

**THE PASTORAL CARE PROFESSIONAL AS PASTORALDRAMIST AND  
HOLISTIC CAREGIVER: ADDRESSING THE CHURCHGOING EXPERIENCES  
OF BLACK YOUTH THROUGH PASTORAL CARE AND PSYCHODRAMA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE PASTORAL CARE PROFESSIONAL AS PASTORALDRAMIST AND HOLISTIC CAREGIVER: ADDRESSING THE CHURCHGOING EXPERIENCES OF BLACK YOUTH THROUGH PASTORAL CARE AND PSYCHODRAMA**

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When looking at the churchgoing experience of African American youth and ways of ministering to them in a holistic way, it is important to realize that the youth are truly the future of our congregations. In order to address the issues and the needs that have been presented by the teens of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA and Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, the researcher of this dissertation developed a project (and consequently) a therapeutic tool that would serve to provide a safe (confidential, non-judgmental, therapeutic) space of free self-expression, to foster healthy mental and social development, as well as, a healthy and effective way for youth to express their feelings, thoughts, desires, and aspirations. This project was meant to set a precedence of palatable therapy in church settings, and had a two-fold purpose of not only providing a safe space for free-expression, but also, it served to close the cross-generational chasm of misunderstanding and miscommunication, and opening up opportunities for an intergenerational connection between the teens and the middle-aged adults of the churches.

To carry out her project, the researcher used as her foundation the principles of in-depth pastoral care and psychodrama. She then combined them into a palatable therapeutic tool coined as pastoraldrama. The premise of both the researchers project and of this dissertation is the understanding that in-depth pastoral care and psychodrama (and consequently pastoraldrama) can be used effectively to foster better intergenerational relationships, attend to the holistic needs of today's Black youth, enhance the churchgoing experience of today's Black youth, and to help today's Black youth feel they have a place, a purpose, and a voice in their families, their community, their churches, and ultimately in the future of society as a whole.

In developing her model the researcher used various authors, theories, and sciences to argue for the importance and usefulness of this project. She used various resources and defended her point theologically, theoretically, biblically, historically, and empirically. The researcher discovered the presented ministry needs through observation, communication with members of each church, research panels, and intergenerational workshops conducted while working as a youth worker in the congregations. Her target age groups for this project were the teens of the congregations in conjunction with the middle-aged adults of the congregations. At Zion Hill, the teen participants were of the ages 16-18, and at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church her teen participants were of the ages 13-15.

In the following dissertation, the researcher will describe in detail the general makeup of both of her research congregations and their history in order

to give her readers a clear and accurate description of the ministry settings in which she worked. She will also present empirical, theoretical, biblical, theological, psychological, cultural, and historical evidence supporting the use of pastoral drama with Black youth in order to enhance their churchgoing experiences, minister to them holistically, and to serve as a tool to bridge generational gaps within the Black Church. She has set up a clear model for her new therapeutic approach and provided a clear outline of her project and a guide for leading pastoral drama sessions. She will further present an example of a skit that was used in a session to address familial stress and discuss the outcomes of this skit, and she will end with a hopeful note describing her desires for the future of pastoral drama and her continued work in this area.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation, project, and resulting degree is dedicated first and foremost to God my Creator and Sustainer, without whom, none of this would be possible.

I also dedicate this to my ancestors who paved the way for me, and on whose shoulders I stand, to my parents Dr. Alvas C. Tulloss, Jr. and Mrs. Gwendolyn B. Tulloss for their endless love and support, and to all who are a part of my village; those who prayed, supported, encouraged, and pushed me through this process...

**THANK YOU!!!**

**A.C.T**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In addition to those mentioned in the dedication portion of this dissertation, this researcher would like to acknowledge Dr. Willie G-dman, Dr. Carolyn McCrary, Dr. Lisa Allen, and Ms. Pamela Dozier for your continued support, hard work, dedication, and mentoring. Thank you all for believing in me, pressing me, stretching me, and helping me to grow. I will never forget you and the lessons you have taught me. Further, this researcher would like to acknowledge the youth of Zion Hill Baptist Church and Friendship Missionary Baptist Church (also known as “my babies”) for their love, encouragement, and dedication to this process.



## CONTENTS

Abstract.....	v
Dedication.....	viii
Acknowledgments.....	ix
Chapter One.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	3
Definitions.....	5
Chapter Two.....	8
Ministry Setting.....	8
Chapter Three.....	31
Ministry Issue.....	31
Chapter Four.....	40
Project Concept (Understanding and Contextualizing Teens).....	40
Still Water Runs Deep.....	44
Ministry is Practical.....	51
We Are Theotokos.....	55
Adolescent Development as It Pertains to Ministry.....	58
How the Researcher was Introduced to the Problem.....	59
Ministry as Application.....	64
Chapter Five (Literary Review).....	79
Historical and Biblical References of Drama (Theater).....	104
Extrabiblical Works.....	106
Chapter Six.....	109
Why this Project is Useful.....	110
How Drama Useful for Ministry.....	112

Why Drama is Particularly Useful for Black Youth.....	116
Delving into the Therapies.....	123
Chapter Seven.....	133
Transference.....	134
Counter-Transference.....	137
Overall Outcome.....	151
Appendix.....	clv
Bibliography.....	clxi

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation serves to examine a ministerial need at both Zion Hill Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia (GA) and Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee (TN) that is geared toward meeting the need for a hybrid model of dramatic interpretation and in-depth pastoral care as a therapeutic tool of in-depth pastoral care with the congregation. Further, this document serves to give a detailed description of the researcher's Doctor of Ministry project which will be an attempt to address this need. The researcher will begin by providing a brief description and analysis of the ministry settings, their locations, their generational breakdowns, their ethos, and other helpful factors that vividly paint the picture of the researcher's ministry settings. The researcher will then proceed to discuss the ministry issue or need that she has chosen to address through her Doctor of Ministry project.

The need has been determined through a series of panel discussions with a sample group from the Zion Hill congregation, the in-put of adult youth workers of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, interviews with church leadership, including both senior pastors, years of observation, prayer, and through contemplative and evaluative methods learned while matriculating through the Doctor of Ministry program. Next, the researcher will discuss in depth the purpose of the project, the pertinent components (therapies, sciences, and

cultural aspects) of the project, the project title, and the results of the project and a concluding statement regarding the future hopes of the researcher pertaining to the project and the congregations of her ministry sites. Lastly, there will be an annotated bibliography of sources the researcher used and a sample of a pre- and posttest that may be used to evaluate project participants.

The goal of both this project and this dissertation is not necessarily to solve the problem or meet the perceived need, but to provide some insight into the pastoral reflection process, to show the first steps taken by the churches to meet the perceived need, and to provide a skeletal look at what the researcher will attempt to do to meet the need sociologically over the course of her lifetime. The premise of both the researcher's project and of this dissertation is the understanding that in-depth pastoral care and psychodrama (and consequently pastoral drama) can be used effectively to foster better intergenerational relationships, attend to the holistic needs of today's Black youth, enhance the churchgoing experience of today's Black youth, and to help today's Black youth feel they have a place, a purpose, and a voice in their families, their community, their churches, and ultimately in the future of society as a whole. In addition, this dissertation will also look at various literary sources to support the logic behind the researcher's project and the means taken to meet the perceived needs of her ministry settings, but first, let us begin by exploring brief statements on the researcher's background in theater and in-depth pastoral care.

## **Background in Theater**

This researcher has a minor in theater and has been immersed in theatre and acting since her childhood. She began acting around the age of five, and started directing plays and skits while in undergraduate school. Additionally, she has stage managed a number of plays and skits ranging from comedy and drama. She further has a working knowledge of stage lighting, set building, costuming, and makeup. Enhancing her knowledge of the use and benefit of theater as a cathartic tool in the Black Church, she was introduced to the disciplines of psychodrama and drama therapy while in graduate school.

## **Background in In-depth Pastoral Care**

During her matriculation through the Interdenominational Theological Center as a Masters level student, the researcher's concentration was in-depth pastoral care and counseling with exposures to psychology of religion. She was taught the basic principles of pastoral care and how to apply these principles in various situations and contexts; all inclusive of but not limited to African-Americans, their social-specific conflicts, crises, and grief. Her studies also included a survey level two-part course in diagnostic and one-on-one counseling. During the second part of this introductory course, she was allowed to pick a client with whom she worked, diagnosed, and counseled for four sessions during the course of that semester. The researcher furthered her study focus in pastoral

counseling during her Doctor of Ministry studies and hopes to become a licensed counselor in the near future.

## DEFINITIONS

**Adolescent/teen/youth:** For the purpose of this dissertation, the terms adolescent, teen, and youth will be used interchangeably to represent young persons from the ages of 13-18.

**Audience:** Persons observing the scene work, action, or play that is being performed in the pastoral drama sessions. In a closed session, the audience consists of the members of the group that are not currently participating in the scene work taking place. In open sessions the audience is comprised of other congregational members who are not regular participants in the closed sessions.

**Auxiliary Egos:** This refers to the other group members that participate in the protagonist(s) scene as a supporting cast.

**Director:** Usually, this would refer to the trained psychodramist, but in the case of this project and dissertation, this refers to the trained group leader (pastoraldramist<sup>1</sup>).

**Drama Therapy:** Drama therapy is described as being a discipline that “acts directly upon the person’s feelings. It does not depend upon verbal accounts of

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<sup>1</sup> See definition for *pastoraldramist* on next page.

the traumatic incident.”<sup>2</sup> It is a discipline that is clinically more playful and less “intensely self-disclosing”<sup>3</sup> than psychodrama.

**Pastoral Care:** Refers to *Psychology of Religion* Pastoral Care as a discipline that focuses on caring for God's people and God's world through the use of a number of holistic methods. It stands on the premise that we hold within us (as innately provided by the Creator) the answers to our own questions and the solutions to our own problems. In short, Pastoral Care is an instrument of healing and growth that fosters in-depth relationships for the purpose of healing and care.<sup>4</sup> Like Psychodrama and Drama Therapy, Pastoral Care is also considered a healing art.<sup>5</sup>

**Pastoraldrama:** This is a term that the researcher is coining for the purpose of this project and dissertation. In that she is attempting to marry two basic therapeutic disciplines in order to form a more palatable form of therapy to be conducted by highly trained lay people; she has simply formed this term by combining “Pastoral Care Provider” and “Psychodramist”.

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<sup>2</sup> Anne Bannister, *Creative Therapies and Traumatized Children*, (New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 46.

<sup>3</sup> Renee Emunah, “Drama therapy and Psychodrama: An integrated model”, In *International Journal of Action Methods*, 50, no. 3, (Fall 1997): 108, <https://login.ezproxy.auctr.edu:2050/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=1075932&site=ehost-live> (Accessed January 28, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the ministry of healing & growth*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Rodney J. Hunter, “The Therapeutic Tradition of Pastoral Care and Counseling,” in *Pastoral Care and Social Conflict*, eds. Pamela D. Couture and Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 18.

**Pastoraldramist:** Like pastoral drama, the word pastoraldramist is a word that is being coined by the researcher. This word denotes one who practices pastoral drama and performs or directs pastoral drama sessions.

**Protagonist(s):** Refers to the group member or members chosen to act out a particular scene from their life (lives). This can also be referred to as “the main character(s)”.

**Psychodrama:** Psychodrama is classified as a healing art, and has been defined as being a form of psychotherapy that uses “...a scientific exploration of truth through dramatic method”.<sup>6</sup> Like Drama Therapy, this form of artistic therapy uses drama to disclose, heal, and, or correct hidden issues that typically stem from early childhood experiences or trauma. As a therapeutic form, Psychodrama was formed by Dr. J. L. Moreno by combining Psychotherapy and drama.

**Stage:** The stage is simply a place in which or on which theatrical or musical movements are performed. The term stage can refer to a literal stage (raised platform on which one performs) or to the designated space in which the scene work within a group will take place. This space can be as simple as a space in the middle of a group of people or as elaborate as the stage at Carnegie Hall

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<sup>6</sup>Josephine Fong, “Psychodrama as a Preventive Measure: Teenage Girls Confronting Violence”, In *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama, & Sociometry* 59, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 100.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **MINISTRY SETTINGS**

The project associated with this dissertation was conducted in two inner-city ministry settings and with two different age groups of teens. The first ministry setting was Zion Hill Baptist Church, and the ages of the research group of teens were between ages 16-18. Zion Hill Baptist Church was a thriving inner-city Baptist congregation located just 30 to 45 minutes from downtown Atlanta, Georgia. The congregation consisted of over 3,000 members and increased in membership almost weekly. Zion Hill was a church in the midst of transition. They completed the building of a new edifice in the Camp Creek area, and a planned, moved into the new location before the end of 2010. The congregation then began the process of adding a second phase of offices and classroom spaces onto the first phase, which was the sanctuary.

The congregation is also in the process of selling the previous building located at 815 Lynhurst Drive in Atlanta. In anticipation of this major move, the members and administrators of Zion Hill made an effort to both ensure the preservation of the current ethos of the congregation as they relocated, and to prevent the membership retention of bad or less productive habits as they transitioned into the congregation's new edifice and environs; such as creating a "Members Only Club" type of atmosphere or a variation in the ethos of "Us – versus – Them". In other words, major efforts were made to ensure that the familiar feel of the congregation remained recognizably close knit and down-

home, thus preventing the entrance of habits that would be detrimental to ministry in the new setting. This effort was only mildly successful. Although, the congregation moved into its new edifice at 6175 Campbellton Road, Atlanta Georgia, the congregation continued to be in transition due to several impacts: The continued process of selling the building at the former location and preparing to build the second phase of the current location. Likewise, changes in leadership, membership, ministry opportunities and operation schedules for the congregation, praise and worship teams, and shifting styles and contents of the worship services to be reflective of and responsive to the new demands upon the congregation and the lives that make up it, were also contributing factors in continuing the transitional state of the Zion Hill congregation.

The general makeup of Zion Hill was the following: the church was 98-100% African-American. The dress was usually "Sunday best"<sup>1</sup>, with the exception of fourth Sundays (Youth and Young Adult Sunday). The dress was casual on these Sundays. The estimated generational demographics included the following: 12% Senior Adults (ages 70+), 43% Middle-age Adults (ages 40-69), 10% Young Adults (ages 18-39), and 33% Youth (ages 1-17). There were also a number of babies (ages 0-11 months) that were a part of the congregation, but they were not yet considered members.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Culturally, especially pertaining to African-Americans, the term "Sunday's Best" denotes the wearing of ones best articles of clothing so as to look especially presentable. Traditionally, these articles of clothing and shoes were reserved only for church activities and special occasions. Even today, a child in an African-American family may be severely scolded for using "church" clothing for common uses such as play or other forms of recreation.

<sup>2</sup> According to Baptist doctrine, babies are not considered members because they are not at the age of reason; the age at which they can make a conscious decision to join the church.

The gender breakdown was roughly 55% females and 45% males, including children. The congregation as a whole was mostly upper middle and working class<sup>3</sup> people, although there were a few lower class and working class poor that made up the total membership. The members of Zion Hill had varying regional backgrounds spanning from North to South and East to West. Nevertheless, a great portion of the membership had rural Deep South<sup>4</sup> roots; including the pastor and first lady who were from Canton, Mississippi. At least 80% of the members would commute from other communities to come to Zion Hill. This percentage was expected to decrease slightly when the transition was made to the developing neighborhood of Camp Creek.<sup>5</sup>

Zion Hill Baptist Church was a National Baptist church, but was not currently active in the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. The church was located in what can be termed the "heart" of Atlanta, Georgia: a large capital city area in the Southeastern region of the United States. It then relocated to a suburb of Atlanta called Camp Creek, near East Point, Georgia. The neighborhood of Camp Creek was a suburban middle to high income residential area about 30 to 45 minutes from downtown Atlanta. Zion Hill Baptist Church set across the street from a wooded area and down the street from a private home,

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<sup>3</sup> While there are no absolute boundaries between these socioeconomic classes, for the purpose of this dissertation, the term Upper Middle Class refers to people or families who are not considered to be rich (apart of the Upper Class) and not considered to be poor (apart of the Lower Class). The term Working Class refers to those who are considered poor, but are currently employed; usually in manual labor or "blue-collar" jobs.

<sup>4</sup> This term denotes the southern most states of the United States of America. These states are Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Texas.

<sup>5</sup> The percentage of members who would commute changed steadily after the move. Some members stopped coming to Zion Hill because of the added distance, but others, especially new members, were pleased because the new edifice was closer to their homes. As membership continued to grow, the number of displeased members decreased and the percentage of commuters leveled out.

two new learning/daycare centers, a new subdivision, and an older African Methodist Episcopal congregation, in a quiet residential neighborhood located between the bustling (and still developing) commercial areas of Camp Creek Parkway and Fulton Industrial Boulevard.

Zion Hill Baptist Church was founded in 1872 by 8 former slaves, as a brush harbor. These former slaves came out of the historic Friendship Baptist Church on Mitchell Street in Atlanta, GA.<sup>6</sup> They decided to separate from Friendship in order to form a closer place of worship near their homes. Zion Hill's first pastor, the organizer of this move, was Reverend Robert Grant. Under his leadership the church's Mothers Board, choir, and Sunday School were formed. Through the years many of Zion Hill's pastors have been instrumental in growing the church and have had the responsibility of overseeing various building projects of the church, and Pastor Aaron L. Parker is no exception. In the early years of the church, Reverend W. W. Floyd oversaw the building of the church's first place of worship. Later, Reverend C. H. Robinson led the church in another building project as they were outgrowing that current place of worship, and later still, Reverend Larry H. Williams, led Zion Hill in buying the church's last location on Lynhurst drive. In 2006 Zion Hill's current pastor, Aaron L. Parker, commenced on the current \$2 million building project consisting of a new worship center, family life center, daycare, and more. Not only has Pastor Parker continued the tradition of growing the church, his vision and primary convictions continued to focus on service and meeting the perceived needs of the church

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<sup>6</sup> This Friendship Baptist Church, which is located in Atlanta, Georgia, is not to be confused with Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

and the community; first serving God and then serving those whom God has created; God's people.

Zion Hill recently celebrated its 140th Church Anniversary; however, it could still be perceived as a "midlife [or established] organization" because it was at the peak of its proficiency.<sup>7</sup> Based on the information provided by Edgar H. Schein in his book *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, Zion Hill Baptist Church was in the "Mid-life" or "established" phase of evolution. Zion Hill had been in this phase for some time, and its leadership continued to do their best to insure that it remained current and relevant. Schein described a company (or in this case, a church) in this "mid-life" phase of evolution as being one that has evolved or is evolving "into multiple units based on functions, products, markets, or geographies, and those units are likely to develop subcultures of their own". In other words, a congregation at the "mid-life" stage has moved beyond the point of trying to maintain culture, into the point of developing different units (groups, auxiliaries, or committees) based on a number of factors for the purpose of staying vital and relevant to its customers (or in this case, members) and surrounding communities. Schein further pointed out that these units or committees will likely develop subcultures (hierarchies or cliques) of their own.<sup>8</sup> This was something that was already occurring at Zion Hill, and it was mostly predicated by the change in size, location, and the pastor's ministerial goals.

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<sup>7</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 12.

Schein went on to say that the culture issue of a church in this “mid-life” phase is “threefold”. Churches in this phase must work to determine:

1. How to maintain those elements of culture that continue to be adaptive and relate to the organization’s success
2. How to integrate, blend, or at least align the various subcultures
3. How to identify and change those cultural elements that may be increasingly dysfunctional as external environmental conditions change<sup>9</sup>

This assessment by Schein was indeed accurate. It well described the culture of Zion Hill. They were very much in the “mid-life” or “established” stage of evolution, the stage which required a more “accurate cultural assessment in order to maintain some parts of the culture while changing others.”<sup>10</sup> In short, whereas Zion Hill was an older church it had not yet drifted into the stage of being an “old dinosaur” or declining, as Schein put it. Pastor Parker and the rest of the church’s leadership had done well in keeping Zion Hill in the “established” phase without sacrificing core culture or validity. Nevertheless, the change in the size of the congregation forced the leadership and members of Zion Hill Baptist Church to deal with and address the dilemma of the “loss of ‘functional familiarity’”.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 12.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 108-109.

In regards to culture, Zion Hill had what Edgar Schein called a "blended" culture<sup>12</sup>, in that it was comprised of many different cultures which functioned in a symbiotic nature. When examined closely, one could see the various cultures at work within the church, but God, Pastor Aaron L. Parker, and Pastor Parker's administrative staff worked well to keep the balance between the cultures by having the final say in all decisions made. Some of the intermingled cultures were that of the United Methodist Church<sup>13</sup>, the Holiness denomination, the traditions and culture from the mother church (Friendship Baptist Church), that of Pastor Parker's former church (Butler Street Baptist Church), and that of the church which previously owned the building at 815 Lynhurst Drive; not to mention those culture-baring families which have been members of Zion Hill for generations.

The class cultural stream was one that was made up of mostly the middle class; everything from the style of dress to the style of cars seen in the parking lot reflected this middle class cultural stream. Even the food served at special occasions tended to be catered or prepared by the Culinary Team, instead of pot-luck. Also, the church tried to make sure that no one was singled out because they could not afford to wear nice clothes or have their hair professionally done, by meeting the need through donating money and, or clothes, shoes, coats, time, services, and attention to those in need. The congregation's motto was "Living to Love and Loving to Serve", and they lived out this motto in various ways including: planting a Community Development

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>13</sup> Not all of the people attending Zion Hill were professed Baptists.

Center, ZHCDC,<sup>14</sup> which served to meet the needs of chronically homeless women and children, urging auxiliary ministries to participate in outreach opportunities at least once a month, and by donating food, clothing, money, and houses to those in need both locally, nationally, and abroad, including Haiti and Africa. Zion Hill's Outreach Ministry, was one of the strongest ministries in the church. In fact, (as was previously stated) all auxiliary ministries were expected to partner with some aspect of the Outreach Ministry by performing some community service at least once a month, including the Azizi Children's Choir. The congregation strove to be a friendly, family oriented congregation that met the needs of its members, visitors, friends, other congregations, and the global and local community alike. Zion Hill would even reach out to meet the needs of a stranger within reason.

As of late, there were plans to build two more CDCs and to partner with other churches in the neighborhoods where these CDCs were to be established. The church was also in the process of making plans to enhance the developing community into which it relocated. To that end, Zion Hill's evangelism team canvassed the Camp Creek neighborhood prior to moving there to give those already living there an opportunity to voice their opinions about what they considered to be the most pressing need in the area. Postcards were also mailed out as a means of collecting responses from those living in the neighborhood.

The regional cultural stream was that of the south to Deep South. Many of the middle aged members of Zion Hill came from small Southern or deep Southern towns and grew up during the time of segregation, Jim Crow, Separate

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<sup>14</sup> The letters ZHCDC denote Zion Hill Community Development Center.

but Equal, and the Civil Rights Movement. In addition, there were also members whose families were a part of the “Great Migration” to the North, thus while they had southern roots, there was still a strong Northern presence.

The ethos or atmosphere of Zion Hill was one of friendliness in conjunction with a strong sense of family orientation, but at times there was also an undertow of “snootiness” among a small amount of the upper class and “dignified members”, as well as, an undertow of competitiveness.<sup>15</sup> Some members, since moving to the new location, started to undercut other members for relationships, positions, or titles that were presumed to give them a greater status or more power; this even occurred among the ministerial staff. Nevertheless, the congregation worked hard to make everyone that passed through its doors feel welcome, and the atmosphere itself (especially during second service) tended to be almost electric and definitely “Spirit-filled”.

All churches great or small come with what Dr. George B. Thompson, Jr., author of *How to Get Along with Your Church: Creating cultural capital for doing ministry*, called “Shared Assumptions”. These shared assumptions are those unspoken, but shared, beliefs that the people of the business or congregation hold dear; those unwritten rules that everyone knows, but no one actually says, and that new people usually unintentionally and sometimes unknowingly break; in other words, the cultural “Land Minds”. The breaking of these unwritten and unuttered cultural rules tend to cause internal cultural issues between new members and old members, and, or between the leadership and the

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<sup>15</sup> These undertows are a part of the attitudes and behavior the pastor attempted to prevent from entering into the new location. More will be said about this later in the dissertation.

congregation.<sup>16</sup> Three of Zion Hill's shared assumptions were: 1) the Pastor is always right. This is a common shared assumption among African American churches because of their cultural history. 2) convenience is the most important factor when considering outreach, and 3) children should be seen and not heard, unless an adult directs them to express themselves.

The third assumption was the one that directly pertained to the ministry need discovered through the Whitehead method and model of pastoral reflection and, that struck the greatest chord among the panel that was used to execute this method and model. While on the surface it seemed as though the youth of the church had plenty of room to express themselves through artistic expression and even vocally (as was alluded to by a panel member), the fact was that moments of expression are only okay as long as an adult was governing them. The teens<sup>17</sup>, in particular, testified to being snubbed or shut down when trying to share their thoughts without prior consent from an adult. They also experienced being told by a supervising adult, that although she loved them, she did not like them. This type of attitude of rejection seemed to be all too common among the middle-age adults. In fact, the youth director himself was absent more often than present, thus showing the youth that they were not a serious priority. The researcher even experienced a couple of members being shocked at the level of intelligence and wisdom that the teens exhibited once allowed to speak their minds. To see middle-age adults be shocked at the intelligence of the teens was

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<sup>16</sup> George B. Thompson Jr., *How to get along with your church: Creating cultural capital for doing ministry*, (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> In this dissertation the terms *teens*, *adolescents*, and *youth* are synonymous for young people ages 13-18.

a great disappointment for the researcher because the teens' intelligence was something that the adults should have been aware of and cultivated by truly allowing the teens to freely express themselves; as the surface attempted to convey.

Regarding possible tacit assumptions dealing with truth, time, and the nature of human relationships, Zion Hill's basic assumptions about truth were governed by a system of moral principles and religious traditions.<sup>18</sup> To The members of Zion Hill, the truth was a revelation from God through the Holy Spirit as made evident through physical occurrences. They believed in trying or judging the spirit(s) by the Spirit;<sup>19</sup> God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and "judging a tree by its fruit".<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the members of Zion Hill felt that while truth could be found through God and revelation from the Holy Spirit, the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible was the most biblically and historically correct means of coming to understand truth as it is presented in and through God's word.

On the topic of time, Zion Hill's members believed that time was linear with aspects of the circular nature of African Cosmology,<sup>21</sup> and that time is precious, valuable, and should not be wasted. Nevertheless, they also believed that in some instances time was irrelevant since everything happened in God's sovereign

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<sup>18</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 54.

<sup>19</sup> The scriptural and theological reference for this can be found in 1 John 4:1-3.

<sup>20</sup> The scriptural and theological reference for this can be found in Matthew 7:15-20.

<sup>21</sup> African Cosmology entails the belief that time is circular, as opposed to the Eurocentric belief of time being linear. African Cosmology describes life as a journey from birth through life and ancestorhood, and then starting again with the re-birth of the ancestor's spirit into the body of a new baby, usually within the ancestor's family. This understanding is presumably the origin of the notion of a baby or child being an "old soul". This belief was presented at Zion Hill by their venerating the ancestors and pouring libation during certain special occasions.

time. So, one is to do what one can in the time provided, and let God handle the rest.

Finally, concerning the nature of human relationships, Zion Hill was a communitarian congregation that believed that the church is to be like one big happy family dwelling together in unity with the pastor as father, the first lady as mother, the members as siblings, Jesus as the elder sibling, and God as the supreme head. When there was a conflict between the community of the church and the individual, it was the individual that was expected to make the sacrifice for the greater good of the community, or leave.<sup>22</sup>

The overall results of this analysis of Zion Hill Baptist Church showed that while there has begun to be some division within the church and some cultural issues that came as a result of the congregation's growth and relocation, there was still hope that, with work, this congregation would be able to revitalize itself and continue to build on the efficacy of its ministry. Furthermore, Zion Hill had not so much lost its functional familiarity that it had become a "revolving door" congregation with little retention of committed members. In the future, the challenge will come in making the pastor aware of the status of the church, and providing some helpful techniques for him and the congregation to maintain their status in the "established" phase of evolution without sacrificing core culture or validity.

The second church that the researcher chose as her ministry setting was Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, and the ages of the group of teens the

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<sup>22</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 52.

researcher worked with were 13-15. Friendship had a 99% Black or African-American congregation of about 400 members consisting of mostly middle aged to elderly, working to middle class, women. The dress was usually "Sunday best", and the congregation was good about helping the less fortunate members by donating money and, or clothes so that they too could look as good as the middle class members. The estimated generational percentage breakdown was as follows: 5% elderly, 50% middle age, 35% College/Young adults, 10% youth. The gender breakdown was roughly 70% females and 30% males including children. The congregation as a whole was mostly middle to working class people with Deep South roots. At least 80% of the members would commute from other communities to go to Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

A number of the middle aged members started attending the church because it was across the street or within walking distance from their college dorms. Also, the former pastor offered a free breakfast after early morning service as a ministry to the college students during a time when the cafeteria was usually closed. The breakfast, in addition to the convenient location of the church, was another incentive for students to come to Friendship. The breakfast ministry was discontinued during the building of the new sanctuary, a time when the church had to temporarily relocate to an elementary school. This halt in the breakfast ministry did not seem to have any real impact on the attendance of Sunday School or either of the morning church services because there was an understanding among the congregation that this change was only temporary and that breakfast would resume once the new sanctuary had been completed.

Friendship was a Missionary Baptist church associated with (and active in) the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. The church was located in the Southeastern region of the United States next to a well-known college campus in a fairly large capital city. The neighborhood was an urban middle to low income residential area about 10 blocks from the downtown area, one to two and a half blocks from two assisted living facilities, and one block from a neighborhood park and recreation and community center. In recent years efforts were made to improve the neighborhood and reduce crime; Friendship has had little to do with these efforts.

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church was founded in September 1939 after a split from Corinthian Baptist Church by a few members from the former church. The original location of the church was the home of Brother Allen and Sister Odesa Kelly on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North. Shortly after moving into Mr. and Mrs. Kelly's home it was decided that the church needed a more permanent home. Within a few months the members moved to the current location closer to the end of 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North.

The first pastor of Friendship was Reverend L. B. Nelson. The first sanctuary was built during his pastorate. Reverend Nelson later accepted a pastorate position at another congregation, and Reverend E. L. Drew, "a 19 year old seminary student"<sup>23</sup> was called to pastor the church. Under the pastorate of Reverend Drew the church's mortgage was burned, deacons were ordained, and the church's membership grew.

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<sup>23</sup> Church History document, 2005.

In 1946 a man by the name of L. E. Biggs became pastor of Friendship. Reverend Biggs launched a drive to build a Sunday school unit, expand the altar, and beautify the church. However, Reverend Biggs left to pastor another church before his goals were accomplished.

Reverend Enoch Jones (1952) was the next pastor at Friendship. He finished much of the work which was left undone by Reverend Biggs. In addition to building the original Sunday school unit (later known as the Educational Department or Educational Wing), Reverend Jones also added a kitchen and bathrooms to the original structure.

In 1961 Reverend Moses Herring became pastor. His pastorate lasted close to 40 years at Friendship, and he was one of the most beloved pastors in the history of the church. During his pastorate a morning breakfast ministry was instituted in order to feed hungry college students during a time when the cafeteria was closed. Also, because Reverend Herring believed strongly in education a new educational wing was built before the building of the new sanctuary. It was after the building of the new sanctuary in May of 2001 that Reverend Moses Herring passed away. Although he was able to see his vision come to pass, Reverend Herring never got to preach in the new sanctuary. The dedication of the sanctuary was held only hours before the wake and funeral of this beloved pastor.

After the death of Reverend Herring and a long search and election process to elect a new pastor, the church split over a disagreement about the election process and who should rightly become the next pastor. About 35 of the

members left to form their own church, Liberty Christian Bible Church, with the person they thought should have been the new pastor Friendship. In later years, Friendship and Liberty worked to make amends.

The current pastor of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church was Reverend Jimmy D. Greer, also known as, Pastor Greer or "Paw-paw" to those closest to him. Pastor Greer was a former member of the church. He received his call to ministry and his training while under the leadership of Reverend Moses Herring. Reverend Greer returned to Friendship after pastoring at Sylvan Street Baptist Church for 12 years. The biggest accomplishments of Pastor Greer's pastorate thus far were the growth in membership and the institution of new ministries.

Membership at Friendship almost doubled from 200 to 400 members, with an average mid-day worship attendance of about 650 people. Plans were being made for an overflow site to be set up in the fellowship hall. Other accomplishments of Pastor Greer's pastorate included the institution of the following ministries: Vision College Ministry, the Drama Ministry, the Health Ministry, the Employment Services Program Network (E. S. P. N), and the Marriage Support Ministry.

Based on the information provided by Edgar H. Schein, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church was in the "mature and declining" phase of evolution, but was showing some signs of revitalization, and struggling to move forward to the "mid-life" or "established" phase of evolution. Before Pastor Greer was elected, the church was further along in the "mature and declining" phase. Schein described a company (or congregation) in this "mature and declining"

phase of evolution as becoming “increasingly maladapted”. He said that “the culture becomes a serious constraint on learning and change” and that a company (or congregation) at this phase tends to “[cling] to whatever made it a success.”<sup>24</sup> This assessment by Schein described Friendship almost perfectly. The researcher says almost because Friendship had started to become more vital and was moving toward the “mid-life” or “established” phase. According to Schein Friendship would require “insight and skill to produce ‘managed’ change of some cultural elements while maintaining the core”<sup>25</sup> as they moved into the “mid-life” phase. This transitional time between phases of evolution is the time when “culture change becomes transformation, because old cultural elements have to be unlearned.”<sup>26</sup> In short, Friendship Baptist Missionary Church was an older church and was accustomed to doing things the way the former pastor did them for almost 40 years. However, the changes that Pastor Greer implemented had begun to push Friendship towards the “mid-life” or “established” phase of evolution.

The culture of Friendship was also a blended culture. The culture was a combination of that of Sylvan Street Baptist Church (the former church of Pastor Greer), and Friendship Missionary Baptist Church (the current church of Pastor Greer); with the Sylvan Street Baptist Church culture slightly dominating. Also, because Pastor Greer was originally a member of Friendship, trained under the former beloved pastor, and seemed to be, unofficially, hand-picked by the former

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<sup>24</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 13.

<sup>25</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 12-13.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

pastor, he was what Schein would call a “hybrid”,<sup>27</sup> and the sentiment of the original members of Friendship (those who were members before Pastor Greer’s return) were similar to that of the business members quoted in Schein’s book: “We don’t like what [he] is doing in the way of changing the place, but at least [he] is one of us.”<sup>28</sup>

As Schein surmised, much of the resistance to the changes that Pastor Greer was initially trying to make came from his failure to address “cultural issues” while making those decisions.<sup>29</sup> This error was made because the pastor assumed that he already knew the culture of the church since he had once been a member there, and he failed to recognize the changes in culture that had occurred prior to his return. Pastor Greer’s assumption caused him to step on what Thompson called a cultural “Land Mine”<sup>30</sup>, causing conflict between himself and the original members of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

At the time of this report, Friendship was still hesitant towards making big innovative changes which would increase their ministry opportunities, but over time Pastor Greer was able to warm the church up to making some gradual changes to improve the vitality of the church. The members remained cautious, nevertheless, and at times skeptical of the pastor’s motives, but altogether, the church continued to progress. Research suggests that, once the members begin

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>29</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 11.

<sup>30</sup> George B. Thompson Jr., *How to get along with your church: Creating cultural capital for doing ministry*, (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2001).

to see that the changes the pastor is making are good for the church and its members, they will become more accepting of the pastor's decisions.

In terms of levels of culture, Edgar Schein and George Thompson both agreed that there are three levels of culture. Thompson used what was called the "Swamp Model" to illustrate these three levels. The first level of culture was what Thompson called the shore. This was where the artifacts (those things which are easily seen throughout the church's edifice) were present. The second level was the water. The water was where the espoused values or common sayings of the congregation were found. Finally, the third level of culture in the Swamp Model was the mud. The mud held what Schein referred to as the basic shared assumptions. Also in the mud of the swamp were what Thompson called "Land Mines". These land mines were those basic assumptions that, when disturbed or uprooted, tended to cause major conflict between the pastor and the congregation.

The artifacts of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church consisted of, but were not limited to: Sunday School banners strategically placed around the church, a large picture of the pastor and his wife in the middle of the vestibule, a moderate size collogue of Jesus made up of members' portraits on the side of the vestibule, and large speakers, microphone, and other sound equipment highly visible in the front of the sanctuary.

The espoused values or sayings of Friendship Baptist Church were "Each one, Reach one", "We Believe in Sunday School", and "We're the friendly church on the side of the road". The last saying was formally "We're the friendly *little*

church on the side of the road", but the word little was deleted from the saying after the completion of the new 750 seat sanctuary.

Regarding the generational, class, and regional cultural streams of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, the congregation had a nice mix of each generation ranging from ages of about seven months to 97 years old, and the membership tried to do things that included and, or benefited each generation. As the population of the church continued to grow and expand, the needs of each generation began to change. Even so, the congregation of Friendship Baptist Church did its best to provide various ministries and events that would cater to the needs of each generation specifically, and a few times a year they tried to have events that the whole church could be involved in; for example, the General Church Picnic.

The class cultural stream was one that was made up of mostly the middle class; everything from the style of dress to the style of cars seen in the parking lot reflected this middle class cultural stream. Instead of the southern tradition of potluck dinners, special events featured catered meals. Furthermore, donations of money and, or clothes, shoes, coats, time, and attention to those in need, exemplified the church's efforts to make sure that no one was ostracized because they were unable to afford to keep their appearance as nice or as up to date as the rest of the congregation. Friendship prided itself on being a friendly family oriented church that met the needs of its members, visitors, friends, and the community alike. Friendship Baptist Church also reached out to meet the needs of strangers, within reason.

The regional cultural stream of Friendship was that of the South to Deep Southern. Many of the middle aged members of Friendship came from small Southern or deep Southern towns and grew up during the time of segregation, Jim Crow, Separate but Equal, and the Civil Rights Movement. Often these events, circumstances, and "old time" Southern or country illustrations or references would present themselves in the pastor's sermons and in general conversations amongst the older members of the congregation.

The ethos or atmosphere of the congregation was one of friendliness on the surface, but there seemed to be an undertow of confusion and resentment. While the church worked hard to make everyone that passed through its doors feel welcome, there was still a sense of unrest in the air. After visiting Friendship a few times and listening to the conversations of the members, or the not so subtle comments made in the sermons, one could quickly sense that everything was not as peaceful and friendly as the congregation tried to make it out to be.

Friendship's tacit assumptions seemed to be that (1) the pastor is always right. Those who questioned or negatively judged a decision made by the pastor, whether they be an individual or a group, tended to be frowned upon and ridiculed for voicing their opinion or concern. (2) The pastor should care for his<sup>31</sup> entire congregation equally. After having a pastor who for about 40 years treated the entire congregation the same, conflict has resulted from Pastor Greer

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<sup>31</sup> The researcher uses exclusive masculine language here because a female pastor would be unlikely for this congregation. A female pastor is unlikely because, while Friendship was open to female ministers as associates, many of the members still frowned upon the idea of a female leading and having authority over the congregation as a whole. This notion had been verbally and nonverbally expressed on multiple occasions; especially by some of the male members in influential positions in the congregation.

showing favoritism towards the members he brought with him and the new college students attending the church. Lastly, (3) "if it ain't broke, don't try to fix it". Besides the conflict regarding the changes made without considering the cultural issues, conflict was also caused by the members simply not wanting to change something that seemed to be working fine, even if the change was for the better.

Regarding possible tacit assumptions dealing with truth, time, and the nature of human relationships, Friendship's basic assumptions about truth were governed by a system of moral principles and religious doctrine, as well as, some religious traditions.<sup>32</sup> To Friendship's members, the truth was a revelation from God through the Holy Spirit; God's Spirit. They believed in trying or judging the spirit(s) by the Spirit; the Holy Spirit, and judging other spiritual beings and their influences by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, they felt that while truth could be found through the Holy Spirit and in the King James, New King James, and the New International versions of the Bible, other translations were questionable.

On the topic of time, the members of Friendship believed that time was linear and could not be retrieved once wasted. However, they also believed that in some instances time was irrelevant since everything happened in God's time anyway. So, one is to do what one can in the time provided, and let God handle the rest as God wills.

Finally, concerning the nature of human relationships, (like Zion Hill), Friendship was a communitarian congregation that believed that the church is to

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<sup>32</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 54.

be like one big happy family dwelling together in unity with the pastor as father, the first lady as mother, the members as siblings, Jesus as the elder sibling, and God as the supreme head. When there was a conflict between the community of the church and the individual, it was the individual that was expected to make the sacrifice for the greater good of the community, or leave.<sup>33</sup>

The overall results of this analysis of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church showed that while there was much division within the church and some cultural issues that needed to be worked out between the blended cultures of Friendship and Sylvan Street Baptist Church, there was still hope that, with work, this church would be able to revitalize itself and build an effective ministry. Friendship was not so far in the “mature and declining” phase that they could not get out. The challenge came in making the pastor aware of the situation, and providing some helpful techniques for him and the congregation to use to gain cultural stability, and spiritual vitality within the church.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 52.

## CHAPTER III

### MINISTRY ISSUE

Determining which ministry issue to tackle for the purpose of this project and dissertation proved to be a challenge. In the beginning of the process the researcher had the privilege of holding a group discussion with some of the members of Zion Hill. These members went on to become members of the researcher's initial reflection panel. The group was made up of a mixture of teenagers (ages 13-18) and middle-age adults (ages 40-60). While having a discussion about the assets and needs of the local community and our local congregation, the sample group was asked to identify these assets and needs. The group was then asked to focus on one need of the local church, and to reflect on that need using resources from our personal and communal experiences, culture, and biblical and, or denominational tradition.

When discussed and reflected on through the points of departure outlined by James and Evelyn Whitehead, authors of *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*, the group found that there was a need for better cross-generational communication at Zion Hill; which actually stemmed from a number of cultural (contemporary and former<sup>1</sup>) factors resulting in the development of a code or secret and sometimes subversive language within the African American community. This code of subversive language has been seen

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "former culture" and "contemporary culture" are meant to denote a culture during antebellum times versus the current day culture. Although there are definitely similarities between the two, there has also been an evolution of culture over the last two centuries.

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slaves and house slaves. Years later we see this mistrust transforming cross-generationally into ageism, classism, and a color divide between light and dark skinned African Americans within our communities. This secret language afforded the slaves a way to communicate and pass on important bits of information with their slave masters being none the wiser. One could argue that in this way the Negro Spiritual, at least temporarily, took the place of the African drum. Just like their slave ancestors, Zion Hill's teens had developed a mistrust of those in authority; in this case, the middle-aged adults. They no longer trusted the adults to know what the teens wanted or needed, and the middle-aged adults no longer trusted the teens to know what is in their own best interest. Dr. Anne E. Streaty Wimberly in her book *Keep It Real: Working with Today's Black Youth* agrees with this notion by saying that, "...it is certainly the case that communication has also become exceedingly complex to the extent that much of what we call the generation gap, or the gap between adults and youth, is largely a gap in communication."<sup>2</sup>

While reflecting on this need for better cross-generational communication the group also reflected on biblical and, or denominational traditions and personal and communal experiences. One of the teenagers reminded the group that worship and other important meetings in the bible were usually communal meetings, and that as such the teens and the middle-age adults of the church should all come together as a community to discuss their feelings and issues in order to better understand each other. Another observation was in terms of

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<sup>2</sup> Anne E. Streaty Wimberly, "The Challenge and Promise of Real Ministry with Black Youth", in *Keep It Real: Working with Today's Black Youth*, ed. Anne E. Streaty Wimberly (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), xvii.

personal and communal experiences, successful relationships with teens usually can be achieved by doing things as a family; for instance, coming to church as a family. One of the middle-age adults pointed out that improvements in communication must first start at home with the parents of the teenagers. She stated that in order for the community of the church to change, the homes of the members must first change. She believed that by spending more time with their children, middle-age parents would be better able to understand, and therefore, communicate with their children, thus helping the congregation as a whole to better understand and communicate cross-generationally; after all, "...cross-generational sharing and celebration of family and community enhance life together...."<sup>3</sup>

By reflecting on the contemporary and former culture's issue of mistrust, attending to the biblical notion of communal worship and, or gatherings, as well as, attending to personal and communal experiences; the discussion group decided that a starting course of action to appease the need for better cross-generational communication at would be to implement a monthly or bi-monthly town hall meeting between the teens and the middle-age adults and to have communal retreats and, or workshops as an effort to help each generation better understand the other. The researcher took this suggestion and began developing workshops, sessions, and exercises that later became this project.

Furthermore, the group determined that in both their experiences and biblical and, or denominational tradition, the need for better cross-generational

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<sup>3</sup> Anne E. Streaty Wimberly, "The Challenge and Promise of Real Ministry with Black Youth", in *Keep It Real: Working with Today's Black Youth*, ed. Anne E. Streaty Wimberly (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), xvi.

communication also stemmed from a lack of committed time spent with the younger generation. Interestingly enough, when asked about their relationship with older or senior adults (70+), the teens replied that they had no problems with the senior adults; in fact, they said that they loved the seniors. Besides the young adults (ages 19-39), the senior adults seemed to be the ones giving more time and attention to the teens.

After the initial meetings with the teens and a combined panel group of representatives from the teens' age group and the middle-age age group the researcher continued to reflect on the discussion and findings of the panel, and on what they determined was a need of our local church. As a result of months of this continued reflection, and after months of working with and observing the memberships of both Zion Hill and Friendship, especially the targeted age groups for this discussion, the researcher came to realize that the immediate need was much deeper than a need for better cross-generation communication, and the research began to show that there were many needs that fostered the symptom of a lack of cross-generational communication and a lack of focused energy towards the teenagers of both Zion Hill and Friendship. These needs included, but were not limited to: 1) a lack of knowledge and, or competence when working with teens, 2) a lack of patience and understanding when dealing with the teens, 3) a lack of space and place for the teens to freely express themselves, 4) a lack of therapeutic resources geared towards teens, and 5) a lack of opportunities and events that foster cross-generation interaction and communication. In addition, there were many needs that the teens were dealing with that were not met in

these churches. The researcher's goal then became to focus on the need for the space and place for teens to freely express themselves with the hopes of exposing and meeting those disclosed needs that were currently not being met but that had been briefly discussed by the teens with the youth workers. Further, it was the hope of the researcher that by disclosing these needs in a more public fashion through psychodrama (and with permission and cooperation from the teen participants), conversation between the teen and middle-age adults will be fostered, the teen's need for more committed attention in particular, and at least one of the church's needs for unity in general would be met.

The panel had named a lack of committed time as a symptom of the lack of cross-generational communication, but the opposite proved to be true; it was really a "chicken or egg" case<sup>4</sup>. As a result of the above process, it became apparent that because the middle-age adults were not spending enough time with the teens and enough time ministering to the teens, a communication breach occurred and mistrust had ensued; thus the starting point of this project. This new insight to the needs of Zion Hill Baptist Church, and consequently Friendship Baptist Church, furthered the idea learned while in the Doctor of Ministry program's Church and Ministry Seminar: surface answers and quick fix programs often do not work because they do not actually serve to answer the need, but rather act as an insufficient band-aid for an even bigger problem.

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<sup>4</sup> The researcher is referencing here the idiom of "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" In this case, when determining the deepest need of Zion Hill's and Friendship's youth, one is forced to ask, "Which is causing which, the lack of committed time and focused energy, or the lack of cross-generational communication".

While engaging in dialogue with the panelist there were a few moments of conflict. However, when addressing conflict, the researcher typically tried to objectively listen to the other person's opinion, this was easier at sometimes than others, and she tried to understand the origin of their point of view. The researcher also tried to make sure that they understood where she was coming from, and she presented them with supporting evidence or information that served to further clarify her point. From there the researcher did what she could to either meet their concern or come up with the best compromise between her opinion and theirs if necessary. Rarely was she completely uncompromising.

The researcher noted that in his book *The Audacity of Hope* President Elect Barack Obama handled conflict in a similar matter. In the case where two concerned citizens, one a doctor, the other an antiabortion protestor, approached Mr. Obama about his stance on abortion (based on words from Obama's website that were not his own) and it conflicting with Mr. Obama being a professed Christian. Mr. Obama never changed his mindset, but he did listen to the concerns of those citizens and changed the language on his website to more appropriately fit his reasoning for supporting abortion and ultimately the right for women to have a choice.<sup>5</sup>

In regards to conflict surrounding the need of the researcher's ministry setting, the main bit of conflict came during the beginning of the pastoral reflection process. When determining the needs of her ministry settings, not everyone was in agreement that the teens were not given a voice within the

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<sup>5</sup> Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 233-235.

church among the middle-age members that typically govern the various activities that occur during worship services. When this conflict arose the researcher recognized it and dealt with it by objectively hearing the people out and by simply presenting them with the testimonies of the teens. After hearing the words of the teens, the people were more easily convinced, and one person openly admitted to possibly neglecting to notice that there was an issue. Other issues of conflict included money, or the cost of the intergenerational gatherings, and scheduling conflicts. These bits of conflict were dealt with by presenting the people with a clear picture of what was needed and allowing them to come up with solutions of how to meet that need. In the end the solutions were discussed and put to a vote; the majority vote won.

This researcher believed that differences are what add spice to life. Without differences the world would be dull and boring. When differences arise they are typically handled through the means of intentional dialogue. Thus, as the discussion facilitator, the researcher set the tone of the discussion by creating an atmosphere in which it was stated and understood that everyone would have a right to talk and to be heard. Respect was vital. No one was to talk over the other, and everyone was to purposely and actively listen to each other and each other's concerns.

At this point the focus group, other members of the Zion Hill community and the researcher were ready to act in terms of having a small intergenerational mixer. This initial effort to form a cross-generational event served as a model for future events at both Zion Hill Baptist Church and Friendship Missionary Baptist

Church. The mixer at Zion Hill included members from both the teenagers and middle-age generations from the Saturday church school classes. The researcher, members of the panel, and those who participated in the workshop and pastoral drama sessions hoped to expand these activities to include the whole Zion Hill community and the surrounding community. During the mixer such topics as "How Can Zion Hill Empower It's Teens?", "Technology Then and Now", "Slang: What's the point?", and "Time Warp: What's different, what's the same?" were discussed. The purpose of these proposed topics was to initiate discussions that would hopefully cause the members of each generation to realize their similarities and utilize the strengths of those similarities to bridge their communication chasm; thereby empowering members of both generations.

## CHAPTER IV

### PROJECT CONCEPT:

#### **Understanding and Contextualizing Teens (meet them in their world, not yours)**

"Authentic ministry with youth is not just about spiritual discipline; it is a spiritual discipline."<sup>1</sup>

In order to do effective and affective ministry and pastoral care with today's teens, it is important to understand that one must meet the teens where they are. It is no longer effective to merely expose them to one's world of religious rituals and doctrines, and hope that they will one day catch on, and all the while ignore the real life that they experience everyday.

When looking at the example of Jesus; Jesus was a traveling healer and teacher; meeting the needs of those he met along the way. True enough, there were times when people had to make the journey to find Jesus, but from the beginning of his ministry we never see a time when Jesus says, "I'm going to stay right here in this town and minister to people. If anyone wants to be healed, let them come here." Instead, we see Jesus going from place to place spreading

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<sup>1</sup> Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998), 17.

the gospel as he was led by the Holy Spirit. We see moments where Jesus, when asked or urged strongly by locals to stay in a particular town, would respond, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also because for this purpose I have been sent."<sup>2</sup>

One of the key understandings in the discipline and practice of pastoral care is the importance of meeting people where they are and being present with those in crisis; more so spiritually and emotionally rather than physically (unless necessary). This is exactly what Jesus did, both on a large scale, as with the crowd of thousands that had followed him all day and were hungry, and on a smaller scale as with people like Zaccheus and Matthew whom Jesus met on his way. In the case of the thousands, instead of being apathetic to their needs, Jesus fed them all with two fish and five loaves of bread,<sup>3</sup> and in the cases of Zaccheus and Matthew (both of whom were considered sinners), Jesus did not condemn the men as the Pharisees would have, he validated them, saved them, and even called Matthew to be one of his disciples.

Even when it came to a moment in which it would have been social acceptable to judge, condemn, berate, or even stone a woman caught in the act of adultery instead of joining the crowd or mob, which presumably contained the man she was caught with, Jesus instead takes a moment to both validate the woman (without validating her actions) and teach the crowd to judge themselves before judging others.<sup>4</sup> Jesus met her in her space of ridicule, fear, and shame, and he showed her love instead of contempt and condemnation. Now, it is

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 4:43 NKJV

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-14

<sup>4</sup> John 8:2-11

important to realize that Jesus did not let the woman get away with her sin, nor did he condone it, but rather he admonished her to “go and sin no more”; thereby holding her accountable, but with love instead of ridicule. Our youth need us to respond in the same way; with accountability and love.

In other examples, as in the case of the feeding of the 4,000 and 5,000, we see Jesus meeting both the physical and spiritual needs of those he was ministering to, and in the case of Jesus consoling Peter by telling him that he will make him and the other disciples “fishers of men [and women]” we see Jesus meeting both an emotional and a spiritual need. This can also be seen in the account with the woman at the well. Albeit, she was a cultural outcast simply because she was a Samaritan and a social outcast among her own people simply because she had experienced a number of failed relationships, which may or may not have been through any fault of her own, Jesus in this case also made a point to meet the woman’s emotional needs in addition to her spiritual needs.

In all of the above example, and the many other examples available throughout the biblical accounts of Jesus’ ministry, we see where Jesus made a point to meet people where they were, meet their needs, and consequently elevate them to a higher status not only in life, but also as believers and joint heirs of God’s Reign; and we have been instructed to do the same. The culmination of Jesus’ ministry ends with what is called the great commission<sup>5</sup> and a statement of encouragement and edification, that we (believers in Christ) will do even greater things than he has. In other words, Jesus was saying that all he

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<sup>5</sup> The Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of [God] and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20a, NRSV)

has done, we will and should do also, and we will and should do it in greater quantity because we have more time. Jesus only had three years to heal, care for, enlighten, save, and serve God's people, including the youth of the community; we have a life time!

What's more, in ministry, especially with youth, it is important for us to be genuine, transparent, and true, not only to them, but to ourselves as well. Renowned author, editor, and teacher of Christian Education, Dr. Anne E. Streaty Wimberly puts it this way, "Throughout the twentieth century [and even now] there [has been] a necessary plea for genuineness in adults' relationship with youth, authenticity in adult's behavior as Christians, and relevance in ministries with and on behalf of youth."<sup>6</sup> If we expect our youth to be open and honest with us, then we have to be open and honest with them. It is important to understand that when ministering to youth, the youth are not expecting us to be perfect; they know we are human and therefore fallible, nevertheless, they are expecting us as caregivers<sup>7</sup> to be real<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Anne E. Streaty Wimberly, "The Challenge and Promise of Real Ministry with Black Youth", in *Keep It Real: Working with Today's Black Youth*, ed. Anne E. Streaty Wimberly (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), xii.

<sup>7</sup> As pertains to this dissertation and the project title, the words "Caregiver and Caregivers" are intended to be inclusive of all persons (pastors, ministers, counselors, pastoral-dramatist, art therapists, psychodramatists, and the like) who are trained in the art of caring for people in crisis.

<sup>8</sup> The notion of being "real" is an idiom meaning for one to be transparent and genuine in their interactions, speech, motives, and so on.

## **“Still Water Runs Deep”**

As the saying goes, “still water runs deep”. In other words, those who appear to be calm, cool, and collected; those who seem to have it all together are sometimes the very ones with the most brewing just below the surface.

Research has shown that when traumatized, a person (especially a child) will have one of two responses; they will either act out or withdraw, and these actions will likely be accompanied by an extreme change in behavior. Author and professor of Pastoral Psychology and Counseling Howard Clinebell quotes psychiatrist Gerald Caplan's, *Principles of Preventive Psychiatry* as explaining such behavior thusly:

[Their] new equilibriums may be better or worse than in the past, in that the realignment of forces both inside [their] personality and in relationship with meaningful people...may lead to more or less satisfaction of [their] needs. [They] may deal with the crisis problems by developing new socially acceptable reality-based problem-solving techniques which add to [their] capacity to deal in a healthy way with future difficulties. Alternatively, [they] may, during the crisis, work out new coping response which are socially unacceptable and which deal with difficulties by evasion, irrational fantasy manipulations, or regression and alienation - all of which [are signs that they are turning inward, and] - increase the likelihood that [they] will also deal maladaptively with future difficulties. In other words, the new pattern of coping that [they] work out in dealing with the crisis becomes thence forward an integral part of [their] repertoire of problem-solving responses and increase the chance that [they] will deal more or less realistically with future hazards.<sup>9</sup>

This project is important because it allows for a way to stir up the deep waters in traumatized youth, and give vent or air to those pains, sorrows, worries, fears,

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<sup>9</sup> Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the ministry of healing & growth*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 15.

regrets, questions, and issues that may be festering, bubbling, and boiling just below the surface; before they explode in a damaging way.

Now that we have discussed the effects of crisis on one's psyche, let us further discuss what exactly constitutes as a crisis and the psychiatric splitting that can occur as a result of crisis or trauma. Caplan explains that a crisis occurs when a person's normal problem solving abilities are no longer adequate, thus causing stress to form as the result of some unmet need. A crisis can come in many forms and can vary from slight to severe. Many life changes bring along with them some semblance or form of crisis, for instance: birth, death, aging, loss, and various life transitions. Transitioning from being single to married, transitioning to parenthood, transitioning from one grade to another or from one job (or career) to another, and adolescence (transitioning from childhood to adulthood) are all good examples of life transitions that typically bring about some form of crisis. These changes are typically coupled with stress (a sign of crisis) because the psyche itself is not satisfied. There is a need present that may be physical and, or psychological. In order to reduce the stress (and the crisis) one must be able to recognize the need and find reasonable solutions by which the need can be met. In order to recognize when one is embarking or has embarked upon a moment of crisis, the person requires a keen sense of self-awareness. They must be in tune enough with themselves to recognize the change (or uncenteredness) in their psyche.<sup>10</sup> Self-awareness can be taught, nevertheless, persons in crisis may need additional help in determining the need

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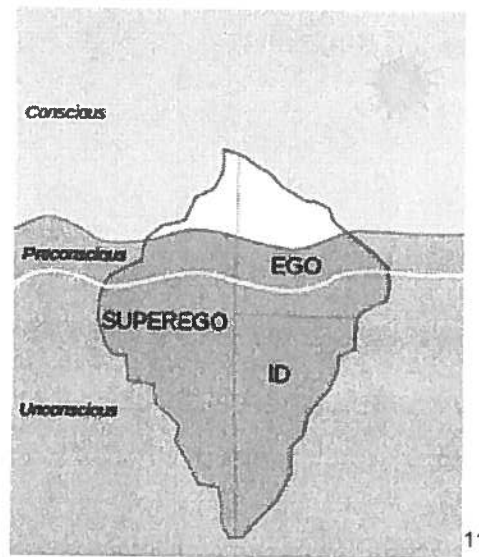
<sup>10</sup> One way to attain this type of self-awareness that is produced through the practice of being centered is by utilizing the healing art of attunement as a way of life. More information about attunement can be obtained at [attunement.org](http://attunement.org).

that is not being met and the most helpful and healthful way in which to meet it. To that end, this project serves to help teens become more self-aware and to equip them with additional problem solving tools that they can use to minimize the negative effects and duration of life-borne crises.

The human psyche is made up of three parts: the Id, Ego, and Superego. These three parts make up and control what essentially becomes known as a person's personality. According to renowned Psychologist Sigmund Freud, the Id is the first part of our psyche to be developed; we are essentially born with it. The Id controls wants, needs, and desires based on what is pleasurable to the body without giving much regard to consequences; the Id is impulsive, subconscious, and its ultimate goal is pleasure. The Ego is the next part of our psyche that is developed. The Ego controls order (well-being and the meeting of societal norms); it is partially conscious and works on the basis of what is "right" or "normal" in a given reality. The Ego serves to meet the needs of the Id while maintaining the moral laws of the Superego; the Ego finds a way to make peace between the Id and the Superego. The Superego is also partially conscious, it is the last portion of our psyche to develop, and acts as what we normally call our "conscience"; it defines what we consider to be right and wrong based on the teachings of the society (natural and spiritual) around us. As a real life example, lets use the scenario of a child wanting a cookie before dinner. The child's Id says, "We want a cookie, go get a cookie". The child's Superego says, "No, you cannot have a cookie because it will make our stomach hurt and you will get in trouble". So, to bring about peace between these two psychological entities, the

Ego will say, "Ok, we can have a cookie, but we have to wait until after dinner".

Below is a diagram of Freud's take on the Id, Ego, and Superego.



Like Freud, famed psychologist Erik Erikson also believed that a person's personality (Id, Ego, and Superego) and its components develop as a person matures and learns societal and survival lessons through life (see Erikson's Stages of Developmental chart on next page).

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<sup>11</sup> This diagram provided courtesy of Google images:  
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/be/Structural-Iceberg.svg/250px-Structural-Iceberg.svg.png>

Stage (Age)	Psychosocial Crisis	Significant Relationship	Existential Questions
1 0-1	trust vs. mistrust	Mother	Can I trust the world?
2 2-3	autonomy vs. shame and doubt	Parents	Is it ok to be me?
3 3-6	initiative vs. guilt	Family	Is it ok for me to do, move, act?
4 7-12	Industry vs. inferiority	Neighbour & School	Can I make it in the world of people & things?
5 12-18+	ego-identity vs. role-confusion	Peer & Role model	Who am I? What can I be?
6 20-30	intimacy vs. isolation	Partners & Friends	Can I love?
7 30-50	generativity vs. self-absorption	Household, Workmate	Can I make my life count?
8 > 50	integrity vs. despair	Mankind, My-kind	Is it ok to have been me?

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Each of the various stages of growth and development poses a new challenge to the person's Ego, and uses the successful accomplishments from the former stages to build on the new challenges that have presented themselves at the current stage. Clinebell comments that "transitions between stages are periods of heightened anxiety and crisis when persons are both pushed forward by inner maturational forces and pulled backwards by the security of the familiar stage."<sup>13</sup>

In other words, what causes one to feel anxiety during natural maturation, and what ultimately causes these transitional period to by themselves develop a crisis, is the internal resistance towards what is new, and the internal pull backwards to what is known and feels more familiar, and often times more comfortable. This natural pull often facilitates what Caplan calls a *developmental*

<sup>12</sup> Chart of Erik Erikson's Developmental Stages provided courtesy of Google images <http://media.onsugar.com/files/2011/05/18/6/1632/16329924/44/table1440pxkv7.jpg>

<sup>13</sup> Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the ministry of healing & growth*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 186.

crisis; a naturally occurring crisis that sparks as a product of maturation.<sup>14</sup> As opposed to what Caplan calls an *accidental* crisis; a crisis that one accidentally finds oneself in,<sup>15</sup> developmental crises are often more easily managed and considered normal in that we all go through them as we mature. On the contrary, accidental crises can occur at anytime, anywhere, and to anyone through no fault of their own. Typically this type of crisis is harder to manage and may require outside help. This project can provided help managing both types of crisis depending on the level of mental illness that is presented by the participant.

Mental illness (or uncenteredness<sup>16</sup>) occurs when the three entities of the human psyche are no longer able to aptly do their jobs. During a time of crisis certain symptoms may begin to present themselves, signaling that the person is in crisis. These symptoms include, but are not limited to: separation anxiety, identity confusion, and psychological splitting. Splitting is usually caused by trauma. Accomplished counselor and professor of counseling, Gerald Corey in his instructional book *Theory and Practice of Counseling & Psychotherapy* defines splitting as a psychologically "...defensive process of keeping

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<sup>14</sup> Developmental crises can be triggered by certain "milestone" moments in one's life. Although, many of these are happy moments, the change they bring with them is usually accompanied with the stress of a changing norm. Some examples of developmental stress triggers are: Marriage, the birth of a child, a child starting school for the first time, leaving a child with a person other than your spouse or yourself, starting a new relationship, ending a relationship, and so.

<sup>15</sup> This term "accidental" is meant to imply that this type of crisis is not something a person knowingly embarks upon or can control. Examples of *accidental* crises are: the death of a loved one, the unexpected loss of something or someone important to you, an unforeseen betrayal, an unforeseen victimization, and so on.

<sup>16</sup> The terms and notions of being *centered* or *uncentered* were learned by the researcher while matriculating through the Interdenominational Theological Center. She learned these concepts from her Pastoral Care and Counseling professors and their lectures.

incompatible perceptions separate...."<sup>17</sup> It is when the Ego takes over and attempts to reconcile an unpleasant or traumatic event to make it more acceptable to the person's psyche. For example: in the case of an abused child; the child knows that the person abusing them is also the person that is supposed to supply them with love and support (as in the case of a parent, family member, or family friend), but now, they are causing the child pain (and, or unmerited pleasure in the case of some sexual abuse cases). The child's psyche has a hard time understanding this because while to some degree the Id may be pleased (by receiving attention, sexual gratification, etc.); the Superego understands that what the abuser is doing is wrong. The child may think, "But they love me, so this can't be wrong.", and a splitting occurs. The Ego takes this traumatic event and rationalizes it so that this new experience (howbeit traumatic) becomes the child's new understanding of what "love" is, and this child is likely to repeat this lesson with other people and may even subconsciously cause themselves to arrange moments with the abuser in which the lesson of "love" can be repeated. Ultimately, splitting is a survival and coping technique, but it can lead to greater mental illness if not properly managed.

When left unmanaged these symptoms can begin to exhibit signs of severe mental illness such as multiple and dissociative personality disorders.<sup>18</sup> Uncenteredness becomes clinically described as a disorder when the exhibited

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<sup>17</sup> Gerald Corey, *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thomson Learning, 2005), 79.

<sup>18</sup> Rodney J. Hunter, et al., eds. 2005. *Id*, 2005, In *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Nashville: Abingdon Press.

C. S. Aist 2005. Mental Health and Illness. In Hunter et al., 2005, 711-714.

K. R. Mitchell 2005. Multiple and Dissociative Personality. In Hunter et al., 2005, 765.

symptoms prohibit the person from achieving acceptable social behavior, achieving and maintaining inter and intrapersonal relationships, hinders the person's overall well-being, causes the person to have a negative self-image, a lack in self-acceptance, or if the person becomes maladaptive, self-hindering, self-defeating, and, or self-destructive. Once the crisis has begun to present itself as severe mental illness, the person will likely need professional psychiatric help. This project is not apt for the treatment of those exhibiting such signs, but may be helpful in preventing such an escalation in uncenteredness by teaching the person (or in this case, teen) how to more aptly adjust to and even avoid certain crisis triggers around them.

### **Ministry is Practical**

"Ministry is therefore viewed as a kind of partnership with the divine for bringing about wholeness."<sup>19</sup>

The word *minister* means to serve, and thus the word *ministry* alludes to the act of service, and as alluded to by the quote above, it can also be viewed as a kind of partnership with God who saves, restores, and sustains all human life. Nevertheless, to be successful, ministry must be made up of more than just a conglomeration of good or trendy ideas or theories. To aptly apply a ministry in the form of a service, activity, or as an auxiliary to the church one must go

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<sup>19</sup> Rodney J. Hunter, "The Therapeutic Tradition of Pastoral Care and Counseling," In *Pastoral Care and Social Conflict*, eds. Pamela D. Couture and Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 19.

beyond textbook knowledge and trends to analyzing and knowing their congregation and community well enough to know what is truly helpful, and further still, this knowledge must be put into action. Ministry must be practical and fit the needs of the people instead of expecting the people to fit their needs to a prescribed ministry mold.

This concept was learned by the researcher during the course of her matriculation through the Interdenominational Theological Center, but it has been taught throughout many generations. The researcher further learned many things pertaining to her particular project and to ministry as a whole including the importance of having tools to measure change, the use of such writing tools as concept mapping and taxonomy, the importance of relationship in ministry, the importance of pastoral reflection pertaining to ministry, the importance of extensively knowing ones congregation, the increasingly abstract nature of church, and the meaning of *call* versus *calling*. She also learned that clarity in ministry is also important, not only in terms of writing, but also in terms of church-wide communication. Nevertheless, before any of this can happen one must first critically reexamine what God is calling them to do in their ministry setting, in light of their call to ministry. One must also reexamine the presented need of the congregation they are involved with, and take time to reflect on what they know about the congregation and its history based on their growing relationship with them.

In doing ministry, relationship is important. In order to achieve wholeness one must have both a relationship with the divine and with those they serve.

Learned theory and praxis are nothing without relationship; in fact it is difficult for theory to accurately become praxis without relationship. To force a theory upon a group of people or an institution in essence typically results in the forming of a type dictatorship ministry; a ministry that is usually unwanted, unappreciated, and ultimately unsuccessful. What's more, besides relationship it is also important to understand what "church" as a concept looks like and means to the congregation with which one is working. This notion is extensively explored in the article "Mission Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context." With the increase in technology and social networks it is important to realize that the idea of church has expanded from the traditional four walls, steeple, pulpit, and pews to include, coffee houses, cafes, street corners and even cyberspace. Consequently, today's idea of ministry has been forced to change and expand in order to stay relevant and up-to-date with the world's needs. Thus one of this researcher's personal goals for her project was to orchestrate it in such a way that it could be used in both traditional and nontraditional church settings.

During her matriculation, the researcher and her colleagues were able to engage in dialogue with Pastor Gregory Eason, Sr., pastor of Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The purpose of this dialogue was to get a firsthand account on ministry and the importance of relationship both with God and with those one serves, from an accomplished minister. It was very beneficial to hear the firsthand account of a successful pastor as he explained how he handled various ministry issues that arose during the course of his

pastoral history. Through all of the stories in his testimony the researcher saw the following common threads: 1) Relationship development between pastor, leaders, and congregation. This included keeping the ministerial staff educated and involved in the church as a whole in activities that promote bonding through mutual vested interests. 2) The importance of the pastor leading by example. 3) The importance of using what is available to you, in other words, modern technology, media, books, and other resources, including people and social networks. 4) The importance of keeping the ministry current, up-to-date, fresh, and most importantly, relevant. Reverend Eason provided a much needed real life perspective on the practicality of ministry and how to go about solving real life issues. One of the most important things that he shared was his conviction about following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Beyond textbook information and solutions, the leadership of the Holy Spirit is a minister's most valuable resource and a guarantee for success, maybe not entirely by earthly standards, but most definitely by heavenly standards.

In the end, understanding the above listed things helped advance the researcher by improving the integrity of her research and project, improving her data collection methods, improving the way in which she consolidated her research and findings, and lastly, by improving the way she presented her findings as a part of this dissertation. As a result, this researcher was equipped to successfully move from the drawing board portion of her project to the field portion. She was given the tools to aptly apply the theories that she was researching in a healthful and helpful way. These theories became more than

words in a book or an abstract idea; they became the workings of a new method of therapeutic approach resulting in the development of the pastoral drama sessions and the resulting project that came from the combining of the aforementioned theories, and the principles of in-depth pastoral care and psychodrama.

In the end, not only did the researcher gain a heightened sense of what ministry and church are, not only had she come to better understand the importance of integrity field research, data compilation, and project execution, she was also given a heightened sense of the importance of her project and the extreme value of God's people. Congregations deserve more than just a fly-by-night ministry that seemed like a good idea at the time. The researcher was also encouraged to venture further into her calling – and field of ministry – pastoral care and counseling. The bottom line: ministry truly is practical, and to foster wholeness, relationship is essential; that which is learned must be applied.

### **WE are *Theotokos*!**

“God calls each of us to become a Godbearer”<sup>20</sup>

During the third ecumenical council which was held at Ephesus in June 431 C.E., (also known as The Ephesus Council), there was a debate between

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<sup>20</sup> Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998), 18.

the followers of Nestorianism<sup>21</sup> and the patriarchs of Alexandria and their Bishop Cyril. This debate was concerning whether Mary, the mother of Jesus, was the bearer of Christ (*christotokos*) or the bearer of God (*theotokos*). Nestorian believed that Mary should not be referred to as *theotokos*, but rather as *christotokos*. The official debate resulted in the council determining that Mary was indeed the bearer of both the divine and human nature of Jesus because in God Jesus encompassed them both; Jesus was both fully human, and fully of the same divine substance or essence of God (*homoousios*).<sup>22</sup> This duality and the authority that comes with it also exists in us, although it is often referred to (especially by the apostle Paul) as the spirit and flesh; in other words, the divine and human. As such, we too, as believers, co-heirs with Christ, and co-ministers of the gospel (no matter the age), have the same responsibility to invoke and carry the divine into every opportunity of ministry; whether it be to the aged or the young.

God calls all of us to be Godbearers and even Christbearers. Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster in their book *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, put it this way: "...God calls each of us to become a Godbearer through whom God may enter the world again and again." In short, there is no age, race, gender, sexual orientation, or class limitation to those who may act as agents of God. Therefore, it is imperative not to take anyone for granted, to be kind to each other, and to show kindness even to strangers and to

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<sup>21</sup> Nestorianism, named for Nestorius, ascribed to the belief that Christ had two natures: divine and human, and as such, that it was the human nature that was born of Mary and not the divine nature.

<sup>22</sup> Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, vol. 1, (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1985), 179-254.

those who are marginalized because, as the author of Hebrews explains, by doing so, we are not just doing the same unto Christ (Matthew 25:40), we also may be entertaining angels unawares.<sup>23</sup> After all, who are we to decide a person's worth of the value of the ultimate outcome of their life; each person (or in the case of this project and dissertation, each youth) has immeasurable potential; some of which is just waiting to be tapped into, realized, and released for all of our good.

While denominationally there are many stipulations to becoming a pastor - one who leads, cares for, and spiritually feeds God's people<sup>24</sup>, - in the Kingdom or Reigndom<sup>25</sup> of God, age is not one of them. God has the ability and will to call and equip both the young and the old. In the bible there are a number of examples of young people who were called to rule kingdoms, prophesy, evangelize and even give birth to the savior of the world (the ultimate bearing of God). To be a Godbearer, all one needs to do is have a willingness to do so. God calls the willing and fully equips those whom God calls. Dean and Foster offer that, "...youth are called to bear the gospel in their own right,...and they look to [us] the church for guidance in how to be the person God calls them to be...." Youth often pastor their friends, younger siblings, other younger family members, and others in their communities; they even pastor older people who are willing to be attentive to them. Ministers, pastors, lay leaders, caregivers, pastoraldramist,

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<sup>23</sup> Hebrew 13:2

<sup>24</sup> In Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster's book *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry* define "Pastor" according to the Latin definition of "one who feeds". More on this can be found on page 12 of their book.

<sup>25</sup> For inclusive purposes, the words *Kingdom* and *Reigndom* are used interchangeably to represent God supreme and sovereign power and rule.

and the like have a divine responsibility to help inform, prepare, and equip the youth in our churches to become effective, efficient, and healthy “pastors” (Godbearers) because they are the future of our churches, our communities, and of our world. If we will not teach them, minister to them, and care for them, then who will? And most importantly, what will happen to our future, our churches, our communities, and our world?

### **Adolescent Development as It Pertains to Ministry**

#### **“Keeping it Real”**

##### **Background**

Before discussing adolescent development as it pertains to ministry, allow this author to first discuss her own development as an adolescent and how she first became aware of the deficiency in the past and somewhat current youth ministry of her home church. Growing up, the researcher did not consciously notice that the church she grew up in did not have many options or opportunities for creative expression. It was not until she found herself deeply immersed in feelings of depression and thoughts of suicide, that she realized this lack of opportunity was a problem. The researcher needed to be heard, but found no way to aptly express what she was going through. Later, she realized that the problem was that, like many of her peers, the researcher had no outlet by which

to convey what she was feeling and experiencing in a healthy manner; she was not encouraged to be real with the people around her, nor was she encouraged to seek help.

In recent years, not much has changed in the researcher's home church. There is still a lack of opportunity and space for youth, particularly troubled youth, to express themselves and their true feelings in many congregations. The voices and stories of today's youth are rarely heard in these congregations, and thus many adults, particularly older adults misunderstand their plight and consequent behavior. Troubled youth are often looked at as being a nuisance, lazy, immature, or just plain bad. However, it is the researchers hypothesis, that if provided with a safe space in which to share their stories, feelings, and opinions of their everyday experiences, troubles, and fears through the means of psychodrama, troubled youth will be more likely and more effectively helped by members of the congregation who have come through similar experiences.

### **How the Researcher was Introduced to the Problem**

The researcher discovered the lack of an expressive outlet shortly after leaving the church to go to college. While away at college she had time to reflect on her life, in particularly the years she spent fighting depression and suicidal thoughts. This led the researcher to reflect on the way some church members responded to her issues. Their transference was that she was being selfish because she was not considering anyone else's thoughts or feelings, ungrateful

because her parents had done so much for her and worked so hard to even bring her into existence, and that whatever her issue(s) were, she needed to just suck it up, pray about it, and get over it, because Christians are not supposed to be depressed; in fact, they are too blessed to be depressed. Not to mention, the belief that if she chose to commit suicide, that was an automatic ticket to hell.

Conversely, the researcher's counter-transference was that perhaps if she had been provided with a way to express what she was feeling, and what she was going through, using the artistic means that came naturally to her, the members of her home church would have been able to better see and understand where the researcher was coming from, and possibly see her feelings as being more than mere selfishness; perhaps they would have seen that her behavior was actually a cry for help. She really wanted to live.

You see, when ministering to youth, it is important to be real with God, oneself, and with those to whom they are ministering. It is also important to create a space in which the youth can be real with the adults of the church without feeling guilty and without the fear of their real feelings being harshly judged. In order to have an effective, healthful, and helpful youth ministry one needs the following actions: hold closely the notion that adolescence is a gift, allow time for youth to tell their own story, be grateful for the accountability and critique of the youth, be intentional about mentoring the youth, and invite the parents to become involved in the ministering of their youth.

In addition, it is important to realize that no one minister, parent, teacher, coach, pastoral dramist, or friend can successfully raise a child alone, it takes us

all; after all, "it takes a village to raise a child." That is why Dr. Anne E. Streaty Wimberly recommends implementing the village motif. In the course of a child's development, no one person or group has sole influence on that child, and barring the cult mentality, no one doctrine has a monopoly on informing that child. The child's personality and decision making process will be influenced by almost everyone they meet and everything they are exposed to during developmental years. That is why it is so important for the Black Church to take a primary role in equipping it's youth to discern what is a healthy and helpful influence and what is not; and one way the church can do this is by providing a safe space and place where teens can openly explore and discuss the options with which they are daily bombarded.

Adolescence (ages 13-18) can be a difficult stage of development because not only is one torn between wanting to go back to the familiar stage of early childhood, and yet, they are being pushed forward - whether they are ready or not - into adulthood. Adolescence can also be a difficult stage because while one is constantly being intrapersonally (internally) pushed and pulled between stages, interpersonally (externally) they are being pushed and pulled by societal norms and the pressure to fit in with their friends (not to mention the physiological changes that are also taking place at this time). Adolescence brings about a struggle for identity, self-understanding, and belonging; especially in regards to friends and family.

This time of identity formation (and for some identity crisis) can be trying for any child. The critical task for humans at this stage of development<sup>26</sup> is to determine who and what they are in relation to society and societal norms (which typically consists mainly of those they interact with on a daily to weekly basis and their opinions of what is normal, right, or acceptable) and who they are apart from it. In addition, adolescents also have the task of navigating, negotiating with, and controlling strong impulses and assertions. They also must culturally begin to mature their sexual and sensual identities; all while controlling the hormonal urges present inside them in a healthful way. Author and Pastoral Care and Counseling professor, Dr. Ed Wimberly, in his book *African American Pastoral Care* further discusses this sexual and sensual challenge by saying: “[A] major difficulty that faces contemporary adolescents is the absence of a language of sexuality for youth that conveys strong relational values and encourages the postponing of sexual expression.”<sup>27</sup> These relational values include (but are not limited to): 1) learning the value of maintaining a friendship before engaging in sexual activity with a person, 2) learning the inherent value of people in general, and their significant other in particular, before engaging in sexual activity, 3) learning how not to objectify a person for the simple pleasure of sexual gratification, 4) learning to love and respect themselves, persons in general, and significant others.

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<sup>26</sup> For a better understanding of what occurs at this stage of development, see Erik Erikson's chart of Developmental Stages on page 48 this dissertation.

<sup>27</sup> Edward P. Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 54.

The pressure to belong presents yet another challenge to adolescent youth. This pressure tends to extend from the family, to friends, and to society in general. During this time of physical, sociological, emotional, intellectual, and sexual development, the youth struggles to find their niche in the various groups around them. They tend to ask questions (usually internally and subconsciously) like: "Who am I?", "What is my purpose?", "Do I matter?", and "Where do I belong?" In an effort to find answers to these questions, adolescents look towards, culture, media (social and otherwise), the community, the church, their family, and typically most importantly (to them anyway) their peers. Since children of this age usually spend anywhere from seven to even nine or ten hours<sup>28</sup> at school, the opinions of their peers tends to weigh more heavily on their consciences than that of their parents. Dr. Ed Wimberly says it this way, "Black youth today [have] turned to [their] peers as though peers are the family."<sup>29</sup> Therefore, "peer pressure" tends to be the root of many bad (and sometimes good) decisions made by adolescents in an attempt to belong. As mentors, pastors, ministers, pastoraldramists, and caregivers, it is our job to help our youth more aptly discern the difference between good and bad peer pressure. We must also help them to see and understand that not everyone is their "friend", and not everyone has their best interest at heart. In addition, albeit challenging, we must strive to help them see and understand that not all adults are their enemies, controlling, or oppressive, and that some of us do understand them, understand

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<sup>28</sup> The researcher is taking into account here extracurricular activities and the like.

<sup>29</sup> Edward P. Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 56.

where they are coming from, and most importantly do have their best interest at heart (rather they realize it or not).<sup>30</sup>

### Ministry as Application

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder"

We all at one time or another have heard the phrase "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" uttered; usually in a time of disagreement as to whether or not something or someone is looking beautiful at the time. When examining the vocation of Christian ministry, one would typically expect it to be done with a sense of excellence, but not necessarily a sense of beauty. For the researcher, doing God's work with a sense of excellence has always been a must. The notion of giving God nothing but the researcher's best was instilled in her by her mother from the time she was born. The researcher has not always met this goal, but the notion has stayed with her and guided her work ethics far into her adulthood. Nevertheless, the notion, brought out by L. Gregory Jones and Kevin Armstrong in their book, *Resurrecting Excellence*, of God's work being beautiful was something completely new to her.

When examining the vocation of Christian ministry, is beauty really in the eye of the beholder, or is it in the eye of the person performing the ministry; or is it both and? This concept of Christian ministry being beautiful was not entirely a

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<sup>30</sup> For more information on adolescent development, the reader may consult the "Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling" or other credited resources on the subject.

new concept. In fact, in the biblical book of Isaiah, Isaiah the prophet noted that those who bring good news, “who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” have beautiful feet.<sup>31</sup> Now of course he did not mean a physical beauty, but rather an emotional and spiritual beauty. In short, those who do the ministry of God are beautiful regardless of their physical appearance, status, or age. But is this beauty in the eye of owner of the feet or in the eyes of the people or person receiving the good news; or again, is it both and? In order to answer these questions, one must examine Jones and Armstrong’s thoughts on the phrases ‘eyes to see’ and ‘ears to hear’.<sup>32</sup>

Jones and Armstrong raised an interesting notion of the meaning of the biblical phrases ‘eyes to see’ and ‘ears to hear’.<sup>33</sup> They said that in order to truly experience the beauty of God’s work through us, we must be equipped with the eyes to see and the ears to hear. This answered the researcher’s initial question of who exactly gets to behold the beauty of ministry; the answer: we *all* do. This moved this researcher to a second question, one of a theological nature; how does one become equipped with the eyes to see and the ears to hear? The simple answer of course was, by having a transformative encounter with God through Jesus Christ. But as agents of God, do we not all play a part? This researcher believes that we do.

The founding mission statement of the vocation of Christian ministry is clearly Matthew 28:19-20, or “The Great Commission”. We as followers of Christ

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<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 52:7 (NIV)

<sup>32</sup> L. Gregory Jones and Kevin R. Armstrong, *Resurrecting Excellence*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 7.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

and agents of God are to go into the world and preach/teach the gospel, thereby recruiting disciples for Christ. It is in this moment of preaching, teaching, and ministering that we, as agents of God, are aiding in equipping these new converts with the eyes to see and the ears to hear the beauty of God's work. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that we are merely vessels of the gospel. It is our job to plant the seed or present the opportunity for others to receive the eyes to see and the ears to hear, we ourselves are not fully equipped with the power to perform the necessary spiritual heart surgery resulting in permanently opened one's eyes and ears. Sadly, not everyone will accept such an awesome and life-changing opportunity. Thus for the researcher, the challenge then becomes a matter of not taking the rejection of God's word and, or God's free gift of salvation equipped with new eyes, a new heart, new ears, and beautiful feet, so personally; understanding that it is God that is being rejected, not the researcher.

This notion of the vocation of Christian ministry being beautiful posed somewhat of a challenge in that it made the researcher even more self-conscious regarding whether or not she was doing God's work correctly, affectively, and effectively. The researcher realized that she had human limitations and therefore she had to trust God to compensate for those limits, but that was hard for her to do. Often times growing up the researcher was disappointed by people she trusted, therefore she learned not to trust, in fact, she really did not totally trust herself, especially with God's work and God's people. However, now the researcher has striven more and more to trust God and to trust the God in

herself. If God trusts the researcher enough to make God's work look beautiful, and if God has equipped her with the beautiful feet, the eyes to see, the ears to hear, and a heart to serve God's people, then why not trust God, and why not share what God has given this researcher to share with others? She has no reason and no excuse not to.

In the researcher's ministry settings, the notion of the vocation of Christian Ministry being beautiful was a factor, in that, it enhanced not only her Christian work ethic, but also how she taught others (particularly youth) to view their own Christian vocation in their everyday life and surroundings. The researcher had a desire to erase the western dichotomy of secular and sacred and replace it with a more holistic view of God and life. In short, her desire for the people, and especially the youth, of her ministry settings was for them to permanently acquire beautiful feet that go with them everywhere, carrying the good news, and not just good looking shoes that can be taken off once they leave the church. The researcher also desired for them to excitedly take the opportunity to not only receive new eyes, a new heart, and new ears, but to also excitedly and willing take the opportunity to be used as agents of God to aid in equipping others with the eyes to see, the ears to hear, beautiful feet, and a heart to serve. To that end, below is the model of this researcher's project:

This outline served as a guideline of what was to be expected to complete a successful pastoral drama program. It contained some aspects that, due to illness and the brevity of time, the researcher was not able to complete. Note

that, to accurately evaluate the usefulness and successfulness of a scientific study such as this, one must invest years into following the subjects involved. While this project showed some significant changes in the youth involved, it could not yet be officially determined as successful on the same scientific level as Psychiatry, Psychology, Psychodrama, Pastoral Care, or the like. Nevertheless, this researcher committed herself to doing further research and further development to bring pastoral drama further into the mainstream of today's known psychological and sociological sciences. To that end, what you have read in this dissertation, and what you will see in the following outline of this project were merely the beginnings of a larger work and life study.

A. This project outline entails using psychodrama and in-depth pastoral care to enhance the churchgoing experience of at-risk African-American youth and foster better intergenerational communication. At-risk youth, for the purpose of both this proposal and project was defined by any combination of four attributes: The region(s) in which the participant(s) resided, academic performance, family structure, and, or observed and reported behavior problems. The targeted age group for the purpose of this project were 13-18 because these are the ages at which children are typically still at home with their parents and are more readily available for consistent participation and attendance for the sessions.

1. In order to address the issue of having a lack of therapeutic free expression and a breach in intergenerational communication within

the researcher's ministry settings and other churches exhibiting the same or similar ministry need, the researcher proposed the use of psychodrama utilizing principles of In-depth pastoral care in interdenominational black churches. Lack in the context of this sentence mainly pertained to an expressed lack at Zion Hill Baptist Church, but could apply to a similar existing lack of other churches. This lack was discussed by the researcher, the Dean of Church School, and the pastor.

The discipline of psychodrama was chosen over other forms of artistic therapy because it utilized aspects of play and full body movement in order to act out one's life story; entailing the good, the bad, the ugly, and the forgotten, as opposed to other artistic forms which tend to be ineffective. The result of marrying these two disciplines was a therapeutic method the researcher coined as pastoraldrama. The pastoraldrama was used in order to serve the purpose of creating a safe, confidential, non-judgmental, and therapeutic space of free self-expression, to foster healthy mental and social development, as well as, a healthy and effective way for at-risk youth to express their feelings, thoughts, desires, and aspirations; with the hope of closing the cross-generational chasm of misunderstanding and miscommunication, and opening up opportunities for an intergenerational connection. It is through this innovative and healthy means of free expression, that older

members of the church were better able to meet the often unseen, unheard, and misunderstood needs of the congregation's youth; thereby, also ministering to the youth more holistically and enhancing their churchgoing experience.

B. Specifically the researcher implemented a dramatic and therapeutic program using principles of in-depth pastoral care that was geared towards providing a beneficial and healthy means of therapeutic free expression. This program once completed served as a model for future programs to be used in other churches.

The one hour pastoral drama session was held at least once a week with alternating open and closed sessions as needed. There were three parts to the average session, and this model was altered as needed to best meet the needs of those in the group. The first part was the check-in and warm up. The check-in and warm up part of the session gave the director a moment to emotionally check-in (evaluate) the participants, discuss key concerns of the group, and choose the main actor(s) of the day. This portion of the session tended to be more playful and interactive at times than the resulting scene work. Author and director of drama therapy at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, Renee Emunah surmised in her article "Drama therapy and psychodrama: An integrated model", from the *International Journal of Action Methods*,

that this would be the case.<sup>34</sup> The second portion of the session was the acting (or scene work) portion. This part of the session was the most informative, disclosing, and beneficial. During this portion of the session, an agreed upon metaphoric scenario based on a real life experience of one or more of the participants was played out before the group. It was during this session that artistic expression emerged and the true self was disclosed under the guise of metaphor and play. The third part of the session was the discussion and wrap-up; this was the didactic moment in the session. This portion of the session was also very beneficial and vital since it was where the de-acting or de-rolling of each participant took place. For each participant boundaries had to be reestablished, all participants' roles in real life were reestablished, and emotions were re-analyzed in an effort to deter transference among the participants and countertransference from the director. While transference and countertransference could not be totally avoided, the previous steps were paramount for the health and wellbeing of both the participants and the director.<sup>35</sup> Finally, the discussion and wrap-up portion of the pastoral drama session also set a benchmark for the following week's session.

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<sup>34</sup> Renee Emunah, "Drama therapy and Psychodrama: An integrated model", In *International Journal of Action Methods*, 50, no. 3, (Fall 1997): 108, <https://login.ezproxy.auctr.edu:2050/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=1075932&site=ehost-live> (Accessed January 28, 2012).

<sup>35</sup> Renee Emunah, "Drama therapy and Psychodrama: An integrated model", In *International Journal of Action Methods*, 50, no. 3, (Fall 1997): 108, <https://login.ezproxy.auctr.edu:2050/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=1075932&site=ehost-live> (Accessed January 28, 2012).

1. In order to carry out the task of implementing this program and constructing this model, the researcher first made arrangements with the pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church, the youth minister, and the Dean and Superintendent of Church School. The program then was implemented as a part of Church School and the Christian Education Department; the pastoral drama sessions then acted as a supplemental class or session of Church School.
2. The researcher's objectives for this project were:
  - a. To enhance the church going experience of at-risk African-American teens
  - b. To educate Zion Hill Baptist Church and Friendship Missionary Baptist church on holistic ministry methods for teens
  - c. To bridge the communication gap between the teenage and middle-age members of the churches
  - d. To provide a space and place for free therapeutic expression
  - e. To provide a beneficial and healthful means of disclosing and dealing with underlying issues of the inner-city youth of both Zion Hill and Friendship
3. The costs of this program were minimal. No materials were required other than an enclosed space (which the churches

provided), participants, and note-taking materials for the facilitator (director).

4. The time period of the project was 6 months. This six month time span consisted of two 3 month sessions. The first session was conducted with youth ages 13-15, and the second session was conducted with youth ages 16-18. In the future, should this program become a more permanent part of the researcher's ministry settings, the time frame for the program will be relative depending on the needs of the participants and allowance from the pastors. Through an evaluative process the researcher will then incorporate modifications to the program in order to determine the progress of the participants. Note: because this type of program is based on need and is in a cyclical format, participants will be able to rotate in and out of the program after six months based on their need for what the program offers.

C. Psychodrama, and therefore pastoral drama, can be used to help people of all ages although its roots were founded in the play of children. The use of pastoral drama is very instrumental in helping adolescents transition from childhood into adulthood in a healthy manner. Therefore, the researcher mainly worked with the youth of the church ages 13-18 split into two groups; ages 13-15 and ages 16-18. It is important to note that, at times Adolescents may be suspicious of activity that appears to be

childish; they tend to prefer enacting realistic scenarios, based on relevant themes. According to Emunah, teens "often gravitate toward sociodramatic scenes they can all identify with, rather than those that focus on individual concerns."<sup>36</sup> This was definitely the case with both sets of teen the researcher worked with, but more so with the younger group than the older.

Most of the work was done during closed pastoral drama sessions consisting of only the facilitator (director) and the participants. Nevertheless, during open sessions, in addition to working with the teens the research also provided an opportunity for discussion and dialogue that included members of the middle-age generation. This served as a means to bridge the communication gap between the two generations as well as between the pastoral drama group and the rest of the congregation.

D. The criteria that the researcher used to decide with whom she would be working include the following:

1. Any child ages 13-18, church membership not required
2. Any child 13-18 that had a written permission by their parent(s) to participate
3. Any child 13-18 whose parent(s) presented the researcher with written or verbal concern regarding

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<sup>36</sup> Renee Emunah, "Drama therapy and Psychodrama: An integrated model", In *International Journal of Action Methods*, 50, no. 3, (Fall 1997): 108, <https://login.ezproxy.auctr.edu:2050/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=1075932&site=ehost-live> (Accessed January 28, 2012).

behavior and, or academic problems stemming from underlying emotional issues.

4. Any child 13-18 referred to the program by the pastor, Dean of Church School, or Superintendent of Church School. The specific group of people that the researcher was attempting to change were the inner-city African-American youth that are considered "at-risk". The criteria that the researcher used to decide to work with this group were as follows:

- a. The region(s) in which the participant(s) resided
- b. Academic performance
- c. Family structure
- d. Observed and reported behavior problems

E. The effectiveness of this program was evaluated using the evaluative opinions of one professional in the in-depth pastoral care field, the pastors of Zion Hill Baptist Church and Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, and a professional therapist. The pastors evaluated the program from a ministerial point of view, the in-depth pastoral care professional evaluated the program from an in-depth pastoral care perspective, and the professional therapist evaluated the program for its therapeutic effectiveness. Furthermore, in order to know if there were any changes in the behavior and interpersonal development of the group members, the facilitator had to pay close attention to the information shared by each

individual, in addition to paying close attention to the behaviors manifested within the group setting. The researcher's own observations further served as a secondary form of evaluation. Evaluators evaluated the researcher's project through the use of both face-to-face and electronic means of communication, the researcher's own observations, and results from a pre and posttest and a scientific measure of behavioral change further served as forms of evaluation.

1. Close observation on the part of the facilitator was one of the key components in accurately evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Positive change looked like stable and, or healthy growth and maturity, more-so psychologically and socially than spiritually. This growth and maturity also manifested itself in improved problem-solving skill, grades, and improved overall social behavior and interpersonal relationships. Evaluation of grades and activities came in the form of copies of the participants' report cards (every six weeks) and progress reports from parents and, or coaches. In addition, the effectiveness of the program was evaluated by the above mentioned individuals and tools once the program was completed and all information was compiled.

F. The researcher intended for the final results to be overall greater intergenerational communication and greater involvement by the teens within the church.

1. What changed as a result of this project were the attitudes that the teens and the middle-age adults had towards one another. Also, the grades, scholastic, and, or physical performance of the participants also improved. This was proven through dialogue with the participants, their teachers or coaches, and parents. Also, the parents were asked to provide written testimonies in the form of letters, notes, or progress reports.
2. The participants acted differently by more frequently communicating and gathering with members of a different generation. The teens also acted differently by more readily being willing to speak up and be heard, volunteering for various expressive opportunities within the church, and by behaving better and making better grades in school.
3. The researcher was made different in that (with time and practice) she became more familiar with the disclosed issues of the participants, and better able to deal with stated issues. She also became more aware of similar disclosed issues that she herself had in common with the participants in her program; thus creating more of a common ground on which to dialogue and improve both herself and the participants. Finally, the researcher became different in that her skills and understanding of how to provide effective, healthy in-depth pastoral care to the youth of today, as

well as understanding her own limitations and the need for referrals when necessary was be strengthened.

G. The researcher used the following qualitative research method:

Participant Observation. By this method the researcher was able to “systematically observe [the participants] while joining them in their routine activities.”

1. The words and actions chosen by the participants gave the researcher and observers insight into issues of immediacy which yielded to further discussion of stated issues. Referrals were made as these issues proved to need follow-up care.
2. The theoretical framework the researcher used was that of Sociological Theory. This framework was composed of the following characteristics (all of which can stand alone): functions (stability and macro interactions), conflict, symbolic interactions (micro interactions), and postmodern.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **PREVIOUS EFFORTS (Literature Review)**

#### **Biblical Passage Exegesis**

In preparation for this project and dissertation, the researcher worked intensely with the scriptural passage known to many as “Jesus Blesses the Children” (Mark 10:13-16). She worked to exegete and interpret this scripture passage so as to discover what biblical principles and rules of religious ethics it had to offer that could be used in her contemporary situation of pastoral concern dealing with the inclusion of children and youth in religious settings and in the life of the church. For the purpose of this exegetical portion of this dissertation, the researcher wants to share the meanings and principles that she discovered within Mark 10:13-16 using the hermeneutical rule of analogy, and she will also share some of the unique attributes she found in other accounts of this story. Further still, the researcher will share three interpretations ranging from the early church to modernity and how such interpretations of this scripture passage have changed over time. All of this is done in an effort to further argue and support the researcher’s argument for the inclusion of youth in the life and worship experiences of our churches, beyond Youth Sunday and the role of religious spectators; and while there are many biblical texts that illustrate Jesus’ love for

youth and occasions in which Jesus ministered to youth<sup>1</sup> that could aid in the researcher's argument, the researcher chose the above text as the best overall example.

Marshall D. Johnson, in his book *Making Sense of the Bible: Literary Type as an Approach to Understanding*, referred to this type of passage as one of Jesus' sayings or teachings. More specifically he called this type of saying or teaching a "pronouncement [story,] (a saying fitted out with a brief narrative frame....)". As such the author of this dissertation decided to use narrative criticism as an approach to interpreting and exegeting the selected passage of scripture.

Narrative criticism was the best method or approach to use when interpreting Mark 10:13-16 because this passage was not as ambiguous as most parables and so did not give adequate allowance for being examined allegorically. Furthermore, there was not enough significant historical data or mentioning of otherwise significant hints alluding to the time in which the events of this text took place, other than to say (or cause the reader to assume) that it was during Jesus' life time, to allow for a sufficient historical criticism. Also, form criticism was not a wise method of choice for interpreting the selected scripture passage because the timing of the oral transmission of the selected text was not the researcher's main focus and that information would not have provided the needed information to support her argument for the inclusion of children and

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<sup>1</sup> Other examples and references of Jesus ministering to youth include, but are not limited to: The raising of Jairus's daughter (Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:35-43, Luke 8:40-56), Jesus heals the demon possessed (epileptic) boy (Matthew 17:14-21, Mark 9:14-29, Luke 9:37-43), and Jesus heals the Centurion's son (John 4:46-54).

youth in the life of the church. Literary criticism, however, was a sensible alternative method for interpreting the selected scripture passage, but did not give way to the details within the narrative that the researcher was looking to discover in order to gain greater understanding of the event described by the passage, and in order to gain further supporting evidence for her argument in the affirmative regarding the inclusion of children and youth in the life of the church; Zion Hill Baptist Church and Friendship Mission Baptist Church, specifically. Nevertheless, examining Mark 10:13-16 using the method of narrative criticism posed a few problems; there were some blind spots that the researcher inevitably encountered. These blind spots included, but were not limited to: a limited view, at best, of the spiritual inferences that might have otherwise been more obvious had the passage been interpreted using an allegorical method, key points or clues lending to knowledge of historical occurrences and, or mindsets during Jesus' time being limited, and lastly, the difficulty of determining the true agenda and intended audience of the author of the selected passage, because narrative criticism simply draws textual conclusions based on information provided by the text itself through the narrator, setting, and the verbal and nonverbal characters within the text. Narrative criticism does not presume to know the history behind, the true author, the intended audience, or even the agenda of the author of the text being examined.

Regarding the use of hermeneutical rules in interpreting Mark 10:13-16, in his book, *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rules*, Charles H. Cosgrove discussed five hermeneutical rules that could be used to

aid the interpreter of a scripture in communicating why they interpreted that scripture in that particular way. For the purpose of this section of this dissertation, the researcher used the rule of analogy as a hermeneutical rule for interpreting Mark 10:13-16. This particular rule was most helpful with explaining the interpretation of Mark 10:13-16 from the aspect of looking at the actions of the adult characters in that passage and the adult characters in the researcher's situation of pastoral concern; that is her concern regarding the exclusion of children and youth from actively participating in the life of the her ministry settings, particularly in worship.

While being more liberal than some traditional churches in the Baptist denomination in terms of allowing children and youth to participate in the worship services and life of the church through free expression, both of the researcher's ministry settings still had some deficiencies in this area. Like many churches that were attempting to keep up with the times, Zion Hill had given way to youth inclusion by allowing one Sunday of every month to be designated as "Children and Youth Sunday", Friendship, however, had not progressed this far, but had allowed the youth to have one Sunday a quarter. These youth services were the special Sundays in which the children and youth were allowed to actively participate and lead in a worship service. However, they were restricted from actively participating or leading worship any other Sunday except for on special occasions. The children and youth played a very small part in the production of what was supposed to be services and activities geared towards them and their wellbeing. Moreover, there were still members, and even guest, who had

expressed displeasure in youth Sunday and even in having children in the regular worship services with the adults. Both pastors, however, disagreed with them and were working toward further inclusion of children and youth.

Conversely, some of the youth and their parents have expressed a need for greater involvement and creative outlets. In fact a few of the teens in both locations have been heard saying things like "They don't understand us" and "They don't ask us what we want or what we like to do, they just force stuff on us" in reference to the adults (usually middle-aged) that oversee the youth activities and worship experience.

As was previously stated, in order to debate this issue of inclusion pertaining to children and youth, the researcher used the hermeneutical rule of analogy and applied the biblical moral rule expressed in Mark 10:13-16 to the issue of pastoral concern regarding the children and youth of Zion Hill and Friendship. The hermeneutical rule of analogy ascribed to the principle that "analogical reasoning is an appropriate and necessary method for applying scripture to contemporary moral issues."<sup>2</sup> This researcher used the rule of analogy to explain the interpretation of Mark 10:13-16 from the aspect of looking at the actions of the adult characters in that passage and the adult characters in her situation of pastoral concern. In addition, the rule of countercultural witness (another rule outlined in Cosgrove's book) was excellent in explaining the interpretation of Mark 10:13-16 from the aspect of giving voice and validation to the children in this passage, but since it was the researcher's desire to convince

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<sup>2</sup> Charles H. Cosgrove, *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rule*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 89.

adults to include children and youth in the life of the church, especially in worship, it was better to appeal to the adults by showing them an analogous situation from the scriptures.

In order to use the hermeneutical rule of analogy<sup>3</sup> the researcher first had to look at the biblical account which she had deemed to be analogous to her contemporary situation of pastoral concern and then she had to look at the contemporary situation that had presented itself at her ministry settings. In both situations the researcher looked for basic principles (implicit and explicit); this was the second step in the analogizing process. Next the researcher determined and compared the similarities of both situations, so as to provide a common point of departure from which to base her moral debate on the inclusion of children and youth; in short the researcher deduced which principles of the biblical account applied to her contemporary situation. By doing this comparison she was able to determine whether or not the two cases were alike enough to apply the biblical rule of moral ethics presented in the biblical account sufficiently in regards to her contemporary situation. Lastly, the researcher made a decision on her contemporary situation based on the conclusions gained from comparing it to the biblical account.

The biblical passage that most resembled the researcher's contemporary issue of pastoral concern was Mark 10:13-16 (affectionately known as "Jesus Blesses the Children"). This pericope represented a small segment in the life of Jesus Christ and was mentioned in both Mathew and Luke as well. In the tenth

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<sup>3</sup> Charles H. Cosgrove, *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rule*", (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 89.

chapter of Mark Jesus had just left Capernaum and somewhere in the region of Judea and the Jordan River. In the text, once again Jesus was surrounded by a crowd. As was his custom, Jesus took the time to teach them. On this particular occasion some Pharisees tried to trap Jesus in his own words by asking him about the lawfulness of divorce. Jesus explained that divorce was not a part of God's original plan, but because of the hardness of the people's hearts Moses made an allowance for divorce. Later Jesus recapitulated this lesson on divorce to his disciples. It is during this teaching moment that people begin bringing children to Jesus so that he might touch them or lay hands on them. As the people were bringing children to Christ, the disciples began to rebuke them.

Upon seeing the disciples' response, Jesus became angry and told the disciples to allow the children to come to him and to not hinder them because the kingdom of God belongs to them. Jesus then began to admonish his disciples and tell them that whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, that person would not be able to enter into it. At the end of the text, Jesus took the children into his arms, blessed them, and laid his hands on them; thereby granting the desires of those who brought the children. The pericope then continued with Jesus continuing his journey.

In reading the biblical account the researcher determined the following to be principles of the account: 1) Children have a place in religious matters and teaching moments. 2) Those who are willing to do what is right on behalf of children should not be hindered. 3) Children and those who are like them have a special place in the kingdom of God. All of these principles aptly applied to the

researcher's contemporary situation; however, there was some discrepancy. In the biblical account adults were literally bringing children to Christ so that he might lay hands on them. In the researcher's contemporary situation children were being figuratively brought to Christ so as to learn of him and develop a close relationship with him, as opposed to literally being brought to Jesus.

Nevertheless, the principle focus of the inclusion of children in religious settings seemed to be common. In addition, with the researcher's contemporary issue there was an underlying principle that said that non-adults should be excluded from the business and formal aspects of the life of the church. In other words, when issues arose within the church the youth were not invited to attend meetings pertaining to these issues, nor were they invited to speak up about these issues; even if the issue concerned them. This was actually a violation of the by-laws of our denomination, but the researcher will speak more on that later. The most children and youth were allowed to do was to speak privately to the pastor concerning the situation, or write him a letter, albeit this was a good start, but again there was still room for improvement.

When looking at the facts presented in both situations the researcher saw that both had two types of adults: those who willingly brought children to Christ, and those who wished to prevent such access to Christ in order to appease personal agendas or idealistic views. There was also a commonality of both Jesus and children (youth) being present and a willingness on Jesus' part to accept, acknowledge, and bless these children. Implicitly there was in both situations an issue of opposition on the part of one set of adults, implicit approval

and encouragement of the adults who brought the children, admonition (albeit slight in the contemporary case) for those who sought to hinder those doing good, and a resolution of blessing. In the contemporary situation this blessing was seen through the positive living and bold Christian confession of the youth of both Zion Hill Baptist Church and Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

With all of the above principles and similarities, it is evident that the contemporary situation and the biblical rule of moral ethics presented in Mark 10:13-16 are analogous enough to the researcher's contemporary situation of pastoral concern to apply the biblical rule to both. Therefore, the researcher made the following decision about her situation of pastoral concern: The biblical rule of inclusion regarding children in teaching moments and religious settings can be applied to the researcher's contemporary situation of pastoral concern; with the understanding that the adults who were bringing children to Jesus actually had the children's best interest at heart.

This contingent leaves room for other factors that may come into play; factors in which the rule may have to be altered in order to fit a slightly different contemporary situation, for instance: Should children be allowed in the budget making process of the church? Or should they be placed in situations or given responsibilities that would be overwhelming for them? Of course not! In situations like these the biblical rule of inclusion must be altered to best fit what is in the child(ren)'s best interest. Now, that is not to say that they should be barred from all business meetings and the like, especially since in the Baptist denomination all tithe paying members have a right to vote on church business, but rather it is

to say that the parents or caregivers of these children should set boundaries and follow up by explaining what is taking or has taken place in the meeting. After all, even business meetings can be a teaching and learning moment for both parent and child.

Furthermore, one of the teens in the panel group reminded the group that worship and other important meetings in the bible were usually communal meetings, and that as such the teens and adults of the church should all come together as a community to discuss their feelings and issues in order to better understand each other and to better the church as a whole. This is especially true given that the age in which a child was considered an adult in the Jewish community was 12 years old. Another observation was that in terms of personal and communal experiences, successful relationships with children usually can be achieved by doing things as a family; for instance, coming to church as a family.

To that end, let us take a closer look at how the author of this dissertation used the rule of analogy to examine this biblical passage. In simple terms, it was the researcher's goal to take both the situation in the selected passage and the situation of pastoral concern (the situation in life) and hold them both up in a side-by-side comparison in order to spark a conversation between those who side with the disciples in the text and those who side with the adults bringing the children to Jesus in the text. She further hoped to arrive at a mutual interpretation; one that looked favorably (or at the very least considerably) on the inclusion of children and youth in the life of the church.

Now, when looking at these two situations, the biblical situation and the situation of pastoral concern, analogously while focusing on the rule that adults should bring children and youth to Christ and should be allowed to do so without opposition, one might ask: "Would this rule always apply in any situation?" The answer is an arguable "No". The answer of "No" is arguable because the traditional Christian understanding is that one must be willing to bring children and youth to Christ at every affordable opportunity; affordable being the operative word. For instance, in the Baptist church and other denominations, the training and involvement of youth in the life and worship exercises of the church is extremely important, but including children in the business of the church is sometimes frowned upon.

Further more, in the Baptist tradition training children and the involvement of the youth members of the church has always been very important. The Baptist denomination understands youth to be the future of the church. Training children in the way they should go is pivotal. Baptists tend to take the scriptural text of Proverbs 22:6<sup>4</sup> literally and seriously. In fact, according to Everett C. Goodwin, author of *The New Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches*, the institutional Sunday School came as a result of church leaders realizing the need for "basic literacy education as well as biblical instruction"; especially in response to the changed social circumstance brought about by the Industrial Revolution.<sup>5</sup> The importance of training and involving children and the church's youngest members in the life of the church is seen in the scriptural readings of *The New National Baptist*

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<sup>4</sup> Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray (NRSV).

<sup>5</sup> Everett C. Goodwin, *The New Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995), 165.

*Hymnal* and in the creation of such organizations as the Baptist Young People's Union (BYPU), also known as the Young People's Department (YPD), and the Baptist Training Union (BTU), as well as, teaching opportunities such as Sunday School (Church School), mid-week bible study, Quiz Team (Bible Drill Team) and the like. Training in the performance duties that contribute to the worship services is also important, hence the development of such organizations and occasions as the Sunshine Choir (Sunshine Band), Junior Usher Board, Junior Deacons, and Youth Sunday. But what about situations in which bringing a child to Christ would result in a dividing of that child's home, should we still insist on bringing that child to Christ? Some would argue "Yes" because Jesus admonishes in the scriptures that one should be willing to forsake all for the sake of the Kingdom or Reigndom of God. On the other hand, Jesus also argues that the Kingdom (Reigndom) of God belongs to children, and that one should be like a child if they want to enter into it, and that anyone who mistreats a child will be harshly punished<sup>6</sup>. So what is a person to do? Does one obey the rule and bring children to Christ at all cost, or does one examine the situation and judge rather now is the best time? Or, does one find a less abrasive way to introduce a child to Christ without dividing the child's household?

These questions and many others like them are not only poignant but they also reflect real-life situations and are worth wrestling with if one desires to whole-heartedly follow this rule of bringing children and youth to Christ. In fact, some time ago in national news, there was a story about a young Muslim girl who decided to become a Christian. As a result, her father allegedly threatened to kill

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<sup>6</sup> Punishment in this text is implied, but is explicit in Matthew 18:10.

her; and so she ran away to the church which had proselytized her. Fortunately, the church followed through and gave the child a place to stay and reported the incident to the police. In that case, the church did exactly what was right and necessary when following the rule of bringing children and youth to Christ, in that not only did they introduce the child to Christ, but they were willing to go the extra mile to insure that she was safe when her family disagreed with her decision.

Safety and the overall welfare of children and youth tends to be the deciding condition when deciding rather or not to apply the rule of introducing children to Christ; should it be at all cost or only in affordable safe situations? According to the research and spirit behind the rule, the rule itself can be applied to all situations, with varying consequences, but the purpose or spirit of the rule is more important than the rule itself when looked at on a case-by-case basis.

By using the hermeneutical rule of analogy, the researcher discovered the following meaning from Mark 10:13-16 that applies to her pastoral concern: 1) Jesus readily accepts children and those who have a heart to bring children to him, 2) Jesus looks favorably (however discrete it may be) upon adults who do what is in the best interest of a child or children and awards them by granting their desire; in the biblical case blessing and laying hands on the children, in contemporary case blessing the children with protection, a good life, etcetera, and 3) Jesus is angered by those who mistreat and, or hinder children from getting what is best for them, and looks unfavorably at adults that would do such things, nevertheless, Jesus is willing to lovingly correct those who are wrong, forgive them, and teach them a better, more perfect way.

Mark 10:13-16 addresses the researcher's pastoral concern by using a literary type Marshall D. Johnson called a pronouncement story. Pronouncement stories are one of the methods Jesus used in order to teach kingdom concepts or principles. By viewing this pronouncement story through the lens of narrative criticism and applying the rule of analogy, the researcher was able to see many commonalities between the biblical account and her contemporary situations at Zion Hill Baptist Church and Friendship Missionary Baptist Church. The Mark 10:13-16 narrative persuades one to accept the rule or argument for inclusion by creating a situation in which the place of children in religious settings must be addressed and then having the main character (Jesus, the one traditionally held in high regard) look favorably on those who obey this rule, thus causing what would be a break in his own religious tradition, and hopefully a break in our (the contemporary church's) tradition.

The researcher's scripture passage's context shaped her interpretation of the scripture passage by being similar to her pastoral concern. Both situations involved children and two types of adults, those who willingly brought children to Christ and those who wished to prevent children from coming to Christ. Moreover, there was an element of traditional<sup>7</sup> interpretation that seemed inescapable based on the context in which Mark 10:13-16 was presented. In other words, the fact that it is in the bible and the fact that in some cases the words of Jesus are given special attention by being printed in an alternate color, usually red, from the rest of the text. This forces one to hold Jesus in high

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<sup>7</sup> This notion of "tradition" is based on the researcher's denominational tradition and what she has been traditionally taught.

esteem, thereby making his words and deeds exemplary, and therefore right beyond contestation. Also, the outcome of the narrative and Jesus' response to both sets of adults led this researcher to interpret the text the way that she did. It is obvious that the author wanted his readers to side with Jesus, the hero character, and not with the disciples. Because in the end, the disciples were admonished by a righteously indignant Christ, but those who brought children to Jesus so that he might touch them and bless them received exactly what they were looking for. So in order to get what we desire from Jesus regarding our children, this text seemed to imply that we too need to learn to expectantly bring children to Christ, and at the very least to stay on Jesus' good side, we must not hinder those who wish to bring children to Christ.

Now for a brief look at how this passage has been interpreted over the years: Not only has the scripture text Mark 10:13-16 been given many titles, it has also been given a number of interpretations through the years since its canonization. For the purpose of this dissertation, let us look at just three of these interpretations. Looking at the works of three interpreters from the early church (13<sup>th</sup> century), the Reformation era (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century), and modernity (20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century) one can see the various changes in the interpretations.

Thomas Aquinas' early church interpretation of Mark 10:13-16 was one that looked at the passage in an allegorical way. The children (although actually children in the narrative) were not merely looked at figuratively as young Christians or new converts, but rather as the ignorant, lowly, marginalized, and unwanted of society. Aquinas' interpretation of the scripture passage alluded to

the notion that while the disciples were busy trying to protect Jesus' divinity, Jesus reprimanded them and admonished them to become as children.

According to Aquinas, Jesus did this not only to show the importance of meeting one at one's level or state of being, but also so the disciples would learn to follow Jesus' example; after all according to the Aquinas Jesus himself forsook his own godly form and became a child.

The adults in the story that brought these children to Jesus were looked at as caregivers of not only the children, but more importantly stewards of the church; those who are followers of "The Way"<sup>8</sup>, witnesses who have brought others to Christ so as to learn of him. Conversely, the disciples were understood by Aquinas, to be those church leaders who were entrusted with the responsibility of teaching new converts about Jesus. It was to these adults that, according to the Aquinas, Jesus (through his message to the disciples) was attempting to teach the importance of putting away worldly pride for the sake of godly humility. What's more, the kingdom of God was interpreted as the doctrine of the gospel, and only those who come as humbly and fully trusting as children were truly able to receive said doctrine.

In the Reformation era interpretation of the scriptural text, Matthew Henry looked at the happenings in Mark 10:13-16 in a more literal and less allegorical way, and he seemingly overly spiritualized the narrative. Henry began his interpretation by looking at the children in the scripture as literal children and not new converts to "The Way". He interpreted Jesus as saying that it was important

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<sup>8</sup> The title, "followers of 'The Way'" is a first century identifier that is synonymous to the term "Christians".

for children to come to him while they are still young, in fact Henry added that they should come Jesus as soon as they were able. Further, Henry looked at the adults that were bringing the children to Jesus as their parents or caretakers and said that a parent's main concern should be the welfare of their child's soul because it was the most important part. If all was well with their soul, then all was well with them. This was based on Henry's observation that the parents or caretakers brought the children to Jesus so that he may lay hands on them and bless them. It was also based on his assumption that the children had no need of physical or mental healing since such a need was not mentioned in the text.

In additon, Matthew Henry looked at the disciples and surmised that they presumed to know how negatively Jesus would feel as a result of these people bringing these children. This was both interesting and ironic since earlier in the gospel account Jesus had explained to them how they should treat God's "little ones"<sup>9</sup>. Henry went on to surmise that Jesus was upset because the disciples were trying to prevent him from doing good; this again was where Henry proceeded to put words into Jesus' mouth. In the end, Jesus was able to do what the bringers of the children desired and he laid his hands on them and bless them; a blessing that according to Matthew Henry was purely transferable to "children" of his generation and generations to come through Jesus' grace and love.

Lastly, in a contemporary interpretation of Mark 10:13-16, Doctor Craig Keener looked at the scripture passage in an even less allegorical and more historical way as compared to the previously mentioned interpreters. Doctor

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<sup>9</sup> Mark 9:36-42

Keener was a biblical scholar in his own right, and he focused much of his attention on the social, cultural, and historical aspects of the scripture, so as to provide his readers with a background understanding that would help them to read New Testament scripture passages with a similar understanding to the original readers and writers of those passages.

Doctor Keener's interpretation brought out the fact that the life expectancy of children in Jesus' day was rather low. According to Keener many children, especially of the poor in the community, did not live past the age of 12 years old. In Jewish custom this would be the age in which a male child would be considered an adult and allowed to begin rabbinical training; to that end, Keener's interpretation of Mark 10:13-16 looked at the idea of the disciples discouraging the bringers of children to Jesus as a rejection of those who are helpless and powerless. Keener stated that the disciples, in their busy attempt to prepare for Jesus' new kingdom, one that they felt was to be an earthly kingdom; did not have time to deal with anyone who did not possess earthly political power. With that type of mindset, it was unexpected that Jesus would insist that the kingdom of God belonged to such helpless beings, not realizing that, according to Keener, such helplessness, as was possessed by the children, had no other choice but to depend totally on God. Therefore, followers of "The Way" should be as those children. Lastly, Keener pointed out that the passing on or conferring of blessings, particularly in Jewish culture, were often given by the laying on of hands (as seen in Genesis 48:14), thus by doing as the bringers of

the children wished and laying hands on the children, Jesus undoubtedly passed on a blessing, and likely the kingdom of God, to the children.

One of the most interesting things about these three interpretations was that each interpreter accurately reflected in their interpretation the way their community was likely interpreting scripture, as well as, what may have been deemed as most important to Christians and the life of the church at that time. In his interpretation of Mark 10:13-16 Thomas Aquinas reflected the thoughts of the church's concern with proselytizing new converts, adding to the church, maintaining church order, and the importance of maintaining respect of leadership through simple faith and obedience to those whom God has placed as stewards of the doctrine of the gospel. This type of mindset was common during his time because doctrines of the church (that we typically take for granted today) were still being written, explored, and discussed in various church counsels at that time.

Matthew Henry in his interpretation of Mark 10:13-16 reflected the less allegorical and more simplistic faith and lifestyle of his time. Henry stressed simply living out the gospel and attempted to help others do so by explaining the scriptures practically line by line. While on the other hand, Doctor Craig S. Keener was not so much concerned with church maintenance or one's ability to live out the scriptures; instead, he reflected the more analytical mindset of modernity (post Enlightenment). In today's time we are less concerned about increasing the fellowship of Jesus Christ and the metaphorical meanings of scriptures; today we are more concerned with the history, culture, and

circumstances surrounding the original text, its original writer(s), and its original readers. Keener clearly reflected this in his interpretation.

In addition to looking at other interpretations of Mark 10:13-16 and how they have changed throughout the years, let us also look at other biblical accounts of this same event. As was said before, both Matthew and Luke offered their versions of this event in which Jesus is blessing children. All three accounts are very similar although Luke's account was slightly vaguer than Mark's and offered no blessing of the children at the end of the narrative. Although the general principles were the same, the alternate ending of Luke's account would, of course, dramatically affect the researcher's ability to use this narrative as an analogous biblical example of her contemporary situation of pastoral concern. Luke's account simply offered Jesus' admonition to become as children, but then moved on to address a ruler's (other versions may say "rich young ruler") question about how to inherit eternal life. An interesting thing that Luke's account did offer, however, was the notion that the people were bringing "infants" or "babies" to Jesus. Luke may have chosen to call these children infants in order to specify to his readers that these children were indeed very young (less than 12 years old) and therefore not likely to have been receiving rabbinical training as a norm. Luke's specification of the children being infants also left room for the basic assumption that little girls may have also been present.

One of the interesting things about Matthew's account of Jesus blessing the children was that Matthew did not explicitly say how Jesus felt about his disciples turning away those who were bringing children to him. Matthew's

account also did not say explicitly that Jesus “blessed” the children. Matthew’s account in this regard was also slightly vague, but with good reason. Matthew’s readers would have known how Jesus felt since (in just the previous chapter) Jesus had admonished his disciples on how to treat little children and the importance of becoming humble like them in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, and in chapter 19 Jesus was having to re-teach this same lesson to his disciples and those who were crowded around him. Matthew’s Jewish readers would have also known (based on their own cultural and religious tradition) that by laying hands on the children and praying for them an automatic blessing was being conferred.

After closely reading Mark 10:13-16, reading the interpretation of three interpreters from the early church to modernity, and after closely examining the accounts of the other two synoptic gospel writers, some of the researcher’s assumptions regarding this text were not only challenged but also corrected. For starters, the researcher was initially under the impression that the children featured in the Mark 10:13-16 narrative were acting on their own account when approaching Jesus. However, upon reading the text more closely, the researcher realized that these children had actually been brought to Jesus by adults who were likely caring for them. This of course changed the way the researcher looked at her situation of pastoral concern. She realized that it was important for adults in religious communities, adults in our community at large, parents, and caregivers of children to play an active part in brining children to Christ,

particularly since such action is believed (by followers of "The Way") to be in the best interest of the children.

Also, by viewing the text more closely the researcher realized that the adults that brought children to Christ were showing their love for the children by providing them with a special opportunity. Now, the text did not say whether or not the disciples or the adults who brought the children to Jesus accurately knew at that time the purpose for Jesus' coming to earth. It is likely though, that both sets had some idea that Jesus' kingdom would be an earthly one that would free them from their current state of oppression from Rome, and ultimately from ever being oppressed again; as was alluded to by some Old Testament prophets. If this was the case and the mindset of both sets of adults in the narrative, then it is likely that these (likely poor) adults were in some way trying to insure that while life for them may not have been the best, these children (by being touched and blessed by Jesus) would have a better future and hopefully a place in Jesus' new kingdom. After all, in ancient Jewish custom, the conferring of blessings, status, power, health, and even (in the case of the scapegoat) sin all took place through the act of laying on of hands, particularly on the head region of the body<sup>10</sup>.

Lastly, upon reading Mark 10:13-16 and other interpretations of this text, the researcher realized that, although mistaken in their approach, the disciples were not all together wrong in their response to the adults that were bringing children to Christ. If indeed they still misunderstood the true reason for Jesus' coming to earth and had not yet fully grasped that Jesus' kingdom would be a

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<sup>10</sup> See other biblical references (such as Gen. 48:13-20, Lev. 4:13-20, Lev. 16:21, I Tim. 4:14) for examples of laying on of hands.

heavenly one, then it is quite understandable why they would be so protective of Jesus, their future king and the power that he held; and would possibly soon have. Although they were ignorant to some degree, the disciple's hearts were in the right place, and so too, some of the adults that appeared to be against the youth of the researcher's ministry settings. These adults may have simply been ignorant in their thinking but pure in their intentions; they may have honestly felt that by hindering the inclusion of youth, they were doing a good service to and for the church. So like Christ, instead of harshly berating them, it would be wiser for the researcher to pose this scripture text as a prime example for how they should go about handling children and youth in the congregation and why.

After carefully examining Mark 10:13-16, if the researcher had it to do all over again, she would still stick with the same scripture text in order to parallel it with her contemporary situation of pastoral concern, because she continued to feel that this text was the most analogous to her situation. However, out of curiosity she would likely switch to another hermeneutical rule in order to see what other implicit rules, meanings, and principles she might find in this text that would apply to her contemporary situation. The researcher would likely switch to the rule of countercultural witness which would help the researcher to interpret Mark 10:13-16 from the aspect of giving voice and validation to the children in the scriptural passage. It would be extremely interesting and informative to interpret the scripture for the point of view of giving children validation and a voice versus helping adults make the right decisions regarding the inclusion of children and

youth in the life of the church. Both rules would likely bring her to roughly the same conclusions, but merely in a different way.

While being extremely helpful in providing insight into how the researcher may go about positively effecting change regarding her situation of pastoral concern and improving the ethos of both her ministry settings, there is at least one question Mark 10:13-16 did not seek to answer for her, and one more question that it revealed anew for her that it also did not seek to answer. First, the text raised the question of what to do in situations where children and youth should not be a part, but either an adult with them, or they themselves feel that they should? The researcher had tried to address this question by altering the biblical rule of inclusion based on what the adult or adults in the situation felt would be best for the child or children involved, but let us be honest, not all adults are great judges when it comes to knowing what is best for a child. So, (not to be cliché, but) what would Jesus do in this situation? It is possible that Jesus and those responsible adults around the situation would lovingly step in and explain to the faulty adult or adults why it is not best to include a child or children in this particular meeting or situation and then offer an alternative event or learning moment for the child or children to attend that would be both safe and enlightening.

Secondly, there was the question of what to do with adults who refuse to learn the lesson offered by Mark 10:13-16. Now, of course the way the bible painted the picture in the narrative, there is little to no chance (except maybe in the case of Judas) that the disciples are going to go against what Jesus had

taught them. Nevertheless, in real life this often happens. Sometimes people are opposed to change, even if it is change inspired, recommended, and, or ordered by God (Jesus). Again, what would Jesus do? Typically we in the church get tired of such folk and either make an attempt to get them to leave the church (through our words, actions, or both) or we simply ignore them to their face and complain about them to everyone else behind their backs. Jesus, however, would take a different approach. Instead of trying to excommunicate them from the religious community, Jesus would likely continue to try to work with them and try to persuade them to make better choices. In the Bible, this response to resistance can be seen both in Jesus' interactions with the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, and with his constant interaction with the disciple that he knew would one day betray him.

This process of interpreting and exegeting Mark 10:13-16 for the purpose of applying its biblical principles to this researcher's contemporary situation of pastoral concern helped her cultivate ways of teaching others how to fruitfully read the bible by 1) helping her to slow down and examine what is present in the text, rather than speed reading and allowing her presumptions from traditional denominational interpretations to cloud her judgment of what is really in the text, and by 2) helping her to look at the biblical account from more than one perspective. Heretofore, when reading this text the researcher would (of course) always lean to the side of Jesus and those who were bringing children to him. However, as a result of this journey and wrestling with this biblical passage, the researcher was able to see that the disciples may have had pure intentions in

their efforts to hinder the people and children from coming to Jesus. By looking at each set of characters and the surrounding factors of the narrative, the researcher gained greater insight than what was originally provided for her prior to this process. In short, by using the tools of interpretation that the researcher gained through education and this interpretation and exegetical process, she was finally able to help others delve into biblical texts using one of the five hermeneutical rules and help them to discover implicit and explicit principles, details, and contextual questions that may have previously been overlooked.

The researcher was also able to help them apply these principles and details to their own contemporary issues in order to answer any contextual questions and debates that may arise out of their particular situation. This was particularly helpful pertaining to the researcher's project because she now had a sound biblical and theological support for her project and desire to facilitate a space and place of free expression for youth and to facilitate their inclusion in the life of the church. All while simultaneously bridging the gap if cross-generational gap of miscommunication and misunderstanding between the teens and middle-aged adults of her ministry settings.

### **Historical and Biblical References of Drama (Theater)**

The history of drama and the theatre goes way back, even to the time of Jesus. During the time of Jesus, the Greeks and Romans were both perfecting their skills in the performing arts. There were many theaters around Jesus'

hometown of Nazareth, and Herod the Great and his son were both avid fans of the theater. The theater had such a great influence on the local culture in Jesus' day that Jesus would sometimes use theatrical references in his teachings. For instance, in Matthew Chapter 6, when Jesus is admonishing his disciples to not be like the hypocrites, he is actually saying: do not be like those who merely play a part. The word Greek word for hypocrite (*hypocritēs*) actually means one who plays a part or acts in a false role while in public.<sup>11</sup> Jesus continued to tell his disciples to be humble when giving alms or doing good deeds. He told them not to blow a trumpet or make a big spectacle as the hypocrites did. That was to say, don't be like those who announce their entrance onto a stage with the loud blast of a trumpet or a big fanfare. There were many other references to theatre in Jesus' teachings, especially in his Sermon on the Mount, including his reference to the long face of those who are fasting, a reference to the extravagant masks that were worn in order for the actors to be seen by those who were seated further away from the stage.<sup>12</sup>

The theater was a popular form of leisure in Jesus' day, and Jesus' ability to travel, as many urban poor or crafts people did, gave him the opportunity to be exposed to various plays, events, and stage actors that performed in the many theaters that were around his home town. In fact, the closest theater to Nazareth was only about four miles away.<sup>13</sup> In Jerusalem that theater was built by Herod

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<sup>11</sup> Richard A. Batey, *Jesus and the Forgotten City: New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 120.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>13</sup> Richard A. Batey, *Jesus and the Forgotten City: New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 125.

the Great.<sup>14</sup> The theater was so popular, especially amongst those who were considered the urban poor or craftspeople, because the theater was one of few places where the poor and the aristocracy were equals, if even for a moment. Yes the seating arrangements were far from equal, but both the rich and the poor alike were able to enjoy the same show, even if it had to be spied from a distant hill.

### **Extrabilical Works**

#### **(Theoretical Review)**

Previous efforts to tackle the needs of the seemingly ignored, misunderstood, at-risk, and, or oppressed youth have been explored by a number of authors. When looking at literature to be used for the purpose of research, the researcher came across a plethora of material focusing on youth, youth ministry, and oppression. A few are highlighted below. Empirically, Dr. Anne Wimberley in her book *Keep it Real* looked at the notion of being real with today's youth and how the model of the African village motif could be helpful in ministering to them. Also, Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster in their books *Soul Tending; Life-forming Practices for Older Youth and Young Adults* and *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry* empirically addressed the notion of holistically ministering to today's youth, and equipping youth ministers with the tools to do so.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 126.

Theologically Howard Thurman in his book *Jesus and the Disinherited* looked at how we as individuals and the church should respond to those who have been pushed to the margins of our society, and this researcher would argue, the margins of our churches. In addition, liberation theologian and Peruvian priest, Gustavo Gutierrez stood on the premise that ministry should begin at the "grassroots"; the bottom. In other words, ministry must start with those in the margins; the less fortunate, homeless, hungry, impoverished, abused, misused, oppressed, and overlooked; this includes our youth, and in a sense Jesus in Matthew 25:40 was essentially saying the same thing. He said, "...Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."<sup>15</sup> After, looking at the notion of the tradition that "Children should be seen and not heard", and having been a witness to the negative attitudes of some adults in protest to "Youth Sunday", it is evident that in some cases today's youth have indeed become marginalized in our own churches.

Theoretically, the article "What Wolf Are You Feeding: Managing Conflict by Storytelling" by William Laramie, and the books *African American Pastoral Care* by Edward P. Wimberly, *Theory and Practice of Counseling & Psychotherapy* by Gerald Corey, and *Telling the Story: Evangelism in Black Churches* by James O. Stallings when combined with principles of drama and play all bring to light that a person's lived, and in this case acted-out, story can be a powerful and therapeutic asset in the healing process, conflict resolution, Christian education, evangelism, and learning self-awareness. In addition, while

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<sup>15</sup> Matthew 25:40, NRSV

there are no resources that specifically address the therapeutic use of pastoral drama or the training of one who wishes to become a pastoral dramaist (since this is a unique therapeutic form the researcher has created for the purpose of this project and dissertation), there are resources that the researcher used as references that deal with, and show the effectiveness of, drama as a healing art. These resources include: J. L. Moreno's article, "The Group Approach in Psychodrama" in *Sociometry*, an article by Renee Emunah entitled, "Drama therapy and psychodrama: An integrated model", from the *International Journal of Action Methods*, Josephine Fong's article, "Psychodrama as a Preventive Measure: Teenage Girls Confronting Violence", in the *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama, & Sociometry*, and Anne Bannister's book, *Creative Therapies and Traumatized Children*. For insight into the methods and principles of Pastoral Care and Counseling, the researcher used the following texts besides others that were previously mentioned: Howard Clinebell's text book *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the ministry of healing & Growth*, Rodney J. Hunter's article "The Therapeutic Tradition of Pastoral Care and Counseling," in the book *Pastoral Care and Social Conflict*, and the Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling by Rodney J. Hunter, et al.

## CHAPTER VI

### PRACTICALITY OF THE PROJECT

#### Project Title

The title of this project is *The Pastoral Care Professional as Pastoraldramist and Holistic Caregiver: Addressing the Churchgoing Experiences of Black Youth through Pastoral Care and Psychodrama*. This title reflects the main ministry question that the researcher's project attempts to answer. That question is: How can in-depth pastoral care professionals address the churchgoing experience of inner city youth (youth exhibiting behavioral, emotional, social, spiritual disconnect as a result of traumatic and, or dramatic situations) holistically through pastoraldrama and communication exercises?

The project title further serves to key readers into the pertinent components that comprise the focus of the project. Those components are: psychodrama, in-depth pastoral care, and holistic ministry methods. Psychodrama is defined as being "A scientific exploration of truth through dramatic method".<sup>1</sup> It utilizes principles of play as a means of discovering undisclosed issues that may be framed in miscommunication, trauma, misperception, and, or other sociological factors. Psychodrama can also serve as

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<sup>1</sup>Josephine Fong, "Psychodrama as a Preventative Measure: Teenage Girls Confronting Violence", In *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama, & Sociometry* 59, no. 3 (Fall 2006):100.

a means to break the code of subversive language. In-depth pastoral care is a discipline that focuses on the art of being present (in the moment) with persons that are distressed. It seeks to help such persons by helping them to find the answers to their problems through self-evaluation. This evaluation can also incorporate finding resolutions for issues related to shame, inferiority complexes, object relation issues, family systems issues, spiritual issue, ethical issues, and other psychological and sociological issues. Finally, the notion of holistic ministry focuses on ministering to the person as a whole; instead of merely treating presented symptoms. It focuses not only on the spiritual needs of a person, but also on the physical, psychological, social, emotional, financial, intellectual, and sexual needs of the participants; all that the whole encompasses.

### **Why this Project is Useful**

This project is important because it allows for a way to stir up the deep waters in traumatized youth, and give vent or air to those pains, sorrows, worries, fears, regrets, questions, and issues that may be festering, bubbling, and boiling just below the surface; before they explode in a damaging way. The researcher has chosen the therapeutic approach of psychodrama because it is most often used with adolescents and adults who have experienced seriously traumatic events in their lives, like sexual abuse or rape. Furthermore, psychodrama is said

to be most effective when used with adolescents.<sup>2</sup> Typically, adolescents experience personality development and changes the most. The use of psychodrama can be instrumental in helping adolescents transition from childhood into adulthood in a healthy manner. Also, there is a greater need for adolescents to gain interpersonal skills and to have the ability to make sense of the world in which they live.<sup>3</sup>

Although the therapeutic field of psychodrama is relatively new, and is still being researched and developed, psychodrama is proven to be very helpful. Because of its imaginative and boundless nature, psychodrama allows its patients to explore unknown or suppressed areas of their own psyche, it gives motion to that which has no words; that which is too painful or traumatic to talk about, and it affords its participants the ability to explore and release strong emotions while under supervision.<sup>4</sup> This is what makes this form of therapy so powerful. It incorporates many different disciplines and techniques, but the technique itself should not be allowed to overtake it.

The basic principles of this project and the marrying of in-depth pastoral care and psychodrama have a very basic practical application, and with the right training can be performed safely and effectively. This new form of therapy (now termed pastoral drama) can be used in church settings to minister to people of all ages, and especially troubled youth, in a non-conventional, palatable way. It is therapy, but it does not seem like it; ultimately, it is fun, and as the foundation of

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<sup>2</sup> Josephine Fong, "Psychodrama as a Preventive Measure: Teenage Girls Confronting Violence", In *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama, & Sociometry* 59, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 101.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

the psychodrama aspect of pastoral drama is based on principles of play; and the in-depth personal care aspect of pastoral drama is based on the awareness of oneself and the awareness of others, having fun is pivotal! It is believed that one's guard is never more let down as when they are in play; that is when one's true self is allowed to be safely disclosed, and it is in this realm of play and role-play that real healing can occur.<sup>5</sup>

### How Drama is Useful for Ministry

"All the World's a Stage"

– William Shakespeare

The above quote from famed playwright William Shakespeare presented a phenomenal way to sum up life. Indeed, "All the world [is] a stage, and the men and women [are] merely [actors]." We each have a part to play, a role to fill, and a mask to where in this play we call life, and depending on the scene, our costumes, roles, and masks change. Most of us, as we go through our daily lives, play multiple roles and wear multiple masks; sometimes one on top of the other. With all of these different roles and ensuing societal expectations one is expected to fill, life can become confusing, stressful, hurtful, and ultimately

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<sup>5</sup> Renee Emunah, "Drama therapy and Psychodrama: An integrated model", In *International Journal of Action Methods*, 50, no. 3, (Fall 1997): 108, <https://login.ezproxy.auctr.edu:2050/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=1075932&site=ehost-live> (Accessed January 28, 2012).

overwhelming, but in this play we call life, there are no intermissions; there is only action (the beginning) and cut (the end). So how do we manage and make sense of it all?

This project in its uniqueness is geared towards helping teens (and adults if needed) to safely navigate their way through this play we call life by blending the sacred art of storytelling with the helpful science of psychology. Now, in the African-American community certain words like "therapy", "counselor", "psychiatry", and "psychology" bring with them a certain stigma and alarm. Typically, if either of these words are used in a public setting or in reference to a particular person, one will also hear muffled comments such as: "Huh, she must be crazy", "My kids don't need to go to no therapy, that's for White folk", "Ain't no shrink messing with my head. Remember what they did in Tuskegee?!" There is a communal distrust of any science considered to be "White", "controlling", or "mind-altering"; and rightly so, given our cultural hermeneutic of suspicion and the Black Experience in this country. Nevertheless, this trend is slowly starting to change, but as of yet, when speaking of "therapy", "counselor", "psychiatry", and "psychology", we still rarely hear comments of: "Oh that would be helpful", "I believe in counseling", "I'm glad she's getting some help", or the like.

The researcher's goal in creating and performing this blend of drama and psychology, which she is coining pastoral drama, signifying the blending of pastoral care and psychodrama, is to not only make the churchgoing experience of African-American youth more holistically valuable and enjoyable. It is also to make therapeutic arts more palatable for our traumatized youth. As was

mentioned before, this project is not apt in dealing with those who are exhibiting signs of severe mental illness, but rather is geared more toward those who are clearly uncentered, but still to some degree managing; it is for those who at most are showing signs of slight to moderate mental illness. Through this project, the researcher was able to provide a safe, healthy, and helpful space in which teens could safely (and without judgment) "rehearse" the parts they were being asked to play, before entering into the main (public) stages of their everyday lives. During the researcher's parents' childhoods, the church was literally the center of the community. Most of the goings on in the area was held at the church. As one of the researcher's professors put it, "The church was the Community Center and the center of the community." If you needed help, you went to the church, if you wanted to hang out with your friends, you went to the church, if there was a community dance, it was at the church, or another social event, it was at the church, and so on. Some of that still remains true today, not nearly to the extent as back then. While our churches have gotten bigger and further removed from the communities in which we live, the church is still to some degree where we go to socialize, meet new people, celebrate high and low moments in our community, and it is still the place we go to for help; to that end, why not also make it a place where our youth can receive some psychological help as well? After all, typically for churchgoing youth, no other group of people knows them better than the church folk that have been there their whole lives and sometimes even before.

Drama (or theater) in the church can be useful as a teaching tool because of its imaginative, entertaining, and exploratory nature. Using theater in the church affords congregations an alternative way to spark discussions and/or get messages across that may otherwise be ignored or unheard by the congregates of the church. Furthermore, it is often said that life imitates art. This is true to some degree, however, in the case of theater or drama being used as a teaching tool, art imitates life. By exploring life situations in the controlled atmosphere of play, choices and situations can be explored through trial and error without the harsh consequences that life may sometimes bring.

Drama can also be used as a preventative and proactive teaching tool. Through the process of trial and error in the safe space of art (drama), one can more easily determine the right choices to make in life and the best way to plan for some of life's pitfalls. Jesus' use of theatrical examples was a preventative teaching method. By using various aspects of the theatre as examples, Jesus was better able to illustrate for the disciples the kind of life he did not want them to live. The same can be done in our churches. A character can make an imaginative bad choice without the risk of bad consequences happening in reality, and still get the point of the right choice across to the audience.

What's more, theatre can be used as an empowerment teaching tool. Because psychodrama can be used to bring out undisclosed issues, personalities, feelings, or occurrences, one is empowered to work through such hidden traits in order to foster their own psychological growth as well as that of the group, and together everyone's interpersonal relationship skills can be

strengthened. Also, by taking the advice of J. L. Moreno and acting as though one can play the characters in life that they always told themselves they could not play, one is empowered to take the limits off of one's own mental capabilities. As humans, we are empowered to do pretty much whatever our minds tell us we can do. Thus, by taking the mental limits off of one's capabilities, that person gains access to what they previously told themselves they did not have access to.

### **Why Drama is Particularly Useful for Black Youth:**

#### **Storytelling and Active Listening in an Oral Culture (the narrative model)**

Storytelling is not just an art. It is a **sacred** art; one that has been passed on from generation to generation in the African and African American culture. Since before the time of written language, Africans, and consequently, African Americans, have learned to preserve their own history, traditions, world view, cosmological thought, and moral convictions through the sacred art of storytelling. The narrative approach works particularly well with African Americans because the African American culture is an oral culture. Africans and African Americans have continued this form of oral chronicle passing from generation to generation for centuries. From the days of the tribal griots to the slave exhorters (unordained slave preachers) to the prominent Black preachers of today, this art form has stood the test of time and remains not only strong, but very prevalent in the culture and society of Africans and African Americans today.

Nevertheless, there is a drawback to oral culture; without written proof of actual events, people can change the story. We as humans tend to embellish to make stories more interesting or to push a personal agenda. As such it is important as listener to learn to separate the truth from the fantasy in both our stories and the stories we listen to.<sup>6</sup>

Through time and study, the researcher has learned that one's own story or experience can still be an effective form of Pastoral Care, but once again, we must remain true to ourselves and to our story; we have to "keep it real". In order to be effective witnesses of God's story and our own, genuineness must be present. Furthermore, it is important to note that, to minister to those that are hurting around us, a bible is not necessarily always needed; after all, the word of God should be in our hearts. The researcher has been taught, and constantly reminded, that one of the best ways to minister to people is by telling your own story. Dr. Edward P. Wimberly in his book, *African American Pastoral Care*, discussed this further as the "the narrative approach to pastoral care"<sup>7</sup>. Dr. Wimberly talked about becoming a wounded healer to those we minister to by sharing our own stories of triumph through the trials of our lives, in other words, "drawing upon personal experience and Bible stories that might facilitate caring for those in need".<sup>8</sup> This occurrence of becoming a wounded healer is a key principle in helping others realize their story in light of the Christian faith story; God's story of liberation, healing, and hope. It is important that the people we

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<sup>6</sup> For further discussion on the fantasy nature of stories, see James O. Stallings' *Telling the Story: Evangelism in Black Churches*, pages 92-93.

<sup>7</sup> Edward P. Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 81.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

minister to know that we truly understand and empathize with what they are going through or where they are coming from. Notwithstanding, it is also vital for the caregiver not to open old wounds within themselves by telling stories that spark conflict or unresolved hurt within themselves. By connecting our stories to that of others (namely our youth), we can find the common ground between ourselves and the youth to whom we minister. By using our own stories as a starting point to facilitate genuine conversation, we can be equipped and empowered to be the most effective and affective ministers we can be.

Author James O. Stallings, in his book *Telling the Story: Evangelism in Black Churches*, pointed out that the use of storytelling was also an effective way of witnessing to everyday people on a basic level by tying our story with that of the Christian story; after all, "everyone loves a good story",<sup>9</sup> and everyone has a story, and even history itself, to some degree, is a story. The other benefit of storytelling is that "we remember [stories] more than sermons, lectures, or doctrines of the faith;"<sup>10</sup> especially, if it is a good story. All of us can think back on our history and recall the great storytellers of our time. Almost as if by magic we can instantly, yet ever so slightly, hear the reflections in their voice as they recalled some life event, myth, fable, parable, or tall tale, for the purpose of information, edification, education, or just plain entertainment. In this researcher's family, we have many storytellers, and each one strives to be better than the other. Each storyteller has their strengths and their weakness, but all serve the purpose of passing on our family traditions, our family history, and the memory

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<sup>9</sup> James O. Stallings *Telling the Story: Evangelism in Black Churches*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 91.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

and legacy of our ancestors. Each family reunion focuses (in part) on the story of our family. One of the miracles or phenomenon of storytelling is that no matter how old the story gets, people still remember it and continue to tell it; passing it down from generation to generation. The same is true for the researcher's family, and for Christians everywhere, seeing that the bible itself is a story. Thus, storytelling is not only an effective way to do pastoral care; it is also an effective way to do evangelism.

By sharing our story we not only share a part of our history, but we also share our joys, pains, hopes, dreams, and even a part of God's story in that our Christian story is connected to our encounter with God. Drama, like dance and other moving arts, is simply a way to tell a story with one's body; with movement. This project was particularly successful with the Black youth of Zion Hill Baptist Church and Friendship Missionary Baptist Church because it not only gave voice and value to their stories, it allowed for them to act their stories out and discover positives and negatives there in. They learned how to reflect on various situations (stories) in their lives and to view them more critically so as to make better or different decisions in the future. Which brings us to the other wonderful and useful attribute of storytelling: it helps us to more readily reach the SANKOFA moments in our lives. Sankofa is an African symbol of a bird flying forward while looking backwards. Sometime after its creation an egg (which was healed in the bird's mouth) was added to the symbol to further emphasize the symbol of future. The meaning of the entire symbol is roughly translated as

"return to get" or "gaining wisdom from the past."<sup>11</sup> The sankofa bird is understood as looking back to gain wisdom from the past as it flies forward into the future (or protects the future, as the egg symbolizes). Our stories, as we tell them and, or act them out, afford us the same privilege of being able to critically examine our past, reap the wisdom gained from our experiences (good or bad), and then they give us the wisdom we need to move into a more productive future. However, sometimes this journey of looking back while flying forward can be complicated and even painful; that is where the counselor or pastoral dramist comes in. As ministers, counselors, caregivers, pastoral dramists, and the like, it is our job to help guide those in need of care through their situation in such a way that benefits them and prevents them from regressing or remaining stuck in the past. What's more, we are to also help our youth to see the value in their story. You see, "to ignore one's experience of God is to denigrate that experience, and to refuse to tell the story of it, to accept someone else's experience of God as more efficacious than one's own, is to demean God and one's experience of God."<sup>12</sup> For one to refuse to tell (or even acknowledge) his or her story downgrades the importance of his or her experience and seemingly adds a sense of shame to their experience with God. However, in order to help guide those in need of care through their Sankofa moment, and in order to help them see the value in their stories, we must first become active and empathetic listeners.

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<sup>11</sup> The researcher has heard and read many different loose translations for this symbol, but they all have essentially the same meaning: "gaining wisdom from the past while moving toward the future".

<sup>12</sup> James O. Stallings *Telling the Story: Evangelism in Black Churches*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 17.

This brings us to the notion of “story listening”; the other component of storytelling. You see, listening to the stories of others is just as important, if not more than, sharing your own story. Like the Ying and Yang of Taoism<sup>13</sup>, these two parts work hand-in-hand. However, one must know what to listen for. Below is a shortened list of key language and terms that some therapists use to better flesh out the truth behind one’s story:

- **“It” talk.** When clients<sup>14</sup> say “it” instead of “I,” they are using depersonalizing language. The counselor<sup>15</sup> may ask them to substitute person pronouns for impersonal ones so that they will assume an increased sense of responsibility.
- **“You” talk.** Global and impersonal language tends to keep the person hidden. The therapist often points out generalized uses of “you” and asks the client to substitute “I” when this is what is meant.
- **Questions.** Questions have a tendency to keep the questioner hidden, safe, and unknown. ...Counselors often ask clients to change their questions into statements. In making personal statements, clients begin to assume responsibility for what they say. They may become aware of how they are keeping themselves mysterious through a barrage of questions and how this serves to prevent them from making declarations that express themselves.

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<sup>13</sup> This reference refers to the ancient Chinese tradition of Taoism, pronounced: *Dä-ō-ism*, which stresses the importance of balance, unity, harmony, and the strength of complementary opposites in the universe. The Yin Yang (shown here☯) is a primary symbol of this tradition and way of thought. It symbolizes that everything in the universe has an equal opposite and that in order for there to be peace these opposites must work in harmony with one another. When one of these opposites seeks to take power over the other, balance is lost and chaos ensues. Examples of these complementary opposites are: light and dark, black and white, up and down, right and left, good and bad, love and hate, life and death, peace and war, and so on. In Jewish and Christian traditions this understanding of equal opposites may equate to King Solomon’s understand of the seasons of life as recorded in Ecclesiastes 3, and in the world of Physics, this notion of equal opposites well compares to Isaac Newton’s third law of motion: for every action, there is an opposite and equal reaction.

<sup>14</sup> The words “Client and Clients” can be read in the following pages as “Youth, Teens, or Adolescents”. Likewise, the words “Counselor and Counselors” can be read as “Caregiver and Caregivers”.

<sup>15</sup> See above note regarding the words “Counselor and Counselors”.

- ***Language that denies power.*** Some clients have a tendency to deny their personal power by adding qualifiers or disclaimers to their statements. The therapist may also point out to clients how certain qualifiers subtract from their effectiveness. Experimenting with omitting qualifiers such as "maybe," "perhaps," "sort of," "I guess," "possibly," and "I suppose" can help clients change ambivalent messages into clear and direct statements. Likewise, when clients say "I can't," they are really implying "I won't." Asking clients to substitute "won't" for "can't" often assists them in owning and accepting their power by taking responsibility for their decisions. The counselor must be careful in intervening so that clients do not feel that everything they say is subject to scrutiny. Rather than fostering a morbid kind of introspection, the counselor hopes to foster awareness of what is really being expressed through words.
- ***Listening to clients' metaphors.*** ...By tuning in to metaphors, the therapist gets rich clues to clients' internal struggles. ...Beneath the metaphor may lay a suppressed internal dialogue that represents critical unfinished business or reactions to a present interaction. ...It is essential to encourage this client to say more about what she [he] is experiencing. The art of therapy consists of translating the meaning of these metaphors into manifest content so that they can be dealt with in therapy.
- ***Listening for language that uncovers a story.*** ...Clients often use language that is elusive yet gives significant clues to a story that illustrates their life struggles. Effective therapists learn to pick out a small part of what someone says [or does not say] and then to focus on and develop this element. Clients are likely to slide over pregnant [or full] phrases, but the alert therapist can ask questions that will help them flesh out their story line....<sup>16</sup>

By uncovering the truth in a person's story through the use of responsible language, the caregiver is able to make efficient use of care sessions without getting bogged down with inconsequential factors of the story that are meant to hide the truth and, in some way, protect the storyteller.

In addition to know what to listen for, one must also realize that "story-listening [further] involves empathetically hearing the story of the person involved

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<sup>16</sup> This list of listening keys can be found in full in the following text: Gerald Corey, *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thomson Learning, 2005), 201-202.

in life struggles,"<sup>17</sup> but it requires more than arbitrary listening. Story listening also requires one to be fully present and attentive. A good listener shows this full presence through their body language and the use of attentive language and questions that show they are truly listening and seeking to understand the story the person is telling. The ultimate goal of story listening is to prevent the abuse of the storytelling method by insuring the caregiver is actively and empathetically listening in such a way as to meet therapeutic goals and to prevent the caregiver from shifting the focus of the session from the person in need to themselves.

### **Delving into the Therapies**

While the science and methods of pastoral care and psychodrama are complex this portion of this dissertation serves to provide a brief overview of some select principles from both of these therapeutic arts that the researcher used in her project.

#### **Pastoral Care**

As mentioned in the definitions portion of this dissertation, Pastoral Care is commonly referred to as *Psychology of Religion* Pastoral Care is a conversational style of care-giving.<sup>18</sup> It is a discipline that focuses on caring for God's people and God's world through the use of holistic methods. It stands on

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<sup>17</sup> Edward P. Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 18.

<sup>18</sup> Rodney J. Hunter, "The Therapeutic Tradition of Pastoral Care and Counseling," In *Pastoral Care and Social Conflict*, eds. Pamela D. Couture and Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 30.

the premise that we hold within us (as innately provided by the Creator) the answers to our own questions and the solutions to our own problems. In short, Pastoral Care is an instrument of healing and growth that fosters in-depth relationships for the purpose of healing and care.<sup>19</sup> Like Psychodrama and Drama Therapy, Pastoral Care is also considered a healing art.<sup>20</sup> Its roots are in the formation of the religion and health movement that birthed similar disciplines during the early twentieth century. The idea of this discipline is based on the healing ministry of Jesus. It puts high value on healing, care, empathy, intent and purposeful listening, wholeness, and presence. In fact, one of its principles is understanding the importance of presence; to know the importance of being fully present with ones suffering from illness or crisis. Those trained in Pastoral Care know and understand that sometime the most helpful and healthful thing a person can say to someone in crisis is absolutely nothing! It brings to mind the saying, "silence is golden". In Pastoral Care more value is given to presence than to speaking; although there are times when speaking is necessary, but even in those times listening and presence remain the most important.

Pastoral Care has its roots steeped in the model of Jesus as healer based on the healing ministry of Jesus. In common with the healing ministry of Jesus is Pastoral Care's principle of understanding the power that one has to heal one's self through self-awareness and self-care. There are a number of scenes in the story of Jesus in which we see Jesus telling a healed person that it was indeed

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<sup>19</sup> Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the ministry of healing & growth*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 15.

<sup>20</sup> Rodney J. Hunter, "The Therapeutic Tradition of Pastoral Care and Counseling," In *Pastoral Care and Social Conflict*, eds. Pamela D. Couture and Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 18.

**their** faith that made them whole (well). You see, even in divine healing each of us has a personal responsibility. As we as caregivers, pastoral care providers, ministers, servants, teachers, mentors, coaches, and the community as a whole seek to provide care and healing to our youth, we have to be willing to also allow them to exercise their faith in such a way that will be healing and beneficial to them as we all partner with the divine in order to usher them and ourselves toward wholeness. To this end, we as pastoral care providers serve to create a secure space and place in which care receivers can feel free to exercise their responsibility and capabilities to critique themselves without being judged by those in authority. This type of therapeutic confrontations facilitates greater moral capacities while allowing the participants (teens) to exercise their moral judgment.

In addition to the above mentioned principles, Couture and Hunter in their book *Pastoral Care and Social Conflict* highlight that they felt were the five most important educational methods (additional principles traditionally used in the operation of Pastoral Care); they were: person and the pastoral relationship of the counselor (caregiver) takes precedence over that of the formal content of its religious message, the commonality of humanity takes precedence over their differences, personal need takes precedence over institutional (and denominational) needs, normal (natural) experiences and rhetoric takes precedence over traditional religious (supernatural) experience and rhetoric, and participants' evaluation and appropriation of a particular form of orthodoxy (or

denomination) takes precedence over that tradition's (or denomination's) orthodoxy and traditional authority.<sup>21</sup>

Pertaining to African-Americans, the African-American community, and people of color,<sup>22</sup> in-depth pastoral care takes into account the necessity of the person's society-borne double consciousness. That is to say, the discipline of pastoral cares recognizes and understands that unlike their White or Caucasian counterparts, people of color (particularly in this country) historically have had to develop a double conscience in order to survive and live in relative peace with those in societal, academic, economic, and governmental authority.<sup>23</sup> Famed author and intellectualist, W. E. B. DuBois, talked about this notion of a double consciousness in his book *"The Souls of Black Folk"*. The double consciousness is composed of two parts: an American part, as it is understood by the "majority" race, and a cultural (ethnic) part. Psychologically, this double consciousness can be looked at as a cultural form of multiple personality. It is similar to the well-known diagnosis of Multiple and Dissociative Personality Disorder in that there is presented a change or altering of one's innate personality, personal identity,

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<sup>21</sup> Rodney J. Hunter, "The Therapeutic Tradition of Pastoral Care and Counseling," In *Pastoral Care and Social Conflict*, eds. Pamela D. Couture and Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 35-39.

<sup>22</sup> The phrase "people of color" here is represents those human beings who genetically possess more melanin in their skin than Europeans and Caucasians. This phrase does not exclusively pertain to African-Americans, but is meant to include all people possessing a brown, black, or red natural tint in their skin. Whether or not this phrase also includes Asians and other non-Whites is debatable, but for the purpose of this dissertation, the researcher means to include all non-Whites as people of color.

<sup>23</sup> While none of these groups are exclusively run by Caucasians (Whites), and the dynamics of these groups are vastly changing to include more of a minority presences and voice, it still remains, that in many cases (the exception to some degree being the Black Church) Whites possess the majority vote and therefore the majority influence.

behavioral patterns, and consciousness<sup>24</sup>; nevertheless, this type of multiple personality is considered healthy in that it is a means of cultural survival and a means of maintaining cultural identity. Furthermore, the discipline of in-depth pastoral care strives to recognize and understand the cultural story and struggle of those it is being used to help. It seeks to recognize that which is considered to be both healthy and normal in a particular culture, so as to effectively provide care to its people; understanding that no two people and no two cultures are exactly alike.

In regards to the use of in-depth pastoral care with adolescents, Dr. Ed Wimberly concurred with the researcher that, "Pastoral care with adolescents is intergenerational."<sup>25</sup> This is precisely why the researcher's project is constructed the way that it is; after all, none of us were born out of a vacuum, we don't exist as an island or isolated body independent of others; we are all connected, both through the societies in which we live, and through genetics. To that end, the issue of the adolescents of today must be dealt with in light of their ancestors (generational and, or family issues) of yesterday, and even in some cases with their descendants of tomorrow (hopes for the future and, or for future generations). According to S. F. Shoemaker in their portion of the "*Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*", to be an effective caregiver (spiritually and emotionally) to youth, one must become to them a kind of underwriter or sponsor.

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<sup>24</sup> Rodney J. Hunter, et al., eds. 2005. *Multiple and Dissociative Personality*, 2005, in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Nashville: Abingdon Press.

A. J. Straatmeyer, 2005. *Multiple and Dissociative Personality*. In Hunter et al., 2005, 765.

<sup>25</sup> Edward P. Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 56.

Shoemaker offers that by being the sponsor of the adolescent we are caring for, we “[provide them] with assurance that he or she can indeed master the turbulent struggles of this stage and develop an identity that has meaning and purpose.”<sup>26</sup>

#### Moreno play theory

Psychodrama is sometimes confused with drama therapy because of their therapeutic and theatrical similarities. For the purpose of this dissertation and general knowledge, the researcher will explore both disciplines and highlight their similarities and differences; however, the remainder of this chapter will focus mainly on the discipline of psychodrama and its possible uses in the Black Church. As has been previously stated, psychodrama and drama therapy are very similar. Both are considered among the healing arts or holistic treatments, and both use theatrical principles of the mind and body working together to express, explore, and work through undisclosed psychological issues, personalities, feelings, and, or occurrences; although there are no scripts involved. The terms psychodrama and drama therapy are sometimes used interchangeable, but there are some distinct differences between them. As previously stated in the definitions portion of this dissertation, psychodrama has been defined as being “a scientific exploration of truth through dramatic method”;<sup>27</sup> whereas, drama therapy has been defined as a discipline that “acts directly upon the person's feelings. It does not depend upon verbal accounts of

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<sup>26</sup> Rodney J. Hunter, et al., eds. 2005. *Adolescents (Caring for the Adolescent)*, 2005, In Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Nashville: Abingdon Press.

S. F. Shoemaker, 2005. *Adolescents (Caring for the Adolescent)*. In Hunter et al., 2005, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Josephine Fong, “Psychodrama as a Preventive Measure: Teenage Girls Confronting Violence”, In *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama, & Sociometry* 59, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 100.

the traumatic incident;"<sup>28</sup> and it tends to be more playful than clinical in many ways.

J. L. Moreno is considered to be the father of psychodrama. Moreno was influenced by the work of Carl Marx and his older contemporary Sigmund Freud.<sup>29</sup> Moreno began to notice the therapeutic effects of drama on the development of children while observing the play behavior of children. For Moreno play, and consequently, psychodrama were ways of expressing stories and events from one's life using one's whole body; they are similar to theater in that way. In short, psychodrama seemed to be a sect of Early Child Development that had grown into its own thing.

In his sessions, Moreno would often stress the use of one's whole body because he believed, and would often say that, "The body remembers what the mind forgets."<sup>30</sup> While drama had previously been incorporated into mainstream education, J. L. Moreno is credited with bringing this discipline into the 20th century as a form of holistic therapy.<sup>31</sup> In his work, Moreno determined that there are three stages of development that are usually fostered by one's parent(s) or primary caregivers. These stages of development, are: finding one's identity, recognizing one's self, and recognizing others, can sometimes be hindered or tainted by traumatic events in a person's life.<sup>32</sup> Moreno saw psychodrama as a way of helping those whose development had been obstructed to work through

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<sup>28</sup> Anne Bannister, *Creative Therapies and Traumatized Children*, (New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 46.

<sup>29</sup> Anne Bannister, *Creative Therapies and Traumatized Children*, (New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 43.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 43.

such traumatic events in order to promote healthy psychological growth and development, and he, when his clients were faced with obstacles or roles they felt they could not play, he would advise them to act as though they could play those roles;<sup>33</sup> thereby empowering them to tap into a mental power they previously thought they had no access to.

One of the main differences between psychodrama and drama therapy is that psychodrama can be utilized in a one-on-one session with a client and a therapist or with the use of toys, dolls, pictures, or other inanimate objects that double as both props and people, and there is usually one protagonist; usually the client.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, psychodrama may also be done in a group setting. If done in a group, there are at least two ways, as described by Moreno, that the sessions can be done. The first way is called the confessional type of psychodrama. During a session using the confessional type of psychodrama, the topic(s) that are to be played out are to be topics that are directly associated with the lives of the person(s) that are playing the parts. In other words, only real life scenarios are to be played out. The second way to perform psychodrama in a group setting is to use the non-confessional type of psychodrama. While using this version of psychodrama, the group, having been previously interviewed, acts out issues that best fits the concerns or issues of the group members.<sup>35</sup> This type of psychodrama does not allow for each individual to explore issues that

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<sup>33</sup> Anne Bannister, *Creative Therapies and Traumatized Children*, (New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 119.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>35</sup> J. L. Moreno, Zerka Toeman, "The Group Approach in Psychodrama", In *JSTOR: Sociometry*, 5, no. 2 (May 1942): 192-193, <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0038-0431%28194205%295%3A2%3C191%3ATGAIP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0> (Accessed March 27, 2008).

directly pertain to their own lives, but they must glean what they can from the issues that are presented. This type of psychodrama is the most similar to drama therapy. For the purpose of this project and dissertation, the researcher focused on the confessional type of psychodrama. The basic setup of a typical confessional type session of psychodrama (as described later on in this dissertation) involves playing out the real-life scenes of the group. A protagonist (or more than one if time permits) will be chosen and a scene from their life will be acted out upon agreement from the group; the group's approval of this choice of protagonist and their corresponding scene is paramount for the scene work to be beneficial to the group as well as the individual that is the protagonist. As the scene is performed, the protagonist (or main character) may find themselves becoming increasingly aware (or familiarized) with the scene that is being played out before them. This is normal, in that the scene will likely closely resemble a scene from the protagonist's childhood; the "original scene".<sup>36</sup> In addition, the protagonist may also become aware of some unexpressed feelings that have been suppressed since that original scene, and those feelings will begin to resurface. Once the scene is completed those feelings that were disclosed in the safe space of the counseling room will be explored and discussed with the group as a whole.

In his studies, J. L. Moreno grouped various forms of psychotherapy into three main methods. These methods were: the Monologue or self-therapy

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<sup>36</sup> Renee Emunah, "Drama therapy and Psychodrama: An integrated model", In *International Journal of Action Methods*, 50, no. 3, (Fall 1997): 108, <https://login.ezproxy.auctr.edu:2050/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=1075932&site=ehost-live> (Accessed January 28, 2012).

method, the dialogue or dyad method, and the dramatic or group method. While there is a distinct difference between psychodrama and drama therapy, it is interesting to note that among the three methods into which all situations of psychotherapy can be grouped, the dramatic method is the only one that encompasses them all.<sup>37</sup> The researcher mentions this merely to point out that because of their common thread of drama, and because of the imaginative nature of drama itself, both psychodrama and drama therapy are able to be successfully combined with many other forms of therapy, including art, play, music, and medication therapy.

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<sup>37</sup> J. L. Moreno, Zerka Toeman, "The Group Approach in Psychodrama", In JSTOR: *Sociometry*, 5, no. 2 (May 1942): 191-192, <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0038-0431%28194205%295%3A2%3C191%3ATGAIP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0> (Accessed March 27, 2008).

## CHAPTER VII

### RESULTS, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

This by far was not an exhaustive study, but rather the beginning stages of the birth of a new therapeutic method (pastoraldrama). In an effort to address the issue of having a lack of therapeutic free expression and a breach in intergenerational communication within the researcher's ministry settings and other churches exhibiting the same or similar ministerial need, the researcher proposed the use of psychodrama utilizing principles of In-depth pastoral care in interdenominational black churches. In order to serve the purpose of creating a safe (confidential, non-judgmental, therapeutic) space of free self-expression, to foster healthy mental and social development, as well as, an effective way for at-risk youth to express their feelings, thoughts, desires, and aspirations; with the hope of closing the cross-generational chasm of misunderstanding and miscommunication, and opening up opportunities for an intergenerational connection.

In order to bring this new therapeutic method up to the par of Pastoral Care, Psychodrama, and Sociology, the researcher will have to invest years of research, work, time, and practice into this area. While she has committed herself to doing so, she will not be able to do so in the time allotted for matriculation through the Doctor of Ministry degree program at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Nevertheless, she

has devoted about five years in working with the participants of this project during the course of her doctoral work. Below is a note on the transference and countertransference experienced by the researcher while conducting this project, following that will be a breakdown of the actual project.

### **Transference**

During the pastoral drama sessions the researcher perceived that her clients were looking for validation, genuineness, guidance, care, and at times, a problem solver. She became a mother figure for them and to a degree they became her children. At Zion Hill Baptist Church, the researcher was one of the newer teachers (mentors) amongst the youth workers; that being the case, at the beginning of this process there was an air of skepticism amongst the participants, because they had experienced disappointment from a number of their teachers, mentors, and other adult influences failing to keep their commitments to them. This had caused a building up of suspicion among the teens regarding the motives of adults who claimed to want to work with them; and the researcher was no exception. To counteract this skepticism, the researcher made it her point to get to know each participant and at least one of their family members. She further made a point to make herself more approachable by listening to each participant, engaging them in and out of sessions, spending time with them at other church sponsored events, and by letting them know that she valued their opinions and genuinely cared about each and every one of them; even to the

point of becoming a surrogate mother to a set of siblings whose mother had passed away due to breast cancer. These siblings were still presenting signs of crisis when the researcher first arrived at Zion Hill. The youngest sibling began acting out for attention and becoming a nuisance in the church, and the middle sibling withdrew into anger which would manifest in sporadic ways and at sporadic times; he was the closest to their mother. The eldest of the siblings was coping the best, but did not quite know how to deal with the grief of her younger siblings. The researcher gave special attention to these siblings, and together they were able to progress through the grieving and recovery processes. At Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, it was a slightly different story. Since this was the researcher's home church, and she had been working with the youth there for many years prior to the project, there was no need to overcome any sense of skepticism. However, the need for validation, genuineness, guidance, care, and problem solving was still present. Only the context was different since the researcher was now taking on the role of counselor or pastoral dramist.

Throughout the pastoral drama sessions the participants would repeatedly look to the researcher to be a problem solver and to validate that their actions and, or rationalization of their actions or inactions were correct. For instance, one of the young ladies in the younger group of participants wanted to blow off a session to go watch her father play basketball. On the surface this seemed like a reasonable reason to miss a session, however, the schedule for the session meetings had previously been distributed, discussed, and agreed upon, and the importance of consistent attendance had also been discussed. With everyone

else abiding by the agreement and the commitment set, the other group members did not appreciate this young lady's lack of commitment. It was then that the researcher had to become the problem solver and confront the young lady about that and other issues the group members had with her. Ultimately, this and the other issues became the topic of one of our "airing out" sessions. In another session, this time with the older participants, the group discussion centered on sex and relationships, and during this discussion, several scenarios were being acted out (verbally only) when suddenly one young man confessed that he was no longer a virgin. The young man (who had come to acknowledge the researcher as a surrogate maternal figure) looked at the researcher expectantly; almost as though he half expected the researcher to punish him in some way; an obvious sign of someone wrestling with issues of shame. While the researcher did not validate his actions, she did validate him as a person and his need for understanding whether or not his actions were skewed. From there, the group continued to discuss the importance of abstinence and safe sex. During that same session, a young lady asked whether or not she should have sex with her current boyfriend. She indicated that she felt obligated to "take the relationship to the next level" since she had been with him for so long (a few weeks). While asking this question, her face and body language suggested that the boyfriend was the one pressuring her, and that she needed validation to say "No". As a group we explored her situation and discussed her options.

## Counter-Transference

In terms of the researcher's counter-transference, this project at times had been mind-boggling and emotionally draining. As a 32 year old unmarried and childless woman, the desire to take these youth under her own wing as her children was all too tempting; and yet not at all practical! Throughout this process the researcher had been trying to prevent herself from yielding to the urge to fix her clients' problems, as well as, trying to do justice to her pastoral care and counseling training while maintaining a level of professionalism instead of being a mere teacher, mentor, and perceived mother figure to the clients; roles that this researcher initially played prior to becoming pastoral dramist. In the course of this counselor/clients relationship, at times the researcher found herself listening to the participants and wanting to baby them and ease their frustrations. Like any good mother, she wanted to make all of their problems, fears, concerns, and regrets go away. Over and over again she was tempted to be the savior in their situations. She wanted to give them the comfort and validation they were looking for.

One of the researcher's spiritual gifts is exhortation, and as such she constantly desired to encourage the participants in addition to providing practical tools they could use to change their current situations. The researcher wanted to validate her clients, encourage them, and help them to see some good in their situations (if any) and most importantly the good that still existed in God and in themselves despite what they had experienced or were still experiencing.

Nevertheless, she had to (to some degree) remove herself from their picture and allow them the space and place to work out not only their own situations but also their own souls' salvation; trusting that God would ultimately get them to where they needed to be in God. Albeit, she did try to end every session on a positive and encouraging note. Her goal in doing this was to encourage her clients to continue on with this journey we call life, knowing that every wind must eventually change (prayerfully for the better).

Below, are notes on overall observations from the researcher as pastoral dramist and director, a summation of what was accomplished through this project, some specific results from notable participants, and a concluding statement regarding future goals and plans as a next step in the development of pastoral drama as a mainstream healing art and its uses in the Black Church.

To begin: The participants in this project were not only divided by age groups 13-15 and 16-18, but also by churches and geographical location. Because of uncontrollable circumstances, this project had to be done in two parts: The first part was done at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee; the second part was done at Zion Hill Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The participants in the first portion of this project were in the age range of 13-15 years old. The participants in the second portion of this project were in the age range of 16-18 years old. This group met during the church's regular Saturday Church School hour. Regular attendance to each group session was strongly emphasized and explained to both the participants and their parents. Regular attendance was important for group cohesion and

trust. It was also important for determining accurate results from this project without unnecessary repetition. Also, the lines of communication in both groups and between the participants of both groups were very open and honest. Nevertheless, in order to protect the safety and privacy of each participant, each participant was asked to sign, in the presence of their parent or guardian, a confidentiality form citing dismissal from the group if broken. If a participant discovered something that would help an outside person's situation, they would discuss it with the researcher after the session before taking that help outside of the group. To the researcher's current knowledge, only principles and strategies were taken outside of the group; names and specifics of situations remained confidential; even after the sessions ended.

The following observations were made regarding how each set of participants dealt with participation, group bonding (including working together and establishing trust), methods in which to determine what to work on, adapting, confidentiality, and project (group) termination:

Most of the participants were willing and even excited to be part of this experimental venture. Since the researcher had already built a rapport with them and had a considerable amount of cultural capital established with the participants, their parents, siblings, dean of Christian Education, and pastor, getting them to do her the favor of participating in the this project was not a real challenge. There was however challenges further on with participants wanting to

quit because of some social and extracurricular conflicts. When social conflict would arise within one of the groups, the researcher would address it by "airing out" the grievances of the participant(s) without using specific names, and as a group we would discuss them.<sup>1</sup> This airing out gave way for individuals to discuss and deal with other underlying issues which could be used as material for the work of that day's session. On the other hand, when an extracurricular conflict would arise the researcher would stress the importance of the person's participation in the group and how the group depended on and expected them to be in regular attendance as much as the researcher did; then ultimately the researcher would allow the participant to determine for themselves which activity was more important.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, for those who chose to put the group and this project ahead of some other extracurricular activity, the group did not fail in showing their appreciation. Conversely, for those who decided to pursue their own agenda ahead of the groups, the group - especially the younger set - would not fail in showing their contempt for the person's actions once they returned.

Both groups of participants knew those with whom they were grouped, because both groups were comprised of teens from the same two churches, these teens had grown up with each other and their families for the most part knew each other very well. For this reason a superficial bonding among the participants was very easy for both groups, because a sense of community had previously been established among them. The challenge then became dispelling

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<sup>1</sup> See following note on "airing out" sessions.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to note here that since these meetings usually (except in the case of a necessary rescheduling) took place during the weekend (early Saturday morning), school related extracurricular activities, for the most part, did not conflict with our sessions. In the extremely few cases where there was a school related conflict, the participant was readily excused.

any underlying cliques or sense of a clique. Getting each person to bond with the group in a more meaningful and trustful way was also a bit challenging. The 13-15 year olds took a little longer to bond as a group. They presented trust issues and had more of a clique attitude. Consequently, the concerns of each individual seemed to have more weight than the overall concern of the collective group. This proved, initially, to be both frustrating for the participants as well as for the researcher; especially given the time constraint on both the pastoral drama sessions and the completion of this project. This also caused an issue regarding group trust, and initially hindered the participants from opening up and allowing for significant work to be done. As director, the researcher worked to solve this issue through "ice breaking" group activities and then an "airing out" session.<sup>3</sup>

Once issues were aired out, meaningful work was accomplished. In the beginning this group of participants had to have an "airing out" session at almost every other meeting, but these "airing out" session became less and less necessary as the group began to gel with and trust each other.

The older group (16-18 year olds) had an easier time bonding as a group and was more open to sharing the limited time. Whereas, the ethos of the younger group was tenser and was never quite relieved from the cliquish aura they began with; the older group had more of a familial atmosphere. Albeit, everybody in the group was not particularly fond with everybody else, the older

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<sup>3</sup> "Airing out" sessions took place during the "Check-in" portion of the sessions. This was time allotted for group concerns to be freely aired and discussed without the use of accusatory language aimed at one particular person or persons. This was to quell the time consuming back and forth of accusation and defense. The language used during these "airing out" sessions were purposefully personal, but aided in helping the group to focus more on how a certain issue was impacting the group and not one individual or clique versus another.

group had an easier time adjusting to the presence of opposition or dislike. In fact, the older group began to look out for each other, help each other, and hold each other accountable to the principles and work done in the sessions. They began to recognize themselves as being part of a special semi-exclusive<sup>4</sup> group within the church.

While the older group in some ways seemed easier to work with, their problems seemed more complex, but their ability to take the total work accomplished in the sessions and weed out what was useful for their own particular life's issue also proved to be more complex and apt; even for those who rarely spoke or acted during the sessions; like "Brandy". "Brandy" was a participant who (although she had asked her mother if she could be placed with the researcher's group) initially had some reservations about talking and participating in the sessions. Nevertheless, according to "Brandy's" body language and facial responses, she seemed to get a lot out of the sessions just by listening, and eventually she began to open up herself.

Additionally, the older group seemed to more readily see the benefit of listening and exploring each other's issues and applying the results to their own lives or to the life or lives of other loved-ones not participating in the group. Deciding what to discuss and work on proved easier with this group as most of them would have the same or similar life issues and many of them found ways to take the principle work, discovery, and breakthrough of each other's work and apply it their own issues; even if the issue or issues were not exactly the same.

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<sup>4</sup> Semi-exclusive because the open sessions were public, and information shared in those sessions was no longer governed by the confidentiality rule.

Furthermore, this group was more apt in self-governing. As is typical human behavior in any group, with this group (as well as with the younger group) a "group leader" eventually emerged. This participant, exhibited (and always had, as long as this researcher had known him) great leadership skills and was always well received and even mimicked by his peers. He was one of those types of people that, when he spoke, people just stopped and listened, and when he acted, people just naturally followed suit. At the beginning of this process, the researcher was challenged by this student and his sidekick. However, once she asserted herself as overall leader, and came to an understanding with this young man, she had no more problems from him; in fact he and the researcher mutually began to favor and support each other instead of challenging each other and he became one of her biggest allies. Following this mutual understanding of position, power, and the overall ecosystem of the group; there were times when as pastoral dramist all this researcher had to do was sit back, listen, and observe. After the pattern of the sessions had been established, the participants seemed to be able to almost run the sessions themselves, correcting and helping each other when necessary. During these times, the researcher performed more as a moderator than a director.

On the contrary, the younger group had a harder time adjusting to the ideas of openly sharing their own issues and yielding the limited time to working on issues that were more congruent to the group rather than the individual. The researcher typically met with these participants on Saturdays at (9:00am), but alternate days were scheduled as needed. The meetings lasted for an hour, and

as with the older group, the importance of consistent attendance and the maintaining of confidentiality were highly stressed.

This group of participants had some interesting differences from the older participants at Zion Hill Baptist Church. While working with the younger group, the researcher had to constantly maintain the role as leader (and at times, as referee). While in the older group, one group leader emerged, in the younger group, there were three persons who desired to assert themselves as leaders within the group, and as a result, they would constantly "bump heads" and compete to see who would lead during that particular session. All three of these young ladies had very dominant personalities and were caregivers or older siblings in their families; so it was natural for them to try to take on the same role within our little group; which ultimately, although temporarily, became a sort of alternate family system of its own. It was not until close to the end of the project that these dominant personalities began to share the responsibility of leading the group. Also, initially, this group would share only superficial concerns and the researcher would have to push them to delve deeper. Although, the level of work with the younger group never quite reached the level accomplished with the older group, a good foundation was set. The younger group definitely improved on their listening skills, abilities to trust, self-awareness, and willingness to share the limited time. They also improved in their competencies of accurate self-evaluation, tolerance, the ability to adapt a principle to fit their own issues, and the ability to look at a situation from more than one point of view or frame of reference.

Ultimately and psychologically, the participants in both groups acted quite typical to their ages and according to their roles in their individual family systems. Renee Emunah, illustrated and described in her article "Drama Therapy and Psychodrama: An intergraded model" in the *International Journal of Action Methods*, typical and age related behaviors that one should expect in a therapeutic session. Her assessments were spot-on with this researcher's groups.

While the younger group tended to be more self-absorbed in terms of the work accomplished during the sessions, the older group tended to be better able to share and adapt. The researcher had the most success with the younger group when she focused more on the play aspect of the sessions rather than the psychological and practical aspects. In other words, although the play aspect was critical and very informative, limited work was done to make the lessons learned during play completely applicable in the lives of these young participants beyond surface changes that could be made and a few principles that could be developed as they mature. On the other hand, the older group was not only more willing to share the limited work time, they were more adaptable, and better self-governing, they also seemed genuinely interested in delving into the psychology of human behavior, body language, family systems, and adaptive principles they learned during the session; in fact at times they seemed to be mesmerized by the science behind the discoveries made in the sessions.

Here now is a short presentation of a session's skit that was performed. The skit came as the result of a conversation the group had regarding familial

stressors and in-home conflict. In both the younger group and the older group there were a set of older sisters whose mothers had died as a result of breast cancer. Both sisters had a younger brother who happened to be the youngest in the immediate family. Both sisters had issues with their younger brothers overcrowding and "pestering" (that is to say bothering or annoying) them whenever they returned home from being away for some time (as with the case of one of the sisters who lived with her biological father part of the time).

The following is a skit that the younger group performed and it brought about meaningful results for the younger group in general and both older sisters in particular. During one of the discussion periods prior to the skits being performed (and after the centering moment), one of the older sisters in the group described her feelings, thoughts, and emotions about returning to her paternal home after being away for some time. She described being tired, frustrated, and a little glad and relieved to be back home. She further described a need to take a moment for herself to re-acclimate herself into the life she had temporarily left behind, but being unable to because she would struggle with trying to get her little brother to understand why she did not want to be bothered at that moment.

As a group, we watched and participated in a skit mimicking what the older sister in the younger group had described regarding her younger brother's reaction to her returning home. We used key words and gestures that she had described using herself when interacting with her little brother. The goal of the skit was to seek to explain her little brothers behavior in particular and, in general, to seek to explain the behavior of other younger siblings or family

members who have experienced the same or similar loss and are behaving in a similar fashion towards older family members in the groups.

The skit was performed four times. In the first skit the older sister took on the role of herself as she would come home from an extended absence. The researcher played the role of her little brother anxiously anticipating the return of his older sister. This was so the researcher and the group get a better understanding of what the older sister had described. This skit was an explorative skit or "dry run". It served the purpose of helping the researcher and the group to become clearer on aspects and dimensions of the situation the older sister had described. During this skit there were moments of pausing and asking questions for clarity so that the next time the skit was performed everyone would have a greater understanding of what was being experienced by the actors, and by those who experience this type of conflict in their own families.

The second time the skit was performed, the older sister played the part of her little brother and another group member who had also had a similar experience with a younger cousin played the part of the older sister while the researcher and the remainder of the group observed their interactions. During this skit, the actor portraying the little brother would anxiously wait at the door or a window<sup>5</sup> for his older sister to come home. Once she came into the "house,"<sup>6</sup> the little brother would continuously block the intended path of the older sister

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<sup>5</sup> The dimension of props were loosely defined for this skit, as that bit of information was not pertinent for the work and goal being accomplished through this skit. In other words, it was not important to establish whether the character of the little brother was specifically waiting by a door or a window. Instead greater attention was given to staging (placement), blocking (movement), and character interactions.

<sup>6</sup> The space designated to represent the inside of the house. Again, defining specific dimensions was not necessary here.

while barraging her with questions about her experiences away from the home, what she was about to do now that she was home, and what he wanted to do now that she was home. The actors mimicked the older sister trying to push little brother out of the way (or away period), and his persistence in trying to gain her attention. They also mimicked her frustration and his unimpeded excitement at the return of his sister.

The third time the skit was performed the parts of the older sister and younger brother were played entirely by other group members. This gave the older sister in the group time to have the advantage of looking at the situation from the outside-in. All the actions and words remained relatively the same as in the first and second skits. The older sister and the group were able to observe the interaction mimicked by the players based on the older sister's description of the situation. The researcher noticed her react to the scene as it unfolded in front of her, and she seemed genuinely hurt by some of the words (her actual words) she could now hear and see "herself"<sup>7</sup> using toward her little brother.

After performing and witnessing the skit three times, from three different perspectives, the researcher allowed the group to take a break, breath, and discuss what they had observed, felt, heard, experienced, and were currently experiencing. The group observed that in the first skit the older sister seemed to desire to have some peace and alone time to process what she had experienced during her time away from home and what she was anticipating experiencing when returning home. She seemed to need a time to refresh and to process,

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<sup>7</sup> To be clear: This was actually another group member portraying the older sister in the skit, but using the exact words, gestures, and attitude she had previously described and acted out in skit number one.

however, her little brother had different needs. He needed attention and love from his older sister; and upon further discussion the older sister began to realize that the reason her little brother had been so bothersome every time she came home was because she reminded her little brother of their deceased mother.

The older sister expressed remorse for the harsh way she had treated her brother. She and the group as a whole discovered that the little brother was not so much trying to be a nuisance, as little siblings sometimes are, and as she had originally suspected he was trying to be, but rather that he had missed the bond that they had shared with their mother, and that he can now only find some semblance of with his older sister. The researcher went on to explain that this was normal behavior in response to his process of grieving, especially since he was very young when their mother died. The researcher also conveyed her understanding that the older sister was still grieving as well, and as such needed some time to process her grief in her own way apart from her little brother; hence the conflict between her and her little brother. The researcher offered the older sister an opportunity to try to come up with a better way to handle her situation, and then as a group, the researcher, older sister, and other participants agreed to find a compromise that would serve to meet both the need of the older sister and the need of her little brother. The older sister helped to facilitate this discussion.

Once a suitable solution was formed and agreed upon by the older sister, the skit was performed again for the fourth and final time, but this time it incorporated the changes and compromises the older sister had agreed to make.

The older sister decided that she would be more patient with her little brother, but not so much as to completely neglect her own needs. The compromise she (and the group) came up with, was to ask her little brother for five or ten minutes of alone time so that she could acclimate herself to being back home, and so that she could process what she experienced while away from home; and then she promised that she would spend time specifically attending to the needs of her little brother by spending time with him and participating in activities he wanted to do. Thereby helping him, and possibly herself, to symbolically spend more time with their deceased mother and consequently work through their grief together. In the fourth skit, the older sister played herself, and the group member who had previously played the little brother in the third skit, once again played her little brother.

The new understandings that were reached by the older sister and the group brought about, over a short period of time, a new bond between the older sister and her little brother; and ultimately, both sisters and members of both groups learned to no longer push their younger family members away on the assumption that they merely wanted to be a bother. They learned to evaluate moments of familial conflict from the point of view of both (or all) parties involved, and the current or past situations that may have led to this conflict and their corresponding behavior. Both groups also learned to try and meet their family members on a common ground, and to make compromises that could lead to peace, and possibly everyone getting at least part of their needs or concerns met.

The project as a whole led to a lot of new discoveries pertaining to the participants, the researcher, their peers, and their families; and when the project was finalized and the time for the project groups to end arrived, the researcher found that it was easier (but not completely "easy") for the younger group to terminate from their roles of counselor and clients. Coming into this project, both groups understood that the pastoral drama sessions had a pre-determined termination date, but the younger group versus the older group had an easier time accepting it. The younger group was more amenable to doing and accepting what they were told without much contestation; seemingly because they realized that this was a temporary activity in their lives and in the life of the church. In contrast, the older group less wanted to terminate the pastoral drama sessions and our roles as counselor and clients. As pastoral dramist, the researcher found it difficult to completely terminate from her role, especially when later approached by one of her participants. What later helped was that over half of the group ended up going away to college, and the researcher ended up relocating to another state.

### **Overall Outcome**

In an effort to solve the problems of 1) a lack of knowledge and, or competence when dealing with teens, 2) a lack of patience and understanding when dealing with the teens of the church, 3) a lack of space and place for the teens to freely express themselves, 4) a lack of therapeutic resources geared

towards teens, 5) a lack of opportunities and events that foster cross-generational interaction and communication, with problems 3 and 5 being her main focus, the researcher managed to develop a program that combined the principles of pastoral care and psychodrama to more holistically minister to and care for Black youth, and to more holistically enhance their churchgoing experience. The goal of this project was to focus on the need for the space and place for teens to safely and freely express themselves with the hopes of exposing and meeting those disclosed needs that were currently not being met, but that had been briefly discussed by the teens with the youth workers. Further, it was the hope of the researcher that by disclosing these needs in a more public fashion through psychodrama (and with permission and cooperation from the teen participants), conversation between the teens and middle-age adults would be fostered, and the teen's need for more committed attention would be met. All together these goals were met, although minimally in some cases. Nevertheless, most of the participants seemed pleased with the experience of this project; some even discussed pursuing interests in acting. Overall, this project was successful in that the participants all showed some sign of improvement in self-awareness and decision making processes. Furthermore, the youth at both churches were being given more space and opportunities to express themselves, and the middle-age adults were starting to not only engage the teens more, but they were also starting to respect and care for them more.

Over the course of the project, parents and non-related adult members of both churches would comment about improvements they had seen in their youth

with whom the researcher had worked, and with the youth in general. In fact, on a few occasions it was suggested to the researcher that she should become the youth minister of the church; a position she had no desire of pursuing at either church. What's more, as the intergenerational communication gap began to narrow, both the youth and the adults who participated via the open sessions began to find commonalities with each other, and the adults began more readily remembering their own childhood and familial patterns. The researcher became pleasantly surprised to hear some of the adults say things like: "I remember when we used to do that.", "I used to think like that when I was a teen.", "Wow our kids are really smart!", "Wow, I didn't know our kids thought like that.", "Our kids are really talented!", and "I'm so proud of them!" It also pleased the researcher to see more moments of intergenerational bonding and teaching; it was almost as though the eyes of both congregations had been open, and for the first time the teens and the middle-age adults truly **saw** each other and the value that each possessed.

This project has been a rewarding experience for the researcher and her participants. Looking at the long-term impact of this project, it is the hope of this researcher that this project and new form of therapeutic expression will be more widely used in churches and organizations, and that pastoral drama will become a mainstream form of therapy; particularly when used with youth. Also, in the future, the researcher would like to conduct this project once again using a smaller sample group in one church and one geographical setting and to follow these participants throughout their college years to see how this project not only

impacted their long-term problem solving and crises management competencies, but also to see how it ultimately affected their churchgoing experience and possible retention in the church locally or abroad. The researcher would also like to conduct this project with congregations of different races, religions, socioeconomic statuses, and sexual orientations to see how her methods work with others who are not exactly like her.

Eventually, the researcher would also like to expand the length of this program. The program then would last for 6 months and would work on a rotating basis. In order to improve the process and to make it more therapeutic, each ending session will end with an open forum discussing both positive and negative outcomes, goals that were met or unmet, and any changes or new developments that may have occurred as a result of the program. In addition, each participant will be asked to fill out a survey telling the researcher what they liked or did not like, what was beneficial and what was not, and what changes could be made in order to improve the program. All healthy habits, improved competencies, and journaling, will be encouraged to continue even after the program's completion.

## Appendix I – Pre and Post Test (sample)

Please **circle** the most correct answer for each question as it applies to you.

1) I enjoy church as a whole...

A) Not at all    B) Somewhat    C) A lot

2) The pastor listens to my concerns...

A) Never    B) Sometimes    C) Always

3) I feel that the church meets my emotional needs...

A) Not at all    B) Somewhat    C) Most of the time    D) Always

4) Middle-aged members of the church listen to what concerns me...

A) Never    B) Sometimes    C) Always

5) How often do you attend church services (Sunday Services, Church School, or Bible Study) here at <Church's Name>?

A) Never    B) Once a week    C) Twice a week    D) Three times a week or more  
E) Once a month

6) My average grade in school is...

A) A+ - A-    B) B+ - B-    C) C+ - C-    D) D+ - D-    E) F

7) How often do you voice (tell) your concerns to the pastor?

A) Never    B) Sometimes    C) Always

8) How many church activities (auxiliaries) are you involved in?

A) None    B) 2 to 4    C) 5 or more

9) How often do you voice (tell) your concerns to middle-aged (age 40-70) members?

A) Never    B) Sometimes    C) Always

10) How long have you been a member of (or attending) Zion Hill?

\_\_\_\_\_

12) My self-esteem is...

A) Low    B) Medium/Moderate/Average    C) High

13) My self-image is...

A) Positive    B) Medium/Moderate/Average    C) Negative

14) I am...

A) Not spiritual at all    B) Moderately spiritual    C) Very spiritual

15) Have you ever been, or are you now being seen by a professional counselor, psychiatrist, or psychologist?

A) Yes    B) No

If yes, for how long?

\_\_\_\_\_

For what reason were/are you being seen by a professional counselor, psychiatrist, or psychologist?

\_\_\_\_\_

What treatment was prescribed?

\_\_\_\_\_

16) How often in the last school year were you...

**Sent to the Principal's office for disciplinary (behavior) problems?**

\_\_\_\_\_ times.

**Suspended (out of school)?**

\_\_\_\_\_ times.

**Suspended in school (ISS)?**

\_\_\_\_\_ times.

**Written up?**

\_\_\_\_\_ times.

**Sent to detention?**

\_\_\_\_\_ times.

**Expelled?**

\_\_\_\_\_ times.

17) How many times a month are you involved in physical altercations (fights) with members of your family?

\_\_\_\_\_ times a month.

18) How many times a month are you involved in physical altercations (fights) with friends?

\_\_\_\_\_ times a month.

19) How many times a month are you involved in physical altercations (fights) with others in your neighborhood or community?

\_\_\_\_\_ times a month.

20) Have you been baptized?

A) Yes (Move on to question 22)      B) No (please answer question 21)

Why or why not?

21) Do you want to be baptized someday?

A) Yes      B) No

Why or why not?

22) What is the makeup of your household?

A) Single parent    B) Two parent (mom and dad)    C) Two parent (same gender loving)    D) Blended (Step-parent)    E) Mixed (Extended family (Grandparent(s), Cousins, Aunt/Uncle) lives with me)    F) Other (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

23) Does anyone in your family have a history of mental illness or emotional problems?

A) Yes (Please proceed to the next portion)    B) No (Please disregard the next portion)

Please list all mental illnesses or emotional problems in your family below. Include your relationship to the person(s) and the length of time in which they have had this/these mental illness(es) or emotional problem(s). Please also include any known or suspected causes for the mental illness(es) or emotional problem(s).

(Example: Depression  
died.)

Mother

3 years

My brother

1)

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2)

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3)

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4)

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5)

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6)

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7)

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8)

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9)

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10)

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clx

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