the Black Muslims have continued to have success in recruiting African American males.

The Million Man March

In October 1995, the Nation of Islam under Louis Farrakhan organized the very successful "Million Man March," designed to advocate "unity, atonement, and brotherhood."³ Massive numbers of African American men from across the country met at the mall in Washington, DC, to engage together as a group in one of the largest marches the capital city had ever seen. Participants were asked to pledge "to rebuild [their] own communities, avoid drugs and violence, register to vote, build Black political power, and invest in Black businesses."⁴ The vast numbers of participants included believers from many different denominations as well as representatives of schools and other organizations.

¹Ibid., 34.
²Nelsen, Yokley, and Nelsen, 217.
⁴Ibid.
Coming out of the march, the organization articulated its objectives as follows:

(1) Reconcile family issues; (2) Reconcile issues with members in the Liberation struggle; (3) Join an organization, contribute money, and volunteer a minimum of two hours weekly; (4) Develop more after-school programs to teach and mentor youths; (5) Surrender our all to God (it is not a sign of weakness to put God first in our lives).¹

Summary

The success of the Black Muslims in recruiting converts makes them a model worthy of emulation. They have provided their members with opportunities to find self-respect and a belief in one’s own worth. They have encouraged their members to be proud of their cultural heritage and aware of their community’s history. They have also articulated high expectations for their members. They have demanded that each member participate actively in the group’s life and support its mission and activities. They have reached out to potential members without condemning them for past behavior that might have been self-destructive or harmful to others—while challenging them to change for the better. They have offered hope to those most in need of rehabilitation. And their social activism has responded to some of the most significant social problems of our times.

Early on, the Black Muslims realized that they must focus not only on the spiritual and the private but also on the material and the public if they were successfully to recruit Black men. Because of its offer of protection, security, a sense of dignity, and

economic well-being, large numbers of African American men have joined the organization. Christians would be well served to follow the example of the Black Muslims in America.

Johnny Ray Youngblood

The Saint Paul Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York, under the pastorship of Dr. Johnny Ray Youngblood has been for thirty years a model successful Black ministry. The pastor is credited with having one of the largest and most successful African American male ministries, resulting in multiple accessions annually. The church is seventy-five years old and Dr. Youngblood is its seventh pastor. Thirty years ago, when he was assigned, the membership was eighty-four. Today, church membership exceeds ten thousand. Furthermore, at the time Dr. Youngblood took over, a “good Sunday” was one when the financial receipts came to $125. The current annual budget is $3,000,000. In addition to operating a school, there are sixty full-time staff.

Youngblood’s Youth and Education

Youngblood grew up in New Orleans, Lousiana, in a family of five (two brothers and one sister). The family lived in an area referred to as “the ninth ward.” The motto of the young Black males in the neighborhood was, “I’m a nigger from the mine, and I don’t mind dying.” Youngblood’s parents made a special sacrifice to send him to private school. He graduated from a Catholic high school and went on to earn his bachelor of science degree majoring in Spanish and Education at Dillard University. He then enrolled

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1Johnny Ray Youngblood, telephone interview by author, Atlanta, GA, December 2003.
at a seminary and completed a doctoral program at Colgate Union in Rochester, New York.

The Mission at Saint Paul Community Baptist Church

According to Dr. Youngblood, the mission statement of Saint Paul Community Baptist Church is summed up in Luke 4:18: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Obviously, this mission compels one to contextualize and be practical while meeting basic human needs.

The ministries at the Saint Paul Community Baptist Church closely reflect this calling. Dr. Youngblood describes his approach to ministries as that of organizing "people around their needs." One of the ministries he has organized is called Women Involved in Discipling Other Women (W.I.D.O.W.). It helps to address the common concerns of women while nurturing women church members and providing an opportunity for active outreach. Another ministry is called COMPASSION. This ministry was organized to minister to mothers whose children were in the criminal system. There was a very successful laywoman who provided leadership and direction. She had been to the courts enough times. She was able to tell other mothers who to see (i.e., the name of the person), the best time of day to approach them, and how to present one's case for the best possible outcome. For the chemically dependent and their family members, he has organized The WOUNDED HEALING MINISTRY. Finally, among many other ministries is the one of special interest to this research project, that directed toward African American men.
Ministering to Black Men

Dr. Youngblood offers a compelling explanation for how and why he developed a ministry geared to the Black male. He said that he had been enjoying the “trappings” of success in his pastoral ministry. Church attendance was good, church budget was being met, he had personal financial security, and the support of his board. The church growth indicators registered positive. However, “the cake was sinking in the middle,” as he described the absence of males in his congregation. This was cause for real concern to Dr. Youngblood.

Some of the problems he observed were that a good number of female church members needed legitimate companionship in marriage. Only a few boys and young male teenagers attended church, and he saw most of them as just waiting to grow up and leave the church. He observed that there were a significant number of gay church members and many “non-church brothers” were in jail. These problems became an obsession for Dr. Youngblood.

With the strong conviction that “God never had a problem winning men” (in both the Old and New Testaments, he contends that men came to Jesus), Dr. Youngblood took up the challenge of bringing Black men back to church. Upon analyzing the situation, he came to the conclusion that Black men were not attending church for the following reasons:

1. Women were not inviting them to church.
2. The dress code was sometimes too restrictive.
3. Black men observed the inconsistencies in the lifestyle of regular church attendees.
4. Many Black males were in prison or on parole.
5. Pastors did not affirm Black men enough.

6. Sermons and services were often too long.

With these ideas in mind, he met with the women “to help go after the men,” and together they came up with the following ten steps in the process to reach the Black male for Christ:

1. Women are to invite their husbands, boyfriends, sons, and get them to church by whatever means.

2. Women are to make sure that these brothers were personally introduced to the pastor.

3. The pastor is to affirm the brothers, sometimes even at the expense of an apology by the female who invited him (he calls this adopted behavior).

4. Women must develop and show increasing amounts of respect for the men.

5. The pastor must make a concerted effort to remember names and faces.

6. The pastor must invite the brothers to return and may even refer to them by their nicknames (Dr. Youngblood believes the identity of many a Black man is rooted in his nickname).

7. As the men attend church and hear sermons of hope and affirmation, they are more likely to join the congregation (all the while, the pastor “meets with men about their needs” and “talks their language”).

8. The pastor must help the men see that they are natural leaders.

9. These informed, discipled men who by now will have gained confidence must be invited to use their spiritual gifts for the church and for their women.
10. The gifted, trained, confident, and now competent Black males feel comfortable helping to raise Black boys and counter the conspiracy advanced by Jawanza Kunjufu.

Because of the multiplicity of members, needs, schedules, and age spread, Dr. Youngblood conducts three worship services each Sunday morning. The 6:00 a.m. service has appeal to seniors and retirees. Often there are 700 or more attending. The 8:00 a.m. service attracts those who want spiritual needs met before getting involved with other worthwhile ventures later in the day. The 11:00 a.m. worship meets the expectations of the traditional worshiper when thousands give honor to Him who deserves our highest praise. When asked what final recommendations he would suggest if one wanted to initiate and develop a ministry to the African American male, he outlined five simple suggestions.

1. For three to five years, the pastor must be committed to do it alone if necessary.
2. Just like the women, the Black male wants the pastor’s attention and leadership.
3. The pastor must train and develop leaders.
4. Time is important, so be punctual for the meetings with the men.
5. The pastor must be intentional and focused.

Summary

According to Youngblood, men and women are joining the church today in roughly equal numbers. Ministry to Black men has succeeded as never before.
Youngblood’s church took twenty-six busses and six carloads of people to the Million Man March. The only other person who took more men was Louis Farrakhan himself.

The success of the Saint Paul Community Baptist Church’s Intentional Ministry to African American males is noteworthy. Like the Black Muslims, Youngblood holds that his mission is to serve the poor and brokenhearted. His ministry is tailored to the needs of his congregation, including their basic human needs. Youngblood is a minister willing to address the real world problems of his congregation’s members. Concerned about the low level of church attendance among Black men, Youngblood sought explanations and identified clear, practical solutions. The steps he took to address the problem include the active involvement of both pastor and church members in reaching out to Black men and a focus on affirming their self-worth and dignity.

The capacity of a philosophy of religion to transform people is a powerful argument in its favor. Despite Otto Klineberg’s 1944 contention that the Negro is lazy, dirty, flashy, sexy, and has little regard for money or morals,¹ many African American males are law-abiding citizens and sincere Christians who have responded to the Gospel. It is my conviction, based on both data and experience, that the African American male in Southeast Atlanta will accept the religion of Jesus Christ as espoused by Seventh-day Adventists.

¹Klineberg, 18-19.
CHAPTER 6

A MODEL DESIGNED TO REACH THE AFRICAN AMERICAN
MALE IN SOUTHEAST ATLANTA

Introduction

The development of the model aimed at reaching and evangelizing the individuals in Southeast Atlanta was primarily based on (1) an analysis of the literature on the situation of the Black male in America today, including the theological and sociological factors impacting his life, (2) an analysis of the factors that are specific to African American males living in the Atlanta area, (3) a survey of established programs designed to evangelize Black men, and (4) the results of the African American male SDA membership questionnaire (developed during the process of this research project). The first three of these are thoroughly discussed in previous chapters of this dissertation.

What follows is (1) a brief description of my personal journey, (2) a short history of the Atlanta Boulevard SDA Church, (3) a restatement of some of the most important research results already highlighted, (4) a description of the steps taken in administering the questionnaire, (5) a description of the questionnaire itself and responses to it, and (6) and a description of the African American Male Study Guides, which were the product of this entire process, as well as (7) some comments on responses to these guides.
My Personal Journey

My Childhood and Education

The reprint of certain historic publications of Ellen G. White resulted in the Gospel of Adventism reaching African Americans, especially in the southern states. One Maggie Garvin heard the news in the early 1900s and witnessed to my mother, who became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1931. The practical application of Ellen G. White’s *The Southern Work* has captured me, and I feel that I am under obligation to share with other African American males about Who gives meaning to life, and provide an expanded summary of Ellen G. White’s attitude on African American males.

I believe that my personal journey has been blessed by God. I have strong faith in the Divine Significant Other who is indeed my magnificent obsession. My mother was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist church in my hometown of Greensboro, North Carolina, while expecting me. Although my father had threatened to leave her if she were to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the end, he did not follow through with this threat. Even though I grew up in the Adventist Church, I was not baptized until I was a teenager. Elder E. E. Cleveland was the evangelist who was to draw me into the Gospel net. It was the most important thing that has ever happened to me. I have a reason for hope.

I attended an African American Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher education, Oakwood College, after completing high school in my hometown. It was a separate but equal experience. While during my elementary and high-school experience, I was living in a segregated society, I have no regrets. My teachers were consistently above average, and I received a solid education.
Family resources were greatly challenged because of our family size: two parents, three sisters, and four brothers. I succeeded in selling books while colporteuring for two summers prior to enrolling at the school of the prophets. While at Oakwood, I taught a Greek II course while the regular professor, Dr. E. E. Rogers, worked on completing his doctoral studies at the University of Michigan.

Upon graduation from Oakwood, I matriculated into the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, which was at that time located in Takoma Park, Maryland. At the Seminary, I earned a Master of Arts degree in Religion. (This was at a time before the curriculum mandated this degree for ministerial students.) Some of my classmates included C. E. Wittchiebe, William Loveless, and Sakae Kubo. (I sat in the Annual Council session when the vote was taken to require the fifth year for ministerial students.)

My Ministry

My official ministerial experience began in rural Alabama as a colporteur-pastor in the peanut town of Dothan. The salary was $50.00 per month, which came to $12.50 per week. This is what I was making when I asked my wife to marry me. She said “yes” not knowing my income. From this assignment, I was asked to be the assistant evangelist to Elder L. G. Newton before receiving an internship to work under Elder C. E. Dudley in Montgomery, Alabama. After a brief period with Elder Dudley, I was given my own district of four churches in economically deprived areas. In the Mississippi Delta, the members of the four churches I oversaw were working for ten and twenty cents an hour. In this context, we were endeavoring to operate two church schools only nine miles apart.

The site of my first evangelistic campaign was Greenville, Mississippi, where thirty-one were baptized. In Covington, Kentucky, we baptized twenty plus. In
Chattanooga, Tennessee, the number was again twenty plus. We organized two churches in the state of Tennessee—one in Brownsville and the other in Eads. The youth of my congregation in Memphis, Tennessee, used to say that “it is exciting to go to church.” Not long after this, in 1965, I was invited to the South Central Conference office as youth director. I held this office also in the Northeastern Conference and the Southern Union. Throughout my experience as a minister, I have pastored in major urban centers of the south, holding pulpits in Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Tennessee. In 1988, the South Atlantic Conference constituency elected me as their president. I served in this administrative post until 1997.

In 1998, I became the pastor of a two-church district, one church in Griffin, Georgia, and the Atlanta Boulevard SDA Church, the focus of this dissertation. My personal journey before the office appointment as conference president was exciting, productive, and a real learning-on-the-job, since I was fresh out of school. My journey since the office brings more experience, plus departmental and administrative skills to the table. Notwithstanding, I still feel a great need to depend on God so that I might be sensitive and obedient to His guidance, thus leading the people to make the best of right choices in every situation. I believe that my return to the pastorate is one of the best things that has even happened to me. Being relieved of an office did not diminish my vision or blur my focus. I still believe that all things work together for the good. It is also comforting to know that “all the resources of heaven are at the command of those who are seeking the lost.”¹ This is why I am so courageous and committed in the face of the

¹White, Christ’s Object Lessons, 197.
above referenced challenges. I love to hear my nieces sing, "After all the things I've been through, I still have joy."

Following the Examples of Others

In my capacity as pastor of the Atlanta Boulevard SDA Church, my hope is to follow the examples of such groups as the American Black Muslims and of ministers such as Johnny Ray Youngblood as I work to reach out to African American men and bring them back into the church family. With this in mind, I embarked on this research project.

I am convinced that conversion to Christianity in general and to Seventh-day Adventism in particular will enhance the quality of life of individuals, including family life, individual health, civic participation, and moral character. This will in turn enhance the life of the community at large.

I am convinced that conducting community services is a key part of the responsibility of any Christian family of believers. My hope was that through this project, the church could increase its community outreach including not only evangelistic meetings but also programs to help the poor (such as assistance with food, etc.), programs to help increase healthful living (including health screenings), programs for youth (including supervised recreation). My hope was to work toward providing both prevention education and rehabilitation services for church members and people from the community.

Part of the plan of this project was to assess the forces that oppress Black men in the Atlanta area (see chapter 3) and to explore how to resolve these problems and motivate them (see chapter 2). In this endeavor, it seemed essential that the Atlanta
Boulevard membership would be fully and enthusiastically involved. A pro-active evangelistic opportunity would not only bring more members of the community into the church family but provide an opportunity for church members to solidify their faith by active involvement (see Chapter 3 for an example from the Scriptures of the benefits of active involvement in evangelistic efforts). Furthermore, through a constant reliance on a theological basis for our approach, I believed that new male members of the Atlanta Boulevard Church and reinvigorated former members would be transformed into leaders who could not only be better fathers and husbands but also stewards for the church. The next chapter details the practical results of the goals of this research project.

**History of the Atlanta Boulevard Church and Membership Accession Analysis**

The Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized in 1965 under the pastoral leadership of H. L. Cleveland. At the time, Elder Cleveland was pastor of the Atlanta Berean congregation (which just celebrated its 100th year anniversary in 2003), the only regional church in metropolitan Atlanta. The Atlanta Berean leadership and membership were concerned about east Atlanta. In response to this, the decision was made and plans were discussed to conduct a public evangelistic campaign in the area of east Atlanta. The pastor-evangelist assembled a team in the early months of 1965 that brought staff from Alabama, Georgia, and Ohio. This team of preachers, teachers, musicians, and Bible instructors labored with all diligence. At the close of the campaign in early September 1965, 250 persons were baptized into the church (unfortunately, we do not have a record of the gender breakdown).

A place to house the new believers was an immediate necessity. The building initially purchased for the worship facility was at 2025 Boulevard Drive in Southeast
Atlanta. This stone-faced building would serve the congregation for more than twenty-two years. The church was named Atlanta Boulevard because it was located on Boulevard Drive in Atlanta. Four acres of land were purchased in the early 1980s during the pastorates of J. Malcolm Phipps and James Parham. It was under James Parham that a gymnatorium was constructed. The congregation moved in 1989 from 2025 Boulevard Drive to the current location, which is 240 Maynard Terrace in Southeast Atlanta.

Beginning in 1980, the congregants would worship in the gymnatorium with the hope that the sanctuary would be built sometime before 1995. Once I took over the pastorship of the church in 1998, I made this a priority and we had the official groundbreaking in January 2001. The construction was delayed because the contractor was slow in getting certain documents to the bank which were needed prior to closing the loan. The sanctuary has subsequently been constructed and the grand opening was held on July 26, 2003.


**The Church Today**

Since its inception, the Atlanta Boulevard Church has spawned or planted two other thriving churches in metropolitan Atlanta. In the summer of 1976, Pastor Ward Sumpter and the Atlanta Boulevard members started the Maranatha Church. The current
membership of Maranatha is 3,032. This is the largest congregation in the South Atlantic Conference. (Atlanta Berean, the mother of Atlanta Boulevard, has 2,400 members.) The second church stemming from Atlanta Boulevard is the New Hope Church, which became a reality during 1985-1986. The present official membership of New Hope is 316. The current number of congregants in Atlanta Boulevard is 390. This number includes 63 members who were baptized during a 1999 evangelistic campaign, held shortly after I became the pastor.

The officers of Atlanta Boulevard are dedicated leaders. The board of elders reflects a positive diversity of cultures, races, and genders. The congregation is caring, respecting, accepting, forgiving, and trusting. In fact, we are known as “the friendly church with the friendly pastor.” The worship service is traditional with an occasional praise service. Since the construction of our new sanctuary, which was officially opened July 26, 2003, we have enjoyed a steady stream of visitors weekly. The church is conveniently located at the interstate exit of I-20 at Maynard Terrace in Southeast Atlanta. Because of the economic and sociological challenges confronting many of the members, most of our young people attend public school. However, with sixty primary and junior-aged children, there are more than enough to operate a local conference church school.

The vast majority of the pastors preceding me were strong proponents of public evangelism. Their concentrated efforts met with success. Almost always, more women were baptized than men (see table 1). The current Atlanta Boulevard membership roster indicates 275 females and only 115 males. From 1987 to 2003, the Atlanta Boulevard’s clerk’s records show a total of 360 accessions. Of this number, 199 were females (55
percent) and 161 were males (45 percent). For this reason, the issue of reaching the African American male in Southeast Atlanta is both a priority and an obsession for me.

Table 1. Atlanta Boulevard Baptisms from 1987 to 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Females</th>
<th>Number of Males</th>
<th>Total for the Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Parham</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David N. Jones</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvin E. Freeman</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph P. Peay</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td></td>
<td>199</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that this problem is not one that is unique to the Atlanta Boulevard Church. The results of a study conducted by Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiy1 reflect a need to reach Black men with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their study included 2,120 churches, and out of the total average membership of 390 per church,

Black males comprised only 18 percent of the membership. In urban churches, the figure was only 19 percent. This indicates a general need for evangelism in all churches, but there is a particular need to reach young people and Black men for the Lord.\(^1\) The need to reach them is for more than simply increasing membership at any given church. Some sociologists believe that the Black man faces extinction in the future if conditions and trends do not change.\(^2\) The Black church is the only institution that has been consistently concerned about the issues affecting Black people since slavery. It is the Black church that must provide leadership in carrying out the mandate to “evangelize Black males.”\(^3\) J. Herbert Hinkle contends that the local church is the instrument to bring the Gospel and salvation to everyone. It should be the launching pad for evangelistic ministry, soul winning, disciple enlistment, and Christian training.\(^4\)

Since we at the Atlanta Boulevard SDA Church began our intentional focus on reaching the Black male from 1998-2003, the figures have significantly changed. Since 1998, there has been a total of 145 baptisms and professions of faith: 54 percent (78 individuals) were women and 46 percent (67 individuals) were men. Table 1 shows the numbers of baptisms over the past seventeen years. As the data reveal, from 1987 to 1997 there were 18.7 percent more women added than men. From 1998-2003, there were only


\(^2\)Richardson, 213.

\(^3\)Ibid.

14.2 percent more women than men added to the membership. Clearly, being specific, focused, and intentional influences the equation.

**Research Results Used in Designing the Model**

See chapter 2, 3, and 4 of this dissertation for a full summary of the research results used in designing the Model for reaching African American men in the Atlanta area with the Gospel of Christ.

An important first step in this process is understanding the reasons why Black men are not attending church at the same rate as Black women. It is important to keep in mind that there are simply fewer Black males than Black women nationally. This is because of factors that reduce the Black male population, such as poverty, malnutrition, racism, high rates of homicide, school dropouts, prison, military, drug use, and unemployment. Thus, the absence of Black men at church is partly rooted in structural factors. It is therefore important to follow the example of the Black Muslims and reach out with more social activism to resolve the societal problems experienced by Black men. Issues that must be addressed include the problem of a high mortality, suicide, incarceration, and drug addiction rate. Added to these are high unemployment, feelings of powerlessness, and loss of self-respect. Until these societal problems are resolved, it is unlikely that Black churches will experience a resurgence of male membership. At the same time, and this is part of the challenge, one element of the solution to these problems in society is precisely to do a better job evangelizing the Black male. Bringing him the

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1 Lincoln and Mamiya, 305-306.
Gospel could reduce the number of broken homes, lower the divorce rate, and seriously impact the number of unmarried couples living together and having children.¹

With so many factors causing stress and depression, the Black male needs to hear good news. Furthermore, he must see in the Gospel an element that serves his needs to be affirmed, appreciated, and acknowledged.² There are five things that the good news must highlight. First, God has a love attitude toward men (Luke 10:10; John 3:16). The Gospel clearly is a message of love. If we are going to evangelize Black men, we must make sure that they get the message of love—not condemnation. Second, God desires to have a personal relationship with each man. He especially wants to help solve the problems that cause stress. Third, it must be understood that sin stands in the way of this relationship (Isa 53:6). God hates sin. He loves the sinner. Fourth, there is something that can be done about the sin problem. Sin calls for a sacrifice and Jesus is our substitute. His provision is the means of hope for Black men. Finally, there is both opportunity and responsibility for Black males to have a close relationship with God.³ There is an urgent need for Black males to hear a vital message of hope.⁴ The message of hope must include “deliverance.”⁵

There are some serious obstacles to soul winning in Black churches. The role of the pastor is crucial. There is no way to build great soul-winning churches without soul-

¹June, 215.


³June, 218.


⁵Ibid.
winning pastors.\textsuperscript{1} The pastor must have a burden for souls and be willing to preach, teach, and visit. Soul winning must not be secondary to social winning.

Furthermore, the preacher must live an exemplary life and preach against sin, not just what people want to hear. “The preacher who never hurts anybody’s feelings, never crosses anybody, never offends anybody, never awakens anybody, never arouses anybody . . . rarely saves anybody.”\textsuperscript{2} On the other hand, magnetism, personality, and psychology are not enough. Evangelism and soul winning among Black males must take into account the economic and social concerns. Education, poverty relief, housing, health, and home care must be of concern to the church.

Soul-winning methods among Black males may include relational evangelism, inviting and bringing non-members to church, individuals sharing their witness at family gatherings, expository preaching, small groups in Bible study, door-to-door evangelism, and telephone evangelism.\textsuperscript{3} Sometimes, soul-winning methods are simply relieving the poor, caring for the sick, comforting the bereaved, and offering personal help.

Disciple making includes introducing people to Christ, building them up in faith, and sending them into the harvest field. Simply stated, soul-winning evangelism is geared to deliver, to develop, and to deploy.\textsuperscript{4} This saturation evangelism is preaching the Gospel to every available person at every available time by every available means.\textsuperscript{5} Hinkle is

\textsuperscript{1}\textit{Ibid.}, 47.

\textsuperscript{2}\textit{Ibid.}, 97.

\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Lee N. June and Matthew Parker, Evangelism and Discipleship in African American Churches} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 52-53.

\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}, 22.

\textsuperscript{5}Hinkle, 73.
very clear on the process. Go from house to house. Do not wait for people to come to the church. Use the Scriptures without apology.\(^1\)

Materials other than the Bible must be relevant. There are two types of relevance that are important to the spiritual development of the African American believer. They are cultural and developmental. They must address historical inclusiveness and contemporary relevance.\(^2\) The research of Willie Richardson concludes that, in order to be effective in evangelizing Black males, we must “have a burden for them.”\(^3\) The message must be carried to Black males instead of waiting for them to come to the church.\(^4\)

Clearly Black males are open to the Gospel message. Our challenge is to become serious and systematic in reaching them with the message of Christ in a manner in which they can receive it.\(^5\) As established in chapter 2 of this dissertation, when we reach Black men for Christ, it can help solve some or many of the Black family problems. These men become better family men because they are now Christians. The church has established ways of conserving them, developing them, and building them up.\(^6\) This will result in more Christian men to marry and to healthier lifestyles. As the family goes, so goes the nation.

\(^1\)Ibid., 22.
\(^2\)June and Parker, 94.
\(^3\)Richardson, 213.
\(^4\)Ibid.
\(^5\)June, 223.
\(^6\)Ibid.
Armed with this information, I began to take the steps necessary to tailor the model for the Atlanta Boulevard Church.

**Steps Taken in Questionnaire Design**

The development, administration, and data evaluation of a questionnaire were a key part of designing a model for evangelism of Black men by the Atlanta Boulevard Church. After becoming informed about the problem, which included the kind of research analysis described in the above section (and outlined in chapters 2 and 3) as well as a study of the economic and sociological factors of the Southeast Atlanta population in the Neighborhood Planning Unit where the church is located (see chapter 4), we invited the church via board and business meetings to share my burden and vision for the Black men in the community surrounding our church and in the homes of our members. We then designed the African American Male SDA Membership Questionnaire. The five questions included therein would provide information from which to develop or generate a strategic response. An important step was actually administering the questionnaire to all the males of the Atlanta Boulevard Church that we could locate. Once this was completed, the questionnaires were collected and the data were analyzed. This yielded information that allowed us to isolate priority issues and critical success factors. The next step would be to design strategies to address the framed issues detected in the above step. Before getting to that, however, the following is a detailing of the questionnaire and the data it yielded.
The African American Male SDA Membership Questionnaire and Results

The African American Male SDA Questionnaire designed in the context of this research project included five questions. Each question has been tabulated by age categories (see tables 2-7). The questions are as follows:

1. How did you first hear about the SDA Church?
2. Where were you when you first heard about the SDA Church?
3. What are the best three ways to attract Black males to the SDA Church?
4. In what year were you baptized?
5. What were the greatest factors in your decision to join the SDA Church?

Tables 2–7 show the comparative results. My observations precede the tabulations. A summary of the data clearly shows that the critical factors are (1) the witness of a family member, (2) friendly church members, and (3) Bible study guides. See table 2.

Table 2. Evangelistic Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Witness of a family member</td>
<td>24 + 2</td>
<td>Friendly church members</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic preaching</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Date potential</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath School</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Community service</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible study guides</td>
<td>17 + 1</td>
<td>Youth ministries</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: mother, parents, Bible study</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Church school</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to my observations of the data (see table 3), most of the men who completed the questionnaires had first heard about the SDA Church from a church
member or relative. This highlights the importance of personal witnessing or sharing.

Men are more easily reached by a tactful member or relative.

Data also demonstrate (see table 4) that nearly 80 percent of the men surveyed had first heard about the SDA Church in their homes. This seems to suggest that a pleasant visit with a plan to follow up the interest would be productive. The quietness, convenience, and comfort of home helps to create a good environment to discuss eternal values.

According to the data (see table 5), the top three methods used to attract Black males to the SDA Church are athletics, evangelistic preaching, and community services. Athletics is primarily the conference-organized basketball schedule for men and women. Evangelistic preaching is organized, systematic presentations of Gospel doctrines with music, preaching, and more music, which equals “the sandwich effect.” Community services is the attention and ministry that focuses on the social and basic needs of people in general, such as food, clothing, health education, etc. This is often temporary assistance for a needy family, but progresses from the disaster mode to a responsible development status.

Data reveal that (see table 6) of the nearly fifty who joined the Atlanta Boulevard Drive SDA Church during the period from 1958 to 2002, eleven (25 percent) have been baptized since 1998. I was assigned as pastor of the church in April of 1998. Since then, there has been an emphasis on the needs and roles of the Black male and a focused ministry to reach him.
Table 3. Question #1: How Did You First Hear about the SDA Church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50+</th>
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<td>Newspaper</td>
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<td>7</td>
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Table 4. Question #2: Where Were You When You First Heard about the SDA Church?

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<th>Source</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50+</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports event</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
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Table 5. Question #3: What are the Three Best Ways to Attract Black Males to the SDA Church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
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<th>Totals</th>
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<td>Youth ministry</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Health programs</td>
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<td>Evangelistic preaching</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revelation Seminar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community services</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Bible study</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television evangelism</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The greatest factors in the decision to join the SDA Church were, according to the data (see table 7): (1) the witness of a family member, (2) friendly church members, and (3) Bibles study guides. Dynamic preaching, youth ministries, pastoral influence, and Sabbath School were in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh positions. Consequently, based on the data in this research project, it was clear that Bible study guides needed to be developed that were sensitive to the felt needs and researched profile of the African American post-modern male.
Table 6. Question #4: In What Year Did You Join the SDA Church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50+</th>
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<td>1958</td>
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<td>1963</td>
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<td>1967</td>
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<td>1970</td>
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<td>1971</td>
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<td>1974</td>
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<td>1975</td>
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<td>1976</td>
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<td>1984</td>
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<td>2002</td>
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<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
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<td>10</td>
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Table 7. Question #5: What Were the Greatest Factors in Your Decision to Join the SDA Church?

<table>
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<th>Factors</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50+</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dynamic person</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospective date/ mate</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sabbath School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Church community service</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church school</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible study service</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Youth ministry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Study Guides

The result of all research, including analysis of the data from the questionnaire, was the development of focused study guides for the African American male. Each lesson in the study guides had only seven questions, and the only reference needed was the Holy Bible. Sociological factors, to a very large extent, informed the choice of concepts in the development of the African American Male Study Guides. For example, the study on “What Is So Amazing About Grace?” is a theological and practical response to hopelessness. “Poverty Is No Longer an Option” is addressed with the principle of tithe and money management. Time management is in connection with the Sabbath under “Were You Born Tired and Never Got Rested?” Roots and status are mentioned in “Ethnics Beginnings” and “Status, Brothers Have It” respectively.

Once the study guides were developed, it was now time to implement the plan. We invited the church membership to conduct personal Bible studies using the African American male study guides. We had forty-eight members and/or visitors respond. Meanwhile, more than eighty Black males were identified as prospects. We asked each participating member to pray for one or more Black males to accept and complete the twenty African American Male Study Guides. We further asked the member to be the one person who would deliver and correct the lesson, and assist the male if he needed assistance with the lesson. The member was further instructed to continue leaving new lessons, one at a time, until the series was completed. Meanwhile, I made myself available to visit with any of the participants to further answer questions and provide assistance if members found this necessary. Twenty-five members received one set. Eight received two sets. Thirteen received three sets. One excited person received four sets.
Finally, we asked that participating members report back to us regarding the outcome of the student who received the study guides. A letter was addressed to the members with a study guide report blank (see Appendix C). The success of this project was dependent on active involvement by church members. There was indeed a sense of excitement anticipating the sharing and distribution of the seven-question study guide series.

At the time of reckoning, many of the members had not conducted Bible studies as they had hoped. A substantial number had misplaced the guides. Other members had just recently enrolled students and the first study was not returned. When I personally called each individual member for a report from each student, the number of people who said that they requested guides but did not receive them surprised me. While that number is small (only eight), it is important. Obviously, some persons received study guides and we have no record of them. Hence, the actual number of study guides accounted for is eighty.

Notwithstanding, of the twenty-five persons who accepted one set of study guides, only two students completed the series. There were eight members who received two sets of study guides. While some began, only one student completed the twenty studies. Most did not finish half the lessons. The one who did finish the series was a Protestant youth minister who xeroxed the guides and taught his class. Those persons who received three sets of guides had an encouraging response. Four individuals completed the entire series. Three of the four registered a desire to unite with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. See table 8.
Table 8. African American Male Study Guides Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th># of Study Guides</th>
<th>Lessons Completed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Anderson, J.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Albert, Mary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Beckford, Phyllis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Byoune</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Barrett</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bryant, Bernice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cooper</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Coley, Denise</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Clark</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Daley, Desmond</td>
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</tr>
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<td>11. Daley, Marcia</td>
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<td>12. Dudley, George</td>
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<td>12. Dowdell, L.</td>
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<td>14. Ennis, Ann</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Floyd, Dorothy</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Floyd, Ry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Floyd, Henry</td>
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<td>19. Fowler, Cassandra</td>
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<td>21. Flakes, Romwell</td>
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<td>22. Higgins, W.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Jackson, Lillie</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Jackson, B.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Light, H.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Long, Olivia</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Miller, Barbara</td>
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<td>28. Matthews, O.</td>
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<td>29. McCollough, L.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>30. Mattison, J.</td>
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<td>31. Moore, Tameraia</td>
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<td>34. Roberts, Cynthia</td>
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<td>35. Robinson</td>
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<td>36. Rugless</td>
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<td>40. Sabeahive</td>
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<td>41. Simons</td>
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<td>43. Smikles, Shawn</td>
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<td>44. Talton, Terrence</td>
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<td>45. Usher, Kim</td>
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<td>46. Williams, T.</td>
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<td>47. Ward, Rosalyn</td>
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<td>0*</td>
</tr>
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<td>48. Ward, Ina</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Warbington, Pat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Reported they did not receive guides.
The findings and results of this research project presented some interesting observations and positive statistics.

1. Eighty sets of study guides were distributed.

2. Most of the “friendly members” who accounted for the study guides could have been more diligent and intentional.

3. Seven African American males completed the twenty lessons.

4. Five of the seven desire membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

5. This means that over 50 percent of those who completed the studies learned a lot about the Bible, about Jesus and His plan for their lives. Evidently, they found the study guides practical, informative, and biblically true. While some had accepted Christ already, the desire to be baptized into membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a cause for angels to rejoice in heaven. The local Seventh-day Adventist church in Southeast Atlanta rejoices as well. The families involved are strengthened, the self-respect, self-worth, and self-image of the newly baptized African American males are more positive.

While the numbers of people baptized into the church as a result of these initial study guides were less than I had hoped they would be, nonetheless, the reports from participating members and the results clearly supported my hypothesis that culturally sensitive Bible study guides for African American males can and do result in decisions for Christ and membership in the Atlanta Boulevard Adventist Church. Therefore, a major assumption that was advanced initially in the development of the model in this project has been validated.
Final Thoughts

Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Of the twenty-seven beliefs and tenets of faith, one highlights unity in the body of Christ. The worldwide organization teaches the importance of men and women in the sight of God. The Church Manual states:

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue and people. In Christ, we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be a divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and one another. . . . This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children.¹

This tenet is supported with a series of texts in context from both the Old and New Testaments. There is absolutely no question that all people of all races, colors, and cultural backgrounds as well as of both genders are equal in His sight.

While people may cling to many stereotypes of African American males, the sacred canon is undeniably clear. Gal 3:27-29 reads: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: For ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” African American males may reap an eternal harvest as heirs to the promise of Abraham’s seed.

Much of the literature about African Americans in general, and African American males in particular, pay tribute to the Black church. The seven historic Black churches

¹Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1995), 11.
have played a major role in the history and progress of African Americans. These seven historic Black denominations are:

1. African Methodist Episcopal
2. African Methodist Episcopal Zion
3. Christian Methodist Episcopal
4. Church of God in Christ
6. National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated

For a long time, the vast majority of church-attending African Americans were members of one of these historical denominations. Since the Civil Rights Movement, formally all-White churches and denominations have recognized the Bible teaching that God made all nations of one blood. Consequently, a substantial number of African Americans have joined those churches.

Efforts to reach the disconnected African American male are gaining results. Many Black males are moving from the fringe into active, focused discipleship. In reaching out to him, it is important to follow the example of Jesus. Reading through the table of contents of a book by Howard Belben, *The Mission of Jesus*, can help one get an idea of the attitude, the approach, and the method of Jesus in reaching out to people:

The Attitude of Jesus

He was sure of His calling

He really loved people

He cared about unwanted individuals
He was slow to condemn
He saw them as they might be
He did not easily give up
He saw them as Whole people
He spent Himself for others

The Approach of Jesus

He offered men His friendship
He started where they were
He listened to what they had to say
He sought the root of their problems
He took their questions seriously
He sometimes asked favors of them
He did not force Himself upon them

The Method of Jesus

He went and looked for men
He knew the value of eating with men
He knew the value of using the home
He spent much time training others
He knew that teaching method mattered
He spoke to men from Scripture
He confronted them with either/or
He led them to definite faith in Himself
He gave them something to do
He went to His Father for His message and power.¹

The attitude, approach, and method of Jesus allowed Him to meet all classes and races, all colors and cultures, and share the good news. Clearly, the Holy Scriptures provide ample support for a theology of witnessing and outreach to all people, including African American males. The encounters of Jesus with the brother from Gadara leave no doubt as to the enormity of sin and His power over it. It is clear that the wild man is in Gentile territory. The Table of Nations identifies him as a descendent of Ham and of a mixed race. Jesus loves Black males. When they are cured of their social and spiritual ills, they are powerful witnesses in their homes, neighborhoods, and cities. Jesus had a different perception of Black males than the dominant culture during slavery. Frederick Douglass refers to the meanness of certain slaveholders in the following poem:

We raise de wheat,
dey gib us de corn;
we bake de bread,
dey gib us de crust;
we sift de meal,
dey gib us de huss;
we peal de meat,
dey gib us de skin;
and dat’s de way
day take us in;
we skim de pot,
dey gib us liquor,
and say dat’s good enough for nigger.²

In contrast, the Creator showed love.

The spotless lamb of God hung upon a cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown


of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that he endured . . . speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, . . . it is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear the burden of guilt; for thee he spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of paradise. He . . . offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee.¹

The Creator’s value for the African American male is measured in the context of Calvary. In the midst of the obstacles facing today’s African American males, the experiences of men who have met and mastered the sociological and economical challenges, offer strength, hope, and a reason to aspire for the Black males’ highest potential.

African American males can build powerful families. African American males are developing and maintaining a commitment to marriage. Too many African American males are in the criminal justice system. However, many have avoided it. African American males are responding to intentional, focused appeals to be the provider, protector, and priest in the home. Unfortunately, many African American males grew up with an anti-church mind-set, based on what they saw or did not see. They did not see many strong men in the church. They did not observe many strong Black males as part of the church. There was not seen a zeal for loving the church, supporting the church, building up the church, or being the church. The positive models were missing. The void was filled with the anti-church mind-set. If it is true that by beholding we become changed, it follows that it is hard to be what you cannot see.

Notwithstanding, in spite of the odds, the challenges to the African American males’ potential may be successfully negotiated. In depth, biblical principles applied, will

bridge the pitfalls to personal, social, economic, and spiritual prosperity for African American males.

There are resolutions to the sociological problems in Southeast Atlanta. Even though it is obvious that the general issues are affordable housing, economic development, the detrimental consequences of concentrated poverty, the disparity in the household income, poor school performance of high-poverty and minority Black students, the spatial separation of Black males from the job centers, and the impact of the racial divide. Because survival is a basic instinct, the time and interest in religious things often is relegated to a lower priority. However, the very nature of the issues requires moral and spiritual resources to change the mind-set to a more positive one. It is possible for African American males who have made bad choices in the past to experience a rebirth and enjoy life at a level much more elevated than slightly above that defined as poverty.

Programs, ministries, and organizations which reach out to the disconnected African American male are to be commended. A successful ministry and appeal to this specific population has its benefits. There would be a substantial reduction in the number of drug addicts, alcoholics, dysfunctional families, orphans, unemployed, and those in prison or on probation. The stereotype of the African American male would gradually change. He would not be described as lazy, dirty, flashy, sexy, with little regard for money or morals. It takes time, planning and organization, patience, commitment, training, punctuality, and intentionality to develop a thriving Black male ministry. It costs, it pays, it is priceless because of John 3:16.
Almost four decades of history have brought the Atlanta Boulevard Church to a critical point in its church life. There is a very real need for more African American men to reflect the image of the Creator. The African American male in Southeast Atlanta has the potential to escape the sociological and economic factors that have negatively impacted his community. The Atlanta Boulevard Church is poised to make a difference. The pastors, from the founder H. L. Cleveland to the current minister, have made appeals to the general population, but now is the time to be specific, focused, and intentional about reaching the African American male with Adventism.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This project was motivated by my own experience as an African American male and my concern for the total well-being of all African American males, especially those in Southeast Atlanta. As pastor of the Atlanta Boulevard Church, I had become increasingly disturbed by the paucity of male church attendance. It is my conviction that we have an obligation to reach out with the Gospel to all of God’s children, including African American men. I also believe that a decent and democratic society develops with the propagation and expansion of Christianity in general and of Seventh-day Adventism in particular. Civic life and the moral character of citizens in Southeast Atlanta would be enhanced by their affiliation with the Atlanta Boulevard Church. I thus felt it was my duty to find a solution to the problem of male attendance at my church, embarking on this project in order to develop a model which could be used to recruit the African American male in Southeast Atlanta to Seventh-day Adventism.

With the help of members of my church, I anticipated increasing awareness of a lifestyle that could add years to people’s lives and enhance the quality of their lives as
well. I also hoped that mistaken beliefs about Seventh-day Adventists as legalists would be explained properly and dispelled.

In connection with this project, I wanted specifically (1) to raise the level of awareness about the African American male; (2) to examine the sociological factors that may have influenced a negative stereotype of them; (3) to establish a theological foundation for recruiting African American males for Seventh-day Adventism, and (4) to develop a model for recruiting Black males in Southeast Atlanta.

In chapter 1 of this dissertation, I explained some of the assumptions or presuppositions of this study. Primary among these is that African American males are valuable to God and to the community. I also introduced the purpose and the limitations of this dissertation, identified my expectations regarding my project, and introduced some of the ideas that emerged as a result of the project. Most important among these is that when African American men are approached by genuinely concerned, compassionate Christians, with culturally sensitive Bible study guides, they will consider church and Christianity as an asset rather than a liability imposed on them by the dominant culture. It is then more likely that they will become Seventh-day Adventist Christians.

In chapter 2, I offered an overview of the contributions made to the study of the African American male by a diverse array of authors. I concluded that some of the most promising solutions to the problems of the African American male include fostering social justice and cultivating a sense of dignity and worth in African American males and affirming and strengthening the black family. I examined arguments for the need to increase evangelistic efforts, explored the strategies of Black Muslims as a successful
model for recruitment, and explored contemporary non-Adventist Christian approaches to recruiting Black men.

In chapter 3, I explored important biblical lessons it might be possible to draw from Mark 5 and from the book of Nehemiah regarding the formulation of plans for recruiting African American males. The healed demonic (Mark 5) provides us with a hopeful symbol of the transformation possible in the lives of distraught men and women and an ideal model of evangelization. Mark 5 also demonstrates that the surest safeguard against a return of our own demons is active service for Christ. In the process of evangelism, Nehemiah’s rebuilding of the walls provide a model for our own rebuilding of “the walls” of the Atlanta community.

In chapter 4, I explored sociological factors that have negatively impacted the African American community on the national level and in the Atlanta area. The most pressing problems include a history of racism and its continuation today; the stark income disparity between Blacks and other racial groups; high levels of poverty, unemployment, and crime; inadequate schooling and unacceptable dropout rates; and high divorce rates and single-family homes. The success of a program to recruit new Adventists in Atlanta depends on the identification and resolution of these problems. These sociological issues not only affect every aspect of individuals’ lives, but they impact people’s world views. A person’s world view establishes an explanation that offers intellectual coherence to what happens. It helps the individual discern some meaning from pain. It offers an explanation of moral order in the universe and addresses evil and injustice. It represents an intellectual process by which people can affirm that life makes sense, that suffering is
bearable, and that justice is not a mirage. Factors such as employment, education, housing opportunities, health and hygiene, life span, public policy issues, racial identity, and subtle segregation all feed into the world view of an African American man. This world view, in turn, is key to his manner of living in the world.

In chapter 5, I explored two successful models of outreach to African American males. The Black Muslim organization and the successful Black male ministry of the Saint Paul Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. In chapter 6, I examined the African American Male SDA Membership Questionnaire, developed in light of the research and experience documented here. And I described the administration of the questionnaire, the questionnaire itself, responses to the questionnaire, and the African American Male Study Guides, which were the product of my research.

In light of my conclusions, evaluations, and analyses I will address several issues in Chapter 7. I summarize the results of my study, present an overview of my conclusions, and offer some final thoughts regarding this study and its implications for ministry.

Results and Conclusions

The primary task of the project described here was to design, conduct, and evaluate a theologically based model for reaching the African American males in Southeast Atlanta with Seventh-day Adventism.

In the context of this dissertation project:

1. I conducted objective research regarding African American males.

2. I designed a theologically based model for reaching the African American male in Southeast Atlanta with Seventh-day Adventism.

3. I implemented and evaluated this model.

4. I involved the members of the Atlanta Boulevard Church in the implementation of the model.

5. African American males joined the Atlanta Boulevard Church in response to the members’ efforts.

6. I attempted to frame a model for churches with similar interest to review.

7. I sought to enhance my skills in research for future publications.

8. I attempted to satisfactorily meet the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree.

Church members’ involvement with the project was crucial to its success. It exposed them to a non-threatening, pro-active evangelistic opportunity. And loving concern by friendly members would enhance the likelihood of a positive response.

Each participating member was asked to pray that one or more Black men would complete the twenty African American Male Study Guides. We further asked the member to deliver and correct the lesson and to aid the male if he needed assistance with the lesson. Nearly fifty people volunteered to participate by delivering, collecting, and correcting guides and assisting students.

These volunteers said they were grateful for the experience of sharing and being a friend to others. Their faith was enhanced, and their reactions to the experience were optimistic. I was certainly pleased overall. Nonetheless, there were some problems related to member involvement.
Unfortunately, not all members were adequately committed. Some viewed the project largely as a means by which I was conducting research for my degree, rather than as an opportunity for valuable ministry. Second, while the self-selected volunteers were concerned for relatives and friends, the level of concern was not always sufficient to maintain the needed level of interest. The participating members did not always accept responsibility for ensuring that the students completed the twenty guides. This lack of consistent involvement definitely weakened the impact of the project. Some members were apologetic and even embarrassed that they had not urged students to finish the guides. Nonetheless, even members who failed to give this project as much commitment as I had hoped remain actively involved in the life of the church.

My assumptions and expectations were seriously challenged by the minimal number of men who actually completed the series of twenty study guides. Only seven who completed all twenty guides. Five of the seven indicated an interest in church membership; two have been baptized. It has been very sobering for me to realize how much time, effort, and mental energy have been invested in a project that has yielded such minimal results. However, these data demonstrate that culturally sensitive Bible study guides for African American males can and do result in successful recruitment into the Atlanta Boulevard Adventist Church. A major assumption underlying the development of the model has been validated. And many aspects of the project were positive.

Analysis of results seems to confirm that positive relationships with friendly members do facilitate the Bible study process. This project has reinforced my belief in the value of the active involvement of lay persons in evangelistic efforts. This kind of
involvement can not only add new church members but also confirm the commitment of current members. As I reflect on my plan for involving church members, I am pleased by their response. Out of some 400 members, 200 of whom are active, 49 accepted responsibility for helping to conduct the African American Male Study Guides series. This experience of commitment on the part of so many members suggest the potential for the enhancement of the church’s outreach ministry.

I am convinced that the evangelization, mobilization, and training of converted Black males will contribute much to the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). I believe the theological concepts contained in the Bible study guides have tended to enhance the self-image and self-worth of those who completed them. Further, the project has helped to create a more positive image of Black males in Southeast Atlanta. Indeed, the Bible studies have already begun to influence the factors that adversely affect Black men’s lives. I believe they can help reverse alarming trends related to the Black family. And I believe they are replicable.

These lessons may be used by any congregation or person interested in reaching out to African American males, provided an atmosphere of affirmation and appreciation for them is present. This project offers the possibility of bringing faith and life in relationship to each other. The Bible outlines provide a low-cost tool to meet the demonstrated needs of Black males beyond the boundaries of southeast Atlanta. These strengths of the model are the outgrowth of the theological and sociological foundations and findings. And the model, which may be used on a year-round basis, can be applied in the marketplace, in the home, in the church, or any choice of settings (though the research confirms that the home is preferable).
Despite the positive results, the project was not as successful as I had hoped. I had anticipated that more new members would join the church. The process of evaluation was helpful in terms of pointing out some structural weaknesses. One was the total number of men completing the series of twenty lessons. A second was the low incidence of those completing even one-half of the total outlines. Another was the less than stellar effort to counter the lack of initiative on the part of the participating members. With the discoveries made during the project, many questions emerged that I did not anticipate. Some are as follows: How many completed study guides should be considered a good witness? What is the best way to motivate a participating member to encourage a student to continue completing the study guides? Is three months enough time or too much time to maintain interest and complete the series? The supervision of the participating members was inadequate, and a much better marketing and publicity plan could have proven beneficial.

I was so concerned with expected outcomes that I failed to take some simple steps that could have contributed to the success of the project. Perhaps I expected too much from members who had received a minimum of training and preparation. Although the total number of men completing the series is likely too limited for statistical tests to be useful, ample evidence highlights the value of the kind of ministry represented by this project. Individual lives were affected in tangible, positive ways. I believe the project continues to have the potential to enhance both the size and the maturity of the Atlanta Boulevard Church.

The range of learning opportunities offered by the project was far greater than I had expected. It proved to be both helpful and sobering. It certainly highlights the
potential value of the Atlanta Boulevard Church’s ministry to the unchurched. Properly understood, the theology of evangelism is a call to a respond to human need without regard to color, creed, or country. The Atlanta Boulevard Church will continue to emphasize the use of the African American Male Study Guides as a means of attracting the interest of Black males who are family members, co-workers, and neighbors of church members. I believe that more black men will become Seventh-day Adventist Christians when they complete the study guide series. These study guides could have some appeal to those who are marginalized and raise their awareness to the level of their value to God. I believe that hope is the precious and unexpected ingredient that poor people need to discover. This project is an opportunity for the contemporary Christian to declare his or her redemptive involvement in the plight of the Black men in Southeast Atlanta. There have been requests for more studies, and the Atlanta Boulevard Church must make this an ongoing priority. This project likewise provides an exceptional and ongoing opportunity to train, refresh, equip, and motivate lay members of the church for participation in evangelism.

Previous evangelistic outreach by the Atlanta Boulevard Church has tended to be highly clergy-driven. The lay approach, recommended by this project, could potentially be more effective—and is certainly less expensive. I firmly support a movement away from a view of outreach ministry as the monopoly of the pastor to an understanding of such ministry as the corporate responsibility of the congregation.
Recommendations

As I reflect on this dissertation project, there are a number of things that I would do differently. I offer an overview of these by way of recommendations for others who may attempt such a project.

1. I would consider offering compensation for a Bible counselor to conduct studies with a limited number of students and tabulate (a) the total number in the group, (b) the total number completing the series, (c) the number indicating desire to become Seventh-day Adventists, (d) the number baptized who completed the series, (e) those who unite with the church without completing the series, (f) age category, and (g) the most important factor in the decision of each to become a Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

2. I would honor the Church Manual's chain of command and conduct a series of discussions with the (a) board and (b) the church in business meetings regarding the comprehensive plan and schedule, before making a Sabbath morning presentation and appeal for volunteers to conduct the Bible studies.

3. I would ask someone capable of carrying the relevant burden to assist in the weekly monitoring of the study guide carriers.

4. I would conduct a retreat, seminar, or more extensive training event for the member-volunteers. In this retreat, I would emphasize cultivating an environment designed to attract the African American male by highlighting his value in the eyes of God. The importance of establishing and maintaining a positive relationship with the student for the duration of the study series would be emphasized. A follow-up plan for those who did not complete the series would be designed and discussed. The study guide lessons would be reviewed with the carriers before their delivery. And the importance of prayer and a positive mental attitude to the success of the venture would be emphasized.
5. I would assign or appoint a special group of prayer warriors to intercede for the project.

6. I would have used an enthusiastic advocate of the model to help promote the study guides and highlight the importance of ensuring that each student completed all of them.

7. I would make provision for reassigning a participating member to a new student if the student with whom she or he was working failed to complete the study guide series.

8. I would consider some kind of compensation for a carrier if one of the carrier’s students completes the entire series of twenty outlines.

9. I would have scheduled a weekly parish lunch after worship to provide opportunity for progress reports.

10. I would consider a more formal post-study-guide class evaluation and solicit input from the members regarding ways of improving outcomes: for instance, I would draw on their experience to determine why so many students dropped out and whether the three-month time frame was sufficient.

11. I would have spent more time training and mentoring participating members, whom I had expected to follow through with their students without substantial pressure from me.

12. I would recommend that the leaders of churches or groups that might be considering this or a similar model spend more time explaining the importance of completing the entire series. The success of the program depends on the maintenance of a positive relationship with each prospect and his completion of all of the outlines.
13. I would organize a Wednesday or Sunday night series around the study guides.

The design and implementation of this model has been beneficial to me. I have acquired competence and information in ministry, along with research methods that will enable me to identify other needs, conduct the necessary research, design models for addressing these needs, and evaluate outcomes.

As a result of my work on this project, I have learned more about the careful, rigorous analysis that is central to academic research. I really endeavored to conduct independent, objective research. Frequently, I experienced some frustration at the level of member commitment and the small number of new members generated by the program. Nevertheless, I have maintained positive relationships with members, including those whose performance I found disappointing. I believe the quality of my relationship with the members is such that, should we implement the model again, the percentage of Bible studies series completed would be greater than that reported in this dissertation. Overall, I am very grateful to the members of the church and of the church staff.

The very completion of the project as planned meant the reaching of an important personal goal—not only the completion of a doctoral degree, but the promotion of the well being of African American males in Southeast Atlanta. I believe I have made a contribution toward understanding and resolving key community needs in the area. Without question, I learned much about the social and economic factors that affect the lives of African American males and why they are so skeptical about what some consider “the white man’s Bible and religion.”

Delegation is a vital feature of effective pastoral leadership. While the pastor cannot and should not assume the role of a caretaker and prevent lay members from
accepting and exercising responsibly, lay members will likely perform more satisfactorily if they recognize a pastor's confidence in them. I have learned how essential it is to delegate responsibility to properly instructed lay persons while monitoring their activities regularly in a non-threatening manner. Greater delegation would provide me—or any other pastor involved in a similar project—additional time to develop greater competence in administration, preaching, counseling, and the development of lay leadership.

The optimism prompted by the initial enthusiasm of participating church members dimmed as I discovered that these members were not always prepared to ensure that students completed the study guide series. I have concluded that it is just as crucial to remind participating church members to be faithful to the Bible study process as it is for the church member to remind students to complete the series. Providing weekly reminders was difficult because I serve a multi-church district and thus preach at Atlanta Boulevard every other Sabbath. Providing weekly reminders was difficult because I serve a multi-church district and thus preach at Atlanta Boulevard every other Sabbath. Despite the difficulties associated with implementing the model, the personal contact that is central to the model is arguably the most effective way of fostering positive responses. I therefore believe the model is worth testing and refining in the future.

**Final Thoughts**

It is crucial that we focus on that special target population of Black men. It is a biblical, theological, and historical fact that the Godhead loves them. The Creator makes no difference between Black and White men. He loves no one less for his color. However, any efforts to evangelize African American males must include the
components of affirmation and appreciation for them as persons. Social and economic barriers are no excuse to do nothing for them.

There are some positive outcomes when African American males become Christians, and especially committed Seventh-day Adventist Christians. They are on the track for comprehensive stewardship. They learn more effectively to manage their time, talents, temples, and treasures. This habituation in applied stewardship systematically addresses the reasons many Black men give for not attending church. They are no longer stressed or depressed. They now have a reason to live that is worthy of their highest and noblest efforts. Simply and succinctly stated, they have hope. An intentional and deliberate focus on their needs is the critical factor leading to the successful recruitment of African American males in general, but in southeast Atlanta in particular.

I believe the basic premise of the project has been sustained. At the same time, I acknowledge a key weakness: the failure to provide sustained motivation for members to encourage each Bible study prospect to finish all twenty outlines. The whole experience has been one of challenge, frustration, and commitment—one that has yielded more than one baptism. I do not believe that the limited response should prompt disillusionment or failure. I still believe it is possible that ten percent of the eighty prospects will respond positively, even if more time is required for them to do so.

Perhaps I could have been a more effective leader. To the extent that the results of my efforts were positive, I thank God for the results. In any case, I trust that a door of opportunity has been opened for reaching out to African American men in Southeast Atlanta.
This entire dissertation project has been a tremendous learning experience for me, both as a minister and as an African American male. I have been forced to think through my own feelings about what it means to be African American. I had to confront a wide range of memories from elementary school, high school, college, and university, and from my five decades as a full-time pastor.

Being an African American male in my elementary school years meant being constantly reminded of my limitations in a segregated society. In high school, it meant intentionally acquiring vocational skills I would need for economic survival. In college, it meant hearing and responding to a divine call for ministry in which my social status and color became subordinated to ministerial formation. At the university level, it meant convincing the dominant culture that my separate but equal education was, in fact, sufficient to equip me to compete in any setting or society. During my tenure as a full-time pastor, it meant bringing into focus and allowing my growing conversion experience to mature in trustful relationships with those whom I had formerly regarded as unworthy of my trust. At every stage of my life, I have been conscious of my ethnic identity, but my consciousness has grown—from a desire to be white, with straight hair, to a greater appreciation for my parentage, my heritage, and my conversion.

The significance of this project for me is multifaceted. I am convinced that the more detailed the planning, the more satisfactory the results of the objective research. I am excited about the potential of the study guides developed as part of the project. I look forward to making appropriate revisions when conducting this program in another church. The model envisioned here does not permit one to operate on automatic pilot and expect occasional references to the need for outreach to motivate church members. I
realize that I must promote the program more actively among the members of my congregation if it is to be a success. While the project did lead to the recruitment of more African American male members, I can and will work harder and more effectively in the future. I have grown in my ability to trust and monitor my members while simultaneously challenging and empowering them to work effectively to recruit new members. But the outcome of this project helps me to realize my need to improve my skills in communication and motivation so that participating church members will sense the importance of encouraging every completing the lessons to finish the entire set.

I intend to apply what I have learned about the value of evaluation to other areas of my ministry. The evaluation of my project adviser offered insightful and constructive input, which I know has strengthened the quality of the project and the report on the project contained in this dissertation. In the future, I will not hesitate to invite the evaluative insights of my peers concerning proposed models of ministry.

I have learned that, at certain intervals, it may be necessary as a leader to combine aggressiveness and tact more effectively. I feel justified in the conviction that appropriate ministry using the African American Male Study Guides will result in a positive response. My future ministry will include the preparation of the study guides for publication and distribution for intentional evangelism among Black men.

From my point of view, the most important contribution of this project has been the opportunity it has given me to deepen my conviction that more African American males, despite stereotypes and unavoidable sociological factors, can and will become members of the Atlanta Boulevard Church. I have been exposed to the City of Atlanta’s Comprehensive Development Plan. It is clear to me that the Atlanta Boulevard Church
can and should help facilitate that plan, especially as it relates to the quality of life in the city. Our church must be committed to enhancing the quality of life in Atlanta, and potential members must see the connection between the Adventist message and the enhancement of their lives in the real world.

This project has significance to me because it is the answer to a life-long challenge to appreciate the inherent value of human beings in general—and of Black males in particular. The project has also helped me become a better church leader. Because of the systematic approach required for the completion of this dissertation project, it has definitely enhanced sermon preparation, organization, and delivery. The project has also reaffirmed for me that the church member is critical to success in evangelism. I will, therefore, spend more time training and equipping them in the future. I hope that there will be no numerical decline of Black males in our congregation.

More than ever before in my fifty years of ministry, I know that I believe in a God who believes in me. I wish I had as long to minister with the experience gained in this project as I have had to spend in ministry already. Despite the limited amount of time likely available to me as a pastor, however, I believe I will be able to offer better leadership in the future to the Atlanta Boulevard Church, and to foster increased growth, especially among Black men.

The completion of this project is in many ways a milestone. It is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in my eyes. It is God’s grace that has allowed the time and gifts to accomplish the task, coupled with my adviser’s careful supervision and guidance, when things looked bleak. Whatever my future decisions and plans might be, this dissertation
The project will ensure they are informed, because of the discipline, determination, and perseverance learned in this memorable process.

As I conclude the study, I do so with gratitude for what I have learned, and with the expectation that I along with others will continue to benefit from the materials reflected in this project. I have learned that I needed to move from an obsession with the preservation of ministerial reputation to a commitment to self-giving. The search for truth is often risk-oriented, since its outcomes are not always precisely predictable. Instead of feeling failure at the minimal results of the project to date, I now rejoice with the unfallen angelic chorus. It is all worthwhile because the word of God is one of the finest prescriptions for curing the ills of mankind.

I am grateful for the opportunity this project afforded me to work with both my congregation and my project adviser. Much has been learned from both sources. The dimension and potential of my ministry seem limited only by the level of my commitment to detail planning, objective research, and persevering action. The lessons learned from this doctoral project are not to be interred in a library with the filing of this report. The act of ministry confirmed the validity of what innovative ideas can do to impact the conditions of black men in southeast Atlanta. Only time will tell the ultimate value of the discoveries I have made in this project, for my ministry. Even though I have earned a Doctor of Ministry degree, I have not completed my education in ministry. The fact is, I am now aware of areas in which I am in need of more education. Far from being an end in itself, this project has been a means of personal growth for me as a minister. Only eternity will disclose the magnitude of ministry that will flow from the principles discussed and the model designed in this journey.
APPENDIX A

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRES
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE SDA MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE*

1. NAME: _____________ CITY: ATLANTA STATE: GEORGIA

2. AGE: (circle one) under 20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50+

3. HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE SDA CHURCH? (check no more than three answers)
   ____ Newspaper  ____ Television  ____ Church member invitation
   ____ Handbill  ____ Radio  ____ Relative  ____ Literature evangelist
   ____ Revelation Seminar  ____ Bible study  ____ Telephone  ____ Tent
   ____ Pastoral visit  ____ Church location  ____ Ingathering
   ____ (other) Write in your answer if it is not mentioned above: Parents

4. WHERE WERE YOU WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD ABOUT SDA?
   ____ Work  ____ Home  ____ Car  ____ Hospital  ____ Shopping
   ____ Sports event  ____ (other) Write in your answer: Granny’s house

5. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE BEST THREE WAYS TO ATTRACT BLACK MALES TO THE SDA CHURCH? (Check only three answers)
   ____ Athletics  ____ Youth ministries  ____ Health programs
   ____ Evangelistic preaching  ____ Revelation Seminar  ____ Sabbath School
   ____ Community Services  ____ Home Bible study  ____ TV evangelism
   ____ Other (write in your answer if it is not listed)  ____ Talking

6. IN WHAT YEAR DID YOU JOIN THE SDA CHURCH?

7. WHAT WERE THE GREATEST FACTORS IN YOUR DECISION TO JOIN THE SDA CHURCH? (check only three or less answers)
   ____ Witness of a family member  ____ Friendly church members
   ____ Dynamic preaching  ____ Pastor  ____ Church school
   ____ Prospective date or mate  ____ Church community service
   ____ Youth ministries program  ____ Bible study series  ____ Sabbath school
   ____ Other (write in your answer if it is not above) 

*Respondents aged 20 and under.
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE SDA MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

1. NAME: 20-29  CITY: ATLANTA  STATE: GEORGIA

2. AGE: (circle one) under 20  20-29  30-39  40-49  50+

3. HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE SDA CHURCH? (check no more than three answers)
   _____Newspaper   _____Television   _____Church member invitation
   _____Handbill   _____Radio   8  Relative   _____Literature evangelist
   _____Revelation Seminar   _____Bible study   _____Telephone   _____Tent
   Pastoral visit   _____Church location   _____Ingathering
   2  Other (write in your answer if it is not mentioned above) Reared in the church

4. WHERE WERE YOU WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD ABOUT SDA?
   _____Work   9  Home   _____Car   _____Hospital   _____Shopping
   _____Sports event   _____Other (write in your answer) __________________

5. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE BEST THREE WAYS TO ATTRACT BLACK MALES TO THE SDA CHURCH? (check only three answers)
   7  Athletics   6  Youth ministries   _____Health programs
   6  Evangelistic preaching   3  Revelation Seminar   4  Sabbath School
   3  Community Services   5  Home Bible study   2  TV evangelism
   1  Other (write in your answer if it is not listed) Gospel concert

6. IN WHAT YEAR DID YOU JOIN THE SDA CHURCH?

7. WHAT WERE THE GREATEST FACTORS IN YOUR DECISION TO JOIN THE SDA CHURCH? (check only three or less answers)
   8  Witness of a family member   8  Friendly church members
   4  Dynamic preaching   2  Pastor   2  Church school
   6  Prospective date or mate   2  Church community service
   6  Youth ministries program   7  Bible study series   5  Sabbath School
   1  Other (write in your answer if it is not above) Desire to be saved

*Respondents aged 20 to 29.
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE SDA MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE*

1. NAME: 30 - 39  CITY: ATLANTA  STATE: GEORGIA

2. AGE: (circle one) under 20 20 - 29 30 - 39 40 - 49 50+

3. HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE SDA CHURCH? (check no more than three answers)
   _____ Newspaper  _____ Television  4 Church member invitation
   _____ Handbill  _____ Radio  3 Relative  4 Literature evangelist
   1 Revelation Seminar  1 Bible study  1 Telephone  4 Tent
   1 Pastoral visit  6 Church location  1 Ingathering
   2 Other (write in your answer if it is not mentioned above) Born into it; job

4. WHERE WERE YOU WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD ABOUT SDA?
   2 Work  6 Home  3 Car  1 Hospital  3 Shopping
   3 Sports event  4 Other (write in your answer)

5. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE BEST THREE WAYS TO ATTRACT BLACK MALES TO THE SDA CHURCH? (Check only three answers)
   3 Athletics  2 Youth ministries  1 Health programs
   3 Evangelistic preaching  2 Revelation Seminar  1 Sabbath School
   4 Community Services  3 Home Bible study  2 TV evangelism
   4 Other (write in your answer if it is not listed)

6. IN WHAT YEAR DID YOU JOIN THE SDA CHURCH?

7. WHAT WERE THE GREATEST FACTORS IN YOUR DECISION TO JOIN THE SDA CHURCH? (check only three or less answers)
   5 Witness of a family member  5 Friendly church members
   2 Dynamic preaching  2 Pastor  3 Church school
   2 Prospective date or mate  1 Church community service
   3 Youth ministries program  1 Bible study series  4 Sabbath School
   2 Other (write in your answer if it is not above) Parents and mother

*Respondents aged 30 to 39.
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE SDA
MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE*

1. NAME: 40 - 49 ______ CITY: ATLANTA STATE: GEORGIA

2. AGE: (circle one) under 20 20 - 29 30 - 39 40 - 49 50+

3. HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE SDA CHURCH? (check no more than three answers)
   ______ Newspaper ______ Television ______ Church member invitation
   ______ Handbill ______ Radio ______ Relative ______ Literature evangelist
   ______ Revelation Seminar ______ Bible study ______ Telephone ______ Tent
   ______ Pastoral visit ______ Church location ______ Ingathering
   ______ Other (write in your answer if it is not mentioned above) Born in it; college; born in it

4. WHERE WERE YOU WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD ABOUT SDA?
   ______ Work ______ Home ______ Car ______ Hospital ______ Shopping
   ______ Sports event ______ Other (write in your answer) Orphanage

5. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE BEST THREE WAYS TO ATTRACT BLACK MALES TO THE SDA CHURCH? (check only three answers)
   ______ Athletics ______ Youth ministries ______ Health programs
   ______ Evangelistic preaching ______ Revelation Seminar ______ Sabbath School
   ______ Community Services ______ Home Bible study ______ TV evangelism
   ______ Other (write in your answer if it is not listed) Give them something to do

6. IN WHAT YEAR DID YOU JOIN THE SDA CHURCH?

7. WHAT WERE THE GREATEST FACTORS IN YOUR DECISION TO JOIN THE SDA CHURCH? (check only three or less answers)
   ______ Witness of a family member ______ Friendly church members
   ______ Dynamic preaching ______ Pastor ______ Church school
   ______ Prospective date or mate ______ Church community service
   ______ Youth ministry program ______ Bible study series ______ Sabbath School
   ______ Other (write in your answer if it is not above) People at study; relationship

*Respondents aged 40 to 49.
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE SDA MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE*

1. NAME: 50+ CITY: ATLANTA STATE: GEORGIA

2. AGE (circle one) under 20 20 - 29 30 - 39 40 - 49 50+ 

3. HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE SDA CHURCH? (check no more than three answers)
   _____ Newspaper   _____ Television   _____ 7 Church member invitation
   _____ Handbill   _____ Radio   _____ 5 Relative   _____ Literature evangelist
   1 Revelation Seminar   1 Bible study   1 Telephone   2 Tent
   _____ Pastoral visit   _____ Church location   _____ Ingathering
   2 Other (write in your answer if it not mentioned above) Bible and other books; prison ministry

4. WHERE WERE YOU WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD ABOUT SDA?
   _____ Work   8 Home   _____ Car   _____ Hospital   _____ Shopping
   _____ Sports event   6 Other (write in your answer) Church member; church school; in jail; tent

5. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE BEST THREE WAYS TO ATTRACT BLACK MALES TO THE SDA CHURCH? (check only three answers)
   5 Athletics   4 Youth ministries   4 Health programs
   6 Evangelistic preaching   2 Revelation Seminar   2 Sabbath School
   4 Community Services   3 Home Bible study   1 TV evangelism
   2 Other (write in your answer if is not listed) Explain church membership; godly life

6. IN WHAT YEAR DID YOU JOIN THE SDA CHURCH?

7. WHAT WERE THE GREATEST FACTORS IN YOUR DECISION TO JOIN THE SDA CHURCH? (check only three or less answers)
   4 Witness of a family members   4 Friendly church members
   5 Dynamic preaching   4 Pastor   4 Church school
   _____ Prospective date or mate   2 Church community service
   _____ Youth ministries program   5 Bible study series   3 Sabbath School
   4 Other (write in your answer if it is not above) Heard the truth; Bible study and other books; the doctrines

*Respondents aged 50 and above.
APPENDIX B

LETTER TO CHURCH MEMBERS FOR A REPORT OF

STUDENT INTEREST
December 13, 2003

Dear Boulevard Member:

The last week in August, 2003, our personal ministries records indicate that you volunteered to participate in the African American Male Bible Study Guide plan. You received [ ] set(s) of African American Male Study Guides. You agreed to pray and select a person to share these study guide with.

Each study guide consisted of only seven [7] questions. You were given the answer sheet for all the questions. The only book needed was the Holy Bible. It was understood that three [3] months would be enough time to complete the study guides by doing two [2] lesson per week.

It is time for a report on what the Lord has helped you to accomplish with your student(s) and study guides. On the back of this letter is the report blank. Please write in the space provided, and return this to my office next Sabbath. I need your results because the research project would be incomplete without it.

I am sure that the personal ministries department would like for you to share your story especially if the student is planning for baptism.

We do have a baptism scheduled for December 27, 2003. It would be a cause for heaven to rejoice if your student is ready for that special step. If I am needed to help you with an appeal to your student for a decision, please call me as soon as possible. My telephone number is 404-289-1935.

Thanks so much for your willingness to participate in this ministry to the African American male.

Very sincerely,

Ralph P. Peay
APPENDIX C

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE STUDY GUIDE

RESPONSE BLANK
RESPONSES FROM THOSE WHO COMPLETED
THE TWENTY (20) AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDY GUIDES

NAME _________________________  CITY ______________  STATE ____________

AGE category (circle one)  Under 20  20-29  30-39  40-49  50+

RESPONSE(S)  You may check all that apply to you; that is, as many as you wish.

A_______  I learned a lot about the Bible, about Jesus, and His plan for my life.
B_______  I believe the study guides are practical, informative, and biblically true.
C_______  I desire prayer that I might be willing to obey what I have learned.
D_______  I have decided to accept Jesus Christ as my personal Savior.
E_______  I desire membership in the local Seventh-day Adventist church.
F_______  I wish to be baptized into membership by immersion.
G_______  I have already been baptized by immersion, therefore I prefer membership
          by profession of faith.
H_______  I need more time and information to think and pray before making a
decision to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
I_______  I would like a visit from your friendly pastor.
J_______  I do not wish to become a Seventh-day Adventist at this time.

Other comment: ___________________________________________
APPENDIX D

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE STUDY GUIDES
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE

STUDY GUIDES

TWENTY LESSONS

ONLY SEVEN (7) QUESTIONS PER OUTLINE

ALL QUESTIONS MAY BE ANSWERED WITH ONE BOOK

THE HOLY BIBLE
STUDY GUIDES

1. Status, Brothers Have It
2. What Is So Amazing About Grace?
3. The Brothers' Textbook
4. Ethnic Beginnings
5. Divine Respect for the Brother
6. The Guarantee Against Homelessness
7. Poverty Is No Longer An Option
8. Occupation
9. Prison Time/Get the Record Straight
10. Take Care of Your Woman
11. What Is the Worst Thing A Brother Can Do?
12. How to Postpone Your Funeral
13. Is There Life After Death?
14. Pie In the Sky
15. Were You Born Tired, and Never Got Rested?
16. The Church
17. You Better Mind/The Judgment
18. It’s Crunch Time-Hour of Decision
19. Guarding the Soul of the Soul Brother
20. Baptism
Introduction: Vance Packer’s book, *The Status Seekers*, describes the class behavior in America. He mentions what affects the status seekers. Among the things that give people in America a sense of distinction, rising, standing, and class are:

- Occupation
- Education
- Income Source
- Dwelling Area (location)
- House Type
- Amount of Income (p. 217).

Q: What status, rank, standing, or class does every Black male have?
A: Genesis 1:27, “So God created in His own image, __________ _______ ________
____________ created he him, male and female created he them.”

Note: The status or standing of Black males was determined by God at creation. His value or worth is not determined by society or the dominant culture.

Q: What is the theological basis of brotherhood?
A: Malachi 2:10, “Have we not all __________ _______? Hath not one God created us?”

Q: Was status, standing, rank, class changed when the first brother and his wife sinned?
A: Micah 7:18: “… who is a God like unto thee, __________ _______ _________.
________ __________, __________ ____________ _______ _______ _________.
________ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______, __________ _______
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________ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______,
________ _______ _______ _______ FIG. 30. Two Small Watercolor Drawings by Jean Goujon (1510-1568) (at the Metropolitan Museum of Art).
A: 1 John 1:9, "If ______ ________ our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Note: It does not take high-sounding philosophy and involved theology to make a Christian out of a sinner. It takes simple faith in the one who “came in the world to save sinners” (2 Timothy 1:15).

Q: What step should follow confession?
A: Proverbs 28:13, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: But whoso ______ ________ _______ _______ _______ them shall have mercy.”

Q: Are there some violations too heinous to be forgiven?
A: Isaiah 1:18, “... though your sins ______ ________, they shall be ______ _______ _______; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Note: Nothing is too hard for God. When brothers are serious about repenting and confessing, God promises to forgive. All the burden of the dark past is lifted.

Q: Has my status, standing, rank with God ever been compromised?
A: 2 Corinthians 1:9-10, “But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead; who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver (present tense): in whom ______ _______ ________ that he will yet deliver us” (future tense).

Note: When a brother makes a bold stand to establish a broken relationship, he can do so with absolute confidence that Jesus (a) has already died for his sins, (b) is willing to deliver him from his sins, (c) and is available and able to keep him in the future from falling.
Status among men is earned. Status with God is a gift bestowed.
The worth of a soul brother cannot be fully estimated by finite minds (5T 620).
Would you know its (soul) worth, go to Gethsemane and the cross (COL 196).
Response:

_____ I feel good about my origin, identity, and destiny.

_____ My status is based on my creator and redeemer.

_____ I want him to be the head of my life.
WHAT IS SO “AMAZING” ABOUT GRACE?

INTRODUCTION: Many African-American males have encountered a lot of crises and social disorders. Certain things in the past have happened with lasting negative consequences. The longing for physical, mental, and emotional relief seems to haunt them. Is there any practical application of this thing called “amazing grace”? Is there a bridge over troubled waters? Is he safe to save?

Q: Do brothers have access or claim to grace?

A: Titus 2:11, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”

Note: God’s grace is available to all men, regardless of race, religion, or nationality. This is sometimes referred to as “prevenient grace” or grace at work prior to conversion.

Q: According to Romans 3:24, what is another type of grace?

A: Romans 3:24. “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Note: Since men and “brothers” have nothing by which they may set themselves right with God, justification must come as a free gift, which Paul calls “justifying grace.”

Q: Name another kind of grace according to Ephesians 1:7.

A: Ephesians 1:7, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

Note: Verse 6 of Ephesians 1 says that grace makes “us accepted.” And verse 7 emphasizes redemption and forgiveness. “God saw our fallen condition, He saw our need
of grace . . . Grace means favor to one undeserving to one who is lost” (SDABC 6:1117). The fact that we are sinners, instead of shutting us away from the mercy and love of God (grace) makes the exercise of His love to us a positive necessity in order that we may be saved.

Q: How does the apostle describe grace in Titus 2:11-14?
A: Titus 2:11-14, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness we should live soberly, righteous and Godly . . . Looking for that blessed hope . . . Who gave Himself for us . . .”

Note: Grace brings salvation while teaching practical living and inspiring hope in the return of Jesus, who died for us.

Q: What simple factor makes grace so meaningful to brothers?
A: Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”

Note: It is grace on God’s part and faith on man’s part. Faith accepts the gift of God. John 1:7 reminds us that grace and truth come by Jesus Christ.

Q: How crucial is grace to behavior modification in brothers?
A: 1 Corinthians 15:10, “But by the grace of God I am what I am: And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain. But I laboured more abundantly than they all: yes not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

Note: Grace made a difference in Paul’s life. It changed him from a persecutor of Christians to a preacher of good news. His past was covered and his present life was transformed and empowered. God’s grace was not wasted on him. Brother, give God credit for His enabling grace to you.

Q: What is so amazing about grace?
A: Romans 5:20 “Where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound.”
Note: There is enough grace to cover any brother’s past and empower him for the present and future. Grace is a gift to the undeserving. It is **Great Redemption At Christ’s Expense.** It is **MARVELOUS, INFINITE, MATCHLESS. It is AMAZING!**

Response:

_____ I believe that grace is undeserved favor to any man from God.

_____ I believe grace forgives and justifies any repenting brother.

_____ I believe grace can, and will, make a difference in my life.

_____ Amazing grace is marvelous, infinite, matchless.
INTRODUCTION: The African-American male has been introduced to a large variety of information designed to impact his physical, mental, emotional, and moral stability. Some has come from Christian and non-Christian religions. Socrates said, “Men will do right, if they only know right.” This certainly calls for an authority on what is right. A map settles the argument on a route to travel. A dictionary settles the argument on correct pronunciation of words. A ruler or tape measure settles the question of length or width. Scales solve the problem of weight. Maps, dictionaries, rulers, and scales represent authority. Real men need divine authority for their rule of life.

Q: By what name is the brother’s textbook commonly known?
A: Matthew 21:42, “Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.”

Q: How were the scriptures given?
A: 2 Timothy 3:16, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

Q: What other name or title is given to the scriptures?
A: Luke 8:21, “And He answered and said unto them, my mother and my brother are these which hear the Word of God, and do it.”

Note: The word commonly used to denote the “scriptures” or “Word of God” is the Holy Bible. The Bible has 66 books and was written by 35-40 men over a period of 1500 years.

Q: What was the purpose for giving humanity the scriptures?
A: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
Note: The inspired writings are reliable for “teaching,” for “censure,” for “restoration to a right state” (relationship), and for “discipline, training, nurture.” The Bible contains proof in itself of its divine origin. It is adapted to every age and condition of life.

Q: What are scriptures able to do for the brother who believes in them?

A: 2 Timothy 3:15, “And that from a child thou has known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Q: What success have critics experienced in their efforts to destroy the holy scriptures or Word of God?

A: John 10:35, “. . . The scripture cannot be broken.” And Isaiah 54:17, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.”

Note: The Bible has been attacked for centuries, yet it remains. Voltaire and Ingersoll both scoffingly maintained that the Bible would soon be extinct. The critics are dead. The Bible lives and is the world’s greatest seller. Black men can trust this book.

Q: Why is the Bible of such great interest and importance to 21st century African-American males?

A: 1 Corinthians 10:11, “Now all these things happened unto themselves for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Note: The Bible alone tells us (a) who made the world, (b) where man came from, (C) why we are here, and (d) what the future holds in store. It condemns evil, offers redemption to the repentant sinner, and gives hope to the downcast. “If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability or purpose that is rarely seen in these times” (Steps to Christ, 95).
Responses:

_____ The Bible is an authority on the origin and destiny of men.

_____ The Bible is a reliable guide for moral men to obey.

_____ The Bible offers hope to men of African descent, for it provides assistance in character development.
ETHNIC ORIGIN

INTRODUCTION: The origin, identity, and destiny of man are three potent concepts for serious review by brothers. What about the origin or the races? Is this crucial to us?

Q: The sacred writings, many of which were written by men of African descent, answers the question “How was man brought into being?”

A: Genesis 1:26, “And God said, _______ _____ make man in our image, after our likeness.” Genesis 2:7, “And _______ ________ formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Note: This is a very simple account of man’s origin. Instead of being an improved likeness of a monkey, he is made in the likeness of God. Dr. E. Slosson discovered that the dust of the ground is made up of fourteen elements... the body of man is composed precisely of these same fourteen elements.

Q: According to the book of Genesis, where did Blacks originate or come from?

A: Genesis 10:1, “Now these are the generations of the sons of _______, _______, _______, and ________ and unto them were sons born after the flood.”

Note: Genesis gives the beginning of almost everything, including the beginning of the universe, life, man, death, marriage, sin, redemption, family, worship, and sacrifice. After the flood (Genesis 10), the sons of Noah became the progenitors of the race. The Black race are descendants of Ham. Robert Morrison wrote, “Scriptural authority makes it amply manifest and undeniable that colored people—black, brown, yellow, and near white occupy a place of reform in Bible history.”

Q: Who are some Blacks in Bible history?

Acts 8:27, “And he arose and went: and, behold a man of Ethiopia, an
__________ of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians . . .”
Matthew 27:32, “As they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, __________ by
name, him they compelled to bear His cross.”

Note: Caleb, the Ethiopian eunuch, the Simon of Cyrene, are all descendants of Ham. Caleb
belonged to the tribe of Judah (Num 13:6), which was a Canaanite tribe through Judah’s
marriage to a Canaanite woman. Hence the tribe of Judah was a mixture of the Hamitic
(colored) and Shemite races. Since Caleb was a member of that tribe, he was colored.

The Ethiopian people were descendants of Cush, the oldest son of Ham (Gen
10:6). Hence, they were Blacks (or Negroes) who inhabited the land of Ethiopia. Simon
of Cyrene belonged to a race of people separate and distinct from the Jews or Romans.
Cyrene, the home of Simon, was in Africa, hence he was an African, a member of the
African race.

Q: Who are some sisters mentioned in biblical history?
A: Genesis 16:1, “Now Sarah, Abraham’s wife, bare him no children; and she had an
handmaid, an Egyptian whose name was ____________.
Exodus 2:9, “And nurse it for me . . . And she called its name Moses . . .”
Ruth 1:22, “So Naomi returned and ________, the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law
with her which returned out of the country of Moab.”

Note: The descent of the Egyptians from Ham is recognized in Psalm 104:23-27 and
Psalm 78:51, where Egypt is called the land of Ham. Pharaoh’s daughter was Egyptian or
colored. Ruth was a Moabitess and also a colored woman. Hagar was an Egyptian and a
Negro bond-woman of Sarah.

Q: What is the true basis of the brotherhood of man?
A: Malachi 2:10, "Have we not ALL __________ __________? Hath not one God created us?"

Q: What New Testament scripture supports the brotherhood concept of Malachi 2:10?

A: Acts 17:26, "And hath made of __________ __________ __________ of men to dwell on all the face of the earth"

Q: According to the sacred scriptures, is one race or gender better or superior to another?

A: Galatians 3:27-28, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for __________ __________ __________ in Christ Jesus."

Note: In Christ, there are no distinctions of race, culture, learning, gender, social-economic status, or nationality. All are equal in God's sight.

Response:

_____ I accept by faith the Genesis account of creation.

_____ I am pleased that God loves all races of man.

_____ I believe in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.
DIVINE RESPECT FOR THE BROTHER

INTRODUCTION: Students of history and Bible scholars have some ideas about the divine existence, or God. They have reduced the arguments in favor of God to four:

1. **Cosmological** or an argument from change in nature. It proves the existence of some cause of the universe.

2. **Teleological** or the argument from order and useful collocation in nature. There must be an intelligence adequate to the production of the order in the universe. The causative power in the cosmological area becomes the intelligent voluntary power in the universe.

3. **Anthropological** or argument from man's mental and moral condition. Man's intellectual and moral nature must have had, for its author, an intellectual and moral being.

4. **Ontological**, which infers the existence of God from the abstract and necessary ideas of the human mind.

Q: What does the Bible say about how God respects the Black male?

A: Matthew 6:26, "Behold the fowls of the air . . .; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

Note: God has a personal interest in you.

Q: What is the basis of God's interest in Black men?

A: 1 Peter 5:7, “Casting all your cares upon Him; for he careth for you.”

Note: Whether you are experiencing hardship or bitter persecution, or economic deprivation, the universal unseen reality has a personal concern for you.

Q: Are God the Father and Jesus the Son one in the same being/body?
A: John 5:30, "I can of mine own self do nothing;... because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me."

Note: The Father sent the Son. Compare John 8:42, "... He sent me." Read John 16:28.

God the Father and Jesus the Son are not one in the same being/body.

Q: Are Jesus the Son and God the Holy Ghost one in the same being/body?

A: John 16:7, "Nevertheless I [Jesus speaking] tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

Note: Jesus and the Holy Ghost (the Comforter) are two distinct personalities. The former sends the latter.

Q: Are God the Father and the Holy Ghost one in the same being/body?

A: John 15:26, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me."

Note: Jesus says the Comforter (Holy Ghost) comes from the Father. He is not the same person as the Father, neither is He Jesus.

Q: How are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost one?

A: 1 John 5:7, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

Note: The three are one in Purpose, Power, and Plan of Redemption. My wife and I have the same last name, but we are separate, distinct persons. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are God, but exist as separate, distinct personalities—one in purpose, not one in body.

Q: Where in the Bible does God love Black people?
A: Numbers 26:65, “For the Lord had said of them, they shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.”

Note: Caleb was of the tribe of Judah, which was a mixture of the Hamitic and Shemitic races. He was colored. He was one of two persons who left Egypt to enter the Promised Land.

Response:

_____ It takes faith to believe in the existence of God.

_____ It is encouraging to believe that God loves Black men too!

_____ It is clear to me now how God is one in purpose, but three in personalities.
THE GUARANTEE AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

INTRODUCTION: Homelessness has been associated with Black males. The number now includes women and children. The good news is that there is a Guarantee against homelessness.

Q: What home did the universal landlord construct for the brothers to live in?
A: Genesis 2:8-15, “And the Lord God planted a __________ __________ __________ __________.” Isaiah 45:18, “The Lord created the heavens; . . . He formed the earth . . . to be inhabited.”

Q: How did our original parents become homeless?
A: Genesis 3:6, “And the woman saw that the tree was good for food . . . She ______ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ______

Note: Genesis chapter 3 explains how Adam and Eve failed the Loyalty Test. Verses 23-24 describe their eviction.

Q: What Hope have brothers now against homelessness?
A: Genesis 3:15 describes a Prophetic feud between Christ and Satan, their respective offsprings, and the triumph of the righteous. “It shall bruise thy ________ (Satan) and thou shalt bruise His H____- (Christ).

Q: How will Christ win the Great Controversy between good and evil?
A: John 3:16, “For God so Loved the world that he gave his only __________ __________ Life.”

Q: When may my brothers expect a certificate of occupancy for their original home?
Q: How did Isaiah describe our guarantee against homelessness?
A: Isaiah 66:21-23, “And they shall build houses and ___________ them. They shall not build and another inhabit.”

Q: What am I to do in the meantime?
A: John 14:1-3, “… In my father’s house are many mansions . . .” Acts 17:26, “And hath made of one blood, ___________ ___________ ___________ to dwell on ___________ ___________ of the earth.”

Response:

_____ I believe He has a permanent home reserved for me.
_____ I want the certificate of occupancy.
_____ I am willing to do my part to claim the promises.
POVERTY NO LONGER AN OPTION

INTRODUCTION: Poverty of the Afro-Americans finally attracted national attention in the 1960s. Much of the attention was focused upon a poor people’s march on Washington, DC in 1968. During the period and extending into the 1970s, about one-third of all Afro-American families lived at poverty levels. The good news is that brothers now have an option.

Q: Every brother is the custodian of some basic resources to manage. You ask what are they?
A: 1 Corinthians 6:19, “What _______ _______ is the temple of the Holy Ghost . . . Ye are not your own.”

Q: Who became poor so brothers may live above the poverty line?
A: 2 Corinthians 8:9, “. . . for your sakes ________ became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

Q: Why are there so many poor people in America?
A: Matthew 26:11, “Ye have the _______ _______ with you.”
Malachi 3:8, Robbed God.

Note: We are tempted to answer and blame national administration, public policy, racism, education, technology, parents, place of birth, no opportunity.

Q: What can a poor person do to pull himself up by his bootstraps?
A: 1 Corinthians 4:2, “Moreover, it is required in _______ that a man be found ________.”

Note: We are stewards of time (24 hours daily), talent (special gift and/or capability), temple (our bodies), and treasure (money—little or much).

Q: How may a poverty-level steward “be found faithful” with treasure or money?
A: Proverbs 3:9, “H____ the Lord with thy substance, and with the ______ ______ of all thine increase.”

Leviticus 27:30, “And all the ______ (tenth) of the land . . . is the Lord’s: it is holy unto the Lord.”

Note: The tithe principle means I should honor God with a minimum of one tenth of my increase or income. This is fair for the lower, middle, and upper income brothers.

Q: What is promised to the faithful tither who may be surviving on a fixed government subsidy?

A: Malachi 3:10, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and prove me . . . if I will not open you the __________ ______ ________, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be ______________ ___________ to receive it.”

Note: Poverty is not an option to the faithful steward. Indeed, the tithe is a guarantee against the lapse into poverty.

Q: What fundamental reason should encourage me to be a tither?


Response:

_____ I choose to live above the poverty level.

_____ I choose to be a faithful steward.

_____ I need prayer for courage to return a faithful tithe.
INTRODUCTION: The Creator of all magnificent vistas and human beings gives each brother some opportunities. Success depends upon the use made of them.

Q: What was the occupation of the first brother?
A: Genesis 2:15, “And the Lord took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to ________ it and to ________ it.” Compare Genesis 1:28. The original couple was charged to (a) populate the earth, (b) subdue the earth, (c) exercise dominion over the animal creation.

Q: What are the benefits of physical and mental labor?
A: Proverbs 14:23, “In all labor there is __________.”
Psalm 128:2, “For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands; ________ shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.”
Ecclesiastes 5:12, “The ______ of a laboring man is ______, whether he eat little or much.”

Q: What was God’s original purpose in giving the creation brothers work to do?
A: “God appointed labor as a blessing to man, to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and to develop his faculties” (Patriarchs and Prophets, 50).

Q: What are some factors to consider in the choice of a career, vocation, occupation?
A: Your individual interest. Your capabilities. The requirements of your job. Your preparation; your willingness to preserve. “Success in any line demands a definite aim. He who would achieve true success in life must keep steadily in view the aim worth of his endeavor” (Education, 262). These are rules that ensure safe guidance in vocational choices.

Q: How many days per week should brothers work?
A: Ezekiel 46:1, “. . . the _______ working days.”

Note: Man had to use his physical and mental facilities to preserve the garden in the same perfect state in which he had received it.

Q: Will physical labor be a delightful feature in the Eden restored?
A: Isaiah 65:21, “They shall ______ houses and inhabit them; they shall ______ vineyards and eat the fruit of them.”

Note: Work was not intended to be a curse in Eden or since.

Q: What does Genesis 2:15, “To dress it and to keep it” mean to you?
A: The verb “to keep” means “to guard,” “to watch,” “to preserve,” “to observe,” and to “hold fast.”

Note: To do this responsibly in 2003 requires a brother to be diligent, focused, and determined.

Response:

_____ I am happily employed and “keeping” my family in tact.

_____ I would like to change careers and evaluate the factors that would ensure success.

_____ I need your prayers as I consider options.
INTRODUCTION: The sacred writings refer to five types of law. They are (1) natural laws, (2) civil laws, (3) ceremonial laws, (4) health laws, and (5) moral laws.

Q: Which of the laws when violated, usually results in fines and prison sentences?
A: 1 John 3:4, “Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the _____; for sin is the transgression of the law.”

Note: Violation of moral and civil laws are financially costly.

Q: Can there be sin/violations where there is no law?
A: Romans 4:15, “Where there is no law, there is no _______________.”
Romans 3:20, “For by the law is the knowledge of sin.”
Romans 7:7, “I had not known sin, but by the law.”

Q: What law was given to govern the morals of brothers and others?
A: Deuteronomy 4:13, “And he declares unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even T_____ C______________, and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.” Compare Exodus 24:12 and 31:18.

Note: The moral law was given to Israel in trust for all mankind. It contains the elementary rules of moral and religious duty and embodies the eternal principles of right and wrong.

Q: What would happen to the prison population if brothers simply obeyed the last six of the Ten Commandments?
A: The last six of the Ten Commandments are:
5. Honor thy father and thy mother
6. Thou shalt not kill
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery
8. Thou shalt not steal
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness
10. Thou shalt not covet . . . anything that is thy neighbor’s

Note: Most of the multiplied thousands of inmates would be with their families free and happy. William Proctor, in the 1933 Moody Bible Institute, p. 49, wrote: “It (the moral law of Ten Commandments) deals not only with our open words and activities, but with our hidden thoughts and motives; the first, second, and tenth commandments regulating our desires, the third and ninth our words, and the remainder our deeds.” The Ten Commandments constitute a summary of the duties that God requires of men.

Q: How enduring are the Ten Commandments of God?
A: Psalm 111:7-8, “. . . all His commandments are sure. They ______ _________ for ever and ever.”

Q: Did this moral law exist before it was proclaimed at Mount Sinai?
A: Romans 5:19, “By one man’s ___________, many were made sinners.”
1 John 3:4, “Whoso ever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: For sin is the transgression of the law.” It follows that the law existed in Eden, else there would have been no transgression—no sin.

Q: What has the eternal lawgiver promised the brothers who respect and obey His code of conduct?
A: Isaiah 48:18, “Hearken unto my commandments! Then had thy ______ been like a river and thy __________ as the waves of the sea.”
Psalm 111:10 “. . . a good __________ have all they that do His commandments.”
Conclusion: John Wesley wrote: “The moral law, contained in the ten commandments
... He (Christ) did not take away ... Every part of this law must remain in force upon
all mankind, and in all ages ...” (John Wesley, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the
Mount,” Discourse 5, in works volume 5 [1829 ed.], 311,-312.

Response:

_____ I believe that in the moral government of the universe, God acts in harmony
with rules/laws.

_____ The Ten Commandments law of God is unchangeable.

_____ Pray for me as I seek to obey these principles.
TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR WOMAN

INTRODUCTION: Black men and women often engage in relationships that are not in their best interests. Karenga (1982) describes four methods through which Black males and females come together.

1. The Cash Connection - everything and everybody has a price;
2. The Flesh Connection - basic sexual attraction;
3. The Dependency Connection - the need for somebody to lean on or lean on you; and

Let's explore the origin and benefits of the Black family's role.

Q: Where and by whom were the foundations of the home/family laid?
A: Genesis 2:8, “And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.”

Q: In making this home/family, what besides man was needed?
A: Genesis 2:18, “And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him.”

Note: The help meet was “fit” or “suitable” to the other’s needs.

Q: What is the role of the wife/mother in the home/family?
A: Ephesians 5:22-23: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.”

Note: No position in life is superior to that of the mother, no influence more potent for good or evil. God committed the care and early training of His only begotten Son to “Mary His mother” (Matthew 2:11). The role of the mother is to care for her husband,
teach the children, and demonstrate Christian qualities (Ministry of Healing, 377-378). It is supportive, not secondary.

Q: What is the role of the husband/father in the home/family?
A: Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.”

Note: The response of the husband to his wife’s submission is not to give a command, but to love. This immediately makes a partnership out of what otherwise would be a dictatorship. A good husband will properly provide for his family (1 Timothy 5:8). The role of the husband is to be Provider, Protector, and Priest for the family/home. He will “balance affection with authority” (Ministry of Healing, p. 390). Hence, direct not dominate.

Q: What is the role of the children in the home/family?
A: Proverbs 1:8, “My son, hear the instruction of thy Father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.”

Note: “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land” (Exodus 20:12). Learning to honor, respect, and obey his earthly parents is the child’s first and most important lesson. As long as parents live, they should be honored and respected by their children. This duty does not cease at maturity, nor when the child leaves the parental roof. The role of children is to show respect, obedience, reverence, and self-control” (Child Guidance, p. 17).

Q: For how long does marriage bind the parties?
A: Romans 7:2, “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth.”

Note: Marriage has come down to us with the Edenic Dews of Divine Blessing. It was ordained for the purpose of populating the earth and perpetuating the race. It is to promote
social order and human happiness. It will serve to transmit truth, purity

Q: What is the greatest secret of a happy home/family?

A: Proverbs 15:17, “Better is a dinner of herbs whose love is, than a stalled ox and hatred thronwith!”

Note: When spouses love each other as Christ does, there is peace and happiness in the home. It is a major asset to the home/family when the African-American father assumes his role as Provider, Protector, and Priest. You can trust the founder of marriage and the family. His love will make you want for His will to be done until life’s setting sun.

Response:

_____ I believe the biblical model of family is good for African-Americans.

_____ I believe the love for Christ is reflected in the love for one’s spouse.

_____ I believe a happy home/family is God’s plan for me.
WHAT IS THE WORST THING A BROTHER CAN DO?

INTRODUCTION: Some have theorized that the sin against the Holy Ghost is premeditated murder. Others contend that it is sexual perversion or demon possession. Still others believe it is suicide. We will answer the matter about this terrible crime for which there is NO forgiveness. Three points in 7 questions should clear this up. Point 1 is: What is sin? Point 2 is: Who is the Holy Ghost? Point 3 is: What is the sin against the Holy Ghost? Brothers will appreciate this approach.

Q: What is sin?
A: 1 John 3:4, “Whoso committeth sin transgresses the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.”

Note: Sin is offensive to God. Whether sins or omission or sins of commission, it is a violation of God’s rules. The act of sin may have been in ignorance, in passion, or willfully pre-meditated.

Q: Is there pardon or forgiveness for all sins?
A: 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Q: Who is the Holy Spirit/Holy Ghost?
A: John 14:26, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

Note: The Holy Ghost is the Comforter who came in its fullness after the ascension of Christ. He is referred to as Spirit of Truth (John 15:26), Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21), one of three in the Godhead (1 John 5:7).

Q: Who does the Holy Spirit represent?
A: John 16:13, “For He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.”

Note: The Holy Ghost is Christ’s representative on earth.

Q: What is the sin against the Holy Ghost—the sin for which there is NO pardon or forgiveness?

A: Matthew 12:31, “Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.”

Note: To assume a function that belongs to God is blasphemy. Blasphemy is also attributing to Satan the work done by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not any single sin. It is not suicide, homicide, or sexual perversion. The sin God cannot forgive is the sin of repeatedly rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit when He convicts us of sin and points out further truths. Blasphemy is an intentional indignity offered to God or sacred things.

Q: What is the good news for brothers who have made mistakes and transgressed or violated civil, moral, natural, and health laws?

A: 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Note: An unconfessed sin is an unpardoned sin. Only those who confess and forsake their sins shall have mercy (Proverbs 28:13). While no sin is too great for God to forgive, no sin, no matter how small, can be forgiven if it is not sincerely confessed. God will forgive any confessed sin. He will excuse none.

Q: In what way may one commit the unpardonable sin?

A: Proverbs 16:25, “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.”
Note: One who is about to commit the unpardonable sin feels no conviction for his fatal
course. He either feels that he is all right, or does not care about his condition. Sin numbs
its victim. If you have a desire to live a better life, **you have not committed** the
unpardonable sin--or the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Response:

_____ I have sinned, but I have asked Jesus to forgive me.

_____ I want to cooperate with the Holy Ghost and live a better life.

_____ I will pray for daily strength to trust and obey.
HOW TO POSTPONE YOUR FUNERAL

INTRODUCTION: The life expectancy of the Black male is less than that of White males, White females, and Black females. What can be done so brothers may postpone their funerals?

Q: Is it possible to die ahead of my time?
A: Ecclesiastes 7:17, "Why shouldst thou __________ thine time?"

Q: What outstanding choices could a brother make that would extend his days?
A: 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye _____, or __________, . . . do all to the glory of God.

Q: What foods were a part of man’s original diet?
A: Genesis 1:29, "Every ______ ______ ______." This suggests legumes, grains, fruits, and nuts. It was after the fall of man and the food that certain flesh foods were permitted. See Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 for clean and unclean meats. Both body and mind are affected by the food we eat.

Q: What drink was not included in the original diet?
A: Proverbs 20:1, "Water is a mockery, __________ is raging."
Alcoholic beverages, fermented drinks, were not in the original diet of man. Beer, wine, gin, vodka, whiskey are not good for the human body.

Q: What popular poisonous herbs shorten life?
A: Deuteronomy 29:18-20, "Lest there be among you a root that beareth ______ ______ _________ ."

Note: Among the poisonous herbs known to shorten life is tobacco. Being a rank poison, it is highly injurious. Tobacco contains 26 different poisons, 8 of which are cancer-producing. Ty Cobb, one of the highest paid baseball players of his era, said, "Cigarette
smoking stupefies the brain, saps vitality, undermines health, and lessens the work fiber of man.

Q: What is a brother expected to do with the information learned in this study guide?

A: 1 Corinthians 10:31, “Whether therefore ye eat (proper diet) or drink (water and no alcoholic beverages), or whatsoever ye do (do not contaminate the body with poisonous herbs--tobacco), ______ ______ ______ ______ ______.” (not self-gratification)

Q: Do you believe a practical application of these health principles will improve the quality of life of the Black male?

A: Ecclesiastes 7:17, “Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldest thou ______ ______ thy time?”

Note: Many illnesses are preventable. We can make the best of right choices. Enjoy length of days and quality of life.

Response:

_____ I choose to take better care of my body.

_____ I will eat more fruits, grains, and vegetables.

_____ I will seek to avoid alcoholic beverages and harmful tobacco products.

_____ I need special prayer to do all of the items I have checked.
IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH?

INTRODUCTION: There is much confusion today about what happens to a person in death. It is believed by some that you could go to heaven, hell, the grave, purgatory, or float around in a spirit world. When a brother dies, what happens to his soul? Is there consciousness in death? Is there life expectancy after death?

Q: Is man mortal or immortal?
A: Job 4:17, “Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his maker?”

1 Corinthians 15:53, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality.”

Note: Man in his post-Edenic state is mortal.

Q: Since a brother is mortal (subject to death), what happens to his remains?
A: Ecclesiastes 12:7, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

Note: Death is just the opposite of the beginning of life. In creation, God took dust and formed man. He breathed into man the breath of life which made him a living soul. At death, this spirit, or breath, is taken away and goes back to God; and the body returns to the earth. This spirit (or breath) is not some entity that is capable of a conscious existence apart from the body.

Q: Is it possible for the soul of a righteous brother to praise the Lord after he dies?
A: Psalm 115:7, “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down in silence.”

Q: Where do the remains of a dead soul rest?
Q: What then is the soul of a man?

A: Genesis 2:7, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Note: The soul did not exist before the body was formed. Neither was the soul added to the body. The soul resulted from a union of the breath of life with the body. There is no consciousness in death (Eccl 9:5-6). Man—the person is the soul. Ezekiel says a soul that sins can die.

Q: Who introduced the idea that there is consciousness in death, or the possibility of communication with the dead?

A: Genesis 3:4, “And the serpent (Satan) said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die.”

Note: Multitudes believe this first lie that the dead are not really dead. It is evident in the rise of spiritualism and appearing in the séance room. Most of the religious community believe in an unbiblical immortality of the soul. There is no second chance after death.

Q: What is the good news for brothers about the state of a soul in death?

A: John 28-29, “Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

Note: Jesus Christ refers to the two resurrections as the resurrection of life and the resurrection of damnation. The dead in Christ will rise in the resurrection of life. The good news is that brothers who die in love with Jesus are not forgotten. Loved ones have the promise of the resurrection of life.
Hosea 13:14 reads, “I will ransom them from the powers of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Compare 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, “For since by men came death, by men also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Response:

_____ I believe that man is a mortal soul.

_____ I understand that there is no consciousness in death.

_____ I want to be in the resurrection unto life and receive immortality at the second coming.
INTRODUCTION: One of the grandest themes in the sacred scriptures is the return of Jesus or, as some call it, "The Second Coming of Christ." There is some good news for brothers about the pie in the sky, as well as the here and now.

Q: How did Christ foretell His return?
A: John 14:2-3, "In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Q: What will be the manner in which Jesus will return?
A: Acts 1:10-11, "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Note: The second coming of Jesus will be visible. "... and every eye shall see him" (Rev 1:7). It will not be a secret rapture. Cf. Matthew 24:27.

Q: What promise is made to those who look for Him?
A: Hebrews 9:28, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Note: The oppressed, abused, enslaved, brutalized brothers have the promise of hope in a better land.
Q: What is one of the major reasons for the return of Jesus that means so much to the brothers?

A: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout . . . And the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Note: To bestow immortality upon the resurrected and translated righteous who accepted God's amazing grace, there will be no more negative stereotypes, no more hardships, no more sickness, or broken families.

Q: What will unprepared people be doing just before the second advent?

A: Matthew 24:37-39, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered the ark. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

Note: The scripture does not teach that it is wrong in itself to eat, drink, marry. But it is a real problem when a brother's mind is so caught up with these routine things that he gives little or no thought to the future life and fails to prepare to meet Jesus.

Q: Has the exact time of Christ's coming been published?

A: Matthew 24:36, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

Note: It is the privilege and duty of brothers to remain alert and watch for the signs of His return and then know when His coming is near.

Q: What will the waiting brothers say when they see Jesus?
A: Isaiah 25:9, "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

Note: This joyous shout of triumph will come from the lips of many brothers who have survived many injustices. That second coming, Pie in the Sky, is very real.

Response:

_____ The return of Jesus will be visible to all.

_____ A major reason for the return of Jesus is to keep His promise and reward the faithful.

_____ Since the exact time of Christ's second coming is unknown, it is best to get ready and stay ready to meet Him.
WERE YOU BORN TIRED AND NEVER GOT RESTED?

INTRODUCTION: The Black male has been stereotyped as lazy and irresponsible. Otto Klineberg (1944) wrote: “The negro is lazy. He will not work if he can get out of it. He cannot handle complicated machinery . . . He is dirty, smelly, careless of his personal appearance . . . He has not sense of time.” I had a sibling who told me that he was not lazy. He was simply born tired and never got rested. Is there some universal panacea for a tired humanity? A regular refreshing pause?

Q: Are brothers the only living creatures who need rest?
A: Exodus 23:12, “Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; thine ox and thine ass may rest; and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.”

Note: Any one (person or animal) who works, deserves to rest. The answer to the question is NO.

Q: Besides man and beasts, what else needs rest?
A: Judges 3:11, “And the land had rest forty years.” Cf. Leviticus 26:34. Land needs rest.

Q: Before sin entered the world, what did Adam do for work?
A: Genesis 2:15, “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it.”

Note: This command teaches us that the perfection in which all creation came forth from God’s hands did not exclude the need for cultivation or human labor. Man had to use his physical and mental faculties to preserve the garden in the state he received it (SDA____, p. 225).

Q: After the first pair sinned, how was work described?
A: Genesis 3:19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

Note: The hard labor that was to add to man's burdensome life is vividly expressed. Since Adam's sin, most human achievement may be realized only through much toil.

Q: What plan did God initiate for human personal rest?

A: Exodus 20:8-11, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates."

Note: The seventh day Sabbath as God's appointed rest, pause for man, goes back to the very beginning of human history. It is an inseparable part of the creation week (Genesis 2:1-3). The Sabbath is a day of rest.

Q: What day of the week is the Sabbath?

A: Exodus 20:10, "But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

Note: No secular labor is to be performed on that day. It is to be spent in religious reflection, worship, and service for humanity. It does provide an opportunity for physical rest. This feature of the Sabbath is very important to man in his sinful state because he must earn his bread by the sweat of his face (Genesis 3:17-19).

Q: Which day of the week is the seventh day?

A: Luke 23:52, 54, 56, "This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus . . . And that day was the preparation and the Sabbath drew on . . . And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested according to the commandment."
Luke 24:1, "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher . . . And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher."

Note: There are seven days in the week. The above-referenced verses state clearly that (a) the day of preparation comes before the Sabbath; (b) the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week because; (c) it is followed by the first day of the week. According to our calendar, the preparation day would be the same day of the week. The seventh-day Sabbath is the day between the sixth day and the first day. Most people will agree that Jesus was crucified on Good Friday and resurrected on Easter Sunday. The Bible teaches that the Sabbath is the day between Good Friday and Easter Sunday—commonly called Saturday. Mark 1:32, “From even unto even shall ye celebrate my Sabbath.” Sabbath begins sunset Friday and ends sunset Saturday.

Response:

- All living creatures need rest sometimes
- God’s plan of rest for humanity, and especially African-Americans, is the Sabbath
- Pray for me that I may observe this precept of a Caring

  Respecting
  Accepting
  Forgiving
  Trusting GOD
INTRODUCTION: There are seven historic African-American denominations. They are:
1) African Methodist Episcopal, 2) National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., 3) African
Methodist Episcopal Zion, 4) National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated,
5) Christian Methodist Episcopal, 6) Progressive National Baptist Convention, 7) Church
of God in Christ. There are over 250 other denominations or religions in America. Nearly
80 percent of all African-American Christians attend the seven historic church affiliations.
Which church would Jesus join if HE were here on earth?

Q: What are some reasons people give for joining a church?
A: I grew up in this church. My parents belong here. My friends go there. It is near
my home. To please my husband or wife. I like the physical plant. It’s good for
business. One church is as good as another.

Q: Does Christ our Lord have a visible church in the earth?
A: Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the
church, and gave Himself for it.”
Ephesians 3:21, “Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all
ages.” Christ is to be exalted in the church until the close of time.

Q: What are the clear identifying marks of God’s visible church in the earth?
A: Revelation 14:6-12
It would preach a world-wide gospel message (Rev 14:6-7)
It calls upon men to fear God (Rev 14:7)
It would deliver the message of mystic Babylon’s fall (Rev 14:8)
It warns about the worship of the beast and its image (Rev 14:12)
It urged worship of the Creator above the beast and his image (Rev 14:7)
It keeps the commandments of Jesus (Rev 14:12)
It exalts faith in Jesus (Rev 14:12)
It announces a time of judgment (Rev 14:10)
It is patient under persecution (Rev 14:12; 12:17)
It will work and wait for Christ’s return (Rev 14:12-15)

Note: God foresaw the rise of modernism. When men deny creation, they must deny the fall of man; and so, without a Creator, there can be no Creator’s laws to be obeyed. If man has not fallen, then there is no need for the atoning blood of Jesus. God’s message/church today may be identified as (1) calling men to recognize creation, (2) recognize the seventh day Sabbath as a memorial of creation, (3) affirm the perpetuity of the ten commandment moral law, and (4) accept the cross/sacrifice of Jesus as the means of our salvation.

Note: Babylon represents those church which DO NOT teach (1) Jesus is the Son of God, (2) obedience to the laws of God, (3) seventh day Sabbath observance, and (4) a time of judgment.

Q: What church should you join if you wish to unite with the one Christ endorses and authorizes?

A: Revelation 14:12, “Here is the patience of the saints: Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

Note: The moral law or Ten Commandments are yet binding upon humans. The faith of Jesus is faith in the literal, visible, personal, audible second coming of Jesus to planet Earth to reward the faithful flock with incorruption and immortality. The fourth commandment of the ten could eliminate a large segment of the professed Christian community. Take the word of God as your only guide, His law as your measuring line,
and Jesus as your only example. Identifying His visible church becomes an easy assignment.

Q: The above question and answer dealt with God's visible church. Does God have an invisible church?

A: John 10:16, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

Note: Christ has an invisible church which is living up to all they know is right. These are honest people scattered in all religions and faiths of the world. (See John 10:27-29)

Response:

_____ I believe God has a visible and an invisible church on planet Earth.

_____ I believe the identifying marks of the visible are biblical.

_____ I believe Jesus would join a Bible-teaching, commandment-keeping, Sabbath-observing congregation.
INTRODUCTION: The American judicial system provides: (a) an investigation of the case in question, to establish the guilt or innocence in accordance with the law of the land; (b) the rendering of a final verdict; and (c) the carrying out of the verdict. There is a higher system that demands accountability for responsible choices for brothers and others. "You better mind – You better mind – You got to give an account in the judgment – You better mind." The words of this old Negro spiritual are true.

Q: What assurance do we have that there will be a judgment?
A: Acts 17:31, "Because He (God) hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained . . ."

Note: The proclamation of a coming judgment is clear in the sacred ___________.

Q: How many people in the world will face the judgment?
A: 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that He hath done, whether it be good or bad." Ecclesiastes 3:17, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked."

Q: What is God’s standard by which to judge mankind?
A: James 2:12, "So speak ye and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

Note: In verses 10 and 11 of James 2, it is obvious that the moral law is the Law of Liberty. The mention of adultery and killing are expressly forbidden. Revelation 20:12 calls attention to books with records about those to be judged. This is an unerring register of each man’s life.

Q: Who presides at the judgment court in heaven?
A: Daniel 7:9-10, “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit . . . The judgment was set, and the books were opened.”

Note: The Ancient of Days is a clear reference to God the Father (cf. Verses 13, 22).

Q: Who is the lawyer for the brothers and others?

A: 1 John 2:1, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Note: Jesus is the Mediator or Intercessor, Advocate or Defense Attorney for those who trust His provisions in His atoning sacrifice. His blood pleads with power and efficacy for those who confess and forsake sin.

Q: What part of the judgment takes place at the second coming of Jesus?

A: Matthew 16:27, “For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his work.”
IT'S CRUNCH TIME
THE HOUR OF DECISION

INTRODUCTION: Dr. Leo Rippy enunciated six steps in the decision-making process. They are:

1. State the problem clearly.
2. List alternative solutions to the problem.
3. List the consequences of each proposed solution.
4. Select the best option.
5. Implement the best option promptly.
6. Evaluate the results.

During the process of reading these study guides, you have learned about the problem of man, his origin, identity, and destiny. The solutions are narrowed down to right or wrong choices, good and evil forces, masters—Christ and Satan. The consequences have eternal implications, life or death. You are invited to select the best option—Jesus. Accept Him as your personal Savior and obey His will. Evaluating the results is a vibrant _____________ Christian growth toward maturity.

Q: What is the most important issue any brother will ever face?
A: Joshua 24:15, “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve.”

Response:

_____ I believe the Bible is the inspired authoritative word of God.
_____ I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for my sins.
_____ I desire to obey Jesus and order my life after His example.
_____ Please pray for me.
_____ I desire additional information on Lesson Number ______.
INTRODUCTION: The forces of God and evil are in a constant battle for the control of human minds. Any control is processed through the senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. Amidst the most ideal surroundings, the fight against evil and sin is not easy. There are 7 simple success secrets in guarding the avenues to the soul of the soul brother.

1. Guard the thoughts.
Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”
Note: Usually before yielding to sin, one goes through a gradual mental and moral breakdown. Think positive.

2. Guard friendships.
1 Timothy 5:22, “Neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.”
Note: Too many brothers have been dragged into unlawful and immoral behavior by improper friends. Choose friends who have, and still practice, high moral values.

3. Guard the eyes.
Job 31:1, “I made a covenant with mine eyes.”
Note: Moving pictures and suggestive (adult) performances have caused a deterioration of present-day morals. A good rule to use in choosing television programs is WWJD. What would Jesus do? Avoid questionable places of amusement.

4. Guard your reading.
Revelation 22:14-15, “Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”
Note: The realities of life have been blurred by the constant reading of fiction. The reading of exciting serials and novels dulls the desire for non-fiction. The desire for the unnatural weakens a brother’s defense against strong temptation. Read true biographies and biblical accounts of those who were overcomers.

5. Guard your language.
Revelation 14:5, “And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without a fault before the throne of God.”
Note: Brothers need to refrain from swearing, crude slang, vulgar language, and suggestive conversation.

6. Guard your amusements.
Proverbs 16:25, “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
Note: Is there such a thing as innocent gambling? Is premarital sex safe or right? Is it okay to be a functional alcoholic? Brothers should shun the first step towards evil in all areas of temptation. Guard your amusements, but enjoy recreation.

7. Guard your soul’s love for your soul’s Savior.
2 Timothy 3:1, 24, “This know ye also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . , lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.”

Note: The brother who is serious about the simple success secrets will not allow anything, or anyone, to sever the relationship with his Creator/Redeemer. He guards well this divine/human encounter. “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

Response:
The avenues to the soul are the five senses.

The choices I make determine how well I guard my soul.

The simple success secrets for the soul brother can be experienced with real lasting benefits.
INTRODUCTION: There is a way to peace for African-American males. It is the best way to honor “The Man.” It is a memorial of the resurrection. It is good news to know that Blacks in the Bible encountered this experience.

Q: Who was the brother baptized by the evangelist Philip?
A: Acts 8:38, “. . . And they wet down both into the water, both Philip and __________; and he (Philip) baptized him (the eunuch).” The eunuch was from Ethiopia. That is in Africa.

Q: Why is baptism so important to brothers?
A: Mark 16:16, “He that believeth and is ___________ ____________; But he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Note: Apparently, this is a matter of vital and eternal importance— it is a saved or lost issue. The meaning and method of baptism are crucial.

Q: Of what is baptism a symbol or memorial?
A: Romans 6:3-4, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his __________. Therefore we are __________ with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was __________ up from the __________ by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life.”

Note: For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.”

Note: Baptism is a gospel ordinance commemorating the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Q: What is the divinely ordained method of baptism?
A: Mark 1:9, “And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was _________ of John in ________.”

Note: Baptize means to immerse, to plunge, to put entirely into or under a liquid, so that the object was wholly covered. Immersion is the only mode practiced by Christ and authorized by Him. Please note the following steps in the process of Bible baptism:

a. Candidate stands with closed eyes and holds his breath - this symbolizes death.

b. Candidate is completely immersed or covered with water, while eyes are closed and he is holding his breath. This symbolizes death and burial.

c. Candidate is raised by the one holding him, from under the water; immediately opens his eyes, resumes breathing, and proceeds to walk in newness of life. This symbolized resurrection.

Therefore, Sunday is not a memorial of the resurrection. Baptism is.

Q: What should precede baptism?

A: Matthew 28:19, “Go ye therefore and ______ all nations.”

Mark 16:16, “He that _______ and is baptized shall be saved.”

Acts 2:38, “___________ and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Note: The Bible contains no records of infant baptism nor any instruction for it.

Q: Which of the following are correct? (Place an “x” in front of the correct statement.)

A: [ ] Baptism openly confirms our decision to unite ourselves with Christ.

[ ] Baptism is a memorial of our Lord's death, burial, and resurrection.

[ ] Baptism of Jesus by John and the Ethiopian (Black) eunuch were by immersion.

[ ] Baptism is a sacred role that Christ tells us to follow.

[ ] Baptism should be the natural follow-up to teaching, believing, and
repenting.

Baptism is the believer’s entrance into the royal family of God.
Baptism is a symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Christian.
Baptism is an outward sign of an inward cleansing.
Baptism is a condition for entrance into the existing visible church of God.
Baptism is a public declaration of one’s renunciation of the world and his acceptance of Kingdom responsibilities.
Baptism is the outward evidence of the candidate’s change of citizenship.

Response:

_____ The subject of baptism is important to God and us.
_____ The meaning of baptism has eternal implications.
_____ The method of baptism is immersion.
_____ The memorial of Jesus’ resurrection is baptism—not Sunday.
Lesson 1  [1] in the image of God  
[2] one Father  
[3] that pardoneth iniquity  
[4] If we confess  
[5] confesseth and forsaketh  
[6] be as scarlet . . . white as snow  

Lesson 2  [1] grace . . . to all men  
[2] justified freely  
[3] redemption . . . forgiveness . . . grace  
[4] that bringeth salvation  
[5] grace . . . saved  
[6] grace . . . I am what I am  
[7] grace . . . abound  

Lesson 3  [1] scriptures  
[2] inspiration  
[3] the word of God  
[4] doctrine . . . reproof . . . correction . . . instruction  
[5] wise unto salvation  
[6] be broken . . . no weapon  
[7] ensamples . . . admonition  

Lesson 4  [1] let us . . . the Lord God  
[5] one Father  
[6] one blood all nations  

Lesson 5  [1] are ye not much better  
[2] He careth for you  
[3] the Father which hath sent Me  
[4] I will send Him unto you  
[5] Comforter . . . whom I will send  
[6] three that bear record  
[7] Caleb
Lesson 6
[1] garden eastward in Eden
[2] took of the fruit . . . husband
[3] head . . heel
[4] begotten Son . . . everlasting
[5] His promises
[6] inhabit
[7] all nations of men . . . all the face

Lesson 7
[1] your body
[2] He (Jesus)
[3] poor always
[4] stewards . . . faithful
[5] honor . . first fruits . . tithe . . holy
[6] windows of heaven . . blessing . . room enough

Lesson 8
[1] to dress . . keep
[2] profit . . happy . . sleep . . sweet
[3] labor as a blessing
[4]
[5] six
[6] build . . plant
[7]

Lesson 9
[1] law
[2] transgression . . knowledge . . sin
[3] ten commandments
[4]
[5] stand fast
[6] disobedience
[7] peace . . righteousness . . understanding

Lesson 10
[1] Lord God
[2] an help meet
[3] submit yourselves
[4] love your wives
[5] hear . . father . . forsake . . mother
[6] so long as he liveth
[7] where love is
Lesson 11
[1] transgression . . . law
[2] He is faithful . . . forgive us our sins
[3] Comforter
[4] Not speak of Himself
[5] blasphemy . . . forgiven
[6] confess our sins
[7] way that seemeth right

Lesson 12
[1] die before
[3] herb bearing seed
[4] wine . . . strong drink
[5] gall and wormwood
[6] do all to the glory of God
[7] die before

Lesson 13
[1] mortal man
[2] dust return . . . spirit shall return
[3] dead praise not
[4] hide . . . grave
[5] formed man . . . living soul
[6] serpent (Satan) . . . shall not surely die
[7] in the graves . . . hear His voice

Lesson 14
[1] prepare a place
[2] this same Jesus . . . come in like manner
[3] shall He appear the second time
[4] meet the Lord . . . be with the Lord
[5] eating and drinking, marrying and giving
[6] knoweth no man
[7] have waited . . . He will save us . . . glad

Lesson 15
[1] do thy work
[2] land
[3] Garden of Eden to dress it
[4] sweat of thy face
[5] seventh day . . . not do any work
[7] that day . . . preparation . . . Sabbath
Lesson 16
[1] Christ also loved the church
[2] world-wide, fear, Babylon's fall, worship-beast-image, Creator
[3] above, commandments, faith, judgment, patient, persecution,
[5] commandments of God . . . faith of Jesus
[6] sheep . . . this fold . . . one shepherd

Lesson 17
[1] Hath appointed a day . . . He will judge
[2] We must all appear . . . judgment
[3] the law of liberty
[4] the Ancient of Days
[5] an Advocate . . . Jesus Christ
[6] He shall reward every man
[7] unjust . . . filthy . . . holy

Lesson 18
[1] Whom ye will serve

Lesson 19
[1] pure in heart
[2] keep thyself pure
[3] covenant
[4] blessed . . . commandments
[5] mouth was found no guile
[6] seemeth right . . . ways of death
[7] lovers of pleasure . . . lovers of God

Lesson 20
[1] The eunuch
[2] baptized shall be saved
[3] death . . . buried . . . raised . . . dead
[4] baptized . . . in Jordan
[5] teach . . . believeth . . . repent
[6] All statements are correct
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VITA
VITA

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CURRENT POSITION
Senior pastor, Atlanta Boulevard Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Atlanta, GA

PREVIOUS POSITION
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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS
18 years spent as a pastor evangelist
23 years spent in youth ministry
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NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS
Organized two churches following evangelistic campaigns in Eads, TN, and Brownsville, TN, 1964
Chaired strategy sessions designed to bring about the desegregation of schools, lunch counters, and waiting rooms in bus and trains stations in Chattanooga, TN, 1962-63
Taught Greek II as a student, 1951
Researched and wrote the opening program worksheet for 15,000 delegate North American Division Festival of Faith, 1978
Served as the first and only African American Director of Youth Ministries for the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1985

EDUCATION
Hon.D.D., Gulf Coast Seminary, 1984
M.P.H, Loma Linda University, 1983
M.A., Scarritt College, 1969 (Christian Education)
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Outstanding Youth Ministry Service Award, Daniel Payne College, 1970
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