WHY MOST BLACK MEN DON'T ATTEND CHURCH:
CHURCH ATTENDANCE AMONG AFRO-AMERICAN MALES IN THE SOUTH

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ABSTRACT

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Churches today in America are on average 60-70% female. The fundamental question this dissertation seeks to address is, “Why most Black don’t men attend church?”

This study focuses on Black men in the Afro-American Christian Church in the south. The project had two specific thrusts. The first was to interview Black males in secular environments who are not church members and ask their opinions about the church. These men are considered non-attendees. The second was to offer a program to men in area churches (attendees) to gain information from them about how the church can attract and integrate men into its ministries. This program, ARMING MEN OF FAITH provided the opportunity for the pastor of these churches to utilize existing men to attract other men and to modify the church worship experience and other activities to retain men.

The general survey of non-attendees revealed that Black men do not attend church because, (1) of poor and irrelevant sermons, lack of a meaningful worship experience (2) disbelief in God because spiritual values were not emphasized while growing up; (3) hypocrisy of church members and leaders; (4) ineffective outreach; church not meeting their needs. The prograin evaluation survey of church attendees revealed that Black men believe in God and understand the value of striving to grow spiritually. Black men believe the church can attract men, given; (1) it has inclusive, credible leadership; (2) it is accountable for the time and resources of its membership; (3) it has progressive programs to meet the needs of the membership; (4) it has effective outreach to impact the community; (5) it has specific opportunities to train and utilize its leadership; (6) it provides for the spiritual nurturing of men, and encourages male attendees to invite other males.
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I am also grateful to my pastor, Dr. Charles G. Adams who inspired me to launch out on faith and do God’s will and quit my job with Ford Motor Co. and preach the gospel. Among the many others I owe a debt of gratitude is my stepfather, Deacon Isaac Harris, for his love and support and wisdom over many years of my development. Last but not least, I owe a profound measure of gratitude to my since departed mentor, Mr. Nathaniel H. Bronner, founder and President of Bronner Brothers Beauty Supply, who refused to call me anything other than Dr. Harris and motivated me, by support and example, into developing all that God had given me.
PREFACE

I have noticed with all major works, that they include a preface to say something about the scope of the work. Why Most Men Don’t Attend Church is a burning on my heart to assist today’s church in reaching out to the lost of our society. Unfortunately, so many of the lost are men. Though this paper primarily centers its focus on the Black male, much of what it has to say could be applied to all males. Having pastored myself for five years, I readily recognize that many pastors cannot get around to ministering to all the needs of their congregation. For this reason, I designed the Arming Men of Faith Seminar and founded Word of God Christian Communication Inc., as a church consulting ministry. It is my prayer that this work will assist pastors in strengthening their congregations by getting a higher level and quality of male involvement. Though I try to lift up some things in today’s church that need to be modified or changed, I do not do so to put down pastors. I am a great lover and admirer of undersheperds. My job is to present the truth about the present situations and to offer some suggestions for improvement and support.
INTRODUCTION

Several years ago I noticed something very striking as I looked out over the congregation. The church I was pastoring, Fountain of Faith Baptist Church, was almost all female. As I reflected on what I witnessed I knew instinctively that it was not just my church, but almost all churches that I knew. This phenomena is not only true of the black church but also white churches. Churches today in America are on average over 60% female. (Schumm and others 1991 pg.521) Many times the question is posed --where are the men?

This question is often answered cynically or negatively with spurious comments and suggestions that they are in the bars, at the dog track, or on the basketball or tennis courts. Given the persistent power and potential of the church and the strength and inspiration that is forthcoming from the worship experience, it seemed odd that more men are not in church. It was then that I was moved to pursue this problem. The purpose of this dissertation is to discover the factors that determine or increase church attendance for Black men. This project will attempt to ask men in secular environments who are not church members or attend less than once per month, why they feel men don’t attend church. Then this project will ask the same question to men who do attend church more than twice per month and are members and have participated in the project’s seminar, why they feel men don’t attend church. Each survey also asks respondents to share those factors they feel encourage or impact male attendance positively. Those who have participated in the seminar and are church members will be identified as attendees. Those who did not attend the seminar and are not church members will be referred to as non-attendees. The ultimate goal of
the dissertation is to identify the needs and mindset of today's Black male so that churches can modify their worship experience and/or activities to attract and retain Black males. This project will discuss the method of data gathering. Then this project will seek to share the results of the data. Since this project only deals with Black males in the Afro-American church in the south and a limited number of churches in its scope, this project will also point out the limitations of its conclusions and point to areas worth of additional research.

Why don't men attend church in the same proportion that women attend? Is there something wrong or anti-male about the church? Do men value their spiritual development less than women? Do men feel that church attendance is unrelated or unnecessary in order for them to be a part of the Kingdom of God? Do men find God or religion or church irrelevant to their lives? As I continued to meditate over the problem of church attendance for Black males, God led me to write a series of articles for the Atlanta Metro News Magazine entitled, "Why Most Black Men Won't Attend Church" (Harris 1990). In the article I speculated why many Black men don't attend church. One, many men do not believe in God as an active force in their lives. That is to say, they have no relationship with God. God may be the supreme power that gives life, God may even be the creator and blesser of all things on this earth. But they do not believe in God in the sense of a Father/son type of relationship. God is not someone they can talk to, trust in, and do things with. Many men have lacked an earthly, natural father. So they have a problem with submitting to and relying on anybody. They never had an earthly Daddy who would hear their request and provide for their needs, so it is hard for them to understand their heavenly Father in that context. Secondly, many men do not know very much about God. They
know little about God's character, God's actions, God's Spirit, and God's promises in His Word. Ignorance is a poor motivator and our culture does little to encourage Christian education and personal spiritual development. It is hard to gravitate toward God in this culture if you have no role model that shows you the value of a Godly relationship. Thirdly, many men do not draw a direct connection between a good and all powerful God and a limited and tainted church. They have problems with the egos of the pastors in the churches and what the church is actually about. They do not feel that one has to attend church to be in good standing with God. I also believe that some women enjoy the fact that the man is not in church. Their codependent state allows them to derive benefits from his alleged godlessness. Men in unfulfilling marriages also enjoy this time as time they can count on, as free time away from their spouse. Last but not least, men do not see how the church as a source of meaningful help and support to the problems in their lives. Men today need jobs, legal help, counseling, and day to day relationships with another male. Many pastors do not have the skills or the time to fill these needs. The results of the project provided much more specific information than my personal hypotheses.

The articles caught on instantly and the interest in the topic crossed all demographic boundaries. As a result, I formed a committee called Men of Faith and began a series of special teachings and activities for men. To my surprise, Fountain of Faith's male attendance doubled in less than a year. Though my initial motivation was personal and pastoral, I have since had my eyes opened to see the larger ramifications of the lack of male attendance in the African American Protestant churches across America. As I watch the news reports that show the collapse of the traditional family, the dehumanization of the poor and the destruction of whole communities.
with drugs, violence, and crimes, I am more concerned than ever about the strengthening of the Black male. He is the key player in saving our youth and our families. As he goes, so our whole people may go also. I believe that the church as we know it, can survive with a majority of women. I do not believe that the church will be able to really reach outside its walls into the community to make a difference in saving lives and confronting evil without the dramatic increase in the number of men participating in its outreach programs.

When I formed Men of Faith I had several goals in mind. One, I wanted to minister to the men that I already had in the church. My observation of them led me to conclude that many of them did not have a vision for involvement in the church. Most had never attached any significant meaning and relevance to the work of the church and the day to day challenges of their lives. By meeting with them on a weekly basis, I was able to better grasp what their personal needs were. I found by working with them and listening to them that their sense of ownership and level of participation increased drastically. Secondly, I found that many men had received little if any spiritual training in the past. By setting aside a specific time that I would use to instruct the men, they seemed to open up and take more risks in talking about the Bible, spiritual experiences and personal situations. Lastly, I launched Men of Faith to increase the effort of men to bring other men to Christ Jesus. The ability of the men to grasp the basic principles and doctrine of the gospel and share it with other men proved to be exceptionally rewarding. Men of Faith showed me that many times men did not come to church because the church showed little or no interest in them, their ideas, their needs, their resources, their personal problems and their development (Hartman 1987). As I watched this first
group of men grow in the spirit and bond, I began to realize that I had only scratched the surface. There were hundreds, thousands of churches in the greater Atlanta area that needed to focus more on getting men back into church. I decided to put what I knew about training men on paper in the form of seminar workshops instead of sermons. I began to research what other ministries to men were doing. I began to study Edwin Cole's work, *Maximizing Manhood* (1982) and Bill Gothard's work, *Institute to Basic Life Principles* (1990) and Robert Bly's work, *Iron John* (1992) and many others to formulate a basic dialogical experience for training men. In the ensuing months, I resigned as Pastor of Fountain of Faith church and returned to school and to the field as an evangelist. My suspicions on the attendance and participation of men were confirmed. According to a national sample, 45 percent of all women attended church or synagogue every week compared to 34 percent of all men; 75 percent of all women were member of a church or synagogue versus 63 percent for men (Pippert 1989). Everywhere I preached the women were in greater attendance and involvement than the men. Where were the men? Why weren't the men involved more? Further prayer and introspection and messages from God through other people, confirmed what I had sensed. God had called me to establish a ministry to men. In May of 1993, I began by designing *Arming Men of Faith*, a 12-18 hour seminar experience to equip men with the Word of God and to teach them spiritual principles so that they can cope and succeed in growing in the inner man. After several initial training sessions and learning experiences, my brother in law, Ray Ransom, and our wives Shari and Myrna agreed to help me incorporate *Word of God Christian Communications*. The initial goal of *Word of God* was to produce written, audio and visual aids for training men for Christian living. *Word of God*
specializes in providing consulting and training assistance to churches interested in increasing the attendance and involvement and spiritual growth of its men. The major goal of this dissertation is to share the results of survey research and primary marketing research as they relate to inform us as to why most black men don't attend church. In addition, it is important to offer suggestions by pastors, laymen and scholars about things that can be done to increase the attendance and the involvement of men in the church. The results of this survey will primarily speak to the African American male who attends or has attended Protestant churches in the south. Though the sample will be African American, many of the conclusions of the survey have more to do with gender than race and other specific situations in the particular church.

Clearly, the modern male needs something that the majority of churches are not offering. There is no lack of men attending the various nude bars, sporting events, movie theaters, discos and restaurants. Somewhere along the line the church is missing the mark with the men. What do the men need that the church is not offering? Why don't most Black men attend church? Is it that men are not as spiritual oriented as women (Walter 1983)? Are there other factors such as work schedules, and family responsibilities that prevent them from attending church? What are the special needs that Black men have that the church is not meeting? This project will draw some conclusions based upon the responses of attendees and non-attendees about how Black men feel about the church, church attendance, ministry and pastors. Then in the epilogue, this paper will offer a view of the ministry of the church for the future that can positively respond to the interest and needs of today's Black male.
CHAPTER ONE
THE MINISTERIAL SETTING

Across America there is a trend affecting the local church. The trend is that the church is becoming increasingly female. This is not only true of the African American church, but white churches across America are also averaging 60% female participation or better in most major denominations (Grant 1979). This phenomenon is crippling the overall effectiveness of the church. A church without a significant and substantive male participation is hampered drastically in its ability to spread the gospel in homes, families, and communities. A church without strong male participation is not representative of the society at large it is called to go out into and share the gospel. A church without men is likened to a family without a father figure. It is off balance and given to be dysfunctional. It is deficient in dealing with its responsibility to children and women. Since the central purpose of the church is to apply the power of the gospel to the world's populace, the church needs men to participate in its great mission mandate.

According to (Krahn 1982), the percentage of churchless Americans has been increasing steadily since 1952 when 73% of Americans attended church. The fact that men are being lost or unmotivated to participate threatens the future productivity and strength of churches across the United States. Research indicates that the most likely candidate not to attend church is male, under thirty, living on the West Coast, making under $10,000 per year and living in an urban area of one million people or more (Davis 1987). Membership attrition among most mainline Protestant denominations during the previous decades is a widely recognized phenomenon. W.J. Hartman (1987) reports the loss of nearly two million
members from the United Methodist church since 1964. Since this project cannot possibly speak to the loss of males in churches everywhere, this project will focus on the loss of Black males, in urban areas, in Protestant Churches in the South. Some of the quantitative and qualitative data gained through this project will be the basis for providing the clergy community with some suggestions for retaining and attracting male worshippers. One primary goal of this project is to share some insight, historical and contemporary, on the pros and cons of male attendance and participation in the church. Another goal is to provide clergy and lay leaders a biblical programmatic approach to strengthen and retain males currently in the church and empower them to attract other males to the church. Lastly, it is hoped that through the evaluation of the project we will be able to isolate some ways clergy can positively impact the quality and quantity of male participation. Obviously, the research and project data will not speak to every situation. Demographics and innumerable situational factors will require prudence and discernment in their applicability to ones own parish. Nonetheless, the objectives of this dissertation are to assist the pastor in understanding how to attract and retain and strengthen the Black male's participation and attendance in their parish.

One might be tempted to think that research done primarily in black congregations will be inadequate to speak to the loss of males in white congregations. To some extent, all localized research is limited in its ability to speak to all situations. Our opinion is that white churches and black churches have more in common than they do in differences. Our world has become so small due to the common problems of competing activities, unemployment, overworking, crime, and drugs, that most of the programmatic ideas and findings apply to men and the church in general.
More times than not, we all struggle within the same international tension and national chaos. We are all impacted by the strength of modern technology, the world economy and the ecological imbalances of the planet. We are all prey to demonic activity that has attacked our communities, our homes, our children, our schools and our being. It will be incumbent upon each pastor or interested lay person to identify what applies to their situation. For in the aggregate, men stay out of church for many of the same reasons whether they are white, black, brown, or red (Davis 1987). When the church's overall identity to them is not relevant or valuable, they do not attend. It is not a race thing or just a class thing, it is a matter of meetings needs. In our world good businesses establish themselves around meeting the needs of those in the marketplace. Some of these needs are obvious, for the consumer cries out to have that particular need met. Some of the needs are intrinsic and it is incumbent upon that business to identify it and educate the consumer about their needs. In some cases good marketing will even create the perception with people that they need something and then move out to provide for that need. The church has the advantage of not having to create needs, rather just identify them, enlighten people about them and equip people to service their needs by a relationship with Almighty God. The church has an enormous opportunity with men in this respect (Rice 1988, pg18). It may be that the setting in which we are attempting to do ministry has changed so much that we do not even realize the little things that have crept in, that are having an impact on male involvement in today's church. Some people like, Toney Walter, in Why are Most Churchgoers Women(1983), suggest that the church has become too effeminate. Any institution that presents a quiet, sheepish,
orderly environment, with men dressed up in frocks and a bunch of women and children dominating its membership is at a loss to attract men. He suggest the church must become more robust and masculine. Jim Smith, in his work *Manhunt*, tries another approach. He suggests that it's all in the message of Christianity, not just in its structure. He seems to advocate a message that proclaims becoming a real Christian as a brave, tough thing, that a guy can be proud. There are a myriad of facts and opinions that should cause us to stop and critique about what we do and how we do it and when we do it and how that effects those who come to church to worship with us.

The African American Protestant Church in the South has been the key resource in affecting social change in America (Lincoln 1990). No other black institution can boast of economic resources, political clout, and a social impact anywhere approaching that of the African American Protestant Church. As Carter G. Woodson pointed out in his work, *The History of the Negro Church* (1936), it is the church that has been the prime vehicle for leadership formation for black people. Time and again we have witnessed the amazing transformation of human personalities empowered by the Word and Spirit of God nurtured through the fellowshipping of the saints. The churches record in developing men of substance and vision and integrity and productivity is unequaled. Great men like Frederick Douglass, Richard Allen, Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver, Adam Clayton Powell, Muhammed Ali, Malcom X, Martin Luther King Jr, Leon Sullivan Jesse Jackson, Benjamin Elijah Mays, Thurgood Marshall, Andrew Young and others all point to the church as their base and power source. In our world today, the Black community desperately needs new leadership to help lead the
fight against drugs, crime, racism, aids and illiteracy (Gite 1993). In a world in which the Black community needs men who know how to build businesses, start coalitions, mentor youth and encourage self determination, the church is needed to step up its image as an institution that specializes in leadership development. Afterall, we need leaders and where else can large numbers of Black males go to get opportunities to develop their leadership skills but to the church. I agree with the late Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, former President of Morehouse College when he said, "I am disturbed, I am uneasy about man, because we have no guarantee that when we train a man's mind, we will train his heart; no guarantee that when we increase man's knowledge, we will increase his goodness." This clearly is one of the job's of the church. Not only is the present setting for ministry to Black men ripe for the church because of its credentials as a major leadership development firm, but also the setting is extremely positive for the church reach out to more men because of the economic potential of the church. The church like every other major institution must come out from behind its stained glassed windows and reach out to them and embrace them.
Summary

The task of deciding which facts and ideas are relevant to ones own ministerial setting is a helpful exercise. Hopefully, experience and objective soul searching will prevail in pointing out areas where ministries can be strengthened in their ability to garner male support, no matter what the demographics. The church must do all it can to reclaim men. Men must be reequipped to take the role of spiritual leader in their homes. Across mainline denominations, America is experiencing a shrinkage in weekly church attendance that is fast approaching only one-third of the membership being present on Sunday. In many churches almost 70% of those in attendance are female (Schumm 1991). Men who are not being nurtured spiritually run the risk of a secular orientation that the Bible points out in Romans 1:22, could lead to them thinking they are wise and becoming fools. Lives, families, and whole communities are at stake. They hang in the balance awaiting the power of godly men working together to correct injustices and bring about a higher quality of living. Ultimately, the church must reach out to its clientele; just like any other institution that uses marketing and programming to attract "customers"(Owens 1980). The church needs to change its image to men by offering relevant program and focused support to empower men. The African American Protestant Church more than any other church in America needs to respond to a world in which 40% of all people in prison are black and 66% of all black youth drop out of high school by grade 10 and the top cause of death for Black males 15-24 is homicide (Frame 1990). By and large the vast number of black males reside in major urban areas. Many times they are within walking distance of well run churches that need their support.
CHAPTER TWO
THE MINISTERIAL ISSUE

The church is the presence of God with God's creation. The church is the Koinonia, the community of believers called out from the world to glorify God by going back into the world, equipped with the good news of God's love and God's saving act through Jesus Christ. Our intent is to be of service to all servants of God who want to carry out the mission of the church, in part by increasing male church attendance and participation. Our specific focus is the Christian leadership that operates under the biblical mandates of God's Word and is motivated to affect social change. Jesus announced his ministry in Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." There are a growing number of pastors across this nation that see men not being in church, not just as a spiritual malaise on men's part, but also as a failure on the part of the church to do what Christ would have it to be doing (Davis 1987). They view the church's role as not just spiritual, or even social, but as practical as well in meeting the needs of the people of the community in which it serves.

One of the most important issues for the church in this time period is that of getting the people back into the church. The church needs clients to perform its work. This issue has become increasingly important because of two particularly dangerous trends. One pattern we have observed is the
impact of the Eastern mystical influence in leading people to feel that they can worship God alone. The impact of meditation and private spiritualization concepts, has decreased the importance of this generation's sense of the need to attend church. Many people feel that as long as they know they believe in God and worship God in some personal way, they need not go to church. They proclaim the religious/spiritual experience as an inner journey ultimately and have alleviated any guilt they would have experienced by staying away from church participation. Even now, movie stars are used to promote this new age spiritualism. If this is not bad enough you have people like LaToya Jackson and Dionne Warwick promoting mysticism as a surrogate religion. Then, people like Les Brown promote positive self esteem and positive affirmations and other biblical principles that have been dechristianized and secularized.

The other harmful trend is that of tele-evangelism. Many Americans feel that they can adequately worship God at home, via the television and need not participate in a Christian fellowship (Kroll 1986). However, we agree with Krahn (1982) in his work, Preaching to the Inactive Member, where he extrapolates from the Third Commandment, and from Jesus' example of a regular worship life, to the practice of the early church, to the musings of Paul in Hebrews, "Do not forsake the fellowshipping of yourselves together .......". It is abundantly clear that weekly worship was always one of the important aspects of the Christian life. Indeed, we have been called out of a community back into the community. We see this with all the people of God from Moses and Abraham, right down to John, Peter and Paul. The Bibles says of Christ himself, that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us(John 1). God did not mean for us to be alone but rather to grow and evolve in divesting our lives into a greater community.
In my opinion, it is an accurate statement to say that ministry is, by its nature, social and that the spirit filled life is, by its nature, communal. That is the church and its members, i.e. the body of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, were both called out into the community to make a difference in the community. The metaphor of light and salt assigned to true believers says something very strong about the life giving and life preserving mission of God's disciples. The somewhat isolated and feminized church of today in the Black community need only take a look at the scriptures and at the community in which it sits to recognize that the membership would be overflowing if the ministry was relevant to the needs of those around it. In a world in which corporations have merged and then downsized their workforce, in a world in which the cost of higher education is prohibitive for those who need it the most, in world in which low income housing is in shortage, in a world in which the cost of adequate medical care is beyond the ability of many Black families, in a world in which banks will not readily invest moneys in the indigent communities where many black unemployed people live, the church must see its mission and point of contact in a much more practical way. According to my pastor Rev. Dr. Charles G. Adams, the issue is jobs. Pure and simple the issue is that economic empowerment of people need occur in many cases before spiritual empowerment is relevant to them (Gite 1993). Jesus was so practical that he frequently fed people and healed people of their poor health condition as a part of his spiritual presence in the midst. So it was, so shall it be. The December 1993 issue of Black Enterprise features Dr. Adams, president of the Progressive Baptist Convention and pastor of Hartford Memorial Baptist Church on its cover. People often criticize black men because of activities they engage in other than church. However, "no drowning man asks who is
throwing him a lifeline. If the lottery man, the bookie or the dope dealer tosses out an economic lifeline, while the church stays on the shore, closed behind stained glass windows, reading a sanctimonious agenda, singing praise songs, it cannot expect to reach and save Black men" (Harris 1990). As a former pastor, I have tried to point out that some problems exist that discourage Black men from attending. Our churches are not full of women just because preachers are so handsome and entertaining. No, this is a very small part of why male ministers attract women and not men. When a spiritual program is economically relevant, black men will participate. The Muslims have proved this to be true. They have a program that builds the spiritual dimensions of men by relating to the esteem needs and the economic needs of men. They have more men in attendance than women. Their Fruit of Islam (FOI) encourages virility, not passivity. They are entrepreneurial and aggressive in their community posturing. They dress men up and position them on the street corners in the Black community selling bean pies, fish and newspapers. Now the Protestant African American Church must take the ministry to the streets.

The article in Black Enterprise is a good example of what type of commitment to ministry is necessary to reattract men to the church. The article points out that C. Eric Lincoln, author of The Black Church in the African -American Experience (1990) and professor of religion and culture at Duke University, says that roughly $2 billion is contributed by African-Americans to their churches annually. Pastor Adams of Hartford Memorial Baptist church believes that the church must be utilized as an economic vehicle for empowerment in the African-American community. This idea is not a new one. From the days of slavery, to the building of our first schools and hospitals, to the creation of the first credit union here in Atlanta by Rev.
William Holmes Borders, pastor of Wheat Street Baptist Church, to the founding of Opportunities Industrialization Centers, by Dr. Leon Sullivan, (pastor of Zion Baptist church in Philadelphia and builder of the Independence Mall) right down to the present as Hartford breaks ground on a reported $17 million, 80,000 square foot shopping center, the church has done it. As Dr. Whelchel, Chairman of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Clark-Atlanta University told me, "The church is the only institution that Black people can truly say they own. We had better put it to good use to save our people." Hartford is doing just that. The church owns land and leases it to minority entrepreneurs to operate a McDonald's and a KFC franchise. The church is planning a 40,000 square foot auto-care and commercial center and a multimillion dollar housing project. Many churches throughout the nation are building senior citizen housing, low income housing, schools, day care, small plants and malls, day cares and restaurants. It is a new day and the churches that are embracing it with faith are not lacking for men. If a church would get more men to attend and participate, then let that church reach out to more men. In the process of working on the needs present in the community, the trust and fellowship and sharing take place that allow the church to plant and nurture spiritual seeds.

As one who has been called out to be a watchman, (as identified in the third chapter of Ezekiel), I see great danger in any activity or lack of activity that lessens church attendance. Our culture does not have the things of God as a priority. We need the church to raise the standard, to present the divine agenda in the midst. The church is not an organization in the same sense as a corporation, rather the church is an organism (Lazerwitz 1962). The church is a body with members; the church is alive. All members have
a role; all members have a stake. The biblical model of the church includes the priesthood of all believers, that is, the church is by definition, the culmination of the faith activity of all its people. The pastor has a role as leader/servant, but this should not be interpreted to mean that the pastor is solely responsible for the ministry of the church (Paris 1985). Quite the contrary, everyone is responsible. Church programmatic posturing is directly affected by church attendance (Williom 1985). The effectiveness of the content of the ministry is directly linked to the diligence and identity of its empowered and organized membership. Black men are in trouble today as they try to function in this society. The answers to the problems that confront Black men lie within the community of Black men. They are the only real experts on Black men. As the church seeks to minister in a community where the Black male is an endangered species, it must utilize Black men to reach other Black men.

Summary

I submit that if each church today had the resources and the abilities of twice the active men it currently has on its roll; we could turn the tide with violence, drugs, sexual immorality and child abuse and negligence issues. The presence and power of men focused with God’s will as their marching orders, could indeed transform politics, reform our present educational system, and impact economic development in our community. The moral fiber and ethical code of our country has been all but eclipsed. A higher standard of living could be restored by doubling the number and the quality of the involvement of men in the addressing of needs through activism in the communities in which they live. As one God has set on the walls to
watch, I am reminded that in I Corinthians 10:6-9, God's people could not enter into Canaan because of five sins. Those sins, lust, idolatry, fornication, tempting Christ, and murmuring are still here preventing this nation from entering into Canaan (Cole 1982). Men who have been restored to right relationship with God, by being reconciled through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, represent the key God seeks to use to provide abundant life for all. The church has a responsibility to reach men where they are, so that they can be saved. A major issue for men today is jobs. The ability to meet the responsibility of being the provider is a reality. Therefore, an issue for the church must be economic development as a spiritual ministry to demonstrate the spiritual truths which the church espouses. There is only one thing equally as constant to life as death, and that is change. What worked to reach men and women fifty years ago is not working as well today. Tradition is an establishment for the preservation of the things of man, not God. We are witnessing church after church stagnate in its ability to create ministries to serve this present age because they refuse to change. "We've always done it this way is one of the most demonic statements ever formed with human lips." The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3:1,"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Clearly, the church has been directed to change, to continue to be open to the leading of God's Spirit. Change always involves two things, giving and faith. The church must be willing to give up some of the present practices or modes of ministries, with the faith that God will lead them to establish more productive and fruitful ways (Driggers 1979).
CHAPTER THREE
THE STATUS OF OUR UNDERSTANDING

Before looking at the project that was implemented to impact male church attendance and participation, it is important to acknowledge what others already have discovered about it. For primary research to be effective, it should utilize previous research data and information as a base to guide its efforts. Many previous attempts have been made to address male church attendance. Many of the points found in previous works will enlighten and direct the effort of this work.

The Normative Literature

It is clear from biblical, theological, historical, and ethical sources that the church is only as strong as the people it has working in it. In a patriarchal society, the ability of the church to influence values, ethics, laws and attitudes rest squarely on the shoulders of men. The Bible itself supports this assumption, for it is basically a book written by men to men. The Bible tells us in Genesis 1:28, "... be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it. Writers like James Cone (1986), Carlisle Driggers (1979), and Theodore Cross (1987), point out time and again the significance of the quality of male leadership, in dealing with today's problems. As Peter Paris (1985) points out in his work, The Social Teaching of the Black Church, the church is the main mechanism for the development of leadership and character, for the sharing of information and for the polarization for action in the Black community. It is the dogma of the church that empowers and informs and controls the praxis of the streets. After all, men without consciences are not men at all, but robots. The
church impacted slavery, the church impacted women suffrage, the church built hospitals, the church launched the civil rights movement. Even now Paris' conclusion holds true to form, for it is the church that is feeding the hungry, providing shelters for the homeless, and fighting against drugs in the community. Society needs the church, and the church needs men to minister to the ills of society.

Other ministers, such as Edwin Cole in his work *Maximized Manhood* are blazing a path straight for reclaiming and reequipping men. Coles' new leadership development program for men, "*Manhood and Christlikeness are Synonymous*", is sweeping the nation like a storm, providing a long term program and strategy for integrating and utilizing men in the church. Bill Gothard (1971) with his *Institute in Basic Life Principles*, has been offering a biblically based national spiritual development training seminar, aimed at the family, since 1952. Rev. Gothard has since added to his program three separate volumes of *Men's Manuals* that reiterate the material strictly from a male perspective. His approach is considerably conservative and hierarchical, featuring the theme as the man as the priest in his own home, the one who will be held in account before Almighty God. Toney Evans in Dallas, Texas also uses a biblical based social action program that focuses on men at work in the urban communities to make a difference. His program is national in scope, with paid regional staff, and is under girded by his journal *The Urban Alternative*. In Atlanta at least 10 churches with memberships over 2000 people, feature regular weekly meetings where men use the Bible as the base to instruct men and empower them for service. Many of these churches like New Birth Baptist Church in Decatur, Salem Baptist in S.W. Atlanta and World Changes Ministries in College Park, have matched the men of their church up with students in the area schools as a
mentoring ministry to curb violence and encourage positive development of the youth. Any survey of the written works of Charles Stanley, Kenneth Hagin, John Osteen, Fred Price, John McArthur, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, J. Alfred Smith and Howard Thurman would indicate the considerable focus clergy have given to the development of the inner man. In addition, the works of theologians James Cone, Cornell West, Robert Franklin, C. Eric Lincoln, and James Evans all function to continue to inform us of the relationship of the Black male with church and with God.

The Empirical Literature

Sociological, psychological and anthropological factors have all contributed to the absence of men in the church. Writers like Dan Benson, The Total Man,(1977) John and Paula Sanford, The Transformation of the Inner Man(1988), Sam Keen, Fire In the Belly,(1992) Robert Bly, Ironwood,(1992) Robert McGee, The Search for Significance (1990), and Robert Hicks, Uneasy Manhood (1991) have all provided substantive information about the male psyche, physical makeup and socialization that is crucial in understanding why many men don’t attend church. In the case of Black men, it is important to recognize that even if men were equally motivated to attend church as their female counterparts, there would still be a significant imbalance. Of the approximately 32 million African Americans here in America, there are at least 3 million more women available to be in church ages 18-55( Lincoln 1990). This is due to the fact that Black women enjoy a nine year longer life expectancy, that over one million black men are now in prison, and that almost 26% of the military is Black men. In urban areas 80% of all arrests for drug charges, are Black men. Also, a
recent survey published in the Atlanta Journal Constitution showed that African Americans are the only group to lose jobs during a 9 month period form July 1990 to March 1991. This net loss of 59,000 jobs makes it hard for men to attend any institution that asks for money. Joseph Winiski in his article "Who We Are, How We Live, What We Think", published in Advertising Age, (January 1992) shared some revealing statistics about church attendance in our culture. Among those statistics we learned that the lowest level of religious participation for all groups is ages 15-24. Devotion begins to decline in a person's mid teens, reaches bottom in their twenties, then begins to pick up again, and reaches a plateau when someone reaches their mid -forties (Greely ;August 1991) Religious participation then increases in general for all groups as age does. Since many violent deaths occur to Black males, again there are less Black males available.

Psychological research points out that though, 95 out of every 100 Americans believe in God, three out of four are certain about life after death, three out of four believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, three out of five believe in hell, nine out of ten pray every week, one out of two prays every day and only one-fifth of all Americans believe in the literal inspiration of the Bible.(Greely 1991) These statistics are not as favorable for men. Robert Hicks in his work Uneasy Manhood, talks about Uneasy Sundays, saying that most men have a problem with pastors (pgs.155-170). They view the men of the cloth as different, not real men who must work five day weeks. They also have problems with charismatic ministers and ministers who present a God of love, grace, mercy, and compassion over and against those ministers who are strong leaders themselves, control oriented, who present a more male God who is distant, austere and controlling. Many men
who have never been affirmed by their fathers have a hard time relating to a gospel that talk about doing the Father's will. Church is a strange, illogical, uncomfortable place to many men because of the people there, the theology presented there and the traditional structure. Church is one more place where a man cannot really be a man. Church is a place where men are asked to be boys. Even more dramatically, C. Kirk Hadaway, in his book *What Can We do About Church Dropouts*, analyzed data from the National Opinion Research Center and concluded that 96% of people who are indifferent toward religion, agree that people can be good Christians without attending church (1990). Perhaps the most alarming and eye-opening information I discovered was that the church's principles of reconciliation, justification, propitiation, and regeneration are foreign and drastically unsupported in the lives of men in modern culture. Robert McGee points out in his work *The Search for Significance* (1990) that men have a hard time understanding and believing that we are by the work of Jesus Christ, deeply loved, completely forgiven, fully pleasing, and totally accepted and complete to God. Our culture overemphasizes four basic beliefs that bind us up spiritually through our thinking that keeps us from valuing a relationship with God. These four things are the performance trap, the approval addiction, the blame game and shame depression. In the performance trap our culture says that I must meet certain standards and accomplish certain things to feel good about myself. The weight here is the fear of failure. God's answer is justification, which basically says that our good standing with God cannot be accomplished by our works, rather it was given by God through God's grace toward us. The approval addiction is where we are so socialized at the horizontal level that our esteem needs are dependent upon how other people view us and accept us. The weight here
is the fear of rejection. The church presents God's answer of reconciliation. That is that we are on perfect terms with God through Christ and through the confession of sins. God does not reject us, his love for us is sufficient to accept just as we are. The third misbelief is that of the blame game. The blame game says that anyone who fails repeatedly is unworthy of love and deserves to be punished. Such a system denies forgiveness without retribution. All injustice must be punished. Law and order must be maintained. Where it is divine law, no one is pardoned because of special privilege. God's answer is propitiation. Though God would be justified in punishing us, Christ has already paid the tab. The last cultural miscue is the shame\depression syndrome. This notion is the culmination of many others. It says that I am what I am. I cannot change. I am hopeless. No matter what I try, nothing seems to turn out right. The weight is feeling inferior, a low sense of esteem and habitually destructive activities are assumed to be uncontrollable and unconquerable. The gospel says that God's answer is regeneration. God is the one who can perform miracles, the one who makes all things new, the one who calls things that are not as though they are (McGee 1990). The empirical literature says that men have received as fact several experiential realities that prevent them from being open to the possibility of other resources and methods to live. Too many times the church has not been clear about the psychological and sociological relevance of the gospel to today's man. Nonetheless recent studies indicate that life satisfaction for Blacks increase with religious commitment (Ellison 1990). In many cases, the church has lost credibility with Black men by insisting on images that are obviously historically incorrect, like white Jesus' and disciples (Cone 1986). These categorical misrepresentations of fact
make the answers to more weighty issues that require faith, difficult to accept.

The Operational Literature

A scan of functional literature proved to be very informative. Many religious authorities like Dr. Ed Wimberly, author of *Pastoral Care in the Black Church* (1983) and Dr. J. Alfred Smith, pastor of Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland, California, have talked about the need for the church to be responsive and sensitive in its programming to secure, keep, and enlist the participation of Black males. Dr. Wimberly points out that for black people the church has always operated as a type of extended family. Dr. Smith points out that the church has always been the mentoring institution for the development and the rights of passage for Black males. Religious writers like Marty Martin (1986) and C. S. Lewis (1952) and George Abatso (1991) have identified the impact of modifying the worship service using specialty teaching aides and overall leadership ability as aides in improving male attendance in church. Krahn in his work, *Reaching the Inactive Member* was very informative in listing reasons men give who have become inactive church members. Among the many reasons given were: (1) Sunday is the only time I have to spend with my family; (2) I go to church when I feel I need it; (3) I'm too busy working; (4) I believe in God, but not in church; (5) There are so many other activities I prefer to do on Sunday. On the other hand, Davis (1987) and Schaller (1988) both published books on how to increase church attendance and pointed out that with men the following are important. (1) Use men as a conduits to attract other men by utilizing them in visible positions such as Sunday School, ushering, male chorus, working in the church tape or television ministry, and serving on ad hoc committees; (2) Make preaching specific, speak to the concerns of men;
(3) Use a second career male who has experience in working with males, as your assistant, or use females as an assistant to the pastor. Females are willing to fulfill the authority of the office of the pastor and are adept at forming relationships with men. (4) Repeatedly and consistently, make dramatic pleas for male involvement in the life of the church. Experience would also dictate that it would be significant to recognize efforts on behalf of males in the church to encourage others making similar efforts.

**Summary**

Though many theological authors and writers have presented material that engages us in our quest to understand the male and the church, it is my opinion that this topic needs a lot more research. In Appendix II more data is available to isolate contributions of other dissertation writers on this subject. It is interesting to me that though there was many dissertations and articles on youth, on the inactive church member, on increasing membership, and on evangelism, there were no works anywhere specifically about the Black man and his lack of church attendance. As it turns out the attendance of men across the board, black or white is virtually the same (Williams 1990). There may be some different nuances as to why the men don’t attend, but nonetheless this problem is one that needs much more research. Oddly enough this male attendance problem is even greater today in Canada than it is in the United States (Brady 1991). Perhaps, we still have time to turn the tide, if we only do some things differently with the men we still have in our church fellowship.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

I have been wrestling with the title and scope of this dissertation project for years. Arming Men of Faith is the vision God gave to me to rectify the deficiency in many ministries across the country by reaching, teaching and involving men in doing the will of God. I know that I was led into this supplementary role as part of an overall vision God gave me to serve this present age. Since, I am Black, and the church that is most accessible to me is Black, I have identified the Black church as the database for program implementation and information gathering and evaluation. The title or emphasis of the project is the attendance and participation problem of Black men. The title of the book I hope to produce as a result of the dissertation, will be the same as that of the dissertation, "Why Most Men Don't Attend Church. In all cases, this title is not aimed at sporadic visits of males to various churches at sundry times. The meaning of the title is to identify why more men do not become an active part of a particular ministry for a consistent period of time. Male attendance in this case is not necessarily synonymous with male membership, but it is being used to speak to male involvement. As a former pastor, I had several men who worked in the church faithfully for years who never joined it. However, many men will join a church and never attend it much or become involved in it. They are on the roll but unaccounted for when the roll call is taken.
In February of 1993, I began to put the *Arming Men of Faith Seminar* on paper (see Appendix IV). The *Arming Men of Faith seminar* is the portion of the total project where I actually go in and teach Biblical principles to the men and work with the pastor. The project includes the seminar, the marketing research experience with pastor and laymen by phone and by questionnaire and the creation of articles, tapes and training materials that are made available to churches through *Word of God Christian Communications Inc.* so that churches might have support resources to continuing focusing on training their men. By March, many churches that had been exposed to the concept would bring me in to speak on their Men's Day. Only a few were willing to set aside the time and the resources for the seminar project. Of the 50 churches I contacted between March and December of 1993, I was able to get seven major churches to commit (see Appendix IV Table I). Four of these churches have already completed the program. The other three Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, Mt. Tabor Baptist in Tampa, Florida and Sixth Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham are scheduled for February and March. Their results will be a part of the final project tabulation and assessment. It is very possible that several other churches like Salem Baptist Church and Shiloh 1st Missionary Baptist will also elect to complete the project prior to the final tabulations.

The aim of this project is to provide a needed service to pastors, as a consultant, to help them increase male attendance and participation. As a consultant, I offered a package of information that shows biblically and theologically, the importance of getting more men involved in their ministries. This package (see Appendix IV) contained an 8-16 hour seminar experience designed to heighten the spiritual appetite of their men and to
encourage them to see the church and its ministries in a much more positive light. The core of the material was teaching spiritual principles to men that would help them to be more faithful to themselves, their wives, their families and their churches. The overall goal of the service was; (1) to inform and alert the pastor, based on research and experience, about the styles of worship and church programming that turn men off, (2) to provide the opportunity for the pastor to get data / information to about the present needs/perceptions of the males in his/her congregation, (3) to work with the pastor to help to establish a specific program to meet the needs of the church given, the current church calendar,(4) to provide training tapes and articles and manuals that highlight contemporary approaches to reaching and teaching and equipping men, (5) to supply follow-up status reports on other programs, and new information and data , as a resource bank for under- girding future programmatic choices in ministering to men. Table II of Appendix IV and Tables III-IV of Appendix V illustrate the kind of information that is fed back to pastors.

**METHODOLOGY**

My hypothesis is that every church can improve male attendance and involvement , if the pastor is willing to survey the needs of the males in the congregation, modify the worship service and create opportunities for quality male participation. In order to be effective these things must be undergirded by a spiritual/biblical call to repentance and a yearning for spiritual renewal and empowerment from the church leadership.

The first phase of the project was the contacting of 50 pastors by phone and in person. I usually shared the contents of my article "Why Most Black Men Won’t Attend Church" as a departure point for a discussion and
then I would show them a content outline of the Arming Men of Faith Seminar and ask them if they would be interested in my support services. Whether they were interested in having the seminar at their church or not, I would get them to participate in the project survey (see Appendix V) and probe them for their programmatic strategies for increasing male attendance and involvement. In many cases like St. Peter's Baptist Church, and Turner Monumental A.M.E. I would be invited to be their Men's Day speaker and allowed to administer the project survey to the men, but not to actually conduct the seminar and use the seminar evaluation survey. The project survey allows men the opportunity to share their views on the church overall and male involvement in it. The seminar survey does the same and it also allows the person to critic the seminar experience and share specific comments on their church. Typically, the seminar experience allows a person more time when they are already focused on the topic to share their opinions and feelings about it.

The second phase of the project was to identify three different denominational churches with at least 1,000 members to conduct the Arming Men of Faith Seminar. The three churches that became test sites were, Ray of Hope Disciples of Christ Church in Decatur, Georgia, Carter Tabernacle C.M.E. Church in Orlando, Florida and Zion Baptist Church in Marietta, Georgia. These three churches allotted a minimum of sixteen hours or two days to work with their men. Ray of Hope was unique in that it allotted six sessions totaling almost 40 hours for their men. Beulah Baptist Church of Atlanta also allotted a lot of time to present the information to its men. However, it was their preference to have the information presented in the form of a rededication period (revival service) for five successive days.
Phase II of the project also includes subjective data that was compiled by me keeping a journal during the project and observing the churches, the pastors, the men and my own growth and challenges. The final phase of the project is to prepare tapes of all Men's day sermons and tapes of the Arming Men of Faith Seminar and to create a one year manual that churches can use to undergird the continued training of their men. The products offered as a part of Phase III are marketed through Word of God Christian Communications Inc.

Overall, the project has been satisfactory. I have been able to speak at or teach at sixteen churches, one college, and one men's organization (The 100 Black Men's Annual Convocation) since March of 1993. I have interviewed 52 pastors in the general survey and almost 300 men. I have another 130 replies from men who evaluated the Arming Men of Faith Seminar. Table I in Appendix IV is a list of churches and event types from which the data will be reported on that is summarized in Table II. Table III shows by categories the responses of men to the general questionnaire (Appendix V). Table III represents all responses to the evaluation survey for the training seminar. The qualitative data of will be presented in the Chapter Six.

The Arming Men of Faith Seminar and the overall project required a lot of work and money. It was not possible to get denominations or foundations or other organization to fund this project up front. The interest level was extremely high in the community but the willingness for organizations or churches to underwrite it was minimal. Most churches only give an honorarium of $150-350 for preaching events. Teaching fees are even more subjective. Since many times I had to rely on the taking of love offerings and private contributions, another step was necessary to complete
the project. My brother in law Ray Ransom was so positively impacted by
the presentation of the material for uplifting men spiritually that he and two
lawyers, Fred Henly and Burrow Ellis contributed to the forming of Word of
God Christian Communications Incorporated. To date the business has cost
us about $3300 to set up. This cost includes a computer, a laser printer, a
tape duplicating machine, a state of the art mike and recorder, the cost of
tapes, labels, paper and assorted items. Since contributions were about
$2200 the deficit was made up by marketing the materials sold as a
consultant service. In six months of operation we have averaged about
$200 per/month in tape sales and about $150 per/month in article sales.
The business side of the project is already profitable (by about $1000) and
it is still climbing. I mention this to point out that men are willing to
contribute money, time and resources to build ministries that are
substantive. A big selling point with men is that are involved up front and
told the goal and the time schedule of the operation. It is also worth noting
that if men understand exactly what it is you are trying to do and exactly
what part you want them to play in assisting you, they are very supportive.
It is always better to involve men in an ad hoc way if their schedules are
tight and their spiritual maturity is low.
SUMMARY

My experience is that men have built Word of God Christian Communications Inc., and purchased its products consistently for themselves and other men they know whom they feel would benefit. I am proud to point out that the $4300 earned by Word of God Christian Communications has almost been matched by honorariums and love offerings over a nine month period. These figures do not include contributions from women into the ministry. Clearly, the numbers would suggest that there is a need today for ministering to men. Pastors want it, men want it and women want it also. Long term, we plan to put Proverbs on tape for men as a test case to see if men will listen to the Bible if they won't find time to read it. We are also in the process of finalizing the year long manual for men to allow men to grow spiritually at their own pace. We believe that the potential is there for marketing a cadre of items that have a spiritual foundation, just for men. Research indicates that 80% of all books are purchased by women (Hicks 1991, pg.172). Outside of their fields and the newspaper and an occasional sports magazine, men just do not read. This would mean that the marketing of spiritual materials for men by churches and other organizations would need to take into account using other mediums, like calendar books, note pads, cards, tapes, tee-shirts and others to reach men. If all else fails, items need to be marketed to women, for men by using marketing techniques that excite and arouse the curiosity of women.
CHAPTER V
THE PROJECT RESULTS

The project will be evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative measurements will be derived from clear and decisive data from the questionnaires, interviews and the journal. The quantitative measurements are self evident in that they will be stated and need only be compared with what one would think to be a reasonable increase or range of interest given their experience. It is worth pointing out that the value of the project cannot be reduced to mere verifiable measurements, for there is a synergetic effect that takes place to marriages, families, churches and communities as men get stronger. One other gratifying result is that I currently have six clients that I counsel at least bi-monthly who feel so strongly about their spiritual growth, that they are willing to enlist the services of a counselor. Most of the sessions involve letting them talk about their life and family and work situations and using the Bible as a tool to help them reframe, or view their dilemma from another vantage point. Reframing as a tool here is used to help men look at their relationships, values and actions from God's point of view (Capps1990). These sessions have given me insight into the type of material to include in the training sessions and research tools.

The findings to the project survey 'Why Most Black Men Don't Attend Church' are listed in Table III (Appendix V). Sixty five percent of all those surveyed were non clergy. The response of non clergy to clergy was relatively undifferentiated with the exception of question number seven, where clergy rated worldliness and apathy of people toward the things of God much higher than focus on money or poor leadership. Overall the
survey produced some astounding insights. A national survey conducted by the National Opinion research center indicated that 70% of church members and 96% of non church members, believe that people can be good Christians without attending church (Roehlkepartain 1991). They feel you don’t have to go to church to be of God. Our survey showed that 90% of Black men surveyed, felt that church attendance was important to their development. Additionally, When asked about their attendance, almost 60% attend church each Sunday. This figure is significantly higher than the 38-40 percent reported by other national polls on male church attendance weekly (Hicks pg.156). Almost all (99%) of those surveyed felt that God does care if men do not go to church.

The survey had several more subjective questions in it. In each case I will list the top three answers and the next three most commonly given responses if they represent more than 5% of all respondents. When respondents were asked in question 3 to identify three things that discourage men from attending church, here is what they said. Thirty percent of all respondents felt that men do not attend church because of poor and irrelevant messages. Men feel that one of the major responsibilities of the pastor is to deliver a strong, relevant and well prepared message. They want the worship experience to be meaningful. Some respondents indicated that too much of what is presented as the Word of God is in fact, off the cuff "Negrology" and jokes and entertainment. It may be emotional and loud and lengthy, but it is not something that meets their needs. Secondly, many men said, that men do not attend church regularly in a lot of cases, because of a disbelief in God as presented and they do not value church attendance because they were not taught to value it as a child (21%). Twenty percent felt that church
service is just too long. Time is not used wisely. Things frequently start late and run over. Too many announcements and too many encores with the choir and sometimes the praying is too long. Many men indicated that Sunday is the only free day they have and the three hour church service many offer takes away too much of their day that they would like to do other things with. They felt that attending church was of little benefit to them in terms of living from day to day. Other answers that frequently appeared were, its all a bunch of hypocrites, that the church is not doing anything in the community, that the pastor is too egotistic, that they would rather participate in sporting events and that they were out partying too late the night before to come to church. The sentiment seemed to be that church is one activity among many that they could use their Sunday for and that if the church does not offer them anything they feel is significant for their lives, they are then drawn to do other things.

When asked in question 4 to describe the type of ministries that do attract men, men said, they were attracted to ministries that are inclusive and open and allow them to have input (32%), ministries that are contemporary and relevant in their focus and approach (28%) and ministries that have a strong and vibrant outreach mode into the community and the family (22%). Other responses included, teaching ministries and ministries that focus on the family.

When asked in question 5, what should the church do to meet the needs of men and encourage the men who do attend, the answers were emphatic. First, the church should have more regular activities that are just for men (38%), second, the church should show men that they are appreciated and valued (31%), third, that the church should be there to pick men up who have fallen along the way (23%). Other significant responses
included, affirm male spirituality in specific as being something that is
different from female spirituality, mentor the young males of the church to
prevent future attrition and teach and train men so that they can
comfortably take on responsibilities in the church. The thing that came
through loud and clear is, men do not feel that the church is set up to
minister to the community or to them. They seem to express a discomfort
with the feminine, social atmosphere of the church. Many men see the
church as an institution that is without a viable function. Therefore, they
are unclear of the role church should play in their lives.

A look at the data of question 7, what do you think God will be upset
with about today’s church, reveals the deeper feelings and concerns men
have with the church. The data is clear and the points are concise. Men
feel that God is upset with today’s church because it is a hypocritical
institution (44%). It talks a good game sometime, but the people in it do
not live according to the Word of God. They see church as a sham, a put
on, sometimes even as a get over situation for vultures and wolves.
Secondly, they feel that God would be upset because the churches do not
focus on meeting the needs of the community in which they live (37%).
Thirdly, because the church is not involved enough in the real issues of sin
that are plaguing our society. Men feel that the church is too complacent,
outdated and backwards (28%). In many communities, large churches are
virtually closed all week and men are not comfortable with what the pastor
and staff does with the money and resources set aside for them to serve the
people. Other responses included, that God is upset because today’s
church overemphasizes money and because churches are too caught up in
man made tradition. This question does not just cue us to understand why
God would be upset with today’s church, this question tells us a lot about
why men today are upset with today's church. Men seem to be saying that
the church and its leadership in too many cases lacks integrity, productivity,
accountability and relevance. Men want the church to be God's power in
the midst, that one can visibly see making a difference in the world. Men
want to believe but express a need for the church to be and do what it says
it is. Many respondents indicated that the pastors are too interested in
having a lot of members and a large building more than they are in having
many services and programs available to help people. Overall, the
sentiment seemed to be that the church is so tainted with the same sinful,
selfish, myopic attitude as the rest of the world, that it is not to be put on a
pedestal and looked at as the place to get help. Men do not attend church
because they do not see the church as a place that helps them with those
problems and situations that are in their day to day lives.

The evaluation survey of the Arming Men of Faith Survey provided
even more insight into how men feel about the church and participating in it.
The respondents all indicated that they wished that the seminar could be
extended (question 9) regardless of their attendance. Over 75% of all men
polled attended two thirds of all sessions ( question 8). Of the men who
attended the seminar about 50% also serve in leadership positions
(question 2) and 70% of all men polled had been in their present church less
than 5 years. National data indicates that men and women begin to return
to the church after they get married and have children. The largest dropout
period occurred in the late teens and early twenties for all people
(Roehlkepartain 1990). This was the case with 80% of all attendees being
older than 25 and 75% of all attendees being married.

In question 3, respondents said that the greatest benefit of their church
to them was, the church offered them a greater sensitivity to and
knowledge of their spirituality (29%). The second was the new awareness they now possessed of God’s Word and God’s way (24%). The third was that the church supported them in developing a more spiritual outlook on life (22%). Men seemed to be saying that church is the place that helps them to establish and nurture their relationship with God.

In question 4 men tell us that the best way to help their church attract more men is to offer more instruction for the spiritual growth and development of men (31%). The second response was that the church should put more men in leadership and visible roles to attract other men (30%). Lastly, men said that the way to attract other men is to provide leadership development training in the church (23%). These answers come from men who are already in the church but evidently feel that the church is not taking full advantage of their presence. They seem to be saying show us what to do and let us do something and equip us so that we can help other men in their spiritual pilgrimage.

When men were asked in question 5, how has the seminar helped you, they said some crucial things. One, the seminar served to reinforce their spiritual convictions (34%). Two, that the seminar challenged them to be stronger morally and ethically (30%). Three, that the seminar made them more aware of God’s grace toward them and left them feeling more grateful to God (30%). These answers showed that the seminar at least initially had reached some of its goals. As a whole, the respondents pointed to a heightened sense of awareness about the devices of Satan and evil forces and how they impact their relationship with God.

Question 6 was originally aimed as a feedback question for helping me to improve the seminar. However, the answers to the question tell us something significant about men in learning situations in the church. First,
men want material that they can look at (36%) and examine so that they can follow along and even take items home with them to read at their leisure. Secondly, men want dialogical teaching situations (32%). They want to be able to ask questions about specifics. Lastly, men said that they wanted more of the program (31%). The message is men want spiritual information that is particular to men and that is pertinent to their current needs.

The commitment that men felt called to make as a result of the seminar can be seen in the results of question 7, where they were asked what they would do differently now. The number one answer was that they would be more focused on their spiritual walk (43%). Secondly, that they would consider God’s point of view more in many more matters (32%), and lastly that they would put on their Christian armor more and witness more to other men (both 22%). These responses speak to a more active and integrated Christian walk (Rice 1988). These things are the goals of all good ministries.

The last question, number 10, shows a big difference than a similar question asked in the general survey to men who had not been through the seminar. Those who have come through the seminar said that what churches should do to attract and keep men is to emphasize the power of the Holy Spirit working in the life of the believer (40%). This response is much more specific and far reaching than the number one response of general survey (have more activities for men). The second top response was, that the church should go out and recruit men (36%). This aggressive attitude was inspiring. It signified at least two things. One, it says that the church is too passive in its approach to evangelize to the lost. Second, it says that the church has something to offer that is worth going
out on the limb for to share. This realization may be one of the great failings of the church during this period of history. The church simply sits there with its doors open during specific hours on specific days and says to the lost, you can come in if you like (Owens 1980). The church (except for Jehovah Witnesses) cannot be seen out in the community recruiting those who need it desperately. The last response, have more activities specifically for men (32%), is the first response to the question in the general survey. Men said over and over the church should become offensive about addressing the needs of men if it wants men (Raboteau 1989).

SUMMARY

The project though limited in scope taught me a lot about the current situation of the church as far as Black men are concerned. With the exception of three women who were ministers, all the survey results represented the opinions of men. Since the project had four separate methods of data gathering (seminar evaluation survey, general male population survey, telephone survey of ministers and subjective survey from my journal), let me summarize each separately. It was very easy to get the men who had participated in the seminar to fill out an evaluation survey. They had developed a kind of camaraderie over the experience and sensed that I sincerely valued what they had to say. Their answers were longer, more in depth and they took more liberties to talk about other things they felt strongly about that were not directly asked on the survey. One item that resurfaced over and over again was their respect and admiration for what Islam had done for many brothers. One brother was more explicit in his accolade saying," The only thing missing from Islam is Jesus Christ. If
they gave Jesus Christ his propers as Lord and Savior, then they would have me and almost all the Black men in America. Many men commended the Muslim faith for its focus on the family, its commitment to a higher quality day to day living, its goal and activity toward economic empowerment and its support for the condition of the Black man in America. Additionally, the Imans and Fruit of Islam (FOI), are a visible, active and vocal group in the Black community. Their most noted leader, Louis Farrakan, is respected and appreciated by the brothers on the block.

The surveys showed that Black men felt that mainline denominations are not as supportive and visible in addressing their needs (Marty pg.719). Two specific things heretofore unmentioned, surfaced in their comments. One, was that our churches are silent while America continues its war on crime. Many feel that in too many instances, this is a war primarily on black crime and poor innocent Black people. A panel discussion with a group of policemen who believe in excessive force, a group of law officers who don't (their national movement is called Slick) and a representative from the Nation of Islam, revealed that since 1986 there have been over 47,000 complaints of police brutality filed with the Justice Department and only 263 prosecutions. With incidents like the Rodney King situation and others, brother are convinced that they cannot get justice in America and yet the mainline denominations are not proactive in raising the issues. Mainline denominations are on the other side of the issue with the white denominational counterparts screaming law and order. Yet, there is no order to the way the law is now enforced. The other issue that came to light, is the role of men versus women in the home. The Muslims are clear on what the role of each is, whereas the modern denominations are a
mixture of a new liberation for women and some antecedents of the man as the priest in his home.

The **phone interviews** with pastors were diverse in their productivity. The main reason for this was, that it is very difficult to locate ministers or to get a return call from most ministers. One day I called 56 churches. Of those, 3 ministers were actually at the church. Only two ministers returned my call. This is worse than it sounds, when one takes into consideration that I knew most of them personally, and I am clergy and in many cases I had already called before. When I tried to interview ministers over the phone, they were mostly either short and quick with their answers or long and philosophical. Many expressed great interest in the project. Very few had ever taken a survey of the men in their congregation or were up to date on the specific needs of men in their communities. **Many had some things coming up for their men but nothing on going.** Some pastors (about 20%) talked about definite plans they had to change their worship experience or supplement their educational offering to assist in the support of men. Mt. Carmel Baptist has started its group Brothers United in Christ each Monday, Buelah Baptist of Decatur has hired a Minister of Education to lead their men's group through the Louis Cole Leadership workshop for men, Ben Hill United Methodist has established a house to house bible study experience called Discipleship that reaches out to and lifts up the role of the man and seeks to equip him for spiritual warfare. Many pastors came across as well meaning but unorganized in their efforts to expand their ministry to men. Some were doing specific new things to address their men. Few were doing anything Radical to reach out into the community and get men. Of the 52 pastors I was able to interview, only 4 told me specifically that they got out on the streets into the community and reached out to men.
The general survey that took place at places like Pascal's Motor Inn, the Peachtree Athletic Club, the Woodruff library and the Five Points Marta Station was very fruitful. The respondents ended up being about half church members and half not. Few men declined to fill out the questionnaire when I approached them. My approach was warm, direct, honest and needful. I told them I was in school writing a dissertation on the Black Man and why many don't attend church. I told them I had done a lot of research on what psychologists, anthropologist, sociologist and theologians think, but that ultimately Black men were the only real experts on the feelings of Black men and that I needed them to tell me so that I could report the truth to the world. This approach brought smiles, looks of serious dedication to the task and many questions. Many men were surprised that anyone cared what they thought. A few men were concerned that the survey was worded sort of negatively. They loved the church and did not want anyone writing a bunch of critical stuff about the church. Their survey comments and the dialogue with men over the last year has taught me several things about Black men and the church. One, most men believe in God, they believe in the Bible and they believe in the power of the Church. Their problem is that most churches do not approach their standard for what the church should be about. Almost to a man, men feel that the church is not doing the job as the presence of God in the local community. Many are suspicious of the ministers, saying that they should be available 7 days a week. They said that ministers should be their link to jobs, politicians, police authorities, social services, the news media, the city and the county and state. They talked about the church being virtually closed during the week except for prayer meeting and choir rehearsal. Their joint cry to the church seemed be, "what have you done for me lately!"
Hypocrisy and the persistent focus on money also kept coming up. Behind all of these concerns was the pain of disappointment, because men want the church to rise up and be the church that Jesus represented by his activity in his day to day life. Men are not anti church, men are upset with the institutions that call themselves churches, but do not do the will of God. Men feel that too much of what churches today do with the money and the time of their members, is not about the business of ministry and building the Kingdom of God.
CHAPTER VI

MY OBSERVATIONS

The last piece of the project was the journal or subjective data I gathered as part of the process of ministering to men. There are several things that jump out at me as I look at the notes that I took since March of 1993. I would like to divide them into three basic areas. I observed new things about pastors, about the church and about men. I will save my commentary about my personal journey as a Black Man and my experiences of and my hope for the church for the last chapter entitled, the Epilogue. That commentary is the analysis of my inner journey in the light of our collective experiences, whereas this is the sharing of the inner and outer struggles of those around me. One's feelings about what the church is, what ministry is and what part they should play in it all, is a thing that requires reassessment from time to time, from many angles. The Church must retain some social redeeming value, some spiritual power and some ethical and moral stance that is relevant, to retain its faithful. Otherwise the church could lose even more men and fail to attract the next generation.

During the past year I have become increasingly aware of the humanity of God's shepherds. Their plight is considerably different from, but not unrelated to, that of the church and laymen. Pastors are people who have an unusual set of circumstances to survive in. I always knew this and yet I felt those of us who have seen a great light and heard a silent voice, were empowered to handle it. We have a gift, a power, an energy to give to the
world. As I went from church to church I would notice the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional condition of the undershepherd. Too many times I found a person that was in need of spiritual rejuvenation himself. If the men of his congregation were hurting because of some deficiency on his part, it should be accounted to his head and not his heart. I found pastors who had lost their wives recently, their sons and daughters. I found pastors who were recently divorced or fresh from the surgeons knife. I found pastors emerged in deep spiritual battles with adultery, drugs, pride and fear. I found pastor tired from fighting with people; deacons, trustees, stewards, members and other ministers. I found pastor drained from building projects and IRS audits and working two jobs because their salaries were not adequate in the church. I found men who wanted to do better, but did not have the resources or the time. Many could not help other men a lot, because they could not muster enough strength to change themselves and their situation enough to help others do likewise. I found human beings, doing a job. Each had some strong points personally and organizationally. Some were very personal and charismatic. Some were very professional and organized. Some could sing real well or preach people silly. Some had built their ministries around teaching and counseling. Only a few had the gift of building businesses and services and managing people. Most were men with a specific type of ministry, who work within their comfort zone. Many were insecure about things and people that were unfamiliar. Some seemed to lack spiritual maturity and a great sensitivity for the church’s role beyond worship. I found no charlatans, just men. Men who are still in the process of becoming what God would have them to be. Men who had taken a stronger step than many others to give their life to
God. Just men, not superstars or devils, just men, trying to get their needs met and do God's will at the same time.

I experienced the church in two ways. The worship experience was decidedly feminine. Worship seemed awkward for most men. Afterall, the women had the numbers, the minister had the power and God was getting the glory. Whereas the major power struggles in meetings and conferences felt very masculine. One deacon told me he liked annual conference and other church meetings fine because after the prayer, what took place was not any different than any other meeting a person would attend in the business world. The deacons who were powerful in the church and the community were the hardest of all to teach (if they showed up). Many attended the seminar sessions as observers, some as inquisitors, and some as filibusters. There seemed to be a force field that surrounds those who are in power in many of the places. This force field would let little in and almost nothing of worthwhile out. There was a way to do things at their church! In order to bring new ideas, information or strategies to the table in the church one would need to know the way or one would not be received well or supported well in their endeavor. One of the reasons men put up with so much nonsense in meetings in the church, I am convinced, is because those are the only places they feel comfortable. The question that needs to be asked is, "Is this the business God has called us to?" Many times it is not. Many of these men I witnessed were so tied up with church matters that they had not cultivated a love for God and the joy of a lifestyle of worship. Consequently, we eventually lose many of our strongest men, because they are tired and there is nothing for them to do in the church, that they haven't already done. Until men look upon the church as more than giving money and attending meetings and scrutinizing the pastor and
managing their harems, we will continue to lose or underdevelop the best men. I am reminded of a little book written in 1947, where Elton Trueblood asked, "Why is it that the church is not getting the best men?" The answer confronts and challenges us. "Because those who are the best men.... are not interested in trivial things."

(Hicks 1991, pg.165) Christianity is not a trivial pursuit. As C.S. Lewis concluded, if it is true we should not sleep at night. But the way Christianity is presented and lived out in the church, it is often reduced to the most insignificant trivia. It's no wonder men want no part of it. They'd rather watch the N.B.A. or play tennis or golf or make some money, anything but be involved in a bunch of mess. If we do not call men to true Christianity and challenge them to invest their lives personally, not institutionally, I fear we will continue to lose the best men.

As cold and territorial as the church is outside of worship, it is decidedly female on Sunday during worship service. It is a place where the Word is male, the Holy Spirit is male and the body is a female that gives birth when it receives God. What I am about to say is not true of every church, but it is true of many of the growing and vibrant churches in Atlanta and in the African American denominational churches in the South. There is a thing going on between the minister and the women on Sunday morning that women can claim much easier than men. In some cases it is a sexual charisma. But in many churches it has little to do with sex and yet it is still geared more for women. The church has a high social and entertainment quality. It is a place where people, particularly women come to get their needs met. The church is able to cater to women better than men, in my opinion because of its therapeutic nature. (Wimberly 1983). Many churches seem feminine in nature because of the emotional content of the services. It is a place where people who are in pain: the bruised; the hurting; the
oppressed; the rejected and the overlooked and undervalued; can come. It is a public place where one can scream and be comforted. This great blessing which the church gives to our community is hard to receive for the Black man. Men have been taught to be strong, tough and cool. Men are socialized not to cry, not to reveal their weaknesses, or fears, or overwhelming frustration, desperateness and hopelessness. Men have been taught to handle it themselves and not let people in on their situation. Society has never applauded weakness in men. Black men, stripped by oppression, rejected because of racism, abandoned by protection from the law, discarded by the free market systems, alienated by capitalism, raped by the media, and violated by classism, are nonetheless, expected to do as well as white fathers, husbands, and church members. But the men have a hard time crying out publicly to God. They stand there hurting, watching others get it out. On their faces, I see the pain. I believe they are asking, "Where is God? How can I get a breakthrough into the throne room for an audience with my God? What is all this singing and being happy about? Why do they insist that God is so good when I am having it so bad?" The spiritual needs of a Black man are different than that of a women and yet the church goes on celebrating and taking up offerings and making announcements. No wonder the men I know don’t feel compelled to attend.

Lastly, as I look back through my notes I see the Black man of today. He is considerably different from many others. He lives in two worlds, three worlds, sometimes more. He knows how to function as if he were a white American, he knows the legacy of his slave ancestors and yet he is a member of the popular culture. As much as he may deny or detest it, he is a part of the new scene. He has a short attention span, he has a preoccupation with personal goals, he has a need to be the Mac Daddy (the
one with the resources and the power who runs things around him and other people are beholding to him). He has a need to be heard and respected for what he has done. He knows there is a God. He says he believes. He tries to be a part of what is positive. Yet, negativity lies deeply rooted within him. As I taught and listened to brothers and as I identified with what they had been through, I could hear the values of this culture loud and clear. Those old destructive values of king of the mountain, an eye for an eye, you do what you please and allow me, to do what I please. Over and over the anger surfaced, the resentment surfaced, the rejection and abandonment issues, the low self esteem, the codependency, the control issues, the performance issues, the helplessness, and the silent injustices of life, echoing a soul buried alive. (Sanford 1982).

A little boy, trapped inside the body of a man, begging to be comforted, heard, and accepted. These are not rogues or fools I speak of, these are men, good men. They are a product of their experience in this environment. They need a church that can reach out to them and help them unlock the power and the potential God put into them by the Holy Spirit and through the blood of Jesus. They seem to know that there is more to be had than what their church or pastor has shared. The church must be holding out on them. They know God meant for things to be better than what they are. These are real men, with a spiritual baby inside begging for nourishment that it might grow up and take dominion and subdue the earth, these are God's men. I watched them sit there and let me talk for a little while and then their questions and their testimonies and their opinions and their feelings began to pour forth. These are men who want to wrestle with God until they get their blessing. Oh yes, I have watched the Black man in these months, crying out for the church to help him get a better hold on
God, so he can get his blessing. The men say in their responses verbal and written, I want to be a part of what God is about. All the rest of that stuff you can have. But let me in, let me do my thing, on the part that God is about.

As I reflect back on why I thought that men did not attend church and the reasons men give for not attending church, I am hit with a few major differences. One, though many men do have problems with the pastor as an authoritarian figure, men have an even greater problem with the seeming irrelevance of an institution which they are obliged to give blind allegiance and support. Two, men are much more concerned with the content of the sermon than I imagined. When men come to church they want something for their minds. Three, men see faith in God and the tradition of church attendance as two distinct items. There is a hidden code among many men that says, if I am a good person then God knows that, and that is all that is important. Men feel no need to do things God's way as long as they feel they are giving God the same results. Four, though it is a concern, money is far less a concern than I believed it to be. Men want God, men just do not like most churches.
Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

On Saturday February 26, 1994 I had the honor of presenting the ARMING MEN OF FAITH SEMINAR to my home church Hartford Memorial Baptist Church, in Detroit, Michigan. This church pastored by Dr. Charles G. Adams has a membership over of 8,000 people. I will not include the survey results of the seminar in the data of this document because the seminar was not long enough to be mixed with the other data and because this church is not in the south. However, there was a little more than 150 men in attendance at the seminar and the preliminary results of the surveys do differ substantively from the surveys of attendees in the south. The sparse turnout and the fact that this is my home church and a church where the man of God is known world wide for his preaching made the results tenable at best. However, this does point out that the church attendance of Black males in the north would need to be studied and compared to the results I received in the south.

What can we say we learned about why most black men don’t attend church in the south? The general survey of non-attendees (i.e. men who are not members of a church and/or attend church less than once per month and were not present at the ARMING MEN OF FAITH SEMINAR) indicated the following: (1) Men do not attend when the messages of the minister are poor and irrelevant and the worship experience is not meaningful, (2) Men do not attend church when they were not taught to attend church as a child growing up and therefore do not value church attendance or have a disbelief in God,(3) Men do not like long drawn out services, (4) men are deterred when the pastor and the members live hypocritically,(5) men are
uncomfortable when there is too much emphasis on money,(6) men are not motivated when the activities offered do not meet their needs,(7) men are turned off when he pastor comes across as controlling and egotistical,(8) men do not see church as necessary when its community outreach programs are ineffective,(9) men are sensitive to the way pastors handle women and deny them attention,(10) men are deterred by many demonic spiritual forces at work in our culture to keep their minds off heavenly agendas. The complete list of findings can be found in Table IV.

Demographically speaking data showed that the men most likely to not attend church were younger than thirty and unmarried. More work would need to be done to see if their income or educational level significantly effects church attendance. Only one man of the 300 non-attendees in the survey indicated he had never attended church. I have a suspicion that this number is on the rise in our culture. This too is an area for future considerations. All in all, the words ineffective, irrelevant, waste, hypocrisy, sham, and unnecessary pop up over and over in the surveys from men. Church is not viewed as a credible institution that meets their day to day needs.

The results of the survey given to seminar and church attendees echo the results of the non-attendee survey. They say that more men would attend church and participate in church if: (1) the church has credible, inclusive leadership, (2) the church manages the time, money and resources well, (3) the church has progressive programs to meet the needs of the membership, (4) the church has effective outreach programs to meet the needs of the community and require the involvement of men, (5) the church has specific offerings to train and utilize its lay leaders, (6) the church provides for the spiritual nurturing of men and encourages its male members to witness to
other men. These respondents (attendees) were overwhelmingly (87%) married and in the 30-50 age bracket. Most of these respondents were also fathers. More work would need to be done to isolate the extent to which parenthood and age effect church attendance and involvement.

I was unable to see if not having a father figure growing up (one of my earlier hypothesis) was significant in deterring male church attendance. Other authors like Hart Nelson in his work Unchurched Black Americans, (1988) found that church attendance in ones youth was the greatest deterring factor for church attendance as an adult. His work also showed that southern and nonurban males have a higher church attendance that northern urban males. These findings lead me to believe that much more work needs to be done in this area. Though I was able to hear men clearly say that the church was not meeting their day to day needs, I was not able to understand what other substitute activities and organizations are meeting those needs.

Last but not least, an exhaustive study needs to be done about the pastor and how his leadership style, his theology, his interpersonal skills, his management and meeting skills, his availability --- how do these things impact the church attendance of Black males. I believe that there are some differences between white and black, north and south, non denominational and denominational emphasis that also will impact a man’s motivation to attend church. Nonetheless, I believe that the ARMING MEN OF FAITH SEMINAR proved that churches who focus on activities just for men and are willing to make some modifications in the worship experience and the accountability of the church to its constituency, will see male church attendance and involvement increase.
Epilogue

SERVING THIS PRESENT AGE

Two generations ago, as a small boy, my grandmother would take me with her to attend the worship service of a little country church outside of Columbus, Ohio. Once inside, I would stare up at the altar. There would be this giant red velvet chair, surrounded by other lesser chairs. This was the preacher's chair. There were all these pictures around on the walls, of the previous men who had pastored there. In the middle was the largest picture. This picture was of a handsome white man, with long dirty blonde hair and a full beard. The picture was always sort of scary to me. This was a likeness of Jesus. As I looked around the church, even then, it was mostly a bunch of women and kids. There were a few older men and a few younger adults, but even then the church was not a place men attended regularly.

The people also loved the preacher. He was an important man to everyone who knew him. In those days even men respected the man of God. I have seen many a man take a cigarette out of his mouth and apologize for his drinking, cussing and absence from church when the preacher approached. But then, that was two generations ago.

Each Sunday these men would come in and lead us in something called devotion. What took place then, is indescribable and timeless. Most people today have never entered into the realm of the next, with such harmony. We have psychologist and counselors and the psychic hotline now. But as William McClain said in his work Come Sunday (1990), Black people could not have survived without Saturday night and Sunday morning to look forward to. I can still see those old ladies, close to a hundred years
old, get up and do a dance that would make James Brown and M. C. Hammer shiver in fear. I can still see those men, trying to hold people who would not be held, for they were shouting. Sometimes you could shout without saying anything yourself. But you seldom saw a man shout. Men did things differently.

About this time, somebody, usually Ma, would stand up and testify. This as far as I could make out, was the part where women got to preach. After a long time the men would start standing around telling her to 'come on in now'. Then one of the deacons would pray a long prayer. But out all the men I ever knew, I never heard a one pray like this outside of church, unless he was a preacher. After what seemed like hours of people going back and forth, someone would begin to say these lines. "A charge I have to keep....a God to glorify. Everyone older would get real excited again and begin to sing what was being said. Then everyone would stand up, for now it was time to really have church, for the man of the hour had come. No not Jesus, Jesus was somehow always there. This man was the pastor. He was now sitting in that red velvet chair. From here on out, everything would revolve around him. Most of the people really liked him. Some feared him. Some loved him. Only the men could sit near him or take messages to him. Church then, was a place where men ran the show.

The pastor knew everybody. He had been to everybody's house. He was known for helping people when they were in trouble. He was also able to tell people the future as if God himself told him what to say. I was told he worked at the stockyard. But he would declare boldly, 'I work for the Lord. Rev. Jackson told us he had been called up by God and ordered to serve this present age'. He did not have a lot of special robes, like preachers do now. He did not go to college, but still many times people
called him doctor. He dressed like the rest of the men, and lived a simple life. He loved us and he kept telling us that we were going to make it, if we just kept walking with Jesus. My father and my mother did not go to church much with me and Ma. My father did not go to church at all. My mother took me to something called the Lutheran church. She had another pastor to serve her age. My mother, did not like my grandmothers' church. She said it was too loud and that it lasted too long. Her church was quiet and clean. Her pastor was a white man. Her church had special books and everyone knew what was next in the service. I liked her church too. You could go to sleep in her church. You knew the words to the songs in her church. Mommie's church was short, maybe it lasted an hour and a half. Her pastor was nice. He knew all about the law and history and stuff. He was different from Ma's pastor. He had been to college, but no one called him doctor. Plus, he did not talk and sing at the same time. He was not as much fun to watch. But then again, I could understand what he said. He served my mother well. He never came to our house, like Ma's preacher. But he did stuff like tell Mommie about college and free dental clinics for my bother Wayne and me. Later on he talked a lot about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and integration. People loved Pastor Graetz. He told us about the meaning of what Jesus did. He served an age that saw integration and education and marching as the key to a better world. He helped Mommie raise four children. All of us completed college. No drug addicts, criminals or wino's out of her nest. All of Mommie's children are married and hard working, but no one valued the church very much, because at first none of us ever saw a need to attend church again. Pastor Graetz's church had even less men in it than Ma's. Men only went to church on Easter and maybe New Year's or Christmas. At my mothers church there was nothing
for men to do but sit there and listen. So the men stayed home and did as they pleased. The church was where the women went and took the kids.

Now the seventies and the eighties have brought another type of world before us. It is a curious thing to witness our walk and our attitude today. Black people have a GNP of almost 300 billion dollars annually. We have so many things now and we put almost 2 billion dollars in our churches annually, and yet we seem to be stagnant. As a people, we are doing so little with the opportunity to do so much. We are held captive by our own prosperity. We watch 6-8 hours of television every night, and spend our money outside our communities all the day (Benjamin 1993). If the physical drugs and violence have not immobilized us, the drugs of selfishness, thanklessness, forgetfulness and laziness have. We are in trouble. Somewhere along the line we lost something we had when we were poor and in the church. We need to hurry up and come together and meet our present challenges. But, we have bought into the mother culture so much, that most of us no longer trust the church or respect the minister of God. In addition, none of our leaders, Jesse Jackson, Richard Dinkins, John Jacobs, Benjamin Hooks, Douglas Wilder, are good enough for us. We will have no one over us, but us. The unemployment level is going way up, as the corporations kick us out. Our share of taxes is going up as we pay for the Savings and Loan scandal and other things we have never benefited from. We are being taxed to build more jails to put ourselves in jail and make life easier for those with money. We are sitting watching the services taken out of our communities and the dollars that should come for us, diverted to others (Cross 1987). Black men are angry because the church is so silent, it seems God is silent. Who will serve this present age?
There was a time when I was so proud of the accomplishments of integration. I felt strongly about having all the rights of other Americans; to eat anywhere, live anywhere, join any club, work for any company and attend any institution of higher learning. Now, I wonder if integration was perhaps too costly. It seems that somewhere in the process of becoming a part of the whole, we disintegrated. As far as I can see, a little segregation on our part would be healthy right now. Perhaps this is the church's chance to show Black men a role to play through the church, in the community.

When I finished college, I moved to Detroit, Michigan. There I met a man of God that would greatly influence my life. This man was not like any of the previous men of God I had ever known. He is a man who respected the tradition of his faith and yet transcended it. He has a mesmerizing effect on all who ever hear him preach. Many men come to here him preach each Sunday. He preached so hard one Sunday morning, that the spirit and power of his love offering touched me. I stood up, accepted the challenge and the call to serve this present age. Dr. Charles G. Adams is a pastor, evangelist, scholar, community worker, writer, visionary, business and a social activist. He is engaging all his power, his calling to fulfill. He is one of the prototypes of the model of servant for the future. He understands the need for the church to give something tangible back to the needful of the community. We need more women and men to do likewise. Now God has deposited something in my heart to do and to say to serve this present age.

I believe that it is too late for our people to be marching and begging now. Yes, there may be isolated incidents where this can still be used, but
this is not what we need now to serve this age. Few things are changed these days by begging and marching or even by new laws. If the church is to move to the front and the center of transforming this nation it must begin by getting the men back into the church and the church back into the community. Our world today is economically driven. We must get in step, we must create opportunities for people to feed themselves physically and spiritually. The church, and those individuals performing the various ministries of the church, are all we really have now. We need ministers who are strong enough to take the gospel seriously and bring our people out of tradition and serve this present age. When we attend church, we notice that many times part of our family is missing. Where are all the men, where are all the teenagers and college students? Economic development is the key to churches doing ministry now. We don’t need to split hairs on how much water to put on folk, or when and how to take communion. We need to go and do the part in the Bible we already understand by meeting the needs of those who are right before our eyes each day. This is the love of God that is relevant. This type of Christianity would meet the spiritual needs of men. “To every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven (Ecclesiastes 3:1). “ The time has come again for the church to go out into its own communities and among its own people. Then, many Black men will once again return to the church.

Church attendance among Black males is a problem that will not go away until the church and its leadership is willing to make some changes. When one read the results of all the surveys and listens to the men in counseling sessions there are a few words that seem to surface over and over again. These words are ineffective, irrevlevant, time consuming, hypocritical and non-factual. There is an enormous credibility gap between how Black men
view the church and what the church purports to be. There must be some changes made. I believe that as the economic climate, drugs, violence and the disintegration of the family continue, men will be searching even harder to find some relief from their trouble. Who will serve this present age? Surely, it will be a great opportunity for the church of the living God to share some good news to a dying world.
Appendix One

Dr. Ndugu G.B. T'Ofori-Atta...In Arming Men of Faith and Building the Whole Man for Effective Christian Outreach, discuss faith as relevant in the psycho-social dimensions of identity, discipline and destiny. (implicit in the term identity is: Is there significance in self-knowledge, in discipline, in self-control, in destiny, and the meaning of self-determination?) In all these, the Christ-consciousness would be the factoring force for wholeness and faith. How can these considerations impact church attendance for the Black male?

The overarching purpose of Arming Men of Faith Seminar is to equip men to grow at all levels (spiritual, psychological, social, physical) so that they can live as God intended for them to live. In many ways our society does not provide us education and instruction about the inner journey. It is the development of people due to the inner journey that gives them the breath and depth to develop coping skills to negotiate the outer terrain. Here is where the church has the opportunity to establish its value and relevance in the lives of men. The church can help them to interpret their lives from a spiritual perspective. The church can act as a facilitator for faith development, interpretation and application. We are told in Genesis 1:28 that we are to be fruitful, and multiply and fill
the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. The Arming Men of Faith seminar attempts to take biblical language and concepts and unpack them, so that men can apply them in contemporary situations. The bottom line is that religion, the Bible, and God must in some way be identifiably relevant to men for them to give them credibility. Faith is the crucial connecting link between the world men experience everyday and the one the Bible reports on. Faith is the vehicle that allows earthly man to dialogue and fellowship with that which he cannot see, understand or control. Faith then becomes the highway for the transportation of the divine to the human and vice versa. In order to go to God one needs faith. In order to receive from God one needs faith. H. Beecher Hicks Jr., in his work Preaching Through a Storm demonstrates the power of preaching to increase the faith of the community of believers to bring them through the storms of life. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:1 that,"faith is the evidence of things not seen and the substance of things that are hoped for." It goes on to say in verse six, that without faith it is impossible to please God. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Faith then becomes the basis of a relationship with God. When a person believes that there is a God who created them, it adds new considerations to living. Many questions then occur and evolve around the identity and purpose of the deity. An extension of the question of the
purpose of the deity in creating the universe, is the question of why did the deity create people. Arming Men of Faith is a seminar that seeks to empower men by sharing with them the information they can believe to be authentic about the nature and purpose of man as created by God. The seminar is designed to equip those men who have faith in God to agree with God's explanation of the purpose and destiny of man, as presented in the Bible and to live their lives based upon the principles presented so that they might reap the results that are promised. God's identity as sovereign, all powerful, all knowing and perfect, provides the opportunity for men to discover their identity and purpose. Because the sovereign God knows the specific purpose for individuals and calls them and works with them to accomplish that purpose, it is said to be man's destiny. Man's creator then, also is the manager of his destiny. Faith establishes God as sovereign. Faith establishes the Word of God as authoritative. Faith then becomes the perspective (psychological positioning) man is informed by, that impacts his understanding of all the events in his life. Pastor Wayne Thompson of Fellowship of Faith Church says that,"faith is a rationale choice modern man makes to decide what he can truly have confidence in, to give him what he desires." Faith then, is the day to day valuing of things we do not fully understand nor control to provide us specific benefits. We trust light switches to give us light and thermostats to give us heat without fully understanding them.

The psycho-social dimensions of identity is heavily impacted
by ones faith. I am reminded of a sermon that my pastor, Dr. Charles G. Adams preached that lifted the relevance of faith in forming identity. He used the text in the sixth chapter of Judges that dealt with the calling of Gideon to become a mighty warrior for God. The sermon was entitled "Faith seeks a Sign". Dr. Adams skillfully wove this story to talk about the many levels of identity and the transforming power of faith. Gideon is called a mighty man of valor by the angel. Yet, Gideon describes himself as the least of his family and his family as the weakest in Manasseh. Nonetheless, he has another identity that needed to be revealed to him. As a member of God's chosen people, he was now being set apart by God as a vessel to accomplish God's will. Gideon was against the oppression of the Midianites secretly, but Gideon required a sign to have the faith to become openly rebellious. Faith then was operative in him becoming a leader. As his faith was increased by dialogue and commerce with God, so his identity was transformed. All throughout the scripture one is confronted with men who see themselves as a member of a specific race or tribe, in a specific situation, playing a specific role. Each time they meet the deity the report becomes they are never the same. Armed with a new relationship with God through faith, they are no longer just isolated men held captive to earthly circumstance but rather they now become participants in a greater scheme. Through faith men's attitude about themselves is elevated as they affirm that they are now the sons of God. Arming Men of Faith says to African Americans, who are of male anthropolgy, in a capitalistic
culture, that God sees you differently than the world and you ought to see your potential in the terms that God has granted it. Not only that, but this relationship that is evolving with each man's faith also says that ultimately as a part of God's family, our destiny is not confined to our earthly physical existence. Our destiny was decided prior to our earthly habitation and it extends beyond it. We have access to a heavenly existence. The New Testament preacher Paul felt so strongly about this dual nature of man (that is a physical and a spiritual one) that he said that our perishable nature must put on the imperishable. The stance of faith is that the earthly walk is small and puny in comparison to the heavenly one. Christ died for us that we might have access to this greater destiny by this new identity. The identity is gained only by grace through faith. The pscho-social dimension of faith is the recognition that we are somewhere between identity and destiny when we apply faith to our daily walk. Self discipline becomes a barometer or tool that assist us in making choices to change identities that we might claim a different destiny. Discipline says, I will apply what I know about God to my life now, so that I may give a good account later. Bishop Earl Paulk of the Cathedral Harvester Hill Church says that everyone has a unique destiny in the plans of God. He equates calling to destiny and says that people are given only one calling. People are, according to Paulk, given gifts to fulfill there calling. He cites I Corinthians 7:17, "Only let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him and in which God has called him."
He uses this Scripture along with Ephesians 4:1, "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called," to illustrate that identity should be shaped by destiny (calling). He points out that when people lack the discipline to learn of God and discover their calling, then they live unfulfilled lives. They miss the beauty of this life because they don't live the life God ordained for them. They are out of step in life because they are operating outside of their calling. Dr. J. Alfred Smith, sees faith being formed in man through the revelation of Jesus Christ as the first true faith man. In his book For the Facing of this Hour (1985), he writes,"where are we going...are we going in the direction of God or are we going in the footsteps of sinners, who lived their lives by pleasing their flesh?" Dr. Robert Schuller in his book Mountain Moving Faith (1975) sees faith as something that man can choose that operates to change his identity and destiny by the sheer discipline of mind over matter. Dr. T. Garrot Benjamin Jr., in Boys to Men (1993) describes faith as work. He says that men often do things differently from the way boys do things because of their faith (belief in an ultimate accountability to God). In all these offerings, there is a pattern that suggest Christ-consciousness is the basis of wholeness, contentment, health and growth. Arming Men of Faith lifts up the narratives of real men in the Bible and outside it and points to the presence and power of God and how their acceptance of God's will changed their lifestyle. This lifestyle guarantees a new identity
and destiny. Faith also says, as one affirms their newness they receive the power or discipline to demonstrate it by making new choices in life. These choices lead to a new consciousness and a new destiny. The oppressed African American male is also a blessed and loved child of God. The church can offer men a gospel of hope and faith that says that God is involved with them in their day to day environment and that they should use faith as an operable resource in their plight to change their lot in life. The church can point to Jesus Christ as the supreme example of the role of a life given as a change agent through faith and obedience. The church can enlist its resources in the faith battles of social issues that are relevant to men and thereby center and position itself as valuable in their lives.
Appendix Two

Dr. Edward Wimberly......There have been many dissertations done on the Black church in the last ten years. Some may address the topic that you propose to address. Review the existing literature done in D. Min. dissertations related to your subject matter. What do the projects of other students tell you about your project and related issues? What are other churches attempting to do to attract more males and get them involved?

Upon review of the existing literature found in the Dissertation Abstract Data Base and in physically surveying all dissertations on hand at the Woodruff Library and the Columbia Seminary library, I found many dissertations related to my subject matter, but none on the exact topic. There were dissertations available on, inactive church members, male church attendance, male church membership, male church participation, or male church involvement. However, there were several dissertations on topics that provided significant observations and strategies to increase my overall understanding of why most men don't attend church. In addition, there were many dissertations whose content and programmatic reviews provided strong organizational strategies for recovering men into the body of the church. Among the dissertations that proved to be instructive were: Ministry to Inactive Church Members, by David Lockaby (1991), Faith Seeking Disciples, by James Horn
One of the most crucial factors in assessing the discrepancy in male attendance is not church related at all, but basic demographic reality. Even if we could prove that men desire spiritual growth through church participation as much as women, there would still be a lot more women in church than men. This is because there are a lot more women in the population to attend church than there are men. Due to a number of reasons from disease to violence, less males survive the first 25 years of life than females. Black women outlive black men by an average of 9 years. The average life span of a black woman is 74 years, while a black man is 65 years. Though the birthrates are about even, according to the 1970 to 1980 census, there were more than one million more black women ages 17-25, than there were black men. Some estimate an excess of 3 million females, ages 25-65, without the opportunity to find an available or desirable male. The factors which reduce the black male population are many and diverse: early death due to the factors of poverty, malnutrition, and racism; high rates of homicide and accidents, heart attack and cancer and aids; a prison population that is disproportionately black (49 percent nationwide, 80 percent death row); the military, which has a large number of minority
recruits (33 percent); the toll of hard drugs and life on the streets; and high rate of unemployment among black teen-agers and young adults, especially males (62 percent). In addition, many of the service oriented unskilled jobs black men occupy require working on Sundays.

In From Macho Man to Image of God I discovered one of the least acknowledged yet important facts that contributes to men not attending church. The evidence is that the church, like elementary and secondary schools, is not as well equipped to teach men, as it is women, because women and men do not learn effectively the same way. Research suggest that women are more right brain sided learners, which puts them more in touch with their feelings. Men are more left sided which leads to the logical, reasoning type of processing. Men are not as aware of how they feel as women are. Churches that build their evangelical efforts around sin consciousness may be missing the mark with men. Men may not feel as strongly about their sins. Females also develop their oral skills earlier than men do and are more socialized to sit still and be submissive to authority. Men are more action oriented, and socialized to lead and conquer. The implication is a sit still, while I talk at you environment, is not only more difficult for men, but less gratifying.

Another reason why more church goers are women than men is because church as an entity, an idea, an organization and an environment is more feminine than masculine. In most churches the leadership is male. The Holy Spirit, the Word, Jesus Christ
and God the Father are all considered male. The church is a she, that is impregnated with the word (through a man) and gives birth. The church is a place where strict order, and protocol are practiced. It is a clean place, a quiet place, a polished place. It is a place where one must be good. The men who work in it wear robes. The men who run it are not one of the boys. They are men who are to be looked up to by everyone. This environment is less attractive to black men especially than women. Church is another place where the average black man has to be quiet, do what he's told, deny his individualism, pay money and receive no tangible return. It is another place where Black men are denied the right to function as men.

There was some good news in the research that empowers the church to correct the problem of the absence of strong male participation. One is that the role of fathers has shifted significantly in the last twenty years as women have entered the work force in greater numbers. The ramifications are that men have more pressure on them to participate directly in the nurturing of their children. Along with the basic secular responsibilities of food and shelter are the additional areas of education, moral training and role modeling. As men take on these more non traditional day to day tasks of being and relating with their children, there is an enormous opportunity for the church to support them in their quest to be equipped for holistic parenting. The research indicates that churches that offer a battery of support activities for the youth also do better in attracting the men.
In *Ministry to Inactive Church Members*, I learned that there are many different reasons why people stop attending the churches they had joined. Men are a valuable subset of a whole group of inactive Christians and inactive church members. This dissertation was especially helpful in pointing out that evangelism and recovering inactive members are two separate task that the church needs to address. The first step is for the church to do some self assessment to ascertain how well its doing. The second step is to set aside a dedicated small group of people to be responsible for identifying who is missing and to create strategies to gain them back. One of the important aspects to understand is that a whole generation of potential churchgoers has been all but lost. These are the babyboomers. Of those on church rolls only 51% are actually active in most denominations. Key in reclaiming inactive members or attracting new members is knowing who they are as people. What do they think of the church and God? What do they want in a church? What are their needs? Another dissertation, *Revitalizing Congregations through Lay Visitation Ministries* described babyboomers as people who are attracted to:

1. activities that promote practical personal development and participation.
2. teaching situations that are didactic and use visual aids.
3. upbeat, contemporary and plentiful music. (not those old lined hymns that no one can figure out the words to)
4. positive messages that are simple, well organized, relevant and relatively brief.
(5) clean, good looking, open, user friendly environment.
(6) a variety of activities and programs offered that support their day to day needs.
(7) a choice of times when they can worship on Sunday and during the week.

Many of the men missing are in the babyboomer era. They can be attracted to churches who have identified their needs and offer special services and programs for them.

Lastly, but not least, there is a greater need for substance and truth and authenticity to the gospel in the activity of the church, if it is to attract men. Men want to see the church do and be what it says it is. Otherwise the church lacks credibility to them. In *Practical Theology in the Black Church* it is pointed out that church ministries such as food and shelter ministries, literacy upgrade and job search services, have an enormous opportunity to reach out to men. When Christian men are used to interface with men, the opportunity to attract men to the church is enhanced greatly. However, a hunger ministry that uses middle class women exclusively to serve food to the men off the streets can loose its chance to attract men. This is especially true where the women are not spiritually mature and they look down on the men and run the ministry as if it is a handout situation. I am encouraged by the process of reviewing other dissertations. I believe now more than ever that the church can improve its effectiveness in securing strong male participation if it uses the information available and applies it to its specific situation.
Appendix Three

Dr. Robert Franklin..... As African American churches devote increasing attention to recruiting and retaining men, some female clergy and womanist theologians are concerned that gender justice and equal ministerial opportunities for women will be relegated to a subordinate status. Drawings upon two contemporary black male theologians and two womanist theologians indicate: a. what they say about gender roles in the black family, church and/or community; b. their specific visions and demands for gender justice; and, c. how they can inform, challenge, and/or support your thesis? Can the church focus on bringing in and utilizing more men without disheartening or displacing the women already there?

Let me begin by saying that neither I nor any of the womanist theologians see a direct conflict in the church reclaiming men into the body and the relegation of women to subordinate status. These are two distinct challenges for the church that need to be dealt with promptly for the overall health and cohesiveness of the community. The fact of the matter is, that in most churches, women are in a subordinate status. The main issue for women is the freedom to utilize their God given gifts in roles of leadership in the church. Many theologians, people who professionally address the study of God in light of the human situation, feel that the church is way out of line with God's will for the treatment of people in the church. In her
work *Black Theology and the Black Woman*, Jaquelyn Grant gives a ringing testimony on the status of black women in the church and in the community. I consider Dr. Grant's voice one of the major voices of the Black female theologian movement. She is strong and correct in asking, "Where are Black women in Black Theology?" She says that they are virtually invisible. Her exacting examination of Black Theology begins by questioning two assumptions that have been made in Black Theology and in the hierarchy of the church. She states that the current condition of Black women in these enterprises would lead one to believe that, either women have no place in the them or that men are capable of speaking for men and women. A reality check would indicate that Black men are no more capable of speaking for Black women than White men were in speaking for White women. She asks some very powerful, yet central questions that lift up the irrationality of sexism. How can a White society characterized by Black enslavement, colonialism and imperialism, provide the normative conception of women for Black society? Are the forces of liberation in the Black community and the Black Church exclusively defined by the struggle against racism. Her answer is no. Black Theology cannot be malevolent and leave the struggle of women as a non-issue. She says that if the liberation of women is not proclaimed, the church's proclamation cannot be about divine liberation. She then goes on to list the many ways that gender is used to oppress Black people who want to participate. She describes the historical insensitivity of the church to freely accept Black women to occupy leadership
positions, even though they make up almost 60-70% of most congregations. She goes on to postulate that it is only when Black women and men share jointly the leadership in theology and in the church and community that the Black nation will become strong and liberated. Dr. Grant's vision for leadership equality for Black women is already a reality in the community and in politics. The church and those who describe God in the context of the lives of Black people need do the same. Here in Atlanta, we already have many examples of Black females who pastor churches like Dr. Barbara King and Dr. Cynthia Hale. Many Black men attend those churches. I believe that God calls whosoever God chooses. I believe that men will worship in churches with female leadership. The major issue for men in most cases would be competency. It is time to quit hiding behind antiquated notions of women's inferiority due to Eve, or Jesus being a man. It assumes that God is not able to use some of God's creation to accomplish God's will. Churches that speak out against sexism liberate men and women.

Another female theologian that is of interest to me is Daphne Hampson. As a womanist theologian, Dr. Hampson grabbed my attention because she discussed the gender struggle of females in our society on deeper, psychological terms. She talks about the paradigms of powerlessness, powerlessness and empowerment. Her major point is that powerlessness and powerlessness (through the abnegation of power) are paradigms in the Judaeo-Christian tradition that reflect a male structuring of reality. She believes that feminist have a paradigm of mutual empowerment.
This paradigm she says, is not present in the current perspective of the tradition. Dr. Hampson goes on to say that the two sexes understand themselves in relation to the world and others very differently. "Men think in terms of an isolated self. They see themselves as in competition with each other. They are at the center of their world, and they see the world in relation to themselves. What is threatening for men is that others should come too close. Men have problems with relationship........By contrast women see themselves in relation to others. They are interested in connectedness and interdependence. What is threatening is that they should become isolated. Women have problems with differentiation of the self." (Modern Theology, 1988, ppg.235-245) She goes on to point out that the Trinity is most always an all male revue and that women, even Mary, are in subordinate roles and for the most part, go unnoticed. Her contention is that a God of power has in fact left one segment of society undelivered throughout recorded history. Then the traditional Christian image is further complicated by the fact that this God gives up His power and sacrifices for us. This divesting of self and power is then used as normative for love and Christian living. She says such a God and such a model offers little help for those who have been without power and deliverance. This image says that now they are expected to abnegate any power they can get their hands on. She does not see the present understanding of who God is and how God works, as adequate for the deliverance of women in a world of men. Her work is exciting and riveting. The
implications of her presentation are that changing the role of women at home, in church and in society will be a much more difficult thing than most people realize. She points out much to show that men and women have a long way to go to become truly humane. The ramifications of her work suggest a new world of relationships that operate completely differently than the current world. I see men as resistant to large numbers of women taking leadership roles, redefining the nature of God and reestablishing what it means to love one another.

Theologian James H. Evans Jr., wrote an article called Black Theology and Black Feminism. I hear him saying that based upon what we male black theologians have been saying about blackness, about the Bible, and about Jesus Christ, our tradition and sociological praxis are sexist and sinful. He says, "the norm of theological discourse is Jesus Christ, whose character and being is defined by his mission to liberate those who are oppressed. Wherever people are struggling to free themselves from oppression, Christ is among them." (The Journal of Religious Thought, Black Theology and Black Feminism, 1981) pg.53. He says that this same Christ then, must be on the side of women who are oppressed at home, at work and in the church. For me his vision for gender justice is biblically based. He skillfully uses quotes form Jacquelyn Grant to show how irrational it is for black male ministers to agree against St. Paul's position on slavery and yet welcome his position on the subjection of women. This secular, unjust, hypercritical nature of the church, represents the tradition of a few men, and is one of the things
that also turns men off to attending church. Black men want a church that truly stands for the things of God toward everyone. They want a church that consistently works on the side of God not men. If church tradition and leadership were more consistently obedient to the Word of God, more men would flock to it.

James Cones believes that the sources and norm of Black Theology must be consistent with the perspective of the Black community. He presents theology as the right of everyone to express their understanding of God from their life context. He believes that God takes sides with those who are oppressed. He describes Black Theologians and Black church leaders as routinely silent or insensitive to sexism. His challenge to Black men is to really stop and consider what kind of society we really wish to create. Do we want to mimic our oppressors or do we really want to create a beloved community? If Cone is right when he proclaims that theology must arise out of one's human experiences. Then black men must support black women as they flex their muscles to do theology and participate in the leadership of the church. Not only that, but black men need to really listen to what black women are saying about how they feel about our oppressive treatment of them everywhere. Cone says in his book Speaking the Truth, that "whatever else Christian theology might be, it must take sides with the victims who are economically and politically oppressed." (pg.39) This means that a church that can turn away from the economic and political oppression of women, is in no position to rescue and
empower the many black men who are now out of work, out of resources and out of hope. Also, I am impressed with Cone's focus on violence as a substantive issue that is a large part of sexism that must be stamped out. To allow any violence to go unchallenged is to neglect the nature of a gospel that teaches that the lion will lie down with the lamb. Men must give true respect and support to women or lose the respect and the support of women in their struggle against racism. Cone supports my contention that black men have strong feelings about the subordinate role that women should play. This impacts my model because many men do not want to go to a place (the church) that will demand that they treat women justly. Research suggest that men with low self esteem want to oppress somebody in order to feel good about themselves. Therefore, many black men do not want to give up control of the one thing they have under them, their women. They view the gospel like slave masters viewed it, certain parts of it can cause them a lot of trouble.

When one takes into account the many dynamics that could impact any church that increased its male participation drastically and quickly, other challenges must be anticipated and addressed. Among these new challenges is the need for new male converts to educated in the Word of God. All growth must be managed. People need time and training before they are put into leadership positions. Leadership criteria in the church must be based on spiritual maturity and development, (Christlikeness) not the social status of the individual in the secular world.
JUST FOR MEN....... 

ARMING MEN OF FAITH 

BUILDING THE WHOLE MAN... by Rev. William J. Harris
Dear

I am writing to introduce a dynamic program to support you in your effort to encourage and energize the men in your congregation and to initiate an effort to recruit more men for your congregation. **Arming Men of Faith** is a program designed to encourage men to become more pro-God, pro-church and pro-pastor by showing them the specific benefits of living faithful to the Word of God.

**Arming Men of Faith** is an experience designed to mimic Jesus' method of spreading his ministry. How did our Lord do it? He taught twelve men the Gospel first and then he sent them out. Then he used the twelve to equip seventy men and then he sent them out. Spiritually strong men out witnessing and living for God attracted so many other men that he faced the problem of how to feed **five thousand men in less than three years**.

Since **Arming Men of Faith** is a Spirit led, Biblically based program, let me offer you seven scriptural benefits of increasing your training effort with the men of faith you currently have:

1. **It will enable you to know the spiritual state of the men in your church.** "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flock..."(Proverbs 27:23).

2. **It will help you to focus on the main priority of the church.** "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."(Matthew 28:20).

3. **It will multiply your ministry.** "Faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also..."(II Timothy 2:2).

4. **It will lighten your counseling load.** "And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home... (I Corinthians 14:35).

5. **It will equip workers.** "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry..."(Ephesians 4:12).

6. **It will prepare men to be priest in their own homes.** "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up..."(Deuteronomy 6:7).
7. It will enable your men to understand and value your work as their Pastor. "Know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you..." (I Thessalonians 5:12).

_Arming Men of Faith_ is a vision God gave to me to help pastors to be viewed in a more positive light by their congregation and to fulfill the responsibility of their office to the glory of God. Since there is a limited amount of time most pastors have to do all the things they would for their flock, this seminar is designed to supplement the pastors efforts. The seminar is an 8-12 hour experience that can be accomplished in the form of a revival or a one day experience or a one day a week for a month experience.

The material used in this seminar is the result of the compilation of material from sermons, articles and books and the working of the Holy Spirit. Major insights have come from the men God has used to directly train me. These men include Rev. Charles G. Adams, Rev. Leon Sullivan, Rev. Wayne Thompson, Rev. C.L. Carter, Rev. John Osteen and Rev. Bill Gothard. In addition, materials of Rev. Toney Evans, Rev. Marilyn Hickey, Rev. Howard Thurman and Rev. Robert S. McGee have also been informative in structuring this experience. However, your input will be the key to making this program work for you. Careful attention will be given to stress those topics you have been focusing on as well as introducing areas you plan to move into in the near future.

_Arming Men of Faith_ is designed to help you fulfill two goals. One is to get each man to reach one man for your church. The other is to increase the number of men serving in your church. These goals will be tracked for a six month period for you.

If you are interested in obtaining this seminar for your ministry it will require at least one person from your church to work with me and the administrative support of your church. There is no flat charge for _Arming Men of Faith_. A reasonable honorarium may be agreed upon up front. This would be based on the type of experience you choose and the size of your church.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this program. Feel free to call me to discuss any questions or modifications that would best meet your needs. My number is (404) 964-8883.

Sincerely,

Rev. William J. Harris
858 Wagon Wheel Way
Fairburn, Georgia 30213
ARMING MEN OF FAITH

I want to thank you and ------- for this opportunity to share with you in this men's seminar. Since I will not be able to take you through the complete seminar in the time we have available today I have attached a few things that you can read when you have time. The goal of our time together today is to help you become a more Godly man, husband, and father. Since you have learned so much by hearing the Word of God through such a dynamic pastor as ------- and by your personal efforts to do God's will here, I hope to help you understand how to further apply the things you know to your life.

Let us pray:

Our Faith Creed

This is my Bible. I am what it says I am. I have what it says I have. I can do what it says I can do. The more I read it; and obey it, the more I prosper.

Today I will be taught the Word of God. I boldly confess, my mind is alert, and my heart is receptive. I will never be the same.

I am about to receive, the incorruptible, indestructible, everliving, seed, of the Word of God. I will never be the same. Never, never, never. I will never be the same in Jesus name Amen.

2nd Timothy 3:16 " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Psalm 1, Jeremiah 17:5-10 and James 1:1-22 explain to us that there are basically two types of men walking God's green earth. One man belongs to God and serves him. The other serves a hard taskmaster, himself, the devil, the world.

I invite you to see how all of us have at one time served God and at other times served the enemy. We are in a war. We need to know who the enemy is and what's at stake and how to win.
YOUR PERSONAL SPIRITUAL INVENTORY

1. I believe that God wants men to: ____________________________

2. God's opinion of our relationship is probably: ________________

3. The amount of time I have spent studying the Bible is ________

4. The amount of time I spend praying is ______________________

5. My performance as the priest in my own home is _____________

6. My definition of God is __________________________________

7. God's has promised to do the following for men who live for Him:
   __________________________________________________________
In churches today we have many services, programs and activities in an effort to perfect ourselves for the coming of the Lord. Yet, the key fundamental to building a strong, spiritual and effective church lies in building Men of Faith. The world does not lack intelligent men, skilled men or gifted men, what the world needs now is Godly men. The world is corrupt because the body of Christ is weak. The Church is weak because families are weak. Families are weak because husbands and fathers are weak. Husbands and fathers are weak because men are weak. Men are weak because no one has consistently taught them to be Godly. The key element to change our homes, churches and communities is the male. God has placed him as the head of the family. He is the key to reclaiming morality, kicking out dope, reinstating respect for women and life. Jesus transformed the world by training twelve men. These twelve men then were used to train seventy. The seventy soon multiplied so that Jesus faced the task of how to feed five thousand. The five thousand formed the people of the Way, who have now multiplied into over a billion Christians worldwide. God's method for transforming a dying world is illustrated in the ministerial methodology of Jesus Christ. If you want to change the world, change the men, train them to be Godly. Make them Men of Faith.

Jesus never told the church to get a lot of members and build large buildings. Jesus said "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you," (Matthew 28:19). It is clear that the great commission of our Lord is for the church to make disciples, men who are Chrislike because they walk in love by faith. A disciple is a faithful follower of our Lord. Therefore the church should be in the business of teaching men to follow Christ faithfully.

Jesus taught at least four things that His disciples should be. One, a disciple should be a person who acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus Christ daily. In Luke 14:26-27 Jesus states, "whoever does not take up his cross daily and follow me cannot be my disciple." A person may be nice, they may be a church member, but they are not a disciple unless they are earnestly following Jesus daily. To follow someone daily is to be openly identified with them. Real disciples were and are people who get up from their way of life and decide that learning what their master is teaching is more important than continuing to live as they have been. There commitment to being like their master causes them to study everything their master says or does so that they might be as He is.

Two, a disciple is one committed doing what he has learned from his master. In John 8:31 Jesus says,"If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples. Jesus did not say if you read the Bible or if you go to church, but rather if you continue
(or walk) in what you know of me. Jesus says our true worship is reflected in our new walk (lifestyle), not in our traditional ritualistic services.

Third, a disciple of Christ is one whose person has been changed from a private selfish attitude, into a servant of God whose character has been transformed to demonstrate unconditional love. In John 13:35 Jesus says, "By this shall all men know you are my disciples, that you love one another." Disciples of Jesus Christ have right relationships with God's creation. This includes wives, children, parents, extended family, friends, coworkers, acquaintances, strangers and even enemies. God is love and Jesus our master has instructed His disciples to be a people who love others in spite of the circumstances.

Lastly, Jesus said in John 15:8, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples. Disciples of Jesus Christ are those who are committed to bearing fruit. This fruit is manifested in their speech (Hebrews 13:15), in their walk (Galatians 5:16-24) and in their beliefs (Romans 1:16-17). God is calling the church to do His will, His way. This starts by teaching and training men to be disciples of our Lord and the men will make a difference in the environment in which they live. Men must be armed with the word of God to increase their faith and empower their lives.
I. The Secret to the Abundant and Victorious Life.
   A. Building the whole man; man back in the driver's seat.
      God's plan for man; the stolen legacy; The lineage of Adam.
   B. Your home, a castle after Eden and before Heaven.
      God's man as husband and head of home; The lineage of Jacob.
   C. Living victoriously in today's society.
      Four misbeliefs that rob man's power; The lineage of Joseph.

II. The Way back to God and over the enemy.
   A. The power of a good relationship with God.
      Trusting and waiting on God; The story of Job.
   B. The beauty of a healthy relationship with yourself.
      Gratitude, confession and repentance; The sign of Jonah.
   C. The treasures found in Godly relationship with others.
      Forgiveness and unconditional love; The symbol of Hosea.

III. Equipment and Ammunition to endure the journey.
   A. Speaking according to the will of God.
      The power of words and praise; The example of David.
   B. Believing according to the will of God.
      The power of being God minded; The struggle of Elijah.
   C. Living according to the will of God.
      The power of self control; The lesson of Moses.

IV. What God has given each man to take dominion.
   A. The unfailing authority of the Word of God.
      God's covenant and promises to us; The blessing on Abraham.
   B. The power of walking in the Holy Spirit
      God's presence in the believer; The submission of Saul.
   C. The victorious example of Jesus Christ
      God's will and way for us; The meaning of the life of Jesus.
Tearing Down the Strongholds of Bitterness

Soul: Our minds, wills, and emotions vs. spirit (Greek psuche)—Hebrews 4:12

Ground: Jurisdictional area ("place" in our souls)—Ephesians 4:27

Stronghold: Mind-set and conclusions contrary to Scripture—II Corinthians 10:4-5

Tormentors: Afflictions allowed by God to teach us mercy—Matthew 18:34

Principality: A ruler of evil over a jurisdictional area—Ephesians 6:12

Steps of Action:

1. Confess the sin of bitterness—Hebrews 12:15; I John 1:9
2. Ask God to regain surrendered "ground"—Psalm 23:3
3. Tear down strongholds with truth—II Corinthians 10:4-5
4. Show mercy by forgiving your offender—Matthew 6:14-15
THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

1. Is a new creation - II. Corith. 5:17-21
2. Is made alive in his Spirit - Ephesians 2:1-5
3. Is delivered from the power of darkness - Cols.1:12-13
4. Is blessed by God - Galatians 3:13-14
5. Is more than a conqueror - Romans 8:37
6. Is a partaker of the divine nature - II Peter 1:3-9
7. Is a son of God with power over Satan - John 1:12

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SOLDIER

1. Every thought - II. Corinthians 10:5
2. Every Word - Matthew 12:36
3. Every Deed - II. Corithian 5:10
4. Every Motive - Jeremiah 17:10
5. Every Attitude - Phillipians 2:1-5

STANDING GUARD

1. Over our Spirit man - Galatians 5:16-26
2. Over our physical man - Proverbs 6:16-19, I Corith. 10:6
3. Over our intellectual man - Romans 12:1-2
4. Over our emotional man - Ephesians 4:23-32

EXAMPLES

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TEN SCRIPTURAL CONVICTIONS

...which every man must teach his family in order to protect them from the destructive influences of wrong desires, false philosophies, and Satanic temptations.

1. The Bible is the inspired Word of God and the final authority for my life. Prayer is the key to the power to do God's will.

2. My purpose in life is to seek God with my whole heart and to build my goals around His priorities.

3. My body is the living temple of God and must not be defiled by the lusts of the world (drugs, overeating, overdrinking).

4. My church must teach foundational truths of the Bible and reinforce my basic convictions.

5. My children and grandchildren belong to God, and it is my responsibility to teach them Scriptural principles, Godly character, and basic convictions.

6. My activities must never weaken the Scriptural convictions of another Christian.

7. My marriage is a life-long commitment to God and to my marriage partner.

8. My money is a trust from God and must be earned and managed according to Scriptural principles.

9. My words must be in harmony with God's Word at all times.

10. Meditating on the Word of God is the key to my growth, prosperity and protection.
HOW MEN LET THEIR WIVES DOWN

CAUSE

1. When a husband fails to be a spiritual leader...
2. When a husband allows problems to continue and even get worse...
3. When a husband does not support his wife in disciplining the children...
4. When a husband spends extra money on things which only he enjoys...
5. When a husband does not accept himself...
6. When a husband praises or admires other women...
7. When a husband verbalizes love only when he wants a physical relationship with his wife...
8. When a husband forgets anniversaries and other special occasions...
9. When a husband does not praise his wife for specific things...
10. When a husband does not spend time talking with his wife...
11. When a husband gets abusive with his wife...
12. When a husband makes bad judgments and unwise business decisions...

EFFECT

His wife feels insecure.
His wife feels helpless and takes matters into her own hands.
His wife blames him for rebellious children.
His wife resents him.
His wife feels the same rejection from him.
His wife feels inferior and jealous.
His wife feels degraded and used and finds it hard to love him.
His wife feels unimportant and not cherished by him.
His wife is frustrated, not knowing how to please him.
His wife finds others who will listen to her feelings.
His wife cannot trust him or feel good about their marriage.
His wife resists his will in future decisions.
CAUSE

13. When a husband is not alert to dangers which his wife faces...

14. When a husband neglects needed home repairs...

15. When a husband does not have good manners...

16. When a husband lusts after other women...

17. When a husband loses his temper and does not ask forgiveness...

18. When a husband does not acknowledge God as the head of his life at all times...

EFFECT

His wife feels unprotected.

His wife builds up resentment and impatience.

His wife does not feel that she is special.

His wife feels inadequate in meeting her husband's physical needs.

His wife reacts to his pride.

His wife resists submitting to her husband's leadership.
### HOW MEN LET THEIR CHILDREN DOWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSE</th>
<th>EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When a father does not fulfill promises...</td>
<td>His children are afraid to trust him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When a father does not admit that he is wrong...</td>
<td>His children lose confidence in his leadership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. When a father refuses to ask for forgiveness...</td>
<td>His children react to his pride.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. When a father does not have right priorities...</td>
<td>His children feel that he is too busy for them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. When a father is too strict in discipline...</td>
<td>His children have their spirits broken.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. When a father gives too much freedom to his children...</td>
<td>His children see freedom as a form of rejection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. When a father neglects his parents...</td>
<td>His children do not honor the counsel of their grandparents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. When a father does not love his wife...</td>
<td>His children take up offenses for their mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. When a father neglects God's word...</td>
<td>His children neglect the authority of God and the Bible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. When a father disciplines in anger...</td>
<td>His children become bitter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. When a father neglects his responsibility for his children's education...</td>
<td>His children cease to respect him as a teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. When a father does not teach his children how to please him...</td>
<td>His children feel frustrated and rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAUSE</td>
<td>EFFECT</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. When a father focuses on the outward beauty and talent of other children...</td>
<td>His children feel inferior and reject themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. When a father is impatient with his children...</td>
<td>His children seek approval from their friends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. When a father has inconsistent standards...</td>
<td>His children become confused.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. When a father lets his wife assumes spiritual leadership...</td>
<td>His children may regard religion as being childish in later years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. When a father does not have Scriptural convictions...</td>
<td>His children accept situational ethics, and they excuse in excess what their father allowed in moderation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. When a father does not spend intimate, quality time with his children....</td>
<td>His children are insecure and have less self esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. When a father spares the rod...</td>
<td>His children are spoiled and do not learn discipline and accountability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. When a father does not praise his children...</td>
<td>His children feel they can never please their father.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If the lottery man, gambling man or dope dealer tosses out an economic lifeline while the church stays on the shore, closed behind stained-glass windows, repeating a sanctimonious agenda, it cannot expect to reach and save black men.

Why Most Black Men Won't Go To Church.

By Rev. William Harris

I am sure you will agree that there is something strikingly odd on Sunday morning in your local church. The oddity is that the church is almost all female. This is not only true of the black church; white churches across America have, on average an over two-thirds female membership. Many times the question is posed by the young and inexperienced and by the seasoned and tested—where are the men?

The question is often answered cynically or negatively with spurious comments and suggestions that they are in the bars, at the dog track, or on the basketball or tennis courts. Given the persistent power and potential of the church and the strength and inspiration that is forthcoming from the worship experience, it seems odd that more black men are not in church. Right? Wrong! Quite frankly, I am surprised that the church has as many men as it does.

Given the acuteness of this problem, I want to prayerfully share with you some of the reasons that many black men won't and don't attend church. Since it would be impossible to list all the reasons, I will list seven major reasons based on my experience, and I will confine my comments principally to the black Christian church.

The first (but not most important) reason that many black men choose not to attend church is that they find church hypocritical and untenable. Many black men are not gainfully employed and church is a social setting where many people are more concerned about what someone is wearing rather than the substance and relevance of the minister's message. It is frustrating and irritating to go somewhere and sit for three hours through song after song, and announcement after announcement, with someone asking you (more than once) for money that you don't have; surrounded by people who aren't seriously trying to commune with the divine presence anyhow.

The second reason many black men don't go to church is because the church has not sought to accommodate men. The church's schedule has remained rigid, preferring to compete against the NBA and NFL for 1:00 p.m. Sunday, rather than starting a little earlier.
so that people may worship and have their afternoons open for other personal and family activities. Many churches start early but drag the service on and on, dissipating an inspirational mood into a tiring, boring, bondage.

The third reason is that the prevailing doctrine of today's Christian church is illogical to the 20th century man's mind. A theology that teaches "turn the other cheek when struck; love your enemies; bless those who persecute you," that presents a blue-eyed, long, blonde-haired, effeminate Jesus, that says, "just pray and believe and you shall receive it," runs contrary to the psyche of an oppressed, rejected, abused and disenfranchised black male.

Every day black men see that praying and getting emotional will not make everything all right. There is a white man and, now, a yellow man out there who are whisking our569 backs, and just praying or talking about it does not appear to change anything.

Now that I have given you a few obvious reasons why many black men won't go to church, let's get to some deeper reasons. The fourth reason is that the church is based on a love epic in which the Heavenly is symbolized in earthly relationships. Our Father's identity and role is understood most easily by earthly fathers. Earthly fathers are creators of life, and it is their role to nurture, protect and bless it. The black male that has never had an earthly father they could depend on and ask things of has a major adjustment to make to believe that he can just pray and receive things from a Heavenly Father.

When an earthly father is either absent, irresponsible, disinterested, negligent or unable to provide good gifts for his children, the child comes up never having experienced a father whom they can rely on totally; who gives unconditionally and is available consistently. This type of early childhood creates a male child who does not readily see that they can ask of God, their Father, for whatever they need and that He will hear and respond. For this reason, the constant talk of God and chatter about Jesus, God's son, never sinks in—it is blocked by the absence of the experience of an earthly father that gave good gifts. Since many homes have no God-like male presence, many males do not have the belief system that they can receive from their Father.

Fifth, black males have a problem with the church setting because they have a problem with being submissive. Submission is the act of yielding to the power of another. In church, God is great; all honor goes to Him, all glory belongs to Him. His will shall be done. God is the first and final authority. Black males live in a world in which they are oppressed. Oppression means you are forced to be in a submissive role. This is more difficult than voluntary submission. Moreover, most black males are raised in homes where the consistent, positive, authoritative and relevant male role model is missing. By the time the male child is 6 years of age, the mother is already introducing him as "my little man" or "the little man of my house." The sin of usurping begins. The male child appropriates power beyond his years and learns quickly to rebel against authority. In too many homes a single mother is either too authoritative or not authoritative enough; thus the child grows up with an unhealthy attitude towards submission to women or anyone else. The result is a male child that cannot or will not draw near to a God that requires submission for an authentic relationship.

The sixth reason most black males won't go to church is that they have a problem with the preachers. In the first place, most preachers are charismatic and authoritative. A male who is made to feel second and inferior all week does not joyfully seek out another situation where another man is over him. To make matters worse, wives and girlfriends build up the preacher and talk about the preacher, creating a social tension and distrust. Then, should the male go to church, he is often met with a sermon pointing out male weakness and infidelity, belittling, and threats of Hell's fire. The preacher is right and the man is wrong. The preacher is up front and able to speak, but he is seated and expected to listen. The preacher is in charge (for better or worse), and he is expected to govern himself accordingly (that is, to do whatever the preacher wants done).

My seventh reason is the most important. Many black males won't go to church because today's church does not address their needs. The black male needs money, job opportunities, business resources and relevant skill training. The black man needs an economic shot in the arm. The church collects money, but does little to create opportunities through which he can make more money. Jesus understood the need to feed people before preaching at them. Today's church must likewise set the table for the black male before asking him to pay to have the dishes done.

People often criticize black men because of activities they engage in other than church. However, no drowning man asks who is throwing him a lifeline. If the lottery man, gambling man or dope dealer tosses out an economic lifeline while the church stays on the shore, closed behind stained-glass windows, repeating a sanctimonious agenda, it cannot expect to reach and save black men. As a pastor, I have tried to point out that some structural problems exist that keep black males out. Our churches are not full of women because preachers are so handsome and entertaining. No, this is a small part of why we attract women and not men.

When a spiritual program is economically relevant, black men will participate. The Muslims have proved that. I challenge all pastors to receive these problems as opportunities to improve their overall structure. I believe with all my heart that if we pastors "do the right thing" God will bless the church with black men.
MINIMUM
FINANCIAL SUPPORT SUGGESTIONS

1. Allow trainer to preach to launch and/or close the program and lift a love offering for his efforts.

2. Support the cost of labor and materials for each training session at a rate consistent with church size.
   - under 500 members..........$50.00 per session
   - 500 to 1000 ..............$75.00 per session
   - 1000 to 3000...............$100.00 per session
   - 3000 members up..........$150.00 per session

3. Allow the sale of additional tapes and articles at all sessions.
Rev. William James Harris was born in Columbus, Ohio. He received his B.A. Degree in Economics from Denison University in Granville, Ohio. He earned his M.B.A. in Marketing from the University of Southern California and his Masters of Divinity from the Morehouse School of Religion at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Reverend Harris is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Ministry majoring in community development and focusing on family counseling. He is also currently writing his first book "Why Most Men Won't Attend Church", and travels extensively throughout the nation as an evangelist and a church consultant with his Arming Men of Faith seminar. He is the founder and president of Word of God Christian Communication Inc, a consulting service for churches that provides Biblical training materials and leadership development seminars.

Reverend Harris was employed by the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan as a marketing research specialist when he received his call to the ministry. He was licensed, ordained and installed as a pastor by his father in ministry, Rev. Dr. Charles G. Adams, pastor of the Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan. Rev. Harris is the founding Pastor of the Fountain of Faith Missionary Baptist Church in Riverdale, Georgia, where God blessed him to start a church with fifteen members and to bring his congregation to 400 members in four years. He also served as the Executive Director of Atlanta's Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) from 1986-1990.

Reverend Harris is a gifted speaker and writer. He has ministered in the Soviet Union, England, France and the Netherlands. He has spoken at Morehouse College, Morris Brown College, Denison University, Kennesaw College, the Bronner Brothers Beauty Show, the National Convocation for the 100 Black Men, the Georgia Assembly, and hundreds of churches throughout the United States. He is a regular columnist for the Atlanta Metro Magazine and Upscale Magazine.

Reverend Harris' ministerial abilities have been recognized in many circles. He was chosen as one of the nations top 50 Spiritual Leaders by Upscale Magazine. His awards include Leadership Atlanta, Benjamin E. Mays Fellow, winner of Consortium Graduate Fellowship for Business Management, UNCF Scholarship winner and a National Merit Scholar.

Reverend Harris is married to the former Shari L. Taylor, a pharmacist, a gospel singer, and graduate of Spelman College and Mercer University School of Pharmacy. They have one son, William Ali Harris, age 13. A born again, spirit-filled warrior and watchman for this present age, receive ye him.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHURCH</th>
<th>PREACHING EVENT</th>
<th>SEMINAR</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>1. First Iconium Baptist - Men's Day</td>
<td>The Brotherhood</td>
<td>3/93</td>
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<td>2. Mt. Calvary Baptist - Sunday Service</td>
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<td>4/93</td>
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<td>3. Mt. Nebo Baptist - Church Anniversary</td>
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<td>4. Morris Brown College - Parents Day</td>
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<td>5/93</td>
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<td>5. Turner Chapel A.M.E. - Men's Day</td>
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<td>5/93</td>
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<td>6. Carter Tabernacle C.M.E. - Sunday Service and seminar</td>
<td>Orlando, Florida</td>
<td>6/93</td>
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<td>7. Turner Monumental A.M.E. - Men's Day</td>
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<td>6/93</td>
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<td>8. 100 Black Men of America National Convocation</td>
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<td>9. Hartford Baptist Church - Sunday Service</td>
<td>Detroit, Michigan</td>
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<td>10. Summerhill Baptist Church - Men's Day</td>
<td>Pelham, Georgia</td>
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<td>11. Wesley Chapel U.M. Church - Sunday Service</td>
<td>West Point, Georgia</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Flint Ridge Baptist - Men's Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Buelah Baptist - Rededication Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>9/93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Philadelphia Church of Deliverance - Men's Day</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
<td>9/93</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Ray of Hope Disciples of Christ - Men's Seminar</td>
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<td>9/93</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Zion Baptist Church - Men's Day and Men's Seminar</td>
<td></td>
<td>10/93</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Bethel A.M.E. Church - College Day</td>
<td>Columbia, South Carolina</td>
<td>10/93</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Morehouse College - Cannon Appreciation Day</td>
<td></td>
<td>12/93</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE II

**Arming Men of Faith Evaluation Survey Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Marital Status S/M Phone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. How long have you been a member of this church?  
   - 70 percent of all respondents have been in their church less than five years

2. Do you presently serve in the church in a leadership role?  
   - 50 percent of all respondents were in leadership roles

3. How has this church been of benefit to you as a man?  
   (1) increased my knowledge of Christian manhood,  
   (2) taught me God's Word and about God's character  
   (3) helped me to develop a more spiritual outlook

4. What would you change about this church to make it more attractive to other men?  
   (1) do more teaching on Christian manhood  
   (2) put more men in leadership and visible roles  
   (3) develop a program to enhance leadership development from a spiritual base.

5. How has this seminar helped you?  
   (1) reinforced my spiritual convictions  
   (2) made me morally and ethically stronger  
   (3) made me more aware of Satan and evil in my life and how it entraps me

6. What would you change about this seminar to make it better?  
   (1) have more handouts and reading material  
   (2) have more time for questions and answers  
   (3) make the seminar longer
**TABLE II cont.**

7. What will you do differently having shared in this experience? (1) focus more on the development of my spirit  
(2) consider God's point of view even over lesser items  
(3) witness to other men

8. How many of the sessions did you attend?  
75 percent of all respondents attended two thirds of all seminar sessions.

9. Do you wish this would be extended? All respondents indicated that they wished that the seminar would be extended

10. What should all churches be doing to help attract and keep men? (1) emphasize the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (2) go out and recruit men, (3) have more activities for men.

Comments you would like to make -
APPENDIX V

TABLE III

PROJECT SUMMARY
WHY MOST BLACK MEN DON'T ATTEND CHURCH

Please check one

PASTOR _______ MINISTER _______
CHURCH MEMBER ________ NON-CHURCH MEMBER ________

1. Is attending church regularly an important item in the development of Black men today? (1) Ninety percent of all those surveyed said yes. Those who said no indicated that church attendance was not important if there was no good church around to attend.

2. How regularly do you attend church?
   less than once per month 10% 
   more than twice a month 35% 
   at least 4 times a month 55%

3. Name three things or more that discourage men from attending church. (1) Irrelevant messages/poor overall leadership (2) Disbelief in God/lack of priority as an adult because not taught it was important as a child. (3) Amount of time of the church service is too long/competing activities 
   ----OTHER COMMENTS----would rather watch sporting events, out partying too late the night before, feel intimidated and disrespected by the pastor

4. Describe the type of church or ministry that attracts men to attend and participate? (1) A ministry whose polity was very inclusive and valued the opinions and person of other men (2) A ministry that deals with contemporary, relevant issues (3) A ministry that has a very active outreach into the community
   OTHER COMMENTS--ministries that cater to families and their needs, teaching ministeries, ministeries that do not overemphasize money.
5. What should the church do (your church do if you are a member of one) to meet the needs of men and encourage the men who do attend? (1) have more specific activities for men on a regular basis (2) show men how valuable they are, teach them and affirm them (3) pick men up when they fall and love on them

OTHER COMMENTS---mentor the young men to prevent future attrition, affirm male spirituality and recognize it as being different from female spirituality, train the men so that they can feel comfortable to function in various capacities.

6. Does God care if men attend church? Ninety seven percent of all respondents said yes, God does care!

7. What do you think God will be upset about with today's church? (1) God will be upset because of the hypocrisy of those who are in the church but do not live according to the Word. (2) God will be upset because the churches are not focused on meetings the needs of the very communities they are in. (3) God will be upset because of the lack of relevance and the complacency of the church in the midst of so much sin in the world. OTHER COMMENTS---God will be upset with many fake and egotistic ministers, too much focus on money, to tied in to tradition, poor use of resources and people on the part of the church leadership.
TABLE IV
Why Most Black Men Don't Attend Church

1. **Poor and irrelevant Messages** -- does not speak to relevant issues and concerns. 
   Lack of a meaningful worship experience.
2. **Disbelief in God** -- not taught to value spiritual things growing up --have worldly 
   values and priorities-- see church as a waste of time.
3. **Service takes up too much time**- too many announcements --choir encores-- never 
   starts on time and ends on time --rather do competing activities like sports, making 
   money.
4. **Hypocrisy of the church members and the pastor** -- do not need to go to church to 
   be a good Christian. -- can worship God without going to church.
5. **There is too much emphasis on money** -- always begging.
6. **The church's regular activities are not relevant/contempary** ---does not meet his 
   personal needs ( job, social life, excitement, activities).
7. **Poor leadership**-- pastor is egotistical and controlling--lacks credibility--distrust of 
   the agenda-- lack of confidence in the overall benefit of participating.
8. **Ineffective outreach**-- the church is not meeting the needs of the community.
9. **Lack of respect for or valuing of men**--pastor caters to the women.
10. **Spiritual oppression** --satanic forces are at work to keep men out.

**OTHER COMMENTS**

Christianity is basically the religion of our oppressor (the white man) 
out partying too late the night before to get up 
pastor is too intimidating,puts guilt trip on you 
poor doctrine is presented 
church is too wrapped up in tradition 
burnt out from working in churches so long 
cannot receive God as Father

Rev. William J. Harris 1/1/94
APPENDIX VI

Why Most Black Men Should Attend Church

1. Out of obedience and gratitude to God.
2. To gain the power to cope with life by developing the spiritual man.
3. To maintain a strong moral and ethical base.
4. To learn the Word of God --to develop a closer relationship with God.
5. To participate in the economic redevelopment of our community.
6. To strengthen and support the development of the family.
7. To develop leadership skills and gifts.
8. To participate in the activities to build the Kingdom of God.
9. To build a network of spiritual friends to fellowship with.
10. To gain wisdom and understanding about life.

OTHER COMMENTS

to learn how to recognize evil

to have Godly role models

to give back to others

to get information about ourselves

to develop focus and discipline

to confront evil and take dominion over it
Reference Lists


Kroll, Una 1986. Can you be a Christian and not go to Church (Summer) Encounters: Exploring Christian Faith pgs. 75-84.


