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**ABSTRACT**

**DEVELOPMENT OF SEMINARS TO IMPROVE FAMILY  
RELATIONSHIPS AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE  
AMONG GHANAIAN EMIGRANT FAMILIES IN  
ADVENTIST IMMIGRANT CHURCHES  
IN NEW ENGLAND**

by

**John K. Amoah**

**Adviser: Dr. Richard L. Trott**

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPMENT OF SEMINARS TO IMPROVE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS  
AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AMONG GHANAIAN EMIGRANT  
FAMILIES IN ADVENTIST IMMIGRANT CHURCHES IN NEW ENGLAND

Name of Researcher: John K. Amoah

Name and degree of faculty advisor: Richard L. Trott, DMin

Date completed: April 2011

### Problem

Family relational problems are on the rise, while family spiritual development is waning in the majority of immigrant Ghanaian churches in the Southern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It is apparent that the changing dynamics in migration and the acculturation process have a significant impact on family relationships and spiritual experience. While the observation may be anecdotal, it begs for systematic study and improvement. This dissertation project seeks to improve immigrant family relationships and family spiritual development through seminars.

## Method

This dissertation involves the development of a six-session seminar based on the areas of reported concern: family relationships, financial management, spiritual priorities, conflict management, communication, and parenting. A survey questionnaire was developed to corroborate the observed problems prior to the seminar and to test the effect of the seminar six months after its implementation. The pre-test and post-test were administered to families attending the New England Ghanaian, Hartford Ghanaian, and Providence Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches of Southern New England.

## Results

The findings supported the hypothesis that there were family relational problems among the subjects, which correlate to the decline in family spiritual experience. The effectiveness of this seminar was evaluated on the basis of its ability to improve family relationships and spiritual development and also the fact that a pastor in a local church can conduct it.

## Conclusion

Healthy families make healthy churches. The participants acknowledged the fact that seminars addressing critical family issues, like the seminar offered, are needed, not only for the Ghanaian churches in Southern New England, but also for all churches on a regular basis, at least biannually or annually. This seminar can be repeated among different ethnic groups and in other countries to establish its generalizability. The impact of migration on family relationships and family spiritual growth needs to be seriously assessed on a wider scale.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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RELATIONSHIPS AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE  
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IN NEW ENGLAND

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

John K. Amoah

April 2011

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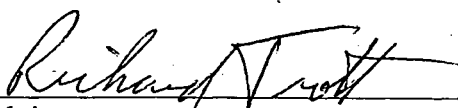
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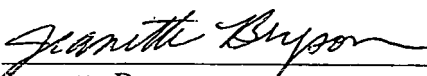
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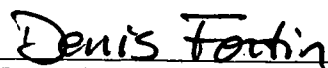
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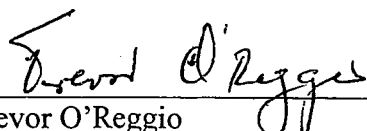
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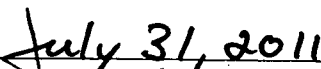
  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing this dissertation was possible due to the help and encouragement of a great many people. First, I borrowed from John Sebastian Bach, who used to write on the first page of every new composition, *Soli Deo Gloria: Glory to God Alone*.

I want to acknowledge the guidance, determination, and scholarship of my advisor Dr. Richard L. Trott. Thank you, Dr. Trott, for saying “Yes” to being my advisor. You have made a difference. You have been accessible, decisive, yet open to new ideas on this journey with me. You gave me the confidence and the courage to push on till the end. Dr. Richard L. Trott, I owe you much.

Dr. Jeanette Bryson, my second reader, you deserve special mention for your support. You took the pains, through many hours, patiently reviewing the chapters and offering suggestions. More significantly, your penetrating comments helped to shape my thoughts. You both were the catalyst through which completion of this dissertation has been realized.

I am grateful to Dr. Trevor O’Reggio for accepting the invitation to be the external examiner. A very special thanks to Dr. Kenley Hall, who facilitated the defense discussions, and to Yvonna Applewhite, for her understanding and constant reminders of requirements and deadlines. Also, to Dr. Laren Kurtz for his editing assistance. In addition, the assistance and the expertise of Dr. Jerome D Thayer, Dr. Jacob J. Nortey, Dr. Issumael Nzamutuma were invaluable. I am indebted to Dr. Jane Thayer who fueled

the excitement in my cohort at the beginning of this journey.

I am exceedingly grateful to the Southern New England conference of Seventh-day Adventists for being gracious, Dr. Whitford Shaw for his encouragement, the three Ghanaian churches in the study, together with the Quinebaug SDA church for their understanding during the writing of this dissertation.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my friends and colleagues Dr. Kwabena Donkor and Dr. Hermann V.A. Kuma, whose conversations helped me to hone the ideas. Dr. Peter K. Omane and his wife, Linda, for their boundless hospitality. To Mr. Isaac K. Annan and Vivian Amoah Avotri a special thanks.

I owe a significant debt to my parents and siblings whose prayers have sustained me and have always stood by me, especially David Baker, my friend who encouraged me throughout the journey.

Thank you to Samuel, my son, for being so understanding and supportive. Finally, a special recognition to Chrystine Bernard-Amoah, my wife, who helped me believe in myself and gave me the courage to follow my dreams. Your influence and faith in me fueled my suppressed desires and helped make them a reality. Once again, I thank my God for His loving care over my family.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Problem**

In recent decades, many Ghanaians have immigrated to the western world. For many of these individuals, emigration results in greater security, better living conditions, and a safe haven from persecution. However, there are two noticeable happenings among immigrant families. First, personal observation in my immigrant churches suggests that there is laxity in the religious experience of migrant members, resulting in limited regular family devotions, prayer, and Bible study. Second, there are observable relational difficulties not only between husbands and wives, but also between parents and children. Furthermore, it appears that these two problems are related—altered and disrupted family relationships following emigration seem to affect the immigrant family’s spiritual experience. Improvement in family relationships will, hopefully, provide a needed fertile environment for spiritual life to flourish.

#### **Purpose of the Dissertation**

The purpose of this dissertation was to develop and implement a seminar to improve some of the major problems that alter or disrupt immigrant family relationships and spiritual development between spouses and between parents and children in the New England Ghanaian, Providence and Connecticut Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches in New England.



## **Justification of the Dissertation**

In spite of a manifest external religiosity among many Ghanaian migrant church members, there seems to be a disconnection between their spiritual and family life experience. Often, external religiosity does not positively affect the family life experience.

Immigrant families are experiencing numerous family issues that need to be addressed. Husbands have problems relating to their wives due to gender role changes. Husbands and wives do not spend quantity or quality time with each other or with their children. The parents' view of the children is that "children are to be seen and not to be heard," therefore, children's opinions are not valued. As a result, parents do not make children a major priority in life; parents, somehow, expect children to turn out right without consciously imparting the faith to them. Family members maintain that they did not have these problems before they emigrated. The financial demands of extended family members put much pressure on emigrant couples resulting in disagreements and disputes.

Observation indicates that immigrant families did not envision the challenges they would face. They do not seem to have the coping mechanisms needed to deal with culture shock.

## **Methodology**

Theological reflection centered on migration in the Bible in terms of its impact on family life and spiritual experience, as well as how spirituality was maintained under these circumstances. There was a review of current literature on the effects of migration on immigrant families' relationships.

A Pre-seminar survey was conducted to determine the problems, perception and causes of family relations and spiritual problems among the New England, Providence and Connecticut Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist immigrant families in New England. A seminar was developed and presented to improve spiritual and family relationships in the three churches.

A post-seminar survey was done to determine immediate knowledge and understanding of the spiritual and relational problems happening among the immigrant families. Post-seminar analysis was done to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and the degree to which it improved immigrant family relationships.

This project was completed by February 2010.

### **Expectations**

This study will equip the researcher with tools to help immigrant families' spiritual experience as it improves their family relationships. This dissertation will seek to improve immigrant families' spiritual experience and hopefully, provide a needed fertile environment for the flourishing of spiritual life. This dissertation will furnish pastors, community leaders, and immigrant churches a potential model to help families who are trapped in this quagmire

### **Limitations of the Dissertation**

As with all research studies, this one is not without its limitations. It should be noted that there were a number of limiting factors noted throughout the project. They may be summarized as follows:

## Time

The duration of the project was approximately six months, and that included the pre-test survey, development and implementation of seminars, and finally, the post-test survey. The scope and time naturally added constituent of limitation that might have been more definitive had there been time (years, and not months). This would have given the subjects more time to develop the skills taught and to render comprehensive results and fuller effectiveness of the project.

## Behavior Change

Regulating one's behavior which has been built over years is not something that could be done in six months. This project was to bring about some modification in the lives of the participants; however, the time allotted for the assessment was limited for bringing about a distinct behavior modification. Four to five years duration of the project would possibly have provided ample time to assess whether the immediate results were due to impulsive reaction, or indeed, a behavior modification that was intended.

## Method of Assessment

It is worth noting that using one method (survey) in assessing a modification in family relationship may not yield exhaustive qualitative results. Focus groups, interviews and family observations could have added to a more definitive analysis and results had there been enough time.

## Definition of Terms

*Migration* refers to the act or movement of populations from one place to another. It involves conquest of land from both nature and fellow men, adapting to new

environments, intermixture of culture, and the blending of blood. It is a constant striving for something better.

*Emigration* is leaving one's country to permanently resettle in another country.

*Immigration* is the act of moving into or settling in another country or region, temporarily or permanently.

*Acculturation* refers to the process through which immigrants and their children attain the values, behavioral norms, and attitudes of the host society.

*Assimilation* is when immigrant group members adopt the culture of the host society and abandon their own culture.

*Integration* is when immigrant group members keep their own culture and adopt the culture of the larger society.

*Marginalization* is when individuals lose cultural and psychological contact with their own ethnic group and the host or dominant society.

*Separation* is when individuals have a strong identification with their own culture and avoid contact with other cultural groups.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF MIGRATION

#### **Introduction**

The one overriding phenomenon that has established its name in recorded history is migration. In this chapter, there will be an attempt to define emigration by looking at the different types of emigration, their causes, problems that affected families in the Bible, and how they maintained spirituality during the migration.

In discussing the general idea of migration, it is important to have a basic definition that will guide the discussion. According to Toro-Morn and Alicea (2004), general migration refers to the act or movement of populations from one place to another. It involves conquest of land from both nature and fellow men, adapting to new environments, intermixture of culture, and the blending of blood. It is a constant striving for something better (p. 12).

The movement is usually precipitated by certain measures that are unique to it. Two basic theories that describe migration are the structural imbalance and the push-pull theory (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, & Taylor, 1993).

The structural imbalance perspective emphasizes the disproportion of regional potential as a determinant factor responsible for the process of emigration. In this pattern, the flow of migration is from the poor to the rich (Borjas, 1990, p. 57-63). To further explain the process, Massey, Goldring & Durand (1994) note that, in general, the core

regions are typified by economic stability and have a powerful military and a strong cultural attraction. On the contrary, the fringe regions are differentiated by moderately stable economic conditions which sometimes place them in a dire economic and political situation that include despotic regimes.

The second theory is the push-pull theory. This is considered to be the archetypal notional representation of the causes of migration. This view posits that people leave their native land and migrate abroad because of push factors within the sending nation and/or pull factors in the host nation (Borjas, 1990; Massey et al., 1994). More often than not, push factors refer to the wearing down of the quality of life and the deteriorating economic, social and political circumstances in the sending nation, which cause its citizens to migrate to the receiving nation, where more advanced opportunities likely exist. Alternatively, pull factors reflect optimistic forces and include better opportunities, political freedom, and the means of satisfying expectations that were not fulfilled in the native land (Lee, 2001; Kunz, 1981).

Related to these two types are the involuntary (forced) and voluntary migrations, as well as the internal and external migration (Hugo, 1996, p. 107). As we develop biblical and theological foundations, it is important to establish a hypothetical basis to explain why people migrate and to situate the discussion in the context.

Emigrational acts in Scripture took various forms such as banishment by God from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:23-24 New International Version); scattering by God (Gen 11:8); call by God (Gen 12:10; Gen 31:3; Gen 35:1); moving away because of famine (Gen 26:1; Gen 12:10; Ruth 1:1); forced fleeing (Gen 27:42-44; Matt 2:13-15); and by invitation (Gen 46:1).

## Family

Studying the concept of marriage and family in the Bible since creation is paramount to understanding the impact of emigration on family life and spiritual experience. The Bible does not give a specific definition of family. However, after creation of the animals, God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18). He gradually led Adam to understand how lonely he was by parading all the animals before him, giving Adam the opportunity to name each pair. Adam quickly found that he had no partner that was fit for him.

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided a "help meet" for him, a helper corresponding to him, one who was fitted to be his companion and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. Marriage, therefore, becomes a substratum of family structure.

God is the designer of marriage (Gen 2:18, 21-24). White (1890, 2002) adds,

"Marriage is honorable" (Hebrews 13:4); it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature (p. 46).

Family, therefore, is an institution of human relationships designed by God to provide for man's needs. In the family, man finds companionship, sexual satisfaction, and learns love, which is an attribute of God himself. It is in the family that children are

socialized. No other arrangement has ever been devised as a successful alternative.

We can conclude from this account in Genesis that marriage is God's idea, designed and instituted by the Creator. In these verses, we also discover that at the heart of God's design for marriage is companionship and intimacy.

Before God made human beings, He prepared a beautiful place which was to become the home for the first parents. It was God's intention to situate them in the garden, and from there, populate the earth. The tree of life in the garden, together with the different trees, colorful flowering plants, four tributaries to water the garden and the shrubs, suggest God's intention for the first couple to live there permanently. God intended human happiness, fulfillment and joy. It was with this intent that He said, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Gen 1:8). The Bible reveals different family types (see appendix A for a detailed discussion).

### **Types of Emigration**

The understanding of being an alien or sojourner was elemental to the patriarchs' early identity. Abraham was called to emigrate from kinfolk and familiar land to be an alien in a new place. In a discourse of promises of offspring and land, God said to Abraham: "Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years" (Gen 15:13). In his poignant essay discussing the status of the alien, Wiesel (1981) maintains that the concept of being a sojourner or alien was actually implanted in the covenant and was part of what it meant to be the chosen ones of Yahweh (p. 55). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were sojourners (*gerim*) in the land of Canaan (Gen 37:1) and subsequently, the



Israelites lived as aliens in Egypt. “The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God (Gen 17:8). Looking for a piece of land to bury his wife, Abraham declared, “I am an alien (*ger*) and a stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead” (Gen 23:4).

Ultimately Israel inherited the land and God repeatedly told the people that He is the owner of the land and that “with me you are but aliens and tenants” (Lev 25:23). The Israelites were to see themselves as resident aliens in their own land. God owned that land and they were to be its curators and custodians, living on the land by God’s approval and grace. They were chosen people, chosen and yet still aliens. Thus the idea of an alien or sojourner which is referred to as migrant, was embedded in the thinking of the earlier Biblical patriarchs. As part of the covenant between God and Abraham, Yahweh reemphasized it time and again as a reminder that they were aliens in the land of Egypt. The following discussion will shift to specific biblical emigrational patterns.

### Involuntary

#### **Adam and Eve**

The early chapters of Genesis, specifically chapter one, present a picture of the authentic account of human origins (Gen 1:1). They describe that quaint world of primordial integrity before man fell into sin (Gen 1:31). It was a world of intimacy between man and God; they walked together in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:8, 9). It was a life of love, joy and peace, because God’s blessing rested on the first parents (Gen 1:28). They were made in God’s image, glorious and beautiful beings, but into that fellowship of holiness Satan came in the form of a serpent (Gen 1:26, 27; 3:1-7). There was

insinuation; seeds of distrust in God were sown. It appears that Satan needed to wield only the slightest pressure on man for him to defy God. Thus Adam and Eve fell.

When Adam and Eve fell, their relationship with God was ruined; their relationship with each other was affected; their relationship with creation became tortuous. They were eventually banished from their Edenic home, setting off the first migration in Scripture. As described here, under involuntary migration, Adam and Eve emigrated from the Garden of Eden not of their own volition; rather, God expelled them because of their disobedience.

### **Descendants of Noah**

After the flood, the Lord was very clear in instructing Noah and his sons to go and replenish the earth with people (Gen 9:1; 7). However, after they left the Ark, they traveled south until they came to a place the Bible calls Shinar and there they settled down. At some point, however, they decided to build a city and especially a tower “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly . . . Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth’” (Gen 11:3-4). With this stunning architectural feat, they hoped to make a reputation for themselves. They anticipated that the tower would provide safety from either flood or enemies who might attempt to scatter them. Hence the tower pointed to man’s attempt to venerate and fortify himself (Smith, 1993, p. 104). The structure became symptomatic of their pride toward God. In response, the Lord “scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city” (Gen 11:8). While this type of emigration was not banishment, it was clearly not voluntary.

## **Abraham and Sarai**

Abraham's migratory happenings in Scripture did not come about from personal aspiration, but were a result of a call of Yahweh when He said, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you" (Gen 12:1).

When people move away to look for work, they normally have a destination in mind. Frequently, there is a job guaranteed for them, friends and family already there and a community of people from their home country. Occasionally, however, they move on again, perhaps numerous times, before they inhabit in one place. Mauk and Oakland (2009) refer to this as "stage migration" (p. 55). "From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and invoked the name of the LORD and Abraham journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb"(Gen 12:8, 9 NRSV). The construction here uses the verb *nasa*, "to journey," with its infinitive absolute *halakh* to stress the activity of traveling, that the traveling was recurrently going on. Therefore, Abraham journeyed, going and journeying.

His migration was in three phases: (1) from Ur in the Chaldees to Haran (Gen 11:31; Acts 7:2-3); (2) from Haran to Canaan (Gen 12:1-9); (3) from Canaan (Negev) to Egypt and back (Gen 12:10; 13:1-4). As noted from the descendants of Noah, God visited them and scattered them across the face of the earth because of their pride. God wanted to make a covenant with Abraham; therefore, He said, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you" (Gen 12:1). Indeed, it was a part of God's purpose to make a nation who should not worship idols but Yahweh.

Abraham settled in Haran until the death of his family then he made the second phase of his journey.

To summarize, it has been shown that Abraham and his family's migratory incidents were in response to the call of God. Abraham lived in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he made his home in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise (Heb 11:9). Although he had a glut of servants, gold, and livestock (Gen 12:16; 13:2; 20:16), he acquired and possessed the barest minimum. He was an alien, a sojourner, and a journeyman (Gen 20:1; 21:23, 34).

### **Lot and His Family**

Terah left Ur of the Chaldees with Abram, Sarai and Lot to go to Haran (Gen 11:32). Lot then went with Abram when the Lord called him to leave and go to Canaan (Gen 12:4, 5; 13:1, 5). In their wanderings, Lot served as subordinate to Abraham since he was the head of the family unit (Boyd, 2009). Separation arose when a disagreement ensued between the herdsmen of Abraham and the herdsmen of Lot. This begins the solo migratory incidents of Lot and his family. It cannot be concluded that the migration of Lot was voluntary because he did not leave on his own. Neither can one surmise that it was a call of God. Two reasons bring about the separation between Abram and Lot: "quarrelling arose between Abraham's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot" and the Canaanites and the Perizzites were also living in the land at that time (Gen 13:7). Abraham proposed that they should part from each other, and he gave Lot the choice of territory. Lot chose the site of Jordan Valley that was well-watered and the cities of the plain—Sodom and Gomorrah (Elwell & Comfort, 2001, p. 524).

The second migratory happening of Lot and his family was precipitated when two

angelic visitors called on Lot to hasten his departure from the doomed city of Sodom. This move was due to the impending destruction resulting from the sunken moral stupor evidenced by the homosexual attack on Lot's family. Lot's egregious move to follow the culture and to offer his two daughters willingly clearly exacerbates the situation. As further evidence of the evil influence, Lot was unwilling to leave Sodom; his future sons-in-law refused to accompany him; and his wife looked back and was turned to a pillar of salt (Gen 19).

### **Jacob and His Family**

Jacob left his father's house through an ignominious escape. He feared that his vindictive brother would pursue or waylay him. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown (1997) assert that he did not take the common road, but went by lonesome and isolated paths, which increased the distance and vulnerabilities of the journey.

Several reasons set off the migratory events of Jacob and his family. Walvoord and Zuck (1983) maintain that Jacob left for Canaan for two interrelated reasons. First, animosity by Laban's sons was growing against Jacob and Laban's mood was dangerous (Gen 31:1, 2). Perhaps God disturbed the nest. Second, God told Jacob to return to his own land (Gen 31:3). This was a divine call to leave for the land of promise. In contrast, Wiersbe (1993) asserts that three factors entered into Jacob's decision to leave: (a) the changed attitude of Laban, (b) the need for establishing his own home, and (c) principally, the direct leading of the Lord. God had reminded Jacob of his Bethel vow.

To Richards (1996), it was quite evident that for 20 years Laban had shown himself to be unfair, devious, and insatiable. Laban dealt with Jacob in a way that may have been seemingly normative at the time; however, legalities never make wronging

others right. Understandably, Jacob's success aroused Laban's envy, and he began changing the terms of their agreement. Jacob decided it was time to leave Haran and return to Canaan. Without telling Laban, he and his family left under cover of night. In spite of the poor treatment he had received, Jacob might not have deemed himself at liberty to quit his present sphere under the impulse of passionate apprehension and disgruntlement.

### **Mary and Joseph**

The New Testament begins with a migration story of Mary and Joseph. Their movements could be classified as stage migration: Joseph and Mary move from Galilee to Bethlehem because of an empire-wide census decree by Caesar Augustus, Joseph and Mary leave under cover of darkness for Egypt due to a warning by the angel of the Lord, and Joseph and Mary move back to Nazareth because the angel tells them that Herod had died.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. His parents traveled there because of the taxation. He was born in a manger, a stable, a shed. The news of his birth was revealed first to the shepherds, the group of people lowest on the social scale at that time and a group of migrants who moved with their flocks.

Mary and Joseph settled for about two years in Bethlehem until after the Wise Men's appearance. After the visit of the Magi (Matt 2:13), an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream (the second of Joseph's four dreams, Matt 1:20; 2:13, 19, 22) and cautioned him, "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him" (Matt 2:13).

Joseph got up, took his wife and the child by night, and went to Egypt where they

remained there until the death of Herod. This act was to fulfill what had been revealed by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son," a reference to Hosea 11:1. Thus, Joseph and his family fled political and religious persecution. Later, in response to divine guidance, he was told, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead" (Matt 2:20). Joseph led his little family back to Israel to settle in Nazareth, a town in Galilee (Matt 2:21-23).

Carson (1994) believes it was the geographical movements of the infant Messiah, from his birthplace in Bethlehem to Egypt, then back to Judea and on to Galilee, where he is established in the village which was to give him his title, Jesus of Nazareth.

As shown in the preceding discussion, it is apparent that the family is the critical negotiator of an individual's capacity and motivation to migrate. Second, the various family migratory accounts have indicated that some families in the Bible migrated, not through their own volition, but through forces from without.

#### Voluntary: Elimelech and Naomi

The foregoing discussion has shown that some of the migratory movements of Scripture were involuntary. Families moved because of circumstances from without. In contrast, Elimelech and Naomi moved to Moab from their own free will. There was neither a mass migration nor any indication of starvation or death resulting from the famine. The Bible passage only states,

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there. (Ruth 1:1, 2)

It is apparent that throughout the history of civilization up to our very day, patterns of hunger have always driven human migration. Famine hits. People get hungry. They leave their homes, the places they love, and go out in search of food, jobs, and a better life. The preceding discussion has shown that in Scripture, some families were specifically instructed to move from their home to foreign lands. However, in this passage, this is not indicated.

Even though the Bible does not give details of the economic and social status of the family, Reeve (1915) explains that Elimelech was a “member of the tribe of Judah, a native of Bethlehem Judah, a man of wealth and probably head of a family or clan.”

Elimelech takes his family from Bethlehem, which, in an agonizing bit of paradox, means “the place of bread,” to Moab, the land of the enemy Moabites, because there is no bread in Bethlehem. The story turns quickly once the family reaches Moab. Elimelech dies and the two sons, breaking with Israelite tradition, marry Ruth and Orpah, women of another religion and race. However, it is not long before the sons also die, leaving Naomi a widow and childless.

Evidently it was a migration of choice. Elimelech and Naomi had hoped to better themselves with their plans, but things only got worse.

### **Family Problems in Emigration**

In this section, three biblical families—those of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—will be examined to determine the problems their families encountered during their migration.

The world of these patriarchs was rooted in an agricultural economy (Caesar, 2000). Besides various divine calls to leave their country, famine seems to be the one major problem that propelled Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their families to migration.



According to Cox (1981), famine is “the regional failure of food production or distribution systems leading to sharply increased mortality due to starvation and associated disease” (p. 5). The first mention of farming in Scripture was so dire as to compel Abraham to go down to the land of Egypt (Gen 12:10-20; 20:1-18; 26:1). Another mention took place in the days of Isaac, causing him to go to Gerar (Gen 26:1, 17). However, the most remarkable of all was that which arose in Egypt in the days of Joseph, which lasted for seven years (Gen 41-45). One observable parallel seen in the narratives of Genesis is that just as Abraham and his family migrated to Egypt because there was famine in the land (Gen 12:10-20), so did Jacob and his entourage migrate to Egypt because of famine (Gen 46:3).

### The Family of Abraham

Biblical families encountered different problems and trials during their wanderings. When God called Abraham, He said to him:

Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. (Gen 12:1-4)

What, then, was the promise that God made to Abraham? How was he to live up to God’s expectations in order for this promise to come to pass? Careful analysis shows that this promise was a composite promise.

First, this promise was one of posterity. He was to go from his relatives and his father’s house. This would eventually result in forsaking his family. However, in exchange for the loss of his family, God would make of him “a great nation.” Later, in order to indicate this, God changed his name from “Abram” (“exalted father”) to

“Abraham” (“father of a multitude”) because, as he said to him, “I have made you the father of a multitude of nations” (Gen 17:5).

Second, it was the promise of land. It appears that the call came to him in two stages: in Ur of the Chaldees while his father was still alive (Gen 11:31; 15:7) and then, in Haran after his father had died (Gen 11:32; 12:1). One way or the other, he was to leave his own land and, in return, God would show him another country.

Third, it was the promise of a blessing. In Genesis 12:2-3 the words “bless” and “blessing” occur five times. The blessing God promised Abraham would spill over upon all mankind (Gen 12:3).

Soon after God called Abraham, his faith was tested, thus posing the first problem of his emigration. God had promised that He would bless Abraham with land. But here in the Promised Land, he was faced with a famine that led to the decision to go to Egypt to sojourn. Upon his approach to Egypt, Abraham feared for his life because his wife Sarai was beautiful (Gen 12:4). This placed Abraham in a spiritual dilemma. He said to his wife, “I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you” (Gen 12:12, 13).

Regarding this counsel to Abraham’s wife, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown (1997) conclude that the “counsel of Abram to her was true in words, but it was a deception, intended to give an impression that she was no more than his sister” (Gen 12:11). Even though at variance with Abram’s conduct in Egypt, Nichol (1978, 2002) maintains that the behavior of the Canaanites, as displayed later by the men of Sodom (Gen 19:4-11),

clearly shows that he had reason for his anxiety. On the contrary, White (1890/2002) stresses the following: “In concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, he betrayed a distrust of the divine care, a lack of that lofty faith and courage so often and nobly exemplified in his life . . . this concealment of the real relation between them was deception” (p. 130).

It may be concluded that Abraham’s conduct was blameworthy and contradictory with his disposition as a servant of God. His behavior displayed dependence on his manipulation more than trust in the promise. Apparently, his preventative measure was not one of faith.

Not long after Abraham returned from Egypt, another problem developed. During the affair in Egypt, both Abraham and Lot acquired a large number of cattle and other riches. The needs of their livestock made it impractical for them to stay together; “and quarreling arose between Abram’s herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time” (Gen 13:7). Even though the problem was about the herdsmen, the larger issue was wealth. The affluence of blessings provoked the dispute between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot. Nichol (1978/2002) adds that the quarrels of the shepherds were probably reflected in Lot’s attitude and conduct (p. 395). Abraham could have asserted his right, in view of the fact that Lot was his junior and he himself had been promised the entire country.

Soon after Abraham separated from Lot, God renewed His promise to Abraham (Gen 13:14-18). God declared that all the land he saw would belong to his descendants and his progenies would be too many to count. However, to the contrary, Sarah had been barren in Ur. She was barren in Haran. She was barren in the initial travels in Canaan and

in Egypt. In Genesis 15, she was still barren. Nothing physically indicated she had been given the ability to conceive. Burdened with the problem of barrenness, Abraham finally speaks up after the Lord God had spoken to him in a vision. He says, “O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus? . . . You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir” (Gen 15:2, 3). The Lord used the rest of Genesis chapter 15 to reiterate His promise and covenant with Abraham; yet, in chapter 16, Abraham compromised with his wife Sarai and slept with her maid Hagar. This created problems for the entire family. When Abraham found himself in a polygamous situation, the relationship between him and his wife became strained and there was a maid-mistress rivalry; Sarai dragged Abraham into the messy triangle relationship with Hagar and herself and displayed a lack of faith in the whole situation.

### The Family of Isaac

Isaac, son and second-generation in Canaan, married a wife from his father’s country and became the recipient of the promise (Gen 26:23, 24). His family had a problem similar to that of Abraham and Sarah. Writing about his role and nexus in the patriarchal lineage, Boase (July 2001) maintains that Isaac represents a murky, wooly and minion figure and has actions that closely resemble those of his father Abraham. The dearth of biblical text about his life is apparently mirrored by a paucity of cerebral interest in his personality (p. 312). Famine seems to be a major problem that faced the wandering nomads. Isaac suffered from famine like his father and had to relocate (Gen 26:1, 12).

When famine struck in Canaan, Isaac went to dwell in the Philistine town of

Gerar (Gen 26:1-7), where, like his father Abraham in similar circumstances, he feared that the local men would kill him to seize his wife. Therefore, he passed her off as his sister (Gen 26:6; cf 12:12-13; 20:2, 11-12). Conversely, unlike Sarah, Rebekah was not taken away from her husband, but King Abimelech rebuked Isaac for what might have happened and immediately warned his men not to touch her (Gen 26:8-11).

As a farmer in Gerar, Isaac became wealthy. Because of his wealth and prominence, conflict arose between him and the Philistines and he was asked to leave the place (Gen 26:12-16). When he settled in the Gerar Valley, another quarrel ensued when he restored the previously covered wells his father Abraham had dug (Gen 26:17-22).

Blind and in old age (Gen 27:1), Isaac faced a major problem that resulted in sibling rivalry. Realizing the imminence of his death, he wished to bless his favorite elder son Esau who, more often than not, brought him venison (Gen 27:1-2; 25:28). This move was against God's plan because the Lord had said before they were born, "The older will serve the younger" (Gen 25:23). This resulted in many familial problems. Isaac's action defied God's desire for Jacob and Esau, Rebekah eavesdropped (Gen 27:5; 27:42) and deceived Isaac by encouraging deception by Jacob (Gen 27:6-17), the actions of both Isaac and Rebekah were tantamount to favoritism (Gen 25: 28; 25:33) which eventually broke down the family, Isaac distrusted his son Jacob, Jacob left home to escape Esau's death threat, Rebekah lost both sons in one day (Gen 27:45), and Esau eventually married Hittite women, much to the displeasure of his parents (Gen 26:34-35; 27:41-46). One act, contrary to the desire of God, brought lack of trust and division upon Isaac's family.

## The Family of Jacob

As a third generation immigrant, Jacob had a chequered life both before and after marriage. His attempt to abate the seemingly patchy problems in his life was a continuous challenge throughout his life. His family problems began with his marriage where a swindling Laban veiled Leah, replacing Rachel as Jacob's bride. Rachel was Jacob's first love and primary wife (Gen 29:10, 11, 18, 19), but Leah was the first wife that he actually married, the first to bear his children and the one to mother the majority of his children (Gen 29:22-25, 31-35).

Although his desire for Rachel was unrelenting, Jacob was married to both women, and this set the sisters at odds with each other almost immediately. Leah, the bride by her father's subterfuge, was fertile and bore Jacob children immediately. She initially gave birth to four sons, and the births are announced in four consecutive verses, echoing the rapidity of the event (Gen 29:31-35). There was a frustrating fertility problem with Rachel, as with Sarah, Abraham's wife, before the ultimate birth of Isaac. Rachel was beautiful but barren. Thus she bargained away her connubial rights for sleeping privileges and exchanges for much heralded mandrake roots, which one of rival Leah's sons had acquired. Her inability to conceive with its frustration is evident. "When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or I'll die!'" (Gen 30:1). Rachel, whom Jacob loved, was always desperate to have his children, while Leah, who had his children, was always desperate to have his love. Each of these unfulfilled desires is referred to several times, thus creating a nerve-racking atmosphere in Jacob's family. Instead of praying for his wife, Rachel, just as his father Isaac and Grandfather Abraham did, he got angry,

exclaiming, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?” (Gen 30:2). It is apparent that each of the sisters wished to be the other, which was impossible, and desiring the impossible breeds misery.

From the epic duplicitous situation in Laban’s home, he left as a wealthy herdsman and head of a household of two wives, Rachel and Leah; two concubines; twelve sons and one daughter (Dinah); other dependants comprising a large retinue of people; and several remarkable negative events along the way. His problems continued unabated.

Many other problems plagued Jacob’s family: there were implicit pagan tendencies amongst Jacob’s wives (Gen 31:19; 35:2), sexual assault (Gen 34:1), deception (Gen 37:23, 31-35; 44:20-23), slaughter, looting and stealing (Gen 34:35-29) took place, Reuben slept with his father’s concubine (Gen 35:22; 49:4), and parental favoritism caused enmity and rage (Gen 37:3, 4).

### **Maintaining Family Spiritual Practice in an Incident of Emigration**

In this section, there will be an attempt to explore problems that faced families of Scripture during migration, how the problems impinged on their spirituality, and how the families maintained spirituality in the midst of those problems. For this discussion, the operating definition for spirituality is appropriately elemental.

According to Hagan and Ebaugh (2003), religious and sociology scholars have not given much attention to how families maintain spirituality during the migration process. Even though there are prominent and differing religious practices among contemporary immigrants, little work has been done to explore how migrants maintain

spirituality during emigration. It must be noted however, that case studies (Orsi, 1985; Mullins, 1988; Hurh and Kim, 1990; Leonard, 1992; Min, 1992; Waugh, 1994; Lin, 1996; Numrich, 1996; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000) and historical works (Dolan, 1975; Bodnar, 1985; Dolan, 1985), have focused on the function of the church in immigrant settlement.

According to Sheldrake (2007), spirituality involves how lifestyles, fundamental values, and spiritual practices reflect a certain understanding of God, human identity, and the material world as the context of human transformation (p. 2).

For this discussion, spirituality will be defined as a relationship with God that provides a basis for relating to and understanding people, making decisions and finding how all aspects of life fit together to form a complete whole. Better put, this relationship or connection with God should be the pivoting platform which informs how a person prioritizes desires and needs, defines goals and achievements, and leads to a process of integrating a better understanding of God, self, and others.

Exploring religion and cultural practices in transnational communities in Empalme Escobedo, Guanajuato, Mexico, LeFlore (2009) observes that spirituality is a significant element in the everyday life of migrants. Sharing the experience of migrants in her study regarding maintaining spirituality during migration, she notes, "Women tell me: 'Faith is a powerful force' . . . 'a moment of prayer centers you . . . and energizes you to get back on track, to live life to the fullest . . . because today might be your last.'" (p. 96).

To maintain spirituality during their wanderings, which is referred to in this discussion as emigration, the biblical families employed various means.



## Building Altars, Worship, and Sacrifice

According to Elwell and Comfort (2001), the altar, from a word meaning “place of slaughter” in the period of the patriarchy, was the center of family worship, the place of sacrifice and devotion to God (p. 32). Altar building symbolizes family worship in the Old Testament and through this ritual some biblical families developed their spirituality. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob built their own altars and offered their own sacrifices as their way of worship. After responding to the Lord’s call to leave his country, Abraham built altars in several places to worship God. When Abraham arrived in Canaan at Shechem, the Lord again appeared to him, saying, “‘To your descendants I will give this land’; and of Abraham it is related, ‘And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him’” (Gen 12:7). Moving south to be near Bethel, he again “built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord” (Gen 12:8). After he settled in Egypt, because of the famine in Canaan, he went back to the altar site near Bethel. “And there Abram called on the name of the Lord” (Gen 13:4). Further, when he and Lot had separated, Abram relocated to the region of Hebron and he “built an altar there to the Lord” (Gen 13:18). While he was still in the land of the Philistines, God tested him, telling him to go to Moriah and offer Isaac for a burnt offering. Arriving at the mount, “Abraham built an altar there” (Gen 22:9).

According to Wood and Marshall (1996), these altars were apparently put up principally as a way of memorializing an occurrence in which the person had had dealings with God (p. 26).

It may be surmised that Isaac probably learned it from his father Abraham. Arriving at Beersheba, after being asked to leave Gerar, the Lord appeared to Isaac and

“Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD” (Gen 26:25).

Commenting on the passage, Wenham (1987) suggests, “The expression refers to worshipping the Lord through prayer and sacrifice” (p. 116). This incident seems to parallel the one with his father Abraham. After he was asked to leave Egypt, he built an altar to worship the Lord between Bethel and Ai. (Gen 12:10-12; 13:1-4). It could be that in both incidents, Abraham, as well as Isaac, may have felt untruthful in the preceding episodes and therefore needed to reconnect to the Lord!

Jacob also built altars to worship the Lord at different times. After he reconciled with his brother Esau, it is recorded that he went to Shechem in Canaan and purchased a property. Pitching his tent there, “he set up an altar and called it El Elohe Israel” (Gen 33:20). Commenting on patriarchal family worship, White adds, “Like Abraham, Jacob set up beside his tent an altar unto the Lord, calling the members of his household to the morning and the evening sacrifice” (1890/2002, p. 204).

Settling in Shechem brought upon Jacob’s family an egregiously messy situation; his daughter, Dinah, was defiled and his sons slaughtered, looted, and stole from the people, thus bringing reproach upon him in Canaan. The Lord appeared to Jacob and asked him to return to Bethel. Smearred by such atrocious acts, Jacob could not come to worship the Lord without cleansing and sanctifying his entire family. Thus, he tells them, “Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone” (Gen 35:2, 3, NAB). Kitchen (2003) believes this gesture was a “token of full submission to his one and only divine guardian” (p. 332).

## Principle of Prayer

As a means of maintaining their spirituality and reconnecting to the Lord, biblical record shows that the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob also used prayer in communicating with the Lord and in certain difficult situations. When the Lord appeared to Abraham at Shechem, he moved toward the east between Bethel and Ai and “there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD” (Gen 12:8). He wandered and came back here and again, “Abram called on the name of the LORD” (Gen 13:4).

At Gerar, the Lord brought a curse upon Abimelech and his household even though Abraham had told him a lie that Sarah was his sister. Upon the Lord’s rebuke, he returned Sarah and treated Abraham honorably. Abraham, therefore, prayed on behalf of the king and his family. Ironically, Abraham and his own wife could not conceive for twenty-five years more, yet in this instance, the Lord answered Abraham’s prayer, thereby healing the infertility of Abimelech’s house.

Family life was a major concern for Isaac. Rebekah was barren. In this situation, he simply prayed and waited on God. He had probably learned this spiritual lesson from his father Abraham (Gen 25:21). Old and blind, Isaac offered to bless his children. Even though it was contrary to the plan of God (Gen 25:23), the use of blessings here shows how he valued prayer. After the deception by his wife and son, Isaac blessed Jacob again and sent him off to the house of Laban and Bethuel (Gen 28:1-4).

Implicit in Jacob’s life were the tendencies to act sometimes in less than honorable ways. Nevertheless, he struggled to wrestle with God through prayer. Returning with his family and wealth, the news that his brother Esau was coming to meet him caused him great fear. Overwhelmed, he prayed,

O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, "Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper." I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. But you have said, "I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted." (Gen 32:9-12)

Many years later, Jacob blessed the second-born son of Joseph first, rather than the firstborn son (Gen 48:14), and toward the end of his life, he blessed his children (Gen 49).

### Principle of Unity

The wandering patriarchal families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had a sense of unity in that there would be no division between the worshipers of Yahweh. There is an observable principle of unity entrenched in their individual families. Accordingly, when strife arose between the servants of Abraham and the servants of Lot, a peaceful means of co-existence was found:

So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." (Gen 13:8, 9, NIV)

To ward off dissension and antagonism between himself and his nephew, Abram proposed severance of their flocks and herds as a solution to the crisis. Clearly, his dealings with Lot reflected his level of spiritual maturity. The graciousness revealed on this occasion stands forth in sharp contrast to the weakness of character he had so recently exhibited in Egypt. Abram proved himself to be a man of peace.

Abraham's peacemaking efforts in the family were not an aberration. He protected his herdsmen from turf wars and forestalled a quarrel with his nephew Lot.

Soon there was a war that involved nine local kings. Lot and his family were taken captive. Abraham formed an army from among his servants and rescued them, defeating their captors (Gen 14). Sensing the imminent danger for Lot and his family in Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham negotiated with the Lord for mercy to spare their lives (Gen 18:23-33). When a misunderstanding almost erupted some time later, Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a treaty (Gen 21:25-34).

Isaac had been in conflict with Abimelech, king of Gerar, but the Lord blessed him. Being extremely wealthy, he could have used his advantage to hurt his adversaries; on the contrary, he made an agreement of mutual non-aggression with his enemies (Genesis 26:16-17; 26-30).

Jacob left with his family from Laban's home, not without bitterness, fear, and further deception, causing God to intervene to protect Jacob and his household. When Laban proposed a covenant, Jacob did not refuse. It must be clarified that the terms of the covenant did not include reconciliation; however, Jamieson et al. (1997) suggest, "A sacrifice was first offered, and then the feast of reconciliation was partaken of by both parties seated on the stones around it" (Gen 31:3). The end result was a covenant between the two men, defining their future relationship by separating them one from the other.

On the verge of meeting his estranged brother, Jacob sent gifts to his brother Esau as a gesture of making peace before meeting him. It may be construed from the action that he was scheming (Wiersbe, 1993; Gen 32:1), if not attempting to curry favor, rather than trusting (32:3-5). However, human motives are too complex and mysterious for one to rule out categorically any given possibility. The gifts (Gen 32:3-8, 13-21), the prayer

(Gen 32:9-12), and the struggle with the angel (Gen 32:24-32) clearly indicate that the predominant view of Jacob's motive, despite its apparent perverseness, was to make reconciliation.

### Purity of Race and Religion

The biblical families had a sense of purity. Their sense of purity led them to an understanding of the need for separation from the Canaanites in whose midst they wandered. This purity was a part of the purpose of God that they would be a distinct and separate people from the nations around them (Gen 24:3, 57, 58; Exo 34:15, 16; Num 36:12; Deut 7:3, 4; Jos 23:12, 13; Judg 3:6, 7; 1Ki 11:2; Ezra 9:1, 2; Neh 13:23-27; 2Cor 6:14-17).

Consequently, when it came time for Isaac to take a wife, Abraham took great pains to make certain that it would not be a Canaanite woman:

And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of the household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Please place your hand under my thigh. And I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that **YOU SHALL NOT TAKE A WIFE FOR MY SON FROM THE DAUGHTERS OF THE CANAANITES, among whom I live.**" (Gen 24:2, 3)

In her discussion on Abraham's demand for a wife for Isaac from his kin, White (1890/2002) notes,

The inhabitants of Canaan were given to idolatry, and God had forbidden intermarriage between His people and them, knowing that such marriages would lead to apostasy. The patriarch feared the effect of the corrupting influences surrounding his son. Abraham's habitual faith in God and submission to His will were reflected in the character of Isaac; but the young man's affections were strong, and he was gentle and yielding in disposition. If united with one who did not fear God, he would be in danger of sacrificing principle for the sake of harmony. In the mind of Abraham the choice of a wife for his son was a matter of grave. (p. 171)

In the same way, Jacob was sent to Haran with the express purpose of finding a wife from his own people:

So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him, and said to him, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Lagan your mother's brother." (Gen 28:1, 2)

### Faith

The Bible provides several evidences in the patriarchal families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to indicate that they lived a life of faith. In spite of the troubles, sorrows, problems and tragedies which predicated their wanderings, the Bible is candid in portraying the accounts of familial stories of faith in the Lord. The Lord called Abraham and he left. "The LORD had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you'" (Gen 12:1). May (1984) denotes Abraham's home, Ur, the prominent Sumerian city, as "the Fertile Crescent" (p. 54).

Archeological findings reveal that it was a populous city that was occupied by merchants, artisans and frequent numerous strangers. All the important trade routes of the primeval world that ran from Elam, India, and southern Arabia to the countries in the north and west converged there (Gibson & Negev, 2001, p. 528). Abraham's departure from this promising city illustrates a heartening faith in the YAHWEH who called him to leave.

That Abraham's faith waned, resulting in his agreement with Sarah to have a child with Hagar. Although this cannot be overlooked, nevertheless, his intrepid faith is displayed when God asked him to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice.

When Isaac asked, "The fire and wood are here . . . but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham responded, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt

offering, my son” (Gen 22:7, 8). Even though Abraham was deeply tested in this, he did not falter. He did as God had commanded. He obeyed God.

Abraham believed in the promise that the Lord would give the land of Canaan to his progeny. After warning his servant once in Gen 24:6 not to take his forty-year-old son (Gen 25:20) back to Mesopotamia, Abraham reiterated the point to his servant and ended the conversation with him thus: “Only do not take my son back there” (Gen 24:8). Why would Abraham make his servant swear an oath?

Abraham had already buried his wife Sarah in Canaan instead of Ur, their native city; returning to Ur was not an option. Abraham’s break with culture, tradition, and precedent in burying Sarah in Canaan was an unmistakable message. In a nutshell, Abraham displayed his faith by leaving his country, sojourning in a foreign land, offering his only son Isaac—an act of dynamic faith expressed in obedience.

Evidence of Isaac’s faith is seen when there was a family crisis. His wife Rebekah was barren for about 19 years. He was 40 when he was married (Gen 25:20), and the children did not arrive until he was 60 (Gen 25:26). So, for 19 years of marriage, he prayed, on behalf of his wife, to God for a son. Without faith, he could have complained to God. He interceded to God in faith.

Isaac knew that he was the son promised to Abraham. When God tested Abraham (Gen 22), Isaac allowed himself to be bound by Abraham. He was obedient to his father, and believed his father when he told him, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son” (Gen 22:7, 8).

Jacob’s faith is expressed in his conviction that God would take his ancestors back to the land of promise. He identified himself fully with the promises and purposes of



God. His roots were in Canaan, and his vision of the future was bound up in the ideal of a promised homeland to be established there. In the end, he died as a man of genuine faith in God's promise that Canaan should be the inheritance of his seed in due time (Gen 48:21; 49:29-31).

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are included in the references to faith found in the NT:

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. . . . By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. . . . These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. (Heb 11:13, 20, 21, 39)

### **Conclusion**

This chapter began by defining migration in general. Migration, as has been shown, refers to the movement of populations from one place to another. It has been shown that inherent in migration are structural imbalance and push and pull forces which determine whether or not the migration would be voluntary and involuntary. The analysis revealed that the biblical idea of family covers a wide spectrum and different types. It can even refer to a nuclear, household unit with its subdivision, which is the extended family and a clan.

The biblical analysis brought to fore that families in Scripture migrated to other lands either voluntarily or involuntarily. God called some families such as Abraham and his family, Isaac and his family, Jacob and his family, and Joseph and Mary to move to another place. These calls were not without the promise of the Lord's protection and blessings. In general, migration in Scripture started with Adam and Eve as they were sent from the Garden to wander, to start again in a new place. Noah and his family were also

called, like Adam and Eve, to leave sin behind and begin society in new ways and in a new place. Some of the descendants of Noah built cities; it was in the city of Ur that Abraham was born, yet God sent Abraham and Sarah out to occupy new land.

The discussion has shown that while some families were called to leave their country, there were other measures that precipitated migration, namely, banishment, orders to leave, and the search for a better life.

It is apparent in the foregoing observation that emigrations in Scripture were replete with varied problems stemming from the different places the families lived, the relationships they developed with foreigners, and the choices they made. Their spiritual fervor was sometimes compromised, giving false statements to their hosts in an attempt to conceal their identity, forming a schism between family members, and entering into polygamous relationships. These acts of distrust and unfaithfulness in the Lord sometimes rendered families estranged from the Lord.

To maintain family spiritual practice during migration, the biblical families used various means such as building altars, worship, sacrifice, prayer, principle of unity, purity of race, and religion and faith.

## CHAPTER 3

### FOUNDATION FROM CURRENT LITERATURE

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of the literature on various studies on migration among Ghanaians and the general acculturation process. It will try to achieve three purposes: (a) to review the existing literature that bears directly or indirectly on immigrant experiences and acculturation models, (b) to analyze how migration impinges on the contemporary immigrants, and (c) to place these studies into a general framework that can facilitate a better understanding of these immigrant families and their religious experience.

The review focuses on migration among Ghanaians and the reasons why so many leave their native country in search of greener pastures. It also looks at the process of acculturation among immigrants as a whole to find information that could later be utilized in the development of seminars. The final part is an analysis of the data and concluding thoughts.

#### **Background for the Project**

Migration, among other things, disentangles people from their culture of origin and gradually navigates them into the dominant culture of the host country. While migration may be adventurous for some, it has become a means of survival for many

immigrants. Economic pressures and the globalizing era of rapid economic and cultural transformation have unsettled many immigrants and disrupted their ways (Ilcan, 2002, p. 1).

Practices, beliefs, and ideas once thought of as traditional culture and regarded as expressions of locally lived experiences are being disturbed by the interconnectedness of the global milieu. Ilcan (2002, p.1) posits that migration is partially due to the extended mobility of populations, and partially a corollary of the shifting of boundaries, and that the ideas and practices associated with belonging are under steady challenge.

With its attached connotations of steadiness, reliability, and distinctiveness tied to the image of a locus of origination and adapted social ties, the home has become a contested and, for some, a changeable ground as far as one's identity is concerned.

### Migration Among Ghanaians

Since the late 1960s, Ghana has become one of the major countries of emigration in West Africa, however, determining the exact number of Ghanaian emigrants is difficult (Oppong, 2004, p. 85). The widespread aspiration of people to make better lives for themselves and their extended families stimulates the rising global migration among Ghanaians. Konadu-Agyeman (1999) reports that for most Ghanaian migrants, a tandem of moves, which may have begun in their towns and villages to the national capital with stop-overs through regional cities and across the borders to a number of countries before arriving at a final destination is the norm. Nieswand (2001) estimates that Ghanaian migrants who lived in other countries other than their home country during the 1990s were 10-20 percent of the population; corresponding to between 2 and 4 million people based on the current population. Over 22,000 people with Ghanaian passports reside

legally in Germany alone, which means that they form the largest group originating from sub-Saharan Africa among immigrants in Germany. While many Ghanaians migrate to anywhere they seem to find greener pastures, North America appears to be the primary destination of choice. Parrillo (2000) reports that from 1991 to 1998, Ghana had 27,580 immigrants in the United States, making them the third leading source of African immigration to the United States at that time. According to the 1996 Canadian census, 14,935 Ghanaian immigrants (by ethnic origin) were in Canada, and 10,025 (67 percent) were in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) (Statistics Canada, 1996).

For Ghanaians, the global surge for quality of life and stability resulted from economic instability at home (Oppong, 2004, p. 82). Ghanaians and other Africans who come to the United States do so for several reasons. Those who come for educational purposes include those who have completed tertiary education either at the university, technical, or teacher-training levels prior to their arrival in the United States. These tend to pursue graduate level education. Another group consists of those who have completed advanced secondary school education (General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level) in their country. This group tends to pursue vocational-technical education in professional and non-professional studies leading to the award of an associate degree. These two groups see education as the proven path to high social mobility. The third group of Africans coming to the United States to pursue educational goals consists of those without a secondary school diploma. While education features significantly in their career goals, the problems they face upon arrival are diverse and difficult to surmount (Arthur, 2000).

The majority of Ghanaian immigrants, like other immigrants, see the new world

as being attractive and, therefore, encourage their children to be like the children of the new world, thereby allowing behaviors and attitudes contrary to their previous religious values (Zhou, 1997).

### **The Process of Acculturation**

The process through which immigrants and their children attain the values, behavioral norms, and attitudes of the host society is known as acculturation (Cortes, Rogler, & Malgady, 1994). Anthropologists refer to it as cultural changes that emerge from intercultural contact. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) defined acculturation as a “phenomenon which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (p. 149). The Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC, 1954) offered a more exclusive conceptualization:

Acculturation may be defined as cultural change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission: it may be derived from noncultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modifications induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the process of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors. (p. 974)

While it may be beneficial to a subgroup, the extreme result of acculturation is the disappearance of any distinct feature of a given subgroup (Addai & Travuto, 1999). Even though it has been widely studied by social scientists since the 1930s (Social Science Research Council, 1954), acculturation has been given increased attention because of the unprecedented volume of cross-cultural migrations (Rogler, 1994). Russell and Teitelbaum (1992) suggest that currently, about 100 million persons live outside their

country of origin and in the United States; there are about 20 million foreign-born, representing more than 100 countries and possessions.

Acculturation focuses attention on how immigrants, worldwide, confront the adaptation requirements and resulting stresses of movement into a socio-cultural system different from their own. Thus, research has sought to examine the relationship between acculturation and mental health problems, and how it potentiates problems such as anxiety, depression, alcohol abuse, psychosomatic symptomatology, delinquent behavior, low self-esteem, and suicidal ideation (Cortes, Rogler, & Malgady, 1994).

### **Models of Acculturation**

During the last few decades, research and studies in the area of acculturation have tended to focus on two specific sets of models in acculturation. On one hand, Gordon (1978) emphasized what he called the 'linear bipolar models' and on the other hand, Berry (1980) stressed the 'two-dimensional' or 'multicultural models'. While Linear models claim acculturation to be a process of absorption into the dominant culture where culture of origin is lost, Two-dimensional or Multicultural models assume the premise that individuals develop a positive affinity to both the culture of origin or ethnic group and that of the host or dominant culture.

#### **Linear-Bipolar Models**

##### **Assimilation Orientation**

One of the oldest and most traditional acculturation models is that of assimilation orientation. Assimilation, generally known as "the process of transforming aspects of a conquered or swallowed up culture into a status of relative adjustment to the form of the

ruling culture” (Lesser, 1933, p. 9), forms the “melting pot” thesis in many sociological acculturation studies (Hirschman, 1983, p. 398). Individuals are assumed to quickly adopt the majority or the dominant culture because they want to become part of the new culture (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983) and/or regard the new country as their permanent home (Berry, 1986). The assumption is that an individual’s new home country may offer better opportunities (e.g., Crew, 1987) or a more attractive way of life (e.g., Belk & Pollay, 1985). The rudimentary hypothesis here is that the acculturating individuals are inclined to follow a unidirectional (i.e., toward the norms of the majority), gradual learning mode in becoming more and more like their counterparts in the host country. Recent studies classify this model as Linear-Bipolar (Gordon, 1978). Gordon points out that several changes occur in immigrants’ social structures, cultural patterns, and psychological features from one generation to another when they settle in the new country. In describing the changes that take place, he employs the idea of assimilation to propose the following stages of assimilation:

1. For Cultural Assimilation or Acculturation, Gordon explains that it is the gradual acquisition of cultural patterns of the host society.
2. Structural Assimilation is entrance into the societal network of groups and institutions of the society.
3. Marital Assimilation or Amalgamation refers to large-scale interethnic marriages.
4. Identificational Assimilation is self-identification as a member of the host society.
5. Attitude Receptional Assimilation refers to absence of prejudice.



6. Behavioral Receptional Assimilation is the process where there is the absence of discrimination.

6. Civic Assimilation refers to the absence of valued and power conflict.

In short, linear models assume that acculturation is a process of absorption into the dominant culture implying a loss of identification with the culture of origin (or ethnic group).

### **Acculturation Attitude Model**

Berry, Kim, Power, Young and Bujaki (1989, p. 188-196) and Sam (1995, p. 243-252) suggest four main categories of acculturation in this model as a means of cultural preservation and contact with the dominant group: (a) Assimilation: the immigrant group members adopt the culture of the host society and abandon their own culture; (b) Integration: the immigrant group members keep their own culture and adopt the culture of the larger society; (c) Marginalization: the immigrant group members are not involved in their own culture or in the culture of the larger society; (d) Separation: the immigrant group members do not adopt the culture of the host society and keep within their own culture (Sam, p. 243-248).

### **Two-Dimensional Models**

Beginning in the early 1980s, researchers Szapocznik, Kurtines, and Fernández (1980) engaged in the study of multicultural models of acculturation. The study suggests that individuals can engage the dominant or host culture in a positive frame of mind and attitude while maintaining ethnic individuality. Obviously, this is in stark contrast to the linear bipolar-models (Berry, 1997; Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997; Rogler,

Cortes, & Malgady, 1991; Sayegh & Lasry, 1993).

### **Quadri-Modal Acculturation Model**

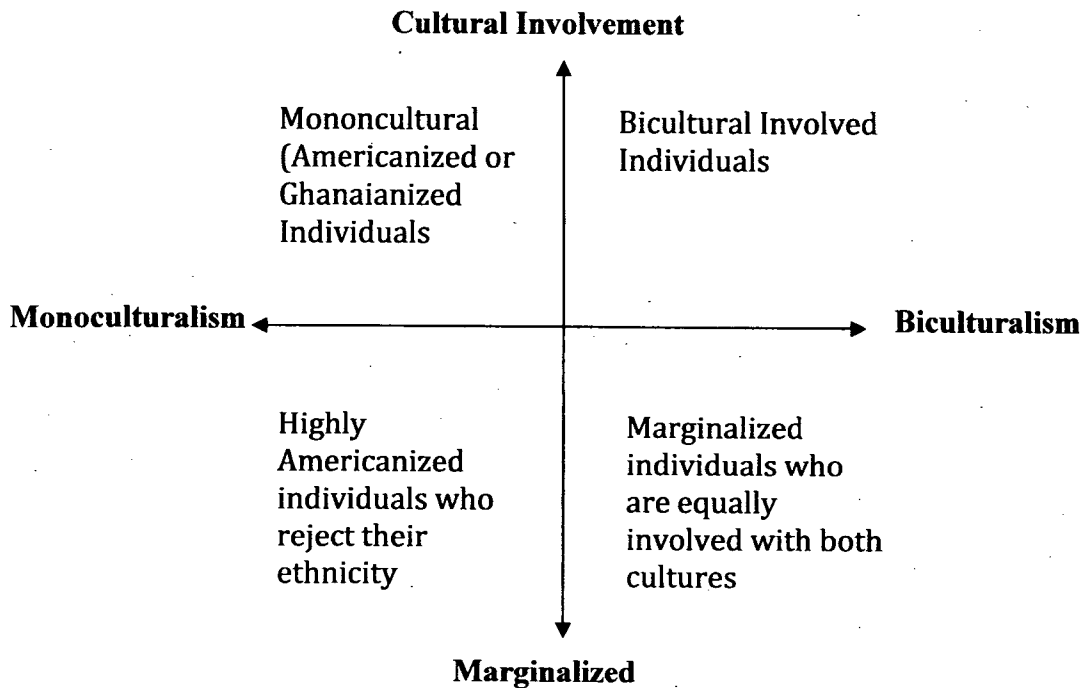
In his Quadri-Modal Acculturation Model, Berry and colleagues (1989) develop two-dimensional models from which emerge four possible outcomes when the dimensions are dichotomized: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. The confluence of the two identities creates a tension and difficult arena for immigrants and their children due to conflict between public expectations and those of the home. Pettys and Balgopal (1998) point out that, on one hand, they are expected to act, behave, and interact according to the dominant culture's standards, but at home, they continue to behave according to their own cultural or ethnic background. This dichotomy can create conflict in the immigrant families. For example, immigrant children may behave like the dominant group, and their parents may feel that their children are giving up their ethnic values and lifestyle, thus creating more tension between the parents and their children.

In comparison, the parents of the earlier immigrants were much more amenable and enthusiastic to become American. Maintaining the two identities is very challenging for new immigrants (Balgopal, 2000). Pettys and Balgopal (1998) discussed the concept of the power of one's ethnicity— that is, maintaining one's own customs, heritage, and language. For instance, when an East Asian adolescent raised in the United States informs her parents that she wants to date just like her American peers, her parents may become upset, as they may not approve of dating unless marriage is to be the ultimate outcome.

Over the years, immigration debates have focused on whether immigrants would assimilate into mainstream American society (Alba, 1984; Handlin, 1957; Park, 1950;

Newman, 1999; Perlmutter, 1992). This was the argument between those who defended the “melting pot” idea and that of those who feared that millions of “undesirable aliens” would change the character of American society. To this Alba (1995) posits that assimilation is now considered to be of dubious relevance for contemporary minorities, who want to remain outside the legendary “melting pot” and to be, in any event, not wholly acceptable to white America. Cannato (2004) joins the argument, emphasizing that the large wave of multiplicity and cultural pluralism has caused the country to change, giving way to a third group, the pro-immigrant multiculturalists. To the multiculturalists, the traditional idea of assimilation is racist, despotic, insensitive, and ethnocentric. They consider assimilation as a form of “Eurocentric hegemony” which compels immigrants to live by the standards of another culture. According to Cannato (2004), the new multiculturalists’ ethic has clearly gained ground.

Figure 1 presents four major quadrants that show four different modes of acculturation. As indicated in the figure, when individuals form positive relations with other ethnic groups or the dominant culture and this is accompanied by maintenance of ethnic identity and traditions, the *integration strategy* is defined (first quadrant). Adversely, when the individuals do not wish to maintain their ethnic identity and adopt the dominant culture, then the *assimilation strategy* emerges (second quadrant). When individuals have a strong identification with their own culture and avoid contact with other groups, the *separation strategy* is defined (third quadrant). Finally, when individuals lose cultural and psychological contact with their own ethnic group and the host or dominant society, then *marginalization* is the outcome (Fourth quadrant).



*Figure 1. Marginality.*

### **Acculturation-Biculturalism Model**

Acculturation in this model is viewed as a two-dimensional process that varies according to cultural contexts for it shows that, although an individual may embrace the new or the dominant cultural context, it does not necessarily mean the loss of ties with the original cultural background.

According to Szapocznik and colleagues (1980), the one-dimensional model can be applied only in monocultural contexts. However, in the arena where several ethnic groups interplay, for instance the original culture and the host culture, there needs to be a development of skills that are necessary for participation in both the host and original cultures. Two divergent processes surface when the cultural context is bicultural: (a) adaptation to the host culture and (b) retention (or loss) of original cultural

characteristics. While the former is conceptualized as a linear function of the time a person has been in contact with the host culture, the latter dwells on the distinctiveness of the original culture. Individual demographics, such as gender and age, manipulate the amount of change in both processes.

### **Interrelationships Between Ethnic Identity and the Dominant Identity**

Inherent in immigrant groups, as well as in individual immigrants, is the differing thinking in regards to retaining their culture of origin and becoming part of the new society (Berry et al., 1989). In the new society, these attitudes network with the actual and apparent levels of reception of immigrants and with official policies toward immigration. Berry and colleagues (1989) maintain that through the process of acculturation, individuals and groups are faced with two basic issues: (a) cultural maintenance and (b) contact and participation. In cultural maintenance, the individual or group chooses to maintain cultural identity and patterns, while in contact and participation, they engage in optimistic inter-group contact. It is clear that when immigrants have a strong desire to retain their identities and when pluralism is very much encouraged, ethnic identity is likely to be strong. On the other hand, when there is a bent toward assimilation and groups feel accepted, the dominant or host identity is likely to be strong.

Implicit in migration are varied situations such as hostility, persecution, and sometimes, imprisonment. When there is a presence of or perceived hostility toward immigrants or toward particular ethnic groups, some immigrants, at the confluence, may discard or jettison their own ethnic identity; others may avow their pride in their ethnic

identity, thereby marrying the two identities for possible adaptation to the ensuing negative attitudes.

### **Acculturation and Cultural Values**

The literature suggests that the term “culture” has several nuances and elasticity (Harrison, 1992). The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (Merriam-Webster, 1998) defines “culture” as “the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought . . . these patterns, traits, and products considered as the expression of a particular period, class, community, or population.”

In social psychology studies, social groups become important sources of self-definition. Research in this field of study provides enough evidence to show the tension which is created between acculturation and cultural values. Literature in the field, for instance, Harter, 1996; Phinney, 1990; Crocker and Major, 1989, indicates that the way in which people relate to their social groups of reference as well as other relevant social groups in society has an important corollary for their personal satisfaction and psychological well-being. As discussed in other literature on acculturation, the studies focus on the long-term psychological outcomes of interacting in culturally plural societies (Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997). Accordingly, this line of research renders that living in a society with different internal groups implies a continuous process of negotiation of the role that both ethnic ingroups and outgroups will play in the characterization of self. Berry (1991) gestates this as decision-making processes regarding two fundamental dimensions of acculturation: maintenance of cultural distinctiveness and maintenance of positive interethnic contact.

In an attempt to identify and define cultural values, researchers try to categorize them as those typically held by certain cultural groups (Carter, 1991; Salm & Falola, 2002; Castro, 2003). Cultural values include person-nature relationships. On one hand, people may dominate nature and on another hand, nature may dominate people. This may include human nature such as bad or good, orientation, self-expression, self-control, social relationship and self-esteem (Brown, 2002). Even though research indicates that some cultural values seem to be more prevalent in certain cultural groups than in others, Carter (1991) maintains that there is substantial multiplicity within the value systems of people from the same cultural groups and extensive overlap in the cultural values held by people from different cultural groups. The supermarket of values of the ingroup and the outgroup foists on the individual a tension which implicates the acculturation process.

### **Effects of Acculturation on Immigrant Children and Their Upbringing**

The rapid increase in immigration to the United States of America in recent years has given rise to a record number of ethnically diverse groups, with children who, regardless of place of birth, are raised in immigrant families. The U.S. Census 2000 indicated that the foreign-born population in the United States was 31.1 million, a 57 percent increase from the 1990 figure of 19.8 million. This group represented 11.1 percent of the population in 2000, the highest percentage since 1930, when they composed 11.6 percent of the total population. As the country's foreign-born population, already the largest in history, continues to grow in size, understanding how its migration and mobility patterns fit into and partially shape the overall migration patterns within the United States is extremely important. Unlike their immigrant parents, immigrant children

and children of immigrants do not have momentous associations to their culture of origin. While they may have some idea about their origin or they may have been born in their native country, the majority of them carry a scattered memory of its minutiae. Researchers, therefore, suggest that it is unlikely for these children to consider a foreign country as a place to return to or as a point of reference. On the contrary, they would prefer to be identified or evaluated by the standards of the host country (Gans 1992; Portes, 1995).

In their study of Mexican immigrant families, Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) point out, and it has been buttressed by other studies (Suarez-Orozco, 1989), that the parents of Mexican children growing up in the United States have a “dual frame of reference” with regard to their child-rearing methods. In the same vein, Mexican families often measure their success in the United States by comparison with a home-country frame of reference. Reese (2001) maintains that the twofold nature of the immigrants’ frame of reference, in which the host country represents both material good and moral deterioration, contributes to their differential espousal of U.S. customs and values. Religious rituals, therefore, become a buffer zone to provide the foundation for resilience and solidarity for the immigrants and their children. Trueba, (1999) and Phinney, (1996) emphasize that immigration to the United States, for these families, sets in action something more than a simple linear model of acculturation defined as the magnitude to which they exchanged their cultural beliefs and practices with US alternatives. They neither utterly desert their cultural traditions, nor insist on replicating their home-country practices in the new land. Rather, the goal for most families is forging adaptive and satisfactory practices by incorporating the new into their familiar model of child-rearing



and the moral code upon which it is based. Immigrants' moral principles and the actions they take in response to these values, help inform their own and their second-generation children's adjustment to life in the United States. In raising their children with values of their culture of origin, Reese (2001) writes,

For the parents, knowing right from wrong, respect for parents and others, and correct behaviour, constitute the base upon which academic competence is built. It is the definition of a good person, and it is associated with their Mexican identity. "We Mexicans come from an old tradition, a tradition of the 'ranchos', where the father and mother are respected. Regarding siblings, the younger ones respect the older ones." One father describes the respect he was taught at home by his parents as a 'bonita herencia' (beautiful inheritance) which he was given by his parents and which he is giving his own children. As they educate their children, immigrant parents seek to pass on ethical values and behaviors learned from their own parents. (p. 459)

Obviously, raising children in the United States by Mexican families puts them in a quandary where the host culture competes with their culture of origin

### **Analysis and Summary**

The rich cultural background regarding morality that the immigrant parents evoke, home-country respect and family unity that contrasts American philandering and decay, may be related to a variety of outcomes. This review has focused on migration among Ghanaians and the reason why so many leave their native country in search of greener pastures. The findings have indicated that although a majority of Ghanaians leave Ghana for European countries and other places around the globe, the final destination of a majority seems to be the United States of America.

The review also looked at the process of acculturation among immigrants as a whole since there was no specific study found on Ghanaians in North America. Clearly, the general understanding of acculturation, a phenomenon which results when groups of individuals with distinct cultures come into incessant first-hand contact with subsequent

changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups, smears on the condition of every immigrant one way or another. No situation in the acculturation process may be the same for everyone. Different models may be applicable to different ethnic groups and while one may assimilate into the new culture, others may integrate, given the circumstances. The latter part looked at the profound uncertainty with which many Mexicans view life in America, satisfying on economic grounds, but problematic in key moral terms similar to what many Ghanaians feel. While the parents like to live in America, they do not want their children to aspire to be Americans.

The observation was made that while a majority of the research has tended toward immigrants from Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa in general, studies among Ghanaian Adventist immigrants have not been done. However, the review of other ethnic studies became very resourceful and it would be a springboard for an in-depth study on Ghanaian Adventist immigrants. Further study on their acculturation process and how it affects their religious experience would be helpful in recommending ways to raise their children and to develop their religious experience.

Given the fact that children of contemporary immigrants will represent a crucial element of future American society, how are they affected by what they identify to be the American culture as depicted in the media, peer-to-peer relationships, at school, and on the playground? The argument, then, is that the adaptive struggle threatening ethnic groups in United States is played out in moral terms: how does one raise children who may ultimately go beyond their parents economically but keep them from falling casualty to the moral wantonness of contemporary American society? For a balance to be struck, immigrants cannot minimally restructure common prototypes of the culture of origin

because the settings are too incongruent. Nor can they, in good conscience, sacrifice their children to American ways. The answer lies in intergenerational acculturation, in which modifications are forged from both the culture of origin and the prevailing one in such a way that core ethical principles continue to give lucidity and value to everyday life.

## CHAPTER 4

### FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS OF IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN NEW ENGLAND GHANAIAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the family relationships that are present among Ghanaian immigrant families in three New England Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches. It draws on the general Christian practices that pervaded family life prior to immigration. The general religious practice of the families prior to migration is derived from the liturgical life and the rituals of the church. It will explore answers to the following questions: (a) What was the families' religious practice like prior to migration? (b) How did family members relate to each other before migration to the New England? (c) What was family life like in the home country? (d) What were the roles of husbands, wives, and children?

This chapter explores family relationships specifically by examining the impact of migration on family relationships and religious experience. Analysis will be done through discussions of general family issues and surveys to determine direct or indirect effects of migration on the attitude of couples toward gender-roles, decision-making, and the division of household tasks; nature of employment; and the effect of the couple's communication style on the quality of their marital relationship.

Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventists in New England are spread out mainly in three churches: New England Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist church in Worcester, Massachusetts; Providence Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist church in Providence, Rhode Island; and Greater Hartford Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist church in Manchester, Connecticut. Families in these churches migrated from different Seventh-day Adventist churches throughout Ghana.

### **Context of Family Issues**

At the beginning of 2006, I had been the pastor of the New England Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist church district in the Southern New England Conference for 8 years. The district had grown from one church to three churches. I observed a pattern of laxity in the lives of several families in the church as it relates to family devotions, prayer meetings, Bible study, and attendance at regular worship services. During my regular pastoral visits, I always asked certain indirect questions and made certain statements to see where the family needed support in their spiritual and religious practice and development. The questions or comments included the following: How are your family devotions? How can we improve the prayer meetings at church? We miss you at the Bible studies. There seems to be few families at the beginning of worship service. How can we improve early attendance?

To these questions and statements, more often than not, I received responses that showed that there are fundamental problems. Some of the responses included the following: “We don’t have family devotions.” “Any time we have devotions, it turns into an argument.” “We do not have the time for Bible studies.” “Time is not on our side for other things.” “Pastor! We get too busy and tired to get up early on Sabbath mornings.”

To further isolate and identify the problems, I sought to employ a phenomenological context, an approach that draws on qualitative methods to develop a more forceful understanding of the experience of a group of people within a specific cultural milieu (Patton, 2002). Guba and Lincoln (1985) assert that research employing this approach takes place in the natural context of the research subjects. In such situations, the researcher does not operate abstractly as an observer, but as a vessel whose life experiences and outlook are as uniformly significant as those of the participants in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

To set the stage for this study, I led in discussions about “church and family life in Ghana prior to migration to the United States” in all three churches. These discussions were announced during Sabbath worship service to invite couples to stay and participate in the afternoon discussion. The discussions usually began at four o’clock on Sabbath afternoon and lasted until six. At the forum, the following specific questions were discussed, just to determine the nature of their religious practice and family relationships in Ghana prior to migration: What was church life like in Ghana? What were the specific church rituals that brought families together in Ghana? How did you practice your faith in Ghana? What were family relationships like in Ghana in terms of roles, communication, financial management, parenting, employment and sexual relations? There were two discussion sessions in each church on two different Sabbath afternoons and each lasted for two hours. Notes were taken during and after the discussions.

#### Summary of Discussion Sessions

The families in the three churches did not attend the same churches in Ghana but there was a general consensus during the discussions that the religious practices, rituals,

and liturgical life of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Ghana are similar. There are varied services such as Bible study, evangelism and missions, worship service, baptism, communion, Sunday evening services, marriage, and funerals which take place at different times throughout the year.

### Christian Religious Practice Prior to Migration

Families of the Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches in the New England area who were Seventh-day Adventists prior to migration were mainly engaged in several religious practices before they immigrated. Besides the general liturgical rituals mentioned above, there are three others that need description: the Morning Watch, the All-Day Prayer and Fasting, and the Naming Ceremony.

#### **The Morning Watch**

The average Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist church has a morning service every day of the week on the church premises to study the Sabbath School lesson for the day. The reason for this is that the Quarterly Sabbath School Lesson Quarterlies are sometimes not available for every individual or family in the church. There is also usually a percentage of the church membership who does not have a basic education; therefore, reading and writing becomes an impediment. This service which consists of a discussion of the lesson and prayer session usually takes place between 5:00 to 6:00 a.m. This eventually becomes a routine in the life of the families. In churches where such meetings do not take place, family morning devotions are encouraged.

#### **Day of Prayer and Fasting**

During the general discussions, it came out that the Day of Prayer and Fasting is

one of the best Sabbaths in the majority of Ghanaian churches. Once every month, a Sabbath is set aside for day-long prayer and fasting. Families feel it is very necessary to be present at this day of prayer and all members of the family are urged to participate. Unlike other Sabbaths, when meals are served for fellowship dinner, the 'Day of Prayer and Fasting' is specifically set aside for praying and fasting, as the name suggests. A different theme is chosen for each month. Churches choose different speakers to speak about different segments of the theme and allow interspersed prayer sessions during the day. The nature of the prayer activities makes it more engaging for families not to miss it.

### **Naming Ceremony**

The birth of a child in Ghana is a very happy and essential occasion in the life of the parents and the community at large. Barrenness is frowned upon; therefore, the birth of a child and the naming ceremony are carried out with nuanced celebration.

After an Akan baby is born, he or she is kept indoors for eight days. The eighth day is the day of the naming ceremony, commonly referred to as 'outdooring', a literal term to express the act of bringing the infant outdoors for the first time.

The ceremony begins at dawn and ends before 6:00 o'clock the next morning. The naming ceremony usually takes place in the house of the child's paternal grandfather. On the day of the ceremony, the mother of the child brings the child to the ceremony and hands it over to the husband, who in turn passes the baby to the elder. In the presence of all or most family members and some invited guests, the ceremony begins with the family elder formally welcoming everybody to the ceremony. Water and spirit alcohol are placed on a table in front of the elder who dips his right middle finger in water and puts a drop on the tongue of the child. He does the same thing with the spirit alcohol and



asks the child to note the difference. In a glass, spirit alcohol looks the same as water but does not have the same taste. This is done to teach the babe that the difference is detected only when tasted. Thus it is important for the child to differentiate and distinguish what is right and wrong in this life. As he goes through this ceremony, the elder mentions the name of the child, usually the name of a distinguished relative, uncle friend or departed ancestor.

It came out from the discussion that, although this used to be the traditional way of naming a child, Christians, have replaced the alcohol with a soft drink and have adopted the practice. On a visit to Ghana from March 28 to April 18, 2008, I observed that churches use this naming ritual as another ceremony to bring couples and families together.

### Family Relationships Prior to Migration

#### **The Family**

The families in this study migrated from the country of Ghana. The family is an important unit of the Ghanaian traditional set up. For Ghanaians, the family is the locus of self-worth, integrity, and a good reputation. The entire family shares any loss of honor, which makes their beliefs a collective one. In order to protect this sense of façade there is a need to maintain a sense of coherence; people will act demurely at all times to ensure they do not cause any embarrassment for the family.

Ghanaian society is hierarchic. People are accorded respect based on their age, experience, wealth and/or position. Society perceives older people as wise and accords them respect. A group would generally accord the oldest person in their midst preferential treatment due to his or her age. However, with respect comes responsibility and people

relinquish the responsibility of decision-making to the most senior person.

### **Family Structure**

Family is the fundamental unit of all societies. In the Ghanaian society, family is perceived as encapsulating the whole gamut of life. Thus it serves as the major source of the basic inevitabilities of life and health: adequate food, clean water, a place and time for rest, clothing and sanitation, love and tenderness. In the traditional, rural societies the extended family system that includes several generations plus cousins, uncles and aunts living in a compound or close to one another form the family.

The traditional Ghanaian family is more than the nuclear connubial unit. In everyday usage, the term “family” refers to both the nuclear unit and the extended family. The extended family is an integral part of the family. The pivotal locus of the extended family provides heightened linkage within the family set up; a person’s uncles, nieces, and nephews are just as important to him/her as the nuclear family. As a very strong bond in Ghanaian society, the family unit becomes a filter through which a person’s status, role, identity, and loyalty are defined (Adonu, 2005, p. 242). A person achieves his/her recognition and social standing through the extended family. Therefore, family obligations take precedence over almost everything else in life.

### **Marital Processes**

The traditional Ghanaian concept of marriage is that it is not between two individuals in isolation. It is between two extended families that consent to the union (Dolphyne, 1991, p. 2). In traditional Ghanaian society, a man does not choose his own wife (Omari, 1963, p. 148). A father or genitor seeks a wife for his well-behaved son. If a

marriage-ready young person finds a girl he loves, he can also inform his father to initiate the process. In either case, the father then approaches the girl's father and determines from him what he thinks about a marriage between their respective children. If the girl's father agrees (after consulting his daughter), he accepts money and two bottles of rum or a pot of palm wine. In a Christian home, the father accepts a token in the form of money. These are used "knock" on the door of the girl's parents, indicating an interest in asking for their daughter in marriage. The girl's father then communicates what else needs to be done to complete the marriage. As a symbol of his intentions, the man intermittently sends gifts to his fiancée and would sometimes perform other services for her or her parents until the marriage rite has been performed.

On the day of the marriage ceremony, the family elders, in consultation with the would-be husband, make the necessary customary negotiations, discuss issues, and pay the previously agreed bride-wealth to the family elders of the would-be bride with the consent of the girl. It thus becomes binding for members of both families to ensure that the marriage is successful. Therefore the elders "oversee" and provide moral support and are usually resource persons who are consulted in time of problems with the marriage. Consequently, the extended family members become a safety-mechanism, thus making it quite difficult for either of the spouses to seek divorce easily. Seeking a divorce would thus necessitate long deliberations with both the families of husband and wife just as what takes place during the marriage contract. The individual spouse is required by custom to submit and explain his/her complaints for divorce to the court of family elders of both families. Thus, the man cannot just renounce the wife without the consent of this court and a woman has a right to contest abandonment in this court. Similarly, the man

cannot relinquish parental responsibility of children of the disavowed wife. There is a strong stigma attached to individuals who shirk their responsibilities in the family.

Because the extended family is binding in the marriage, they provide social, financial, and physical support for the children and the couple when there is the need. This renders marriage within the traditional social system a relatively high degree of stability.

## Family Relationship

### **Roles and Attitudes**

Until recent years, men in the Ghanaian society were regarded as competent as or more capable than women. Men generally occupied certain responsibilities such as regional administrative governorship, union chairpersons and chief executive officers of firms, and political office in society. Even in the twenty-first century, prominent positions in business and politics in most areas are still occupied by men (Billing & Alvesson, 1989). Entrenched in the Ghanaian society is the view that performance of certain responsibilities is gender specific. Husbands normally occupy leadership roles and consign their spouses to positions of subordination (Cornwall, 2005, p. 27).

Husbands with a traditional mindset toward marriage are much less involved in household tasks than are husbands with egalitarian inclinations. Given the divided gender roles in most African societies, communication between men and women tends to be minimal and more among those of the same gender. In analyzing marital quality in Ghana, Miller, and Kanna (1999) posit that those who have more traditional gender-role attitudes would engage in less open communication with their spouses (p. 599). Because of this trend, Cornwall (2005) postulates that the traditional gender-role way of thinking is related to male-dominated decision-making at home and a traditional division of

household labor because that represents the prevailing pattern.

### **Domestic Roles**

Domestic roles in Ghanaian, as well as a majority of African societies, are gender specific. The society places certain specific roles on males that are different from their female counterparts (Ampofo, 2001). For instance, in the traditional family, men are usually expected to effect functions such as planning family budget, instilling discipline in the family, and gardening. Conversely, women are expected to carry out other roles such as homemaking, nurturing, and taking care of the children. Members in the same family may inhabit one or several houses in the same community. The wife and her children habitually reside at their maternal house, where she prepares her food, usually the late evening meal, to be carried to her husband at his maternal house during a sleep-over (Der Geest, 1976).

### **Decision-Making**

The dominant nature of the traditional patriarchal view in African societies places decision-making in the domain of males. The power to make family decisions is not subject to bargaining or negotiation between husbands and wives as is the case in most western developed societies. Discussing women's role in the political arena, Binka (n.d) notes that the accounts so far have revealed clearly that women in Ghana are not dynamic participants in decision-making. Okediji (1968) says that the opinion of the husband carries more weight than that of the wife in decision-making in many African societies. However, in certain situations, such as selecting a new traditional king among the Akan matrilineal pedigree, elderly female members of the extended family may be consulted in

the decision-making process and often have veto power. Besides this, men wield more influence. Other studies (Adamchak & Adebayo, 1987; Arowolo, 1976; Khalifa, 1988) have concluded that male dominance in decision-making pervades most traditional marriages in Africa.

### **Wife's Employment Status**

Employment for a traditional Ghanaian wife depends on certain factors, such as number of children, education, and skills. Until recent years, women in Ghanaian society only had a basic education to compete in the job market. In their discussion on custom and culture in Ghana, Salm and Falola (2002) postulate that the disparity of education between men and women leaves women without sufficient education to assume professional positions; therefore, women generally engage in menial office work, trading, and other unskilled economic enterprises. This gives wives the flexibility to plan their time to include other domestic responsibilities (p. 141). When wives engage in employment, they become less dependent economically on their husbands. However, Voydanoff (1988) and Galambos and Silbereisen (1989) maintain that the wife's employment foists upon the couple a level of strain and threatens the husband's authority and position. Miller and Kannae (1999) add that husbands view their wives' employment as negating their manhood, thereby diminishing satisfaction with the marriage.

### **Family Communication**

In the traditional family system in Ghana, communication of the couple is often minimal due to the male-dominant nature of society. Several studies about conjugal decision-making related to sexual health (Blanc, 2001; Wolff, Blanc, & Ssekamatte-

Ssebuliba, 2000) and family planning (Bawah, Akweongo, Simmons, & Phillips, 1999; Biddlecom, Tagoe-Darko, & Adazu, 1997; Salway, 1994) concluded that there is usually little or no communication between couples.

Rivers, Aggleton, Elizondo, et al. (1998) maintain that when women initiate communication with their spouses, it sometimes leads to violence, marital discord, removal of economic support, physical abuse of wives or suspicions of infidelity, especially when it is related to their sexual life. Although women are willing to communicate with their spouses, they are usually afraid of losing their mate. On the other hand, men find it easier to talk to their wives as they often see them as acquiescent (Mahler, 1996).

In instances where there is effective communication, it depends on the person's self-esteem and sense of self-worth. When a woman is confident in herself, she will be able to communicate to her spouse about her needs, about sex, and about her feelings, even in cultures where such communication is considered taboo (Keller, 1996). The level of education may also be a determining factor in improving the couple's communication. In a survey of 1,022 Nigerian men, Oni and McCarthy (1991) reported that among educated men who communicated about family planning with their partners, 60 percent used contraceptives. Among the educated men who did not discuss sexual matters with partners, only 10 percent used contraception. Among uneducated men in the survey, 27 percent who talked about family planning were using contraception, compared with only 4 percent who did not communicate with their partners.

### **Trends in the Traditional Family Set-Up**

In recent times, the traditional family set-up seems to be shifting and undergoing

changes due to urbanization, migration, achieved status, formalized education and the impact of Western culture. The increase in Western education has introduced new factors into rural life. People are moving from what used to be an agrarian society to labor economy, thereby increasing individualism and diminishing the impact of traditional lineage relations. There are greater varieties of economic, social, and cultural choices. The economic system of the city is more diversified and people work in a variety of professions that determine a large part of everyday life.

People who migrate to the cities in search of employment may not move back to their homes, shifting the traditional patterns of inheritance and distribution of wealth.

Better educational facilities are more widely available in the cities. Western education has created and promoted new professional occupations, such as doctors, lawyers, and accountants.

Until recent years, people gained social standing by age and social status as is seen with elders and chiefs. This trend is gradually giving way to gaining prestige through the level of education and the standard of living. Individuals, as well as families, gain wealth through individual means. The wide varieties of opportunities in the cities offer people aspiring to financial wealth better success through lineage (Nukunya, 1975, p. 165).

### **Nature of Family Relationships for the Past Five Years**

In the foregoing discussion, we looked at the nature of family relationships of the Ghanaians in this study prior to emigration. The discussion focused on church life and family life and, finally, the trends that are percolating the traditional family set-up. In this section, the discussion will focus on the situation of family life and the religious practices



of the families in the New England Ghanaian, Providence Ghanaian, and the Greater Hartford Ghanaian churches in New England in the last five years (2004-2009).

Families in the three Ghanaian churches in this study are from the country of Ghana on the west coast of Africa. About 95 percent of them immigrated to the United States of America in the last 5 to 10 years. In my ministry, as the pastor of these three churches, I visited in the homes of the majority of the families attending the churches not only for regular pastoral visitation purposes, but also in response to calls to help the families with varied marital and family problems. I observed that Ghanaian families do not generally go for counseling and therefore would call the pastor for family-related issues. First, referring them to a counselor is generally construed as shirking the pastors' responsibilities. Second, going to a counselor is usually perceived as tantamount to "revealing one's private life;" therefore, they will not go to a counselor, but rather, will call upon the pastor because they trust his or her confidentiality.

Given the magnitude of the problems, I resorted to using the Family Life Department of the church. This helped with some of the issues, because Ghanaians generally accord respect to the elderly and when nominating leaders in the church, they tend to choose a married elderly person to lead out in the Family Life Department. Even though it helps to minimize the problems, they still end up with the pastor because the family life leaders do not have the necessary training. Due to the nature of some of the issues, I sometimes spent three to five hours with some of the families in attempting to resolve marital and family issues. For some, I had to go back or invite them to my house for follow-up sessions.

The problems can be grouped into three main categories: couple relationships, family relationships, and spiritual problems.

Observation of the 5-year period, given the numerous challenges the families face, gives a fair view of issues affecting the families who have been in the United States of America five years or more, as well as those who have been here from one month to five years.

### Couple Relationships

One of the major problems that plagued most of the families in this study is culture shock. They came with the hope and enthusiasm resulting from pictures they had seen, conversations they had had, what they had seen on television in Ghana, and other stories they had heard about America from friends. They did not anticipate basic challenges such as finding employment upon arrival, both partners working, cultural challenges for their children, the need to have a car, and paying bills for practically everything. Since most of these demands are different in Ghana, the families were shocked and the majority regretted migrating. Some wished they could go back right away but the problem was that they may have come on borrowed money, hoping to find employment quickly and pay the money back; some may have sold all their property and had nothing to fall back on if they were to return, and finally, the economical expectations of the extended family back home in Ghana. These and many of the other challenges they face create relational problems, because they do not know how to cope.

### Challenges in the Host Country

Some of the families in this study had little or no formal education. A family

member or a friend had put their names on the federally-controlled visa lottery program and they won. Therefore, a lack of basic education alone posed major problems. The problems were related to issues such as filling in employment applications, preparation of résumés, getting a driving license and driving, communicating in English at work and other public places. These became challenges because not many people in this study had driving experience in Ghana, some had a minimum or no formal education, others did technical jobs and seldom did employers require applications and résumés in such skilled jobs.

### **Communication**

Communication is the process of sharing our ideas, thoughts, and opinions with other people and having those ideas, thoughts, and opinions understood by the people we are talking with. It involves speaking, listening, and observing and thus, becomes a crucial ingredient in defining a relationship (Olson & Olson, 2000, p. 230). As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, the communication of a Ghanaian couple tends to be male dominated. When the families immigrate to America, the women, who have always seen themselves as subordinates, suddenly feel liberated because they can also compete in the menial job market, bringing in almost the same income as their husbands. This gives them the leverage to want to have an equal share in the affairs and running of the family. On the other hand, the men begin to feel that their power, position, and authority are being challenged and threatened because the prevailing Ghanaian traditional thinking is that the man's ability to provide for his family is putative as their authority, power, and position (Salm & Falola, 2002, p. 140). The wives would like to know how the money is spent, how the children are taken care of, who decides how to spend money. They will,

therefore, ask questions and offer their opinion in conversation but, more often than not, the men would say, “She does not respect me, because she asks me about how the money was spent or why didn’t I call and tell her that I will be late from work. She challenges my authority all because we are in America. When we were in Ghana, she would not have talked back to me like that. What is this? Pastor, you should tell her to respect me.”

On the contrary, the wives would say, “Pastor, all I did was to ask a question and he became angry, screaming, and yelling, but I also bring money to the house and should have the right to express my opinion in matters affecting the home.”

Men generally talk to their spouses, giving instructions about things to do and how to do them, but they do not engage in an exchange of ideas. They do not expect their wives to talk back to them nor to express their opinion. Communication was one way just as when they were in Ghana. Conversely, the wives felt their opinions were constantly being suppressed and that they do not live in Ghana and things should change. This was the situation in many of the problem calls I responded to.

### **The Couple’s Finances**

Financial problems ranked high in the majority of visits during the five-year period. This was because in most of these Ghanaian families, the men controlled how money was spent but their wives did not agree because they felt that they also brought money home; therefore, they should know or be informed about the financial management in the house. Areas that affect the family’s finances were about building projects in Ghana and the needs of extended family members. Sometimes the husband wanted to build a house in his hometown in Ghana, and the wife also wanted to have a house in her hometown. Usually the wives did not demand the money itself, but rather,

wanted to be informed. However, because the men made major decisions prior to migration, they felt that the wives' wanting to be involved in decision-making now threatens their authority. These situations almost always result in fighting and sometimes it gets physical.

### **The Couple's Sexual Life**

Because communication is stifled due to the traditional family male-dominant mindset, sexual problems do arise. The majority of the families in this study preferred not to talk about their sexual life. The complaints usually came from the wives. They felt that even though they live in America, their traditional roles have not changed. The only thing that has changed is that they (the wives) are working just as their husbands are. Besides, they cook, clean; take care of the children's basic needs, wash, do dishes, and take out garbage. They do all this besides working for eight hours and, sometimes, working a double shift. Because of limited education, most of them do menial jobs, which sometimes demand hard work, exerting a great amount of energy. Consequently, the wives caught in this situation often get too tired to participate in sexual encounters with their husbands. When they express their lack of energy to participate, their husbands do not agree but begin to complain. The wives are embarrassed when this gets to the pastor or family life leader because in the Ghanaian traditional thinking, denying one's spouse sexual encounters could be grounds for humiliation and divorce. Therefore, they cooperate to avoid such embarrassment, although they may not be in the mood to participate. Adding to the problem is that some of the men think it is a sign of weakness to hold their wives' hands in public, sit together in public places, or be seen touching or doing things together in public. Some do not understand the role of romance in sexual

encounters. To some men, foreplay is considered “western culture” and sometimes “unchristian” behavior.

### **Dual Employment**

Prior to immigration, employment by couples depended on the level of education and where they lived in Ghana. If they lived in a rural community, then there is the likelihood that the wife may have engaged in doing domestic chores such as cleaning, cooking, collecting firewood, and fetching water, as well as helping with farming duties. If they lived in an urban area, then there is the possibility that she engaged in labor for a wage if she had formal education or small trading, selling manufactured goods, food, or art on the streets, in the markets, or in shops if she had no formalized education (Salm & Falola, 2002, p. 164). The women had the opportunity to plan their own time to include the chores in the house.

After migration, the couples’ roles change. In America, Ghanaian married couples often share both paid work and housework in a more equal way than they would in their country of origin. Consequently, women become active decision-makers in the household. Because of the economic demand, husbands and wives take structured jobs in varied general labor sectors such as factories, delivery, cab drivers and sometimes in the healthcare sectors as Clinical Nurse Assistants. Some of the family members may not be educated enough to compete in the labor market (Manuh, 2001, p. 20).

The harrowing situation is that some of the husbands are professionals with degrees in law, business, nursing, teaching, and social studies but due to state and federal standardized examinations, have resorted to doing menial jobs (Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare et al., 2000). Many have jobs that do not use their education or training, but their income

often provides a considerably improved standard of living and lays the foundation for a better life back home.

### **Demands From Home Country**

Ghanaian immigrants stay in contact with their families at home by sending sums of money that they wire abroad using a number of different services (Manuh, 2001). The home country (Ghana) has neither meaningful public social security programs nor extensive employer-provided private pensions. Thus, for the most part, individuals must depend on their families for old-age support and adult children may provide substantial monetary transfers to their elderly parents, especially to widowed mothers (United Nations, 2001a). The idea of community development is ingrained in Ghanaian communities both at home and abroad. Therefore, they contribute towards 'hometown' projects, as well as serving the needs of extended family members at home (Piel, 1995, p. 362).

### **Family Relationships**

#### **Conduct in the Presence of Children**

Perhaps one troubling situation facing Ghanaian immigrants in this study, and probably other immigrants from Africa, is the parents' conduct in the presence of their children. The typical house in Ghana has an opening in the middle with the living rooms and bedrooms enclosed. Thus, the couple's arguments are kept away from children and neighbors. The homes and apartments styles in America keep living room, bedrooms, bathrooms, and dining rooms together. Children see and hear almost everything that takes place in the home. It has been observed that couples often argue, yell, and criticize each

other and use abusive language in the presence of their children. This often places children and teenagers in a state of agony because they are witnessing their parents fighting and disagreeing. It may further subject the children to displaying wrongful conduct in social gatherings or among family members at home.

### **Parents Expectation of Children**

Ghanaian parents in this study have a lot of frustrations in raising children in the United States of America. They would like to pass on their language and the cultural values they deem the most important, such as self-discipline and respect for authority and elders. Ghanaian immigrant parents do not wish their children to adapt what they consider to be the “inappropriate behavior” of the average American child. Thus, they do several things in order to slow down what they term the “Americanization” of their children. The majority require that their children spend more time at home with their families and are generally allowed much less freedom of movement than American families. They do not allow their children to socialize very much with schoolmates who are not Ghanaians. Most African families try to strike a balance in raising their children in the U.S. Ghanaians in America push themselves and their children to succeed while seeking a balance between the traditions and customs of the native culture and those of the United States (Walker, n.d.).

### **Children’s Expectation of Parents**

Ghanaian families in this study have children who experience tremendous challenges in relating to their parents. In conflict resolution situations, children and teenagers have shared their frustration on how their parents communicate to them. They



say that parents give them instructions without giving explanations. When they ask questions, it is construed as being disrespectful. Children and teenagers expect their parents to have constructive communication with them and not just tell them what to do. In some instances, teenagers said that they stay in their rooms when their parents are at home, because “all that the parents will do is to find fault” and blame them for something. Children’s and teenagers’ perception of their parents is that “children are to be seen and not to be heard.”

Children in these families express confusion regarding their parents’ expectations of them. Parents expect them to behave as Ghanaians, but at the same time, expect them to compete and succeed as Americans. These situations do not allow congruous children-parent relationships.

### Spiritual Life

As shown elsewhere in chapter two of this dissertation, maintaining spiritual experience and development in migration calls for determination, fortitude and intentionality. The preceding discussion brought to fore the situations the family lived among the subjects in this study. This section will look at the spiritual development of the family in the areas of prayer, devotions, Bible study, church attendance, and service.

#### **Family Prayer Life**

The three Ghanaian churches in this study emphasize prayer in the planning of church services. Once every month in each of the three churches, a whole Sabbath service is used for prayer and fasting. In the New England Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist Church, there is a prayer service on Sunday morning beginning at 5:00 and ending at

6:30. There are two prayer sessions on Wednesday—one in the morning from 10:00 until 12:00 and another one in the evening from 7:00 until 8:30. There is also another prayer session on Saturday morning from 8:00 until 9:30. Similar programs take place in both the Providence Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist and the Greater Hartford Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches. While these are intended to help improve family prayer life, it appears that it has limited correlation with prayer life at home. The observation is that few couples attend these meetings together. It has often been confirmed during intervention sessions that couples do not pray together and neither do many pray individually on a regular basis, except when there is a crisis in the family.

### **Family Devotion**

Even though Ghanaians are used to and enjoy the fondness of the extended family system, migration has altered the custom, foisting on them the need to live in a closed nuclear family. They like to do things together for religious and social purposes. When a person is having a naming ceremony, all attend and support. When there is a baby dedication, friends, acquaintances and neighbors all attend. When there is a funeral (which would be a memorial service by Western standards), the entire community attends.

In religious practice, it has been observed that families have limited family devotions in the home. In the context of Ephesians 5:23-30, husbands are supposed to be the head and priest in the family. Their role is not only to provide and support the family, but also to provide spiritual nurture, leading and guiding the family with spiritual models. In this regard, husbands in this study fail to be the spiritual leaders of their families. Some of the reasons for not having family devotions have been lack of time in America,

different work shifts, fatigue, and strained relationships at home. It may be assumed that the desire for and practice of family devotions and prayer could improve their spiritual development as well as their family relationships, if engaged in regularly.

### **Bible Study**

Ghanaian families in this study have limited family Bible Study. They prefer to attend Bible Study at church when a pastor or an elder leads it but not necessarily in their homes. While they make attempts to attend Bible Study at church, it may be helpful to have family Bible Study at home as well. To concede on this greatly affects families' spiritual moorings, thereby subjecting members to unhealthy family relationships.

### **Church Attendance and Worship**

Worship may be described as a person's relationship with God through prayer, worship and the sacred life. It is through worship that one actually experiences and personally gets to know the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, one in essence, and undivided. The relationship with God through spiritual disciplines such as prayer, worship, meditation, and reflection provide basic spiritual nourishment, but they must become a meaningful personal experience for the worshipper, not simply an empty form. Form must be filled with life-giving content. Although the families in this study attend regular church worship services, involvement in worship service, Bible study, and the other spiritual disciplines seems to have limited correlation to the families' religious development. It may be suggested that numerous family relational problems that face Ghanaians in this study could be minimized if the worship experience together with the other spiritual disciplines had a bearing on their lives.

## **Service**

Service may refer to faith in action, using a person's strength and goods to actively promote the good of others and the cause of God. It has often been repeated by families in this study that "when we were in Ghana, we were active in Bible study, prayer meetings, morning watch, church attendance, evangelism, and service, but over here in America, there is no time for anything." Whether it is a mere excuse or a legitimate problem (further study would have to be done to establish it), observation has shown that the families in this study exhibit limited works of service on an ongoing basis. It must be emphasized that for evangelism, families are very hospitable and generous toward visitors and newly baptized members as well. Ghanaian families are open to accepting new immigrants to live with them until they have their own place to live. Families buy groceries for needy members in the community and sometimes provide financial support for those in need.

CHAPTER 5  
METHODOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SEMINARS  
TO IMPROVE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

**Methodology**

This chapter presents the methodology and development of seminars to improve family relationships and family spiritual development. Included is a description of the content of the seminars, a description of the design specification, and finally, the draft of the seminars.

Introduction

This section presents an outline of the design, objective, procedure, sampling and data collection. It describes the type of data used in the study, how it was collected, and also sets out how the data was analyzed to explore the research problem.

Design

This study used a one-group pre-test and post-test method. It is believed that through this approach, measurable results were possible and that it could be done in a short time. The pre-test was done to specifically identify relational and spiritual problems that families face after immigration. The post-test measured the improvement in family relationships and religious experience after treatment. There was no control group due to

the size of the population. The purpose was to evaluate the influence of a variable outcome.

### Procedure

The purpose of the research project was to develop a seminar to improve family relationships in the families of three Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches in New England (New England Ghanaian, Providence Ghanaian, and Greater Hartford Ghanaian churches). In each church, an assistant was chosen. The assistant was given a brief explanation of the study and was asked to solicit member participation. The assistant supervised the handing out of the surveys and informed consent forms. Volunteers were asked to read and sign copies of the informed consent form. As each participant completed the form, he or she brought both the signed informed consent form and the completed survey to the rear entrance of the sanctuary and placed each form in a secure box. The assistant supervised the placing of the forms in the two boxes to ensure that there was one returned consent form for every returned survey. Once all the forms were collected, both boxes were sealed and returned to me on the same day.

The secure boxes were opened and informed consent forms were counted, filed, and kept in a secure place for 36 months. I opened the three survey boxes indicating the congregation of origin on each survey. The surveys were counted to make sure there is one consent form for each survey received.

I processed the surveys and entered the results on my computer. The surveys were destroyed, leaving the tabulated information for analysis. The same procedure was used for both pre-test and post-test surveys and processing.

## Objectives

Observation and years of ministry among the subjects yield some assumptions. First, there seems to be a degree of flaccidity in the spiritual life of the subjects, resulting in limited family Bible study, family devotions, church and worship attendance, and service. Second, there are observable relational problems not only between husbands and wives, but also between parents and children. It appears that these two problems are related. Following immigration, disrupted and altered family relationships seem to affect the families' spiritual life.

Thus, this research was designed to help families to improve their relational skills, thereby creating a fertile ground for the development of spiritual life.

It was hoped that the development and implementation of the seminars would help them:

1. Understand that immigration may alter the roles of the couple but could also improve family relationships.
2. Enhance their communication skills.
3. Develop family financial management and set achievable goals.
4. Learn basic skills in conflict management.
5. Develop family spiritual priorities.
6. Improve parent-children relationships.
7. Enrich their spiritual life and further improve personal relationships with each other and with God.

## Sampling

The subjects chosen for this study were chosen as probability purposive samples

of convenience. Three Ghanaian congregations were selected to be identified in New England (Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island), in which 300-400 participants were expected to take part. The congregations are Greater Hartford Ghanaian, New England Ghanaian, and Providence Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches.

### **Analysis and Findings From Survey**

In May 2009, a pre-test survey was administered in the New England, Providence, and Greater Hartford Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches (see Appendix D). A total of 350 surveys were sent out. From these, 240 were completed and returned. All completed surveys were processed and entered to PASW 18 statistics for review and analysis.

The survey consisted of eight sections, one of which was about the profile of the individual. Six sections emphasized different aspects of family relationships: (1) relationship roles, (2) financial management, (3) family spiritual priorities, (4) conflict management, (5) family communication and (6) children and parenting. The last section dealt with a summary of all the other sections.

The sample had a good representation of both men (45.8 percent) and women (54.2 percent) who are all first generation immigrants. The majority of the respondents were mostly middle-aged (over 97.5 percent were 30 years old or older). It is noticeable that the educational levels were spread out, but most were in high school (36.7 percent) and college (40.4 percent). The main profile descriptors of the population that participated in the survey are presented in Table 1.



Table 1

*Family Profiles*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Church</b>				
	New England	167		69.6
	Providence	25		10.4
	Greater Hartford	48	240	20.0
<b>Gender</b>				
	Male	110		45.8
	Female	130	240	54.2
<b>Age</b>				
	20s	6		2.5
	30s	98		40.8
	40s	136	240	56.7
<b>Education</b>				
	Grade School	31		12.9
	High School	88		36.7
	Some College	97		40.4
	College Degree	13		5.4
	Trade School	11	240	4.6
<b>Income</b>				
	31k-70k		240	
<b>Religious Background</b>				
	Seventh-day Adventist	136		56.7
	Baptist	8		3.3
	Catholic	21		8.8
	Presbyterian	20		8.3
	Methodist	9		3.8
	Pentecostal	29		12.1
	Apostolic	17	240	7.1

**Findings**

The main purpose of this project was to develop seminars to improve family relationships and to develop their spiritual life. The pre-test survey was to test the hypothesis that there seem to be family relational problems which seem to negatively affect the subjects' spiritual development. Each section of the survey had questions

ranging from eight to seventeen. Samples of the responses from each section were chosen for analysis.

### Family Relationships

With regards to couple relationships, there appeared to be major problems. It became evident that the subjects have issues with balance of power in their relationships. While 21.3 percent agree that there is an even balance of power in their relationships, 78.8 percent admit that it is the opposite. Sixty-four percent believe that their spouses are too controlling and the other 56.7 percent indicate that their partners have too many rules in the home, further supporting this position. It is apparent that most of the subjects may have relational issues. Besides the issues with control and too many rules in the home, it is clear that they do not spend enough time with each other or with their children because work takes the couple out of the home for the most part (61 percent).

There appear to be other related problems among the subjects, resulting from lower levels of education and related low wages. This places couples in a situation where they have to work for many hours to make ends meet. Thus, there is limited time to work on their relational problems as well as to spend time with their children. See Figure 2.

### Financial Management

Financial management appears to be a major problem for the subjects. Eighty-three percent agree that they do not agree on how they spend their money and 56 percent say that they do not have equal access to their bank accounts. It is thus not surprising that the majority (71 percent) admit that they often argue about money. See Figure 3.

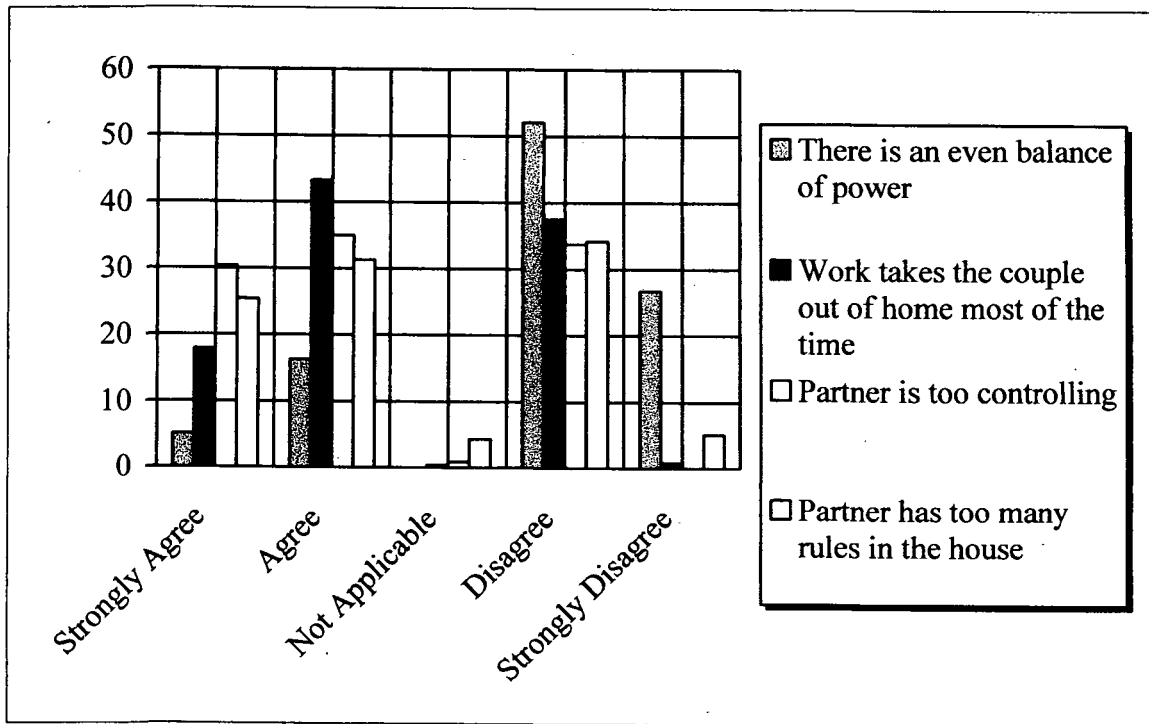


Figure 2. Experience of family life. *Source:* Survey responses.

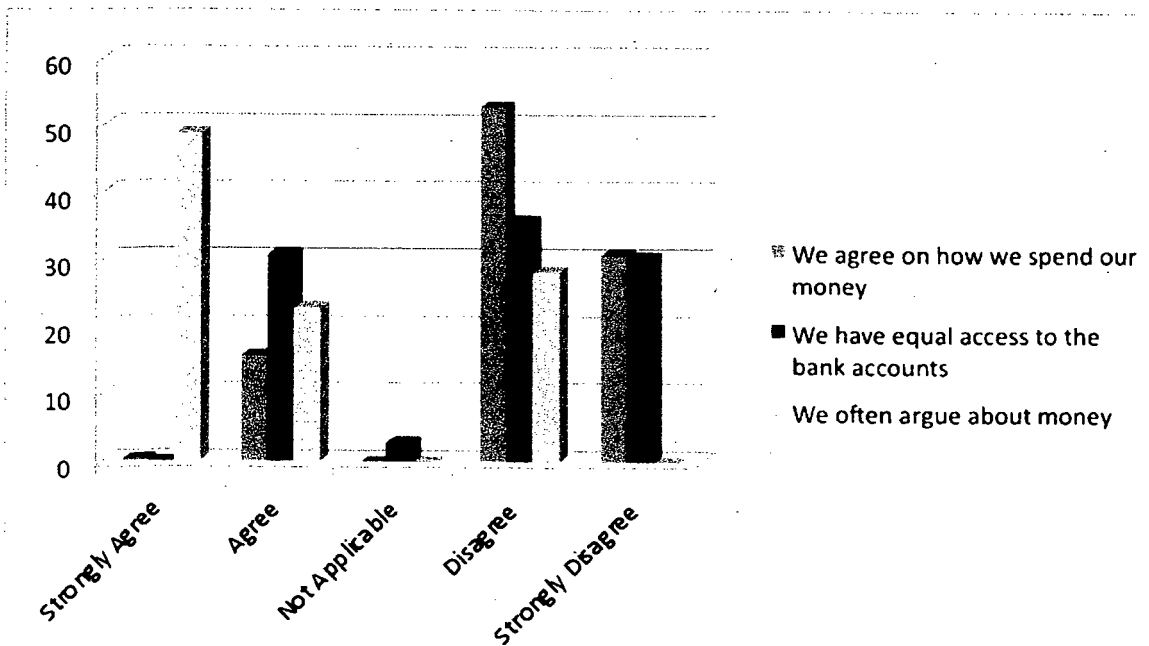


Figure 3. Experience in financial management. *Source:* Survey responses.

## Spiritual Priorities

A paradox indicated by the survey is that, first, a majority (99.6 percent) of the respondents agree that a good relationship with God should make a difference in the quality of one's family life (see Figure 8). Second, 94.2 percent, (Figure 4) participate in areas such as singing in a group, offering prayer, and serving as deacon/deaconess, or usher during worship services at church. On the contrary, it was observed in the survey that there is limited correlation with this belief at home and in spiritual priorities; few have daily personal devotion (32.1 percent), family prayer morning and evening (10 percent), pray together as a family (26.3 percent) and study the Bible together as a family (21.3 percent).

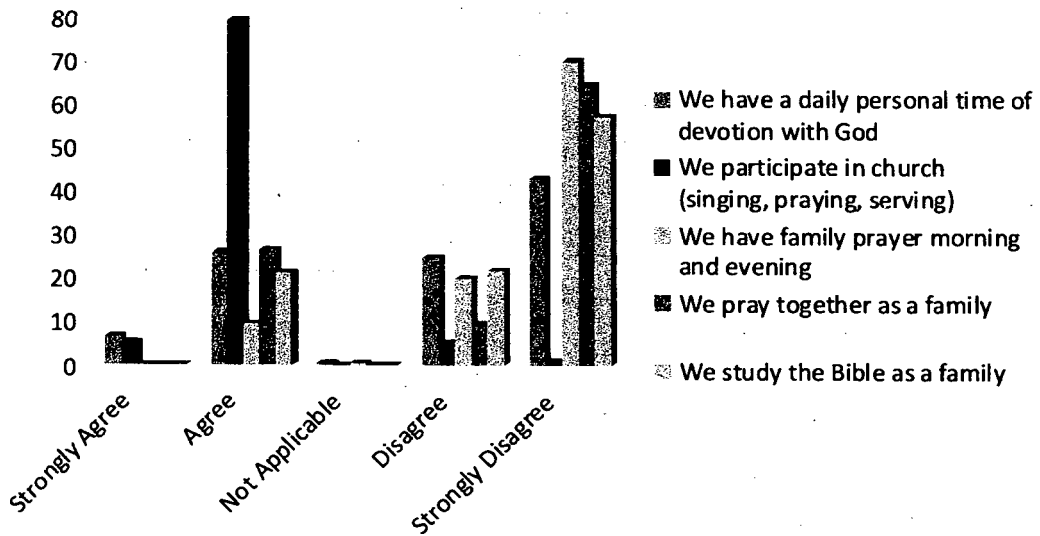


Figure 4. Spiritual priorities. *Source:* Survey results.

## Conflict Management

Conflict management appears to be an issue with the subjects in this study.

Eighty-three percent of the subjects admit that when they get angry, their partners usually get angry as well. Added to the problem is the fact that 88.7 percent agree that they cannot talk about their feelings without a fight and 80.9 percent responded that verbal insults are thrown at each other in the heat of arguments. See Figure 5.

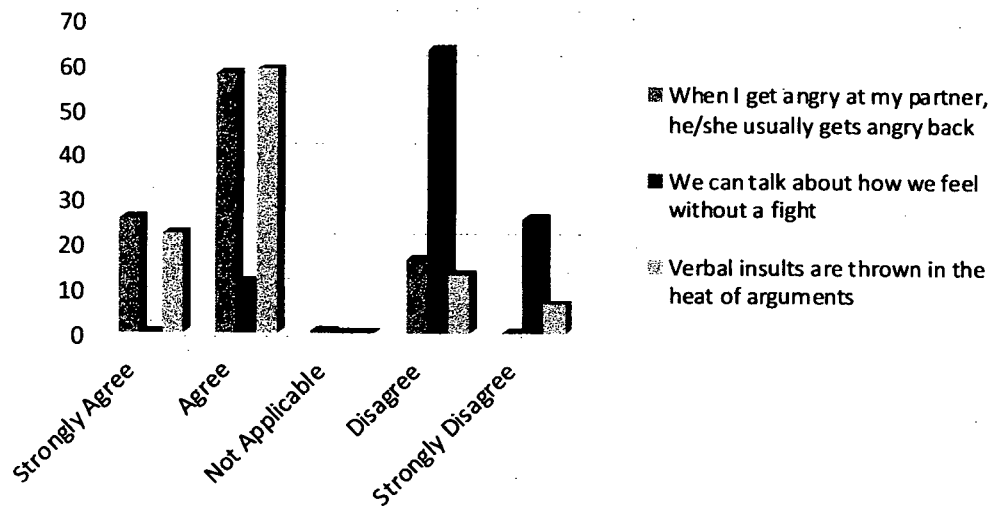


Figure 5. Conflict management. *Source:* Survey results.

## Communication

Communication, a major component in quality family relationships, seems to suffocate in the relationships of the subjects. Sixty-two percent admit that they do not watch their words during communication. Although it does not mean that couples have

physical fights, it does confirm the fact that verbal insults may be rampant (see Figure 6). This situation may further be a threat in homes where there are children, for they would be subjected to seeing their parents “getting at each other.” The survey showed that there are other communication problems among the subjects: (a) fewer partners are perceived by their partners as being good listeners (33.8 percent), (b) over three-fourths agree that their partners make comments that put them down (83.7 percent), (c) they cannot share their extended families problems with their partners without conflict (62.1 percent), and (d) couples often call each other names (80 percent).

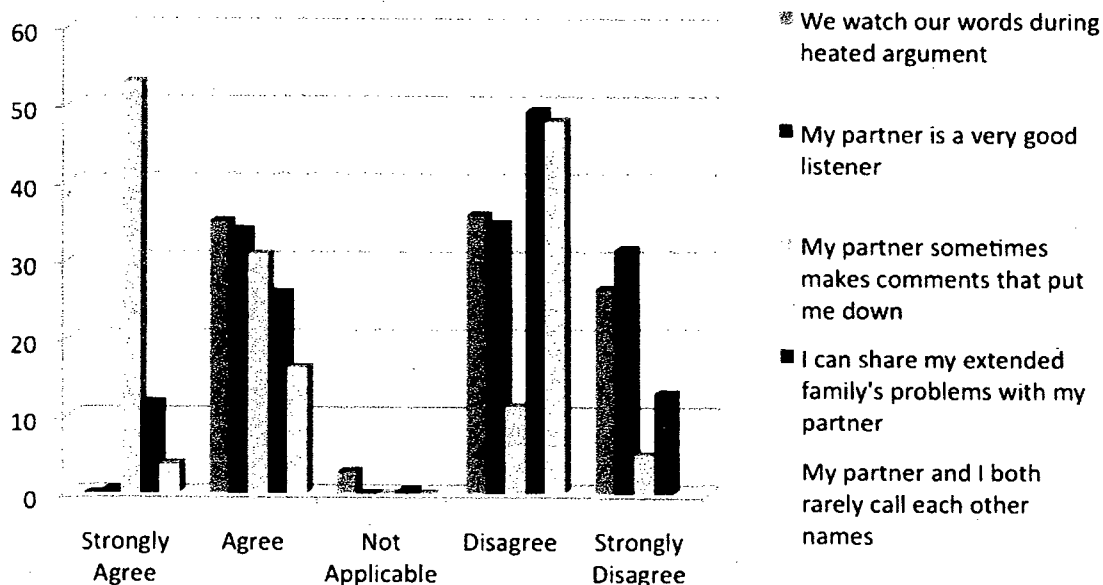


Figure 6. Family communication. *Source:* Survey results.

## Parenting

Even though the majority (99.2 percent) admit that their children's future is a major priority for them, achieving that dream is becoming difficult. Sixty-nine percent do not agree on how to discipline their children, 62 percent agree that it has been a challenge to relate to their children, and 48 percent admit that their children are not happy at home. The survey revealed that a higher percentage (78.7 percent) of the subjects argue a lot in the presence of their children, a situation which could have an adverse effects on their children. Over 80 percent of the subjects admit that their children do not freely share their feelings with them, while almost half (47.1 percent) admit that they do not know their children's friends.

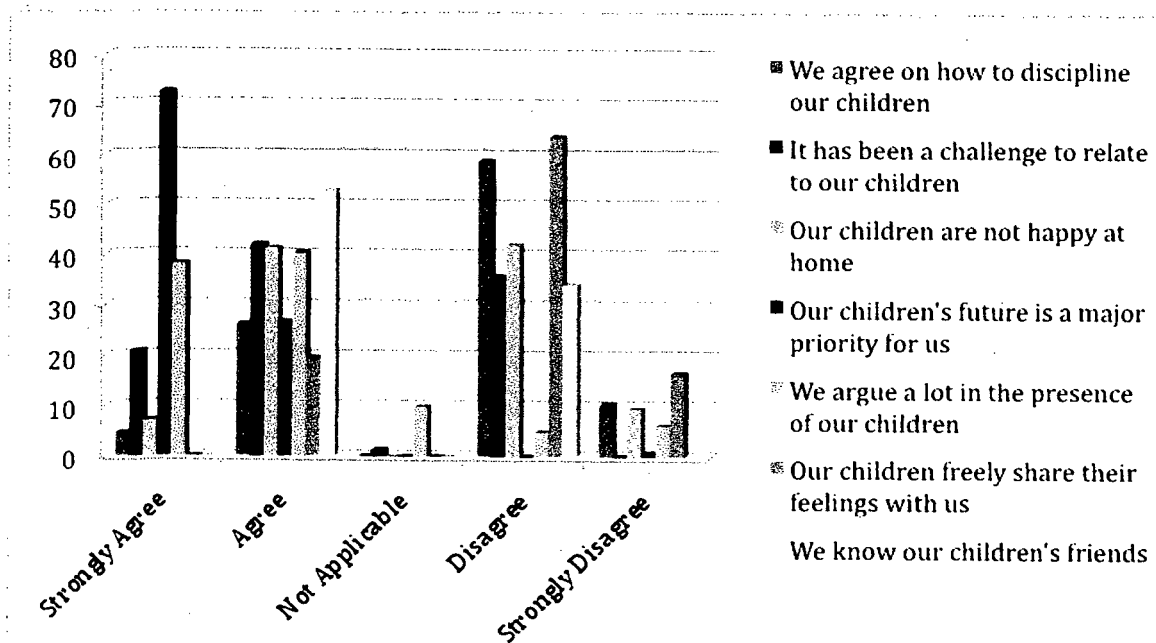


Figure 7. Parenting. *Source:* Survey results.

## Summary

It goes without saying that the majority of the subjects (99.2 percent) agree that a good relationship with God should make a difference in the quality of a person's family life. On the contrary, it does not appear in the survey that a good relationship with God translates into their family lives. See Figure 8. We may conclude from the survey that because spiritual priorities are misplaced, a number of the respondents are not satisfied with their current relationships (68 percent), they are not satisfied with their financial situation (85 percent), and less than half have good relationships with their children (45.5 percent). Overall, only 28.8 percent admit that they have happy relationships.

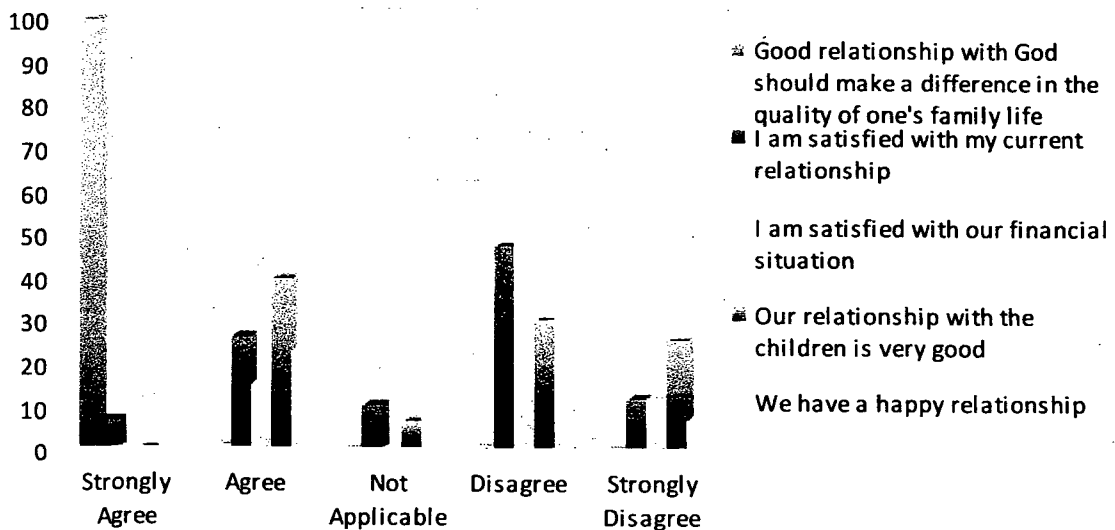


Figure 8. Summary of survey. *Source:* Survey results.



## **Development and Implementation of Seminar**

### **Content of Family Seminars**

From the literature review and biblical and theological foundation review, an outline of information was developed. The seminar focuses on two major interrelated areas that this dissertation seeks to address (a) family relationships and (b) families' spiritual life among Ghanaian families in three Ghanaian Adventist churches in the Southern New England Conference. The topics of the seminar were carefully chosen based on personal experience as pastor of the three churches, with knowledge of the specific family challenges that came up during the 11 years of ministry to these families. To a certain extent, the seminars began to have a life of their own. That is, they became the product or output of the participants. One of the goals prior to the event was that the project would be *in vivo*, taking the risk of allowing the participants to have a certain amount of input into the direction and content of the exercise. Not to do so would be to deny the proper development of seminars that could become models for others to utilize.

To test the validity and reliability of the data and the subsequent seminar, a pilot program was carried out and all of the topics were presented in three other Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches (Toronto Ghanaian, Toronto, ON, Canada; Chicago, Ghanaian, Chicago, IL; Queens Ghana, Queens, NY) and also at the North America Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting. An evaluation was taken at the end of the seminar in Toronto and Chicago to check the feasibility of doing the study and to observe how best to improve the content and design. Revisions were derived from suggestions and comments on the survey completed by participants in the pilot and field-testing phases. The final product was completed in June 2009.

## Design Specifications

The seminar is expected to be a valuable instrument in educating immigrant families on areas of family relationships and spiritual development as an optional tool for improvement. Although the presentation can be altered to present to families with different backgrounds, this study was intended for the Ghanaian immigrants mentioned in this study. The seminar was research-based and its design utilized instructional design characteristics. Each topic was derived from the original content outline. From the outlines, PowerPoint presentations were developed with selected pictures, illustrations and designs to correspond to the topics and to add visual effects. The seminars are designed in such a way that pastors, community leaders, and church elders can review and present them without any difficulty.

A pre-test survey was conducted one month before the beginning of the seminars. The survey was specifically designed to focus on exclusive problems the families face in order to prepare the topics for the seminar to suit the needs of the families. Prior announcements of the seminar were made to invite families for the seminar. Attendance was open to all families. The project consisted of a one-week seminar.

## CHAPTER 6

### IMPLEMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF SEMINARS

#### **Introduction**

The central thesis of this project is that the impact of migration, from personal pastoral experience, suggests that there is laxity in the religious experience of migrant families of the three Ghanaian churches in this study, resulting in limited regular family devotions, prayer, and Bible study. Second, there are observable relational difficulties, not only between husbands and wives, but also between parents and children.

Furthermore, it appears that these two problems are related—altered and disrupted family relationships following emigration seem to affect the immigrant family’s spiritual experience. This project, therefore, seeks to design a seminar to improve the situation.

In this chapter, I address both implementation and analysis of the seminar. First, I discuss the actual rendering of the seminar and how it shaped its identity. Second, I discuss the post-test survey, and third, I analyze the findings from the project and draw conclusions.

#### **Implementation of Seminar**

Prior to the implementation of the seminar, all of the logistics, planning, information gathering, protocol, and procedures had been done as an object lesson or metaphor for the research problem. Now it was time to explicitly communicate the

guiding principles of the seminar to the subjects. The seminar notes are found in Appendix B.

In July 2009, a family seminar was conducted in each of the churches in this study. To ensure a high rate of attendance and participation, the seminar was scheduled to take place on two weekends with a Wednesday evening meeting between the weekends (Friday evening, Saturday morning worship time [11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.], Sabbath afternoon [3:00–5:00 p.m.], Wednesday evening, Friday, and Saturday morning and afternoon: six sessions in all.

Besides the Saturday worship times, the other meetings took place from 7:00 to 9:00 in the evening in a culturally acceptable manner: the first fifteen minutes were for singing and other preliminary activities, such as announcements and family exercises, if any. This is very typical and acceptable in these ethnic churches. At the end of each presentation, the participants were allowed time for questions and comments. Each meeting lasted for two hours. The presentations lasted for one and a half hours, with the remaining fifteen minutes set aside for questions, comments, and recommendations.

### **Post-Test Survey and Results**

Six months after the seminar, a post-test survey was done to see how well the families understood and were applying the principles taught in the seminar. The questions of the survey were arranged on a Likert Scale, using five responses, ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” The survey took approximately 30 minutes to administer on each occasion. The subjects were aware that they were being studied for a Doctor of Ministry project. In order to preserve confidentiality, because I serve the subjects as their pastor, I decided not to provide code numbers for them or ask for their

names on the survey. The responses were valid and not skewed, because the forms were anonymous. The respondents were assured that the researcher would not be able to detect the sources since they were not asked to provide their names or any source of identification. As one who is Ghanaian and has worked with the subjects for 11 years, I knew that the subjects would be truthful in responding to the questions in the survey if confidentiality was assured. Being the pastor of the subjects, a Ghanaian, and a fellow immigrant allowed me to do further qualitative data analysis on the collected data. According to Weinreich (1996), qualitative research provides the researcher with the perspective of target audience members through immersion in a culture or situation and direct interaction with the people under study, very much like a participant observer.

Post-test analysis was done to assess both qualitative and quantitative results of the success, failure, impact or relative merit of the treatment. The survey (Appendix D) was sent to 350 couples and 231 valid results, representing 66 percent, were received to compute the results of this dissertation.

The respondents who returned the survey were from the three Ghanaian churches in this study: 74.9 percent from the New England Ghanaian, 9.5 percent from the Providence Ghanaian, and 15.6 percent from the Greater Hartford Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Church Respondents*

Church	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
New England Ghanaian	173	74.9	74.9	74.9
Providence Ghanaian	22	9.5	9.5	84.4
Greater Hartford	36	15.6	15.6	100.0
Total	231	100.0	100.0	

The ages of the respondents ranged from the 20s to the 60s with the majority (91.8 percent) being between the ages of 30 and 50 years. The gender distribution was nearly equal, with 51.5 percent female and 48.5 male. Having an evenly distributed representation of all ages of family units strengthens the validity of the survey. Table 3 shows the distributions.

Table 3

*Gender and Age Distribution*

			Age					Total
			20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Frequency	5.0	62.0	39.0	5.0	1.0	112.0
		Percent	2.2	26.8	16.9	2.2	0.4	48.5
	Female	Frequency	8.0	52.0	59.0	0.0	0.0	119.0
		Percent	3.5	22.5	25.5	.0	.0	51.5
<b>Total</b>		Frequency	13.0	114.0	98.0	5.0	1.0	231.0
		Percent	5.6	49.4	42.4	2.2	0.4	100.0

The majority of the respondents (34.2 percent) had completed high school education. Those who had some college education represent the second largest group (32.5 percent). Respondents who had completed grade school were in the minority (13.9 percent). Graduate degree holders also represented a small number (6.1 percent) of the respondents and the smallest group had attended trade school (2.2 percent). See Table 4.

Table 4

*Highest Education*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Grade School	32	13.9	13.9	13.9
High School	79	34.2	34.2	48.1
Some College	75	32.5	32.5	80.5
College Degree	26	11.3	11.3	91.8
Graduate Degree	14	6.1	6.1	97.8
Trade School	5	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	231	100.0	100.0	

The subjects in this study had varied religious backgrounds prior to becoming Seventh-day Adventists. Seventy-two percent of the respondents were former Seventh-day Adventists and represent the largest group in this category. The second largest number of respondents (18.2 percent) were former Presbyterians. Former Catholics compose 8.7 percent, one Baptist (4 percent) and one former Muslim who represents 4 percent. The varied representation of the subjects (education, age, previous religious background, different church membership, and gender) give the study integrity, validity, and balance. See Table 5.

Table 5

*Religious Affiliation Prior to Becoming an Adventist*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Seventh-day Adventist	167	72.3	72.3	72.3
Baptist	1	.4	.4	72.7
Catholic	20	8.7	8.7	81.4
Presbyterian	42	18.2	18.2	99.6
Muslim	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	231	100.0	100.0	

**Analysis and Findings**

One survey instrument (Appendix D) was used for both pre-test and post-test. The survey was divided into six categories together with the demographic data and conclusion. The presentation of each portion of the results and analysis includes a number of selected questions from the survey that correspond to the specific category. A Likert scale was set up using the following indications: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Not Applicable (NA), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The analysis and findings are organized under the following seven categories:

1. Family Relationships
2. Financial Managements
3. Family Spiritual Priorities
4. Conflict Management
5. Family Communication
6. Children and Parenting
7. Summary



## Family Relationships

Even though families in this study have relationship problems in areas of balance of power, control, rules, time with each other and the children, there appears to be significant improvement after the treatment. The post-test results indicated that 45 percent of respondents admitted that there is an even balance of power while 51 percent disagree. On the issue of time together at home, the survey revealed that while more than half (55.8 percent) spend most of the time at work, almost half (44.1 percent) agreed that they spend time together at home with spouse and children.

Compared to the pre-test results, there appears to be improvement in the relationships after the seminar. Balance of power went from 21 percent to 45 percent, showing an increase of 24 percent for those who admitted that there was an even balance of power. This improvement seems to have correlations with partner control and too many rules in the house. The issue of partners being too controlling went down (65.4 to 35.5 percent) after the seminar. Similarly, in the pre-test 56.7 percent indicated that partners had too many rules in the house; however, after the treatment, only 29.8 percent admitted that their partners had too many rules in the house. See Table 6.

## Financial Management

Fifty-six percent of the subjects admitted that there is no agreement on how to spend money, a decrease of 26 percent from the pre-test. This is one area that creates significant problems among families in the study. Reduction in this area apparently correlates to equal access to the bank account (50 percent) increase from the pre-test, and considerable decrease in argument about money (19 percent) compared to the pre-test. See Table 7.

Table 6

*Family Relationships*

Question	Test	Percent				
		SA	A	NA	D	SD
There is an even balance of power in our relationship	Pre-test	05	16.3	0	52.1	26.7
	Post-test	13.4	32	2.2	39.8	12.6
My regular job takes me out of the house most of the time	Pre-test	17.9	43.3	0.4	37.5	0.8
	Post-test	08.2	35.9	0.0	36.8	19
My partner is too controlling	Pre-test	30.4	35	0.8	33.8	0.0
	Post-test	10.8	24.7	0.0	62.8	1.7
My partner has too many rules in the house	Pre-test	25.4	31.3	4.2	34.2	0.5
	Post-test	06.9	22.9	0.0	41.1	29

Table 7

*Financial Management*

Question	Test	Percent				
		SA	A	NA	D	SD
We usually agree on how to spend money	Pre-test	0.4	16.7	0.0	70.8	12.1
	Post-test	8.7	34.6	0.0	49.4	7.4
We have equal access to the bank accounts	Pre-test	0.0	30.8	2.9	35.8	30.4
	Post-test	49.8	31.6	1.7	16.0	0.9
We often argue about money	Pre-test	48.8	22.9	0.0	28.3	0.0
	Post-test	9.1	41.1	0.0	42.9	6.9

## Family Spiritual Priorities

One hypothesis that partly prompted this study was that there are observable limited spiritual disciplines currently being practiced in the families, such as family devotion, prayer and Bible study. There are also related marital problems among the subjects. As reported in Table 8, the pre-test results indicated that the respondents admitted limited occurrences of these activities in their daily lives. The subjects were

used to attending the Morning Watch and attending regular daily morning services prior to emigration from Ghana. The Morning Watch, which was the main morning devotion for these families, is not conducted in the Ghanaian churches in this study. The families in this study were, therefore, left to find other methods to develop their own family devotion, prayer, and Bible studies. The pre-test report indicated hardly any practice of the disciplines among the families in the study. In contrast, the post-test results show improvement in all three areas: family devotion (from 32.1 to 65.8 percent), prayer (from 9.6 to 51.9 percent) and Bible study (from 21.3 to 39 percent). This increase may partly be attributed to the fact that the researcher observed that the subjects needed a form of an outline or method to guide them in family devotions in their homes. During the seminar, a method was provided for the families, and it included prayer and Bible study as part of the devotion. This may be credited for the significant improvement in these areas.

### Conflict Management

On the issue of getting angry at each other and seeking revenge, the post-test results indicated that there has been a reduction of this occurrence among the families in the study. Forty-four percent of the respondents admitted that they do not get angry with their partners, showing an improvement from the pre-test report of only 16 percent in this category. As shown in Table 9, more than a third (33.8 percent) of the respondents are able to express how they feel without any fight with their spouses. It is typical for Ghanaian men to interpret their partner's expression of opinion or feeling as tantamount to opposition to the man's authority. This improvement is, therefore, a positive sign of a better understanding among members of the family. Pre-test results indicated that incidents of verbal insults in the heat of arguments were very high. On the contrary,

Table 8

*Spiritual Priorities*

Question	Test	Percent				
		SA	A	NA	D	SD
We have personal time of devotion with God everyday	Pre-test	6.3	25.8	0.4	24.6	42.9
	Post-test	16.9	48.9	0	25.1	9.1
We participate in the worship services in our church	Pre-test	15	79.2	0	5	0.8
	Post-test	56.7	38.5	0	3.5	1.3
We have family prayer morning and evening	Pre-test	0.0	9.6	0.4	20	70
	Post-test	18.6	33.3	0.0	43.7	4.3
We pray together as a family	Pre-test	0.0	26.3	0.0	9.2	64.6
	Post-test	15.6	34.6	0.0	35.5	14.3
We study the Bible together as a family	Pre-test	0.0	21.3	0.0	21.7	57.1
	Post-test	12.6	26.4	0.0	46.3	14.7

Table 9

*Conflict Management*

Question	Test	Percent				
		SA	A	NA	D	SD
When I get angry at my partner she/he usually gets angry back	Pre-test	25.4	57.9	0.4	16.3	0
	Post-test	8.7	47.2	0	29	15.2
We can talk about how we feel without a fight	Pre-test	0.0	11.3	0	63.3	25.4
	Post-test	5.7	28.1	0	56.7	9.5
Verbal insults are thrown in the heat of arguments	Pre-test	22.1	58.8	0	12.9	6.3
	Post-test	0.9	48.9	.9	41.6	7.8

contrary, only 49 percent admitted that it does occur, as shown in the post-test report.

While it is still high among the subjects, it shows a significant reduction of 31 percent from the pre-test results.

### Family Communication

As reported in Table 10, 72 percent of the respondents indicated that they watch their words during communication, showing a 37 percent increase. Forty-eight percent reported that their partners sometimes make comments that put them down, a reduction from 82 percent in the pre-test results. Over three-quarters (77.9 percent) of the respondents admit that they can freely share the problems of their extended family with their partners. Almost half (47.9 percent) reported that they rarely call each other names. While this can be improved, it shows some decrease in occurrence compared to the pre-test results.

Table 10

#### *Family Communication*

Question	Test	Percent				
		SA	A	NA	D	SD
We watch our words during communication	Pre-test	0.0	35	2.9	35.8	26.3
	Post-test	9.5	63.2	0.4	15.2	11.7
My partner sometimes makes comments that put me down	Pre-test	52.9	30.8	0.0	11.3	5.0
	Post-test	11.7	37.2	0.0	37.7	31.4
I can share my extended family's problems with my partner	Pre-test	11.7	25.8	04	49.2	12.9
	Post-test	18.2	59.7	09	9.5	11.7
My partner and I both rarely call each other names.	Pre-test	3.8	16.3	0.0	47.9	32.1
	Post-test	5.2	42.9	0.4	37.2	14.3

## Children and Parenting

This analysis focused on issues about children and parenting among the subjects. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents reported that they agree on the method of discipline for their children. Although 48 percent admit that they have challenges relating to their children, parent-child relationship seems to suffer among the families in this study. This further correlates to their children's level of happiness at home (48.3 percent). As shown in Table 11, there was a significant change in the rate at which parents argue in the

Table 11

### *Children and Parenting*

Question	Test	Percent				
		SA	A	NA	D	SD
We agree on how to discipline our children	Pre-test	4.6	26.3	0.0	58.8	10.4
	Post-test	19	39.4	0.9	40.3	0.3
It has been a challenge to relate to our children	Pre-test	20.8	42.1	1.3	35.8	0
	Post-test	.4	48.5	0.9	45.5	4.8
Our children are not happy at home	Pre-test	7.1	41.3	0.0	42.1	9.6
	Post-test	.9	42.9	0.4	34.6	21.2
Our children's future is a major priority for us	Pre-test	72.5	26.7	0.0	0.0	0.8
	Post-test	60.6	39.4	0.0	0.0	0
We argue a lot in the presence of our children	Pre-test	38.3	40.4	10.0	5.0	6.3
	Post-test	.9	8.2	9.1	52.8	29
Our children freely share their feelings with us	Pre-test	0.0	19.6	0.0	63.7	16.7
	Post-test	5.2	26.4	0.0	54.1	14.3
We know our children's friends	Pre-test	0.0	52.9	0.0	34.2	12.9
	Post-test	0.4	70.6	0.9	26	2.2

presence of their children. On the pre-test survey, 78.7 percent of the respondents admitted that they argue in the presence of their children. After treatment, only 9.1 percent report occurrences of argument in the presence of their children. Post-test survey results show that 31.6 percent of respondents admitted that their children freely share their feelings with them and 71 percent reported that they know their children's friends. This change may be attributed to the fact that almost half of the respondents indicated in the "comment" section of the survey that their children are beginning to share and open up to them during devotion time.

### Summary

Ninety-nine percent of respondents agree that a good relationship with God should make a difference in the quality of a person's family life. Fifty-six percent of the families in the study reported that they are satisfied with the current relationship with their partners as contrasted to the reported 32 percent in the pre-test survey. Although 14.6 percent of respondents admitted that they are satisfied with their financial situation, after the seminar, 52.8 percent reported that they are satisfied with their finances. Fifty-six percent admitted a good relationship with their children and 68.5 percent reported that they have a happy relationship. See Table 12.

In Table 13, the results show that even though couples in this study did not agree that they have happy relationships, more men were satisfied with their relationships than women. The analysis revealed that the majority of the females in the study did not believe they have happy relationships. This phenomenon was observed in areas such as financial management, conflict resolution, and communication.

Table 12

*Summary*

Question	Test	Percent				
		SA	A	NA	D	SD
A good relationship with God should make a difference in the quality of one's family life	Pre-test	99.2	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0
	Post-test	79.2	19.9	0.0	0.9	0.0
I am satisfied with the current relationship with my partner	Pre-test	6.3	25.8	10	46.7	11.3
	Post-test	17.3	39.4	0.4	42.4	0.4
I am satisfied with our financial situation	Pre-test	0.0	14.6	0.0	73.8	11.7
	Post-test	11.7	41.1	0.0	46.3	0.9
Our relationship with our children is very good	Pre-test	0.0	39.2	6.3	29.6	25
	Post-test	11.7	44.6	2.2	38.1	3.5
We have a happy relationship	Pre-test	6.3	22.5	14.6	50	6.7
	Post-test	29.4	38.1	0.4	22.9	9.1

Table 13

*Gender \*We Have a Happy Relationship (Pre-Test)*

			SA	A	NA	D	SD	Total
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Frequency	15	28	34	30	3	110
		% of Total	6.3	11.7	14.2	12.5	1.3	45.8
	Female	Frequency	0.0	26	1	90	13	130
		% of Total	0.0	10.8	0.4	37.5	5.4	54.2
<b>Total</b>		Frequency	15	54	35	120	16	240
		% of Total	6.3	22.5	14.6	50.0	6.7	100.0



The last analysis sought to measure the level of happiness after the seminar. In Table 14, a descriptive frequency analysis was done to specifically determine gender happiness. In this, the level of happiness among females went up, showing a minor improvement from the pre-test results. The results of the tests indicated that the happiness of the women showed the least improvement. It is possible that the expectations of the females are not being met. Secondly, the females may have expected instant changes in their spouses as a result of the seminar not taken into consideration that behavior modification takes time.

Table 14

*Gender \*We Have A Happy Relationship (Post-Test)*

			SA	A	NA	D	SD	Total
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Frequency	30	44	0	33	7	114
		% of Total	13	19	0	14.3	3	49.4
	Female	Count	38	44	1	20	14	117
		% of Total	16.5	19	0.4	8.7	6.1	50.6
<b>Total</b>	Frequency		68	88	1	53	21	231
	% of Total		29.4	38.1	0.4	22.9	9.1	100
	% of Total		6.3	22.5	14.6	50.0	6.7	100.0

### Conclusion

The purpose of the seminar was twofold. First, it was to improve family relationships among Ghanaian immigrant families in three churches in New England: New England Ghanaian, Providence Ghanaian, and Greater Hartford Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches. Second, it was to address the observed laxity in their spiritual experience (family devotion, prayer, and Bible studies), which is believed to have impacted their relationships. The seminar covered six areas, namely, financial

management, designing family spiritual priorities, changing family dynamics, designing family devotions, developing healthy communication, conflict management, and developing healthy relationship between parents and children. Six months after the presentation of the seminars, a post-test survey was conducted to assess and evaluate the treatment. The results show, in general, that the seminar appears to have positively improved family relationships, as well as family spiritual development.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

The goal of this chapter is to present a brief summary of the dissertation, reflections on the project, and recommendations for future implementation of similar projects and general recommendation for pastors and community leaders of Ghanaian immigrant families.

#### **Summary**

The purpose of the study was to develop seminars to improve the observed altered family relationships and spiritual development among Ghanaian immigrant families in three Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches in Southern New England. It came to the fore in the study that changing dynamics in the migration process have a significant impact on family relationships and spiritual experience.

Chapter 2 presented the biblical findings on family migration and the challenges that come with it. Two basic theories which describe migration—structural imbalance and the push-pull theory—were explored to show how they play out in the biblical narratives of migration.

Acts of migration in Scripture took various forms, such as banishment by God from the Garden of Eden, scattering by God, called by God, moving away because of

famine, forced flight, and migration by invitation.

The Bible presents two main types of migration: voluntary and involuntary. Both of the types are replete with migratory problems and challenges that impact family relationships and spiritual development. Some of the challenges created schisms among families, forced families to give false statements to conceal their identity, and sometimes created polygamous relationships. To maintain family spiritual practice and development during migration, biblical families employed altar building, family prayer, unity practices, spiritual sacrifices, acts of religion, faith and worship, and purity of race commitments.

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the socio-theoretical conceptual frameworks used to study the immigrant family. The review of the acculturation process seemed to provide the best basis for developing the survey questionnaire and the seminar presentations. Two modes of acculturation were explored.

Since there was no specific study found on Ghanaians in North America, the review looked at the process of acculturation among immigrants as a whole. The following two major models were explored:

1. The Linear-Bipolar Model places one culture against another and assumes an inverse relationship between the ethnic and host cultures, which means the strengthening of one at the expense of the other. This model eliminates the possibility of independent parallel involvement in each culture and virtually eliminates the experience of biculturalism.

2. The bi-dimensional approach or two-dimensional approach views acculturation as a process in which the relationship with both the minority and dominant

cultures should be considered separately and relations between them may be independent.

No situation in the acculturation process may be the same for everyone. Different models may be applicable to different ethnic groups and, while one may assimilate into the new culture, others may integrate given similar circumstances. The review uncovered the profound uncertainty with which many Mexicans view life in America. They may be satisfied with the economic grounds, but it is problematic in key moral terms, similar to what many Ghanaians feel. While the parents like to live in America, they do not want their children to aspire to be Americans.

It was observed that a majority of the research has tended to explore and study immigrants from Europe, Asian, Latin America, and Africa, in general. Studies among Ghanaian Adventist immigrants have not been done previously. However, the review of other ethnic studies is useful as a springboard for an in-depth study on Ghanaian Adventist immigrant families.

Chapter 4 explores immigrant family relationships by examining the impact of migration on family relationships and spiritual life and practice. An overview was done to show the direct and indirect effects of migration on a couple's attitude toward gender-roles, decision-making, and the division of household tasks, nature of employment, and the communication style on the quality of their marital relationship.

The word "family" connotes a broader meaning to Ghanaians. It is not limited to the nuclear family, but extends three generations and references "community." The extended family, which provides control over the children, provides the adolescent with a sense of security and connectedness. The large size of a Ghanaian family tends to make older children 'parents' of the younger one. The grandparents add support to the nuclear

family; the grandfather and grandmothers take on the roles of additional parents, providing emotional and financial support to the younger generation.

Ghanaians are customarily more traditional than North Americans in the distinction of the roles of man and woman in the family. Males are the providers and macho or “take charge” leaders, while females are caretakers, followers, and child nurturers. Changing dynamics in the post-modern society, percolating into the traditional Ghanaian family systems, are causing a shift in this traditional gender role, with the males losing ground, thereby creating conditions which make them defensive and lead to low self-esteem. This transition from the patriarchal/matrilineal community to the American individualism roils family relational challenges for the Ghanaian families in Southern New England.

Strained relationships caused by the challenges inherent in migration have foisted financial, communication, couple relationship, and parent-child relational problems upon the families. This has further decreased the occurrence of family prayer, family devotions, and family Bible study.

Chapter 5 described the project, which included the methodology, pre-seminar survey, pre-test survey analysis, and the implementation of the seminars to strengthen families in the study.

The pre-test survey was administered to identify problems in two specific areas: family relationships and family spiritual life and practice. The survey tested six different areas: family relationships, financial management, spiritual priorities, conflict management, communication, and parenting.

Analysis of the pre-seminar survey (the pre-test) confirmed the hypothesis that there are family-relational and spiritual life problems among the subjects. A one-week, six session seminar was conducted in each of the three churches. Each seminar was comprised of six presentations: Financial Management, Designing Family Priorities, Changing Family Dynamics, Designing Family Devotions, Developing Healthy Communication and Conflict Management, and Developing Healthy Relationships between Parents and Children.

Chapter 6 described the implementation of the treatment and analyzed the results and findings. The seminar covered six areas: financial management, designing family spiritual priorities, changing family dynamics, designing family devotions, developing healthy communication, understanding conflict management, and developing healthy relationships between parents and children.

After the presentation of seminars in the three churches, a post-test survey was taken after six months had elapsed to appraise and evaluate the treatment. The results broadly indicated that the seminars had improved family relationships as well as family spiritual development.

### **Personal Reflections**

The study of family migration and its implications from biblical and the socio-theoretical perspectives deeply enriched my understanding of the complexity of migration and how it impacts family relationships and spiritual development. The exploration of the Ghanaian family's experience in the host country—in this study, Southern New England—opened my mind to understand better the difficulties and challenges these families face in the diaspora.

The implementation of this project had a significant impact on my ministry. I saw growth within spiritual experience of families in terms of family devotions, Bible study and prayer. There were also observable improvements in the relationship between couples and between them and their children. The camaraderie and the trust that I gained from visiting them provided the opportunity for families to open up more in discussing how the seminar helped them in their relationships, as well as in their spiritual growth. Further invitations from families to counsel and provide intervention to them have brought many a meaningful experience. During visitations, even though I did not raise the subject, families expressed growth in their marriages and families as a result of the seminar. They confirmed continuous implementation of the principles taught in the seminar and expressed a desire for a bi-annual or annual repetitions of the seminar to offer them additional alternatives to family challenges.

Inferring from numerous conversations families who attended the seminar appeared sincerely grateful for the Bible discussions and invitations of families to assist them in designing family devotions and thank you cards following the seminar and special events and for the information and training that was shared. Based on the written evaluations given by the couples at the end of the Family Enrichment Week and the public expressions from families, I foresee stronger homes and more intimate relationships among these family units.

I believed prior to the study, and now feel confirmed in my belief, that better homes create better churches. In Bible discussions at church and in private visits with the families, I sense that their churches have been strengthened. It was surprising to see that, among many other opportunities, this project gave me an opportunity to influence the



lives of the families and churches and to provide tools for family relationships and family spiritual development. Even though they recall my sermons, as I minister and visit the families in their homes, they talk more about the issues and continuously express their appreciation for the experiences they gained at those seminars.

The success stories from the families who attended the seminars resulted in a presentation on family issues on radio. A Ghanaian Internet radio organization (CB Radio Ghana) has given me a one-hour slot to do live presentation entitled “Enrich Your Family Series” on their channel on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. At the end of each presentation, listeners call in with their questions and comments.

I have also had invitations to other Ghanaian churches to present the “Enrich Your Family Seminars” to help families and churches. One invitation, which is worth mentioning, is that of the Quinebaug church, a Caucasian church that I pastor. Hearing about the seminars I present, the members requested that I do a family seminar in their church. With the lessons learned from the project, I have given two family seminars which were well received in non-Ghanaian churches.

## **Recommendations**

### Recommendations for Using the Model

A number of recommendations may bolster the usefulness of this model for enriching family relationships and family spiritual development, especially, but not only, in Ghanaian churches within the Seventh-day Adventist Church throughout the world church. The following list includes some of the recommendations:

1. It takes more than one successful application of a new model to validate it as an effective tool. More testing needs to be done to discover whether or not the positive

results achieved through this model of the immigrant families in the Ghanaian churches in the Southern New England Conference can be replicated elsewhere. Therefore, it is recommended that this seminar be presented in other conferences and local churches.

2. If this seminar is to be an effective strategy, it is recommended that the process be redesigned. There seems to be a great need for more time for interaction and discussion and for more clarity in teaching and testing the seminar. The seminar might well include two sessions a year over a two-year period. In addition to questions and comments, more time should be devoted to small group discussion at the end of each session.

3. If the seminar is found to be useful elsewhere, and if it is then refined, this approach to improving family relationships and family spiritual development among immigrant families could be made available for widespread use in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These materials can be made available at this point to interested pastors and churches.

### General Recommendations

1. Pastors and church leaders would help themselves and their ministry by taking time to get acquainted with the Ghanaian immigrant groups. An understanding of the meaning of community in their home countries would help the pastor connect with these families. His intervention would help to protect them from social isolation by recreating the tight-knit communities, extended family systems and social support networks similar to that of their home country. However, Ghanaian families who do not live in such environments often experience social isolation if they cannot fully integrate into their

nonimmigrant community of residence. Social isolation is one of the strongest predictors of family relational problems and is a risk factor for family spiritual problems.

2. It is important to develop culturally appropriate family education seminars in churches and Ghanaian communities as an ongoing support to educate Ghanaian immigrant families regarding relationship skills. One of the goals of this education should be to empower Ghanaian immigrant families to continue to adapt to their new environment and successfully build strong family units.

3. Ghanaians couples do not generally go to counselors for family counseling since they perceive that approach as exposing family affairs to the public. They rely more on the pastor and the church's Family Life Department for family and spiritually related problems.

4. Based on the premise that repetition is the mother of learning, ongoing training on family crisis intervention, communication, changing family dynamics, family challenges in diaspora, and financial management should be given to leaders of the Family Life Department since families in Ghanaian churches depend on them for family related issues.

5. With regard to family educational seminars and programs, it is very important that the curricula reflect the realities of the learners. Many churches and community-based and non-profit organizations provide family enrichment programs. However, the materials and examples used are often based on Western experience. An understanding of Ghanaian culture and the generational differences that impact these families' relationships and spiritual challenges would help pastors, churches, community groups, non-profit organizations, and educators better meet their needs.

## APPENDIX A

### FAMILY TYPES

When we talk about the term “family” in scripture, different types of combinations emerge. While the general idea describes the basic household unit which provides a person's central relationships, nurture, and support, the biblical record of the ancient is replete with many differing types.

The Old Testament family structure embodies a larger concept than the English word suggests. Two Hebrew words, which describe family, are “*mishpahah*” and “*bayith*” (Gottwald, 1979, p. 257, 291). *Mishpahah* was used to describe the larger patriarchal subdivision that included those persons related by blood, marriage, servitude, and even animals. When God said “neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates” (Exod. 20:10), it was the idea of *mishpahah*. Best described it is “protective association of extended families” (Gottwald, 1979, p. 315).

The “*bayit*,” house, was a subdivision of the “*mishpahah*,” family or clan. Among other meanings it was used to suggest the place of residence or household. It embodied a clan of descendants (Gen 18:19), or a person’s property, a particular place or residence on which and on whom one depended (Job 8:15). The family unit was patriarchal and was termed “*bet av*,” house of the father. The “*naissance*” of a family connotated the idea of building a house (Gen 16:1). The condition for family membership was a blood relationship, marriage, adoption, or geographical proximity. The father was head of the family and owner of its property (Num 26:54-55). The father was the principal authority. He was expected to be munificent, to show love and pity to his family (Gen 25:28; 37:4;

44:20; Ps 103:13). From these two structures one can delineate a nuclear family and the extended family.

The nuclear family is described when God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."... "But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man... For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen 2:18, 20b-22, 24).

In two specific instances the Bible uses the idea of building a house to refer to building a family. In each case the word used is "banah" to build a house (Botterweck & Ringgren, 1978, p. 167). In her attempt to remove the social pressure foisted on her due to bareness, Sarah said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." (Gen 16:1-2) Similarly, Rachel could not have a child and that built in her jealousy. As the custom allowed she said to her husband "Here is Bilhah, my maidservant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and that through her I too can build a family." (Gen 30:1-3) For specific basic structure of nuclear family type, it is recorded "In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab (Ruth 1:1).

From the general idea of "family" emerges the extended family structure. While the nuclear family describes the circle of parents and unmarried children the extended

family (the 'father's house') was composed of two or more nuclear families that claimed descent from the same ancestor. Yahweh told Noah to go to the ark "you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation" (Gen 7:1) and we find that "Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood" (Gen 7:7). Noticeably, this fits the description of the extended family structure. Members of the extended family occasionally lived together in bordering houses, and while this does not seem to have been common, they occasionally worked at the same trade or profession (1 Chr 4:14, 21, 23).

When a member of a nuclear family within an extended family was forced to sell property, the extended family had the right to redeem the property in order to keep it from leaving the family (Lev 25:25; Jer 32:6-15). A member of the extended family could redeem individuals threatened with being sold into slavery, and, at least in the early period, the family was allowed to avenge a wrong done to one of its members (Lev 25:47-49). The ancestor from whom all of its constituent nuclear families were descended exercised power in the extended family. If this individual was not living, then questions of authority were negotiated among the heads of the nuclear families. (Achteimeier, 1985, S. 302)

Another meaning derived from the "family" is clan. In her predicament a woman whose son died from a quarrel comes to David for protection:

I am indeed a widow; my husband is dead. I your servant had two sons. They got into a fight with each other in the field, and no one was there to separate them. One struck the other and killed him. Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant; they say, "Hand over the one who struck his brother down, so that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed; then we will get rid of the heir as well." They would put out the only burning coal I have left, leaving my husband neither name nor descendant on the face of the earth. (2 Sam 14:5-7)

Sometimes the Bible could use “family” to refer to a tribe. “Now the house of Joseph attacked Bethel, and the LORD was with them... And the Amorites were determined also to hold out in Mount Heres, Aijalon and Shaalbim, but when the power of the house of Joseph increased, they too were pressed into forced labour” (Judges 1:22, 35).

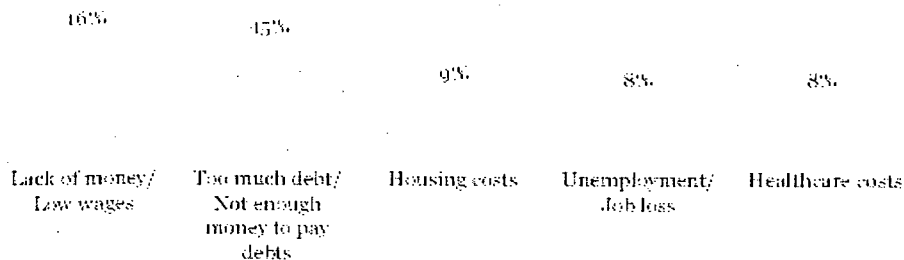
## APPENDIX B

### SEMINAR NOTES

#### Financial Management

Money is one of the most significant areas of potential conflict in marriage and is consistently among the top four reasons for divorce. Financial issues occur between couples across the economic spectrum from wealth to poverty. Having a lot of money is not a guarantee of happiness or ease of dealing with money.

*What is the most important financial problem facing your family today?*



Gallup Poll, Feb. 9-12, 2009

SMITH

Part of the real work of marriage involves making money and managing money. Couples who work together as a team and can reach agreement about financial matters are happier than couples who perpetually disagree about finances. Closely related to financial matters are two other important areas which couples must consider: career decisions and desired level of affluence/lifestyle. Career goals and attainment of material wealth can often be in conflict with relationship goals. What is most important to you and do the two of you agree about that? Do you think it's possible to "have it all"? A frank exploration of financial styles, expectations and goals is extremely important to marriage success.

Money means different things to different people. Financial attitudes often reflect one's most basic feelings about the world and are usually learned in one's culture and family of origin. Some people regard money as an important element in ensuring happiness, while others see it more as a way of ensuring security and a defense against fears. Some people are "savers"; others are "spenders". Some people feel discomfort just talking about money. Others are more open about money. Some people think being in debt is fine. Others are scared of debt. Status, security, freedom and control are just a few of the things people associate with money to different degrees.



## **Problem**

Usually families with financial problems don't even recognize the real trouble. What they recognize are only the symptoms of the problems, such as unpaid bills, or the consequences of the symptoms. The deep-seated problems include

1. Power and control
2. Lack of good money management skills.
3. Lack of proper communication and decision-making skills.
4. Dependence and Independence
5. Emotional problems, addiction and stress leading to impulsive spending patterns
6. Commitment
7. Lack of trust
8. Uncontrolled factors; unemployment, reduces hours, prolong illness

## **Result**

1. Disagreement and fight of over money
2. Stress
3. Divorce
4. Children – they may feel caught in the middle of the arguments, and feel guilt when they benefit from purchases or disappointment when money problems prevent them from having certain things.

## **Precautionary Measures**

What usually surface, as financial problems are symptoms of deeper issues and that's why it makes good sense for families to practice prevention rather than recuperation.

## **Five Basic Principles**

1. Set Family Financial Priorities -
2. **Stop borrowing** – The Bible makes it clear that borrowing is not God's best for His people and should never be used as a routine part of financial planning. Proverbs 22:7 “The poor are always ruled over by the rich, so don't borrow and put yourself under their power.” (MSG). (Also, Neh. 5:4, 5, Psalm 37:21).
3. **Start saving and Practice Delayed Gratification**– Saving for the future is in keeping with principles taught in the scriptures. “Precious treasure and oil are in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man consumes them” (Proverbs 21:20). Contemporary society promotes spending and borrowing, and saving is discouraged. Saving for future needs is in keeping with God's principles rather than to borrow or use credit.
4. **Avoid Impulse Decisions** – Careful planning, patience and consistency are the ways to financial security. Proverbs 21:5 “Careful planning puts you ahead in the long run; hurry and scurry puts you further behind”.

5. **Avoid Get-Rich-Quick Scheme** - Proverbs 13:11 “Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows.” (Job 20:15,19-22; Prov. 10:2; Jer. 17:11; Matt. 6:19-21; 1 Tim. 6:9-11 )
6. **Live Within Your Means** – It is a good principle to prepare a budget and live within one’s means. “Poverty and disgrace [come to] those who ignore instruction, but the one who accepts rebuke will be honored” (Proverbs 13:18).

“We should ever remember that in the judgment we must meet the record of the way we use God’s money. Much is spent in self-pleasing, self-gratification, that does us no real good, but positive injury. If we realize that God is the giver of all good things, that the money is His, then we shall exercise wisdom in its expenditure, conforming to His holy will. The world, its customs, its fashions, will not be our standard. We shall not have a desire to conform to its practices; we shall not permit our own inclinations to control us.” Deuteronomy 28:1 - “Now if you faithfully obey the Lord your God and are careful to follow all His commands I am giving you today, the Lord your God will put you far above all the nations of the earth”

If Christian families would live by sound biblical financial principles, they would not only be beacons and pathfinders into the way of financial freedom for friends and family but they would be models for their own children.

Undoubtedly, lack of financial discipline in parents have serious impact on the lives of their children and their children’s families.

**Promise:** Matthew 6:33. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.” Remember, those mounting monthly payments probably aren’t quite as “easy” to make as they are alleged to be.

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### **Designing Family Priorities**

All people have priorities in their life. Priorities are the people, things, behaviors, or beliefs that are very important to a person. Priorities are often reflected in the way people spend their time or money.

Everyone needs to discipline their life if they are to get anywhere. We choose priorities. We decide how to spend our money and time based on how important certain things are in our lives. We have to give up some things in order to gain other things.

Underlying the non-Christian's world-view is usually a search for success, happiness and pleasure based on what the world-system values highly---money, success, power, prestige. Each generation has its own ideologies and dreams, these constitute the "spirit of the time," or *zeitgeist*. This spirit is opposed to God and ignores God's intended and ultimate purposes for mankind and the earth.

### **Identifying Your Priorities**

We have many things in our lives that we feel are important. However, there is just a limited amount of time, energy, and money that is available to us. Often we have to choose between the priorities in our lives. We have to decide which of our priorities are the most important to us.

Excuses for not being intentional about priorities:

- a. I am doing fine.
- b. I am too poor to plan or provide for the future.
- c. I am too uneducated to know how.
- d. I do not have enough time left to plan.

Some People do not set priorities because they:

- a. Are unrealistic about life.
- b. Refuse to set goals, fearing embarrassment if they should fail.
- c. Are afraid people will accuse them of bragging.
- d. Have low self-image; they cannot see themselves succeeding.
- e. Have wrong views of God's providence; just let God take care of them.
- f. Have wrong views of spirituality; I must be nothing and have nothing.
- g. Have never lived by goals; they've just survived.

- h. Have failed in the past because they set unrealistic goals.
- i. Set low goals and didn't get satisfaction.
- j. Are in a middle of a problem and can't see anything but trouble.
- k. Have never taken responsibility for their life; someone else has always done their thinking.

Why Priorities? They give us:

- a. Energy, to get up and work when tired.
- b. Purpose in life.
- c. Feedback, i.e., how we are doing
- d. Hope or a future.
- e. They make us plan.

### **The Biblical Order Of Priorities**

**1. Personal Relationship with God** - Deut 6:5, Matt 6:33, 1 John 2:15. Faith in God is an essential element of home life. Decisions in the home should be made in a way that will honor God and to respect each member of the family. Our religious life should be vital enough to influence our everyday.

**2. Family:** Besides our relationship with God, the first institution that God instituted in Eden is family. Having a strong home life becomes the next great priority. Putting the proper attention to nurturing one's relationship with his or her spouse and family honors God (Gen. 30:30; 1 Tim. 5:8)

Spouse - A married man is to love his wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). For a husband, God comes first then his wife. In the same way, wives are to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). The principle is that a woman's husband is second only to God in her priorities. Parents are to raise godly children who will be the next generation of those who love the Lord with all their hearts (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4)

**3. Christian Community and the wider community** - Galatians 6:10; Matthew 5:16, 28:19. The church community should be the next priority. We should not permit houseguests to interfere with church attendance. Neither should the weather make any difference in our church attendance. Family plans such as outings, athletic activities, and trips at hours should not conflict with church services.

We should invite friends, neighbors, and relatives to attend services with us and make special provision to encourage them to come. We should make a sincere effort to improve our talent for use in the kingdom building.

**4. Work (Career)** - Christians should ordinarily find some sort of job to support themselves. **2 Thessalonians 3:6-15**

Setting priority to the relationships in your life helps to define what is important and what falls into secondary levels of importance. Scripture teaches us to seek what is of God and all other things will take care of themselves (Matthew 6:33).

Do we, as parents, seek to lead our children to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior?

Is provision made in the home for daily worship? Does the entire family attend church regularly?

Do we criticize church programs and its leaders in the presence of our children and friends?

### **5. Family Health/Exercise**

Each member of the family should spend some quiet moments by her/himself to think about a purpose statement for his or her life. Encourage each person to think about one goal for improvement in each priority area (God, self, family, community, world). These goals should be measurable and easily attainable in the next month. For instance, a goal for the priority of God might be "I will read my Bible every morning at before I get out of bed."

After each person has come up with a purpose statement and some goals, let them with the entire family at a family meeting. Choose an accountability partner who will check the progress on his or her goals one month from the day of the family meeting. Be sure to mark this date on your calendars. Come together at the end of the month and assess progress, setbacks and determine where you can improve. Reassess monthly and reward progress.

### **6. Retirement and Old Age**

- a. Winter – Dreams and planning (childhood).
- b. Spring – Planting and preparation (youth).
- c. Summer – Growth and hard work (adult).
- d. Autumn – Harvest and enjoying the fruits of your work (retirement).

Retirement is an example of life's transitions, or crossroads. In today's society very few sense that we are accountable to God and must face judgment. It is best to think much about such inevitabilities in a secular, profligate society where short-term goals are preferred in an uncertain and confusing world.

No one knows when a particular day will be the last, if not will inevitably move on to the next season.

- a. 70 years. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psa. 90:10, KJV).
- b. Use today. "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psa. 90:12, NKJV).
- c. "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under Heaven. A time to be born and a time to die" (Ecc. 3:1-2). A time to retire.

To have a better tomorrow, we must plan a better today.

The best place to retire is in eternity - "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matt 6:19-21, NIV)

### **Couple Exercise**

Each couple should spend some quiet moments themselves to write priority statement for family. Encourage each other to list one short-term goal for improvement in each priority area (God, family, Christian community, work, health, retirement). These goals should be measurable and attainable in the next month. For instance, a goal for the priority of God might be "I will read my Bible every morning at breakfast."

After each couple has written a priority statement and some goals, find another couple and share with them. If possible, have each couple choose an accountability partner who will check the progress on their goals one month from today. Be sure to mark this date on your calendars!

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### **Changing Family Dynamics**

Change in itself does not have to be bad. It can often be good. When it is expected and wanted, most of us handle it well and welcome the variations it brings – like the arrival of children, starting a new job or growing old. Though at the time we may struggle with these changes, we soon regain our balance and move on with life.

However there are other kinds of change that challenges the dynamics of immigrant families.

In Home country:

1. Usually, husbands work to take care of the family
2. Husband Dominates decision-making
3. Women mostly do household chores
4. Limited or no baby sitting needs – extended family members provide the needed support

5. Extended family members live closer and provide support
6. We usually know neighbors and trust them
7. Media - predominantly radio; little or no television
8. Children listen without questioning
9. Driving – not a basic necessity but luxury
10. Home styles – Open and shared with extended family members
11. Family size determined by ability and extended family demands
12. Sexual life controlled by men

#### In Host Country

1. Husbands and wives both work full-time
2. Women have a voice - shared decision-making
3. Women compete in labor market
4. Shared household chores
5. Baby sitting needs
6. Extended family Demands
7. Individualistic living patterns – Knows few neighbors
8. Easy access to home telephone, television, computers
9. Driving – a basic need and helpful to the family
10. Children – Want rational and open discussion
11. Home styles – closed
12. Family size determined by financial conditions.
13. Sexual life - shared

Different situations can cause changes in a person's life. Some of the situations are marriage, new home, baby, new job, divorce, bereavement, and migration or new environment. These levels of change can be very stressful and difficult to cope with. Knowing how to adjust to change can be of tremendous help to families.

1. **Reorient your Perception about Change** – It is there to upgrade your knowledge and consciousness and not to hurt. Sometimes it comes with pain but it becomes fruitful. **Romans 8:28** “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”. **Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 16** “Remember the whole way by which he has brought you these forty years through the desert so that he might, by humbling you, test you to see if you have it within you to keep his commandments or not. So he humbled you by making you hungry and then feeding you with unfamiliar manna. He did this to teach you that humankind cannot live by bread alone, but also by everything that comes from the Lord's mouth... fed you in the desert with manna (which your ancestors had never before known) so that he might by humbling you test you and eventually bring good to you.”
2. **Admit that you are going through change** - Denial does not make our problems disappear; instead it usually makes things worse.
3. **Do not resist it.** - Just go with the flow and let it happen. Try to learn from it and understand the hidden lesson. You cannot develop without change. Remember

stagnation leads to rottenness. Isaiah 40:31 “But those who wait for the Lord’s help find renewed strength; they rise up as if they had eagles’ wings, they run without growing weary, they walk without getting tired.” (NET)

4. **Anticipate stress** - Adapt to the stressor by reframing the effects of change, looking at the long-term effects or bigger picture, adjusting your values, accept the things you can’t change, and focus on the positive. James 1:4 “So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.” (Message)
5. **Face your fears** – “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us and His teaching in our past history.” --*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 196 (1902). **Matthew 6:34** “So then, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.”
6. **Take inventory of your Resources** - evaluate the resources you have at your disposal as you deal with the issue. Dependent upon the specific situation you are facing, your relevant resources may include skills, time, finances, skills, or even other people in your life that can help you through the adjustment. Sometimes change might require you to make some tough decisions, like perhaps re-working your priorities. You may need to seek some outside counsel from someone else. **Psalm 46:1** “...God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” (Also Psalm 91:1-9)
7. **Communicate with your partner** – It is extremely important to communicate with your partner during change. To successfully navigate through change you need each other’s wisdom, be on the same page, know how each one feels and share ideas.  
**Ecclesiastes 4:9-11** Two people can accomplish more than twice as much as one; they get a better return for their labor. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble. And on a cold night, two under the same blanket can gain warmth from each other. But how can one be warm alone?

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## **Developing Family Devotions**

### **A. Why Family Devotions?**

1. To have a moment of family worship.
2. God wants us to teach Biblical principles to our children. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 – “Keep these words that I am commanding you in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.” Ephesians 6:4 “Fathers...bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”.
3. To allow fathers (and mothers) an opportunity to transmit and practice symbols of faith and deliverance stories - Exodus 12:26-28 “When your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ then you will say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover, when he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck Egypt and delivered our households.’” The people bowed down low to the ground, and the Israelites went away and did exactly as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron. Psalm 78:5, 6 – “He established a decree in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children.” (NRSV) (Isaiah 38:19, Ex. 12:3; Dt. 6:6-8; Jos. 24:15; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15).
4. It brings the family together at least once a day. Children realize the necessity of learning about God and His ways. And most importantly, it teaches the children what simple devotion is with God, that it doesn't have to be hours long to be instrumental in their life.
5. Allow family members to study scriptures, share their spiritual concerns and pray together.
6. To allow children opportunity to see the ongoing spiritual example of their parents
7. To provide children with continuing opportunity to ask about the things of God in a comfortable context.
8. It fosters a sense of belonging and security, especially for the children.
9. Affords opportunity to know much more about what's going on in children's lives. We will understand their real concerns and the things that trouble them, and our relationship will grow. We will be connected as a family, instead of fragmented, and God will begin to be the center in our daily living.

### **B. Helpful Suggestions in Planning**

1. Keep it simple and short – It is better to have it short and sweet, vital and nourishing, so that family members would hunger for more. (Keep it 15-20 minutes, that way you'll do it regularly).

2. Do it regularly – Weekly is great, daily is even better.
3. Make it a down time - Turn off the television, cell phones and laptops, and don't talk business
4. Allow time for discussion - Children tend to be inquisitive and want to know. Give opportunity for discussion, answering questions, solving problems, and for self-expression.
5. Be respectful of the different age groups
6. Vary the methods - To include all ages, sometimes allowing children to lead, choosing their own method; song, passage, form of discussion and prayer. This will prevent boredom and cold routine.
7. Include the whole family
8. Not the time for criticizing or gossiping - This is not time to air church problems unless for a matter of prayer. Remember, it is worship time.

### **C. Suggested Format**

1. Prayer
2. Song(s)
3. Passage
4. Discussion
5. Prayer needs and request
6. Prayer

(Note: format should be varied to allow creativity since different family members, including children, may lead).

### **D. Suggested Methods**

1. Bible Stories – discuss where it took place, who were involved, what it was about and the lessons learned.
2. Miracles of Jesus – may find lessons, meanings and answers to family or individual problems
3. Bible Book Study – look for themes, major divisions, lessons, key chapters and ideas etc.
4. Paragraph Bible Study – allow family members to suggest title for content, describe characters, places, events, people, and special words.
5. Bible Characters – discuss where they were born, who their family was, special skill, character traits, their importance in scripture and what can be learnt from them.
6. Reading passages together – this encourages participation.
7. Memorizing Bible passages –challenges family members to test their memory skills, recite them the next time, reward progress.

8. Studying Bible maps.
9. Watching Bible Videos- watch segments if it is longer than the usual time for devotion.
10. Bible Character Role play – dramatize scenes of life stories of bible characters and allow family members to identify who they character may be.
11. Devotional Books.
12. Hymn Stories and Companions.
13. Bible Pictures – This would be appropriate for children.

**E. Suggested Materials:** Bibles, song books, bible maps, DVDs, CDs, pictures of bible characters, Animated Character DVDs etc.

Family worship and devotions are a vital part of the thriving Christian family, making time for it would be a blessing for the entire family.

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- **Developing Healthy Communication and Conflict Management**

### Communication

1. We often do think we understand what our spouse is saying, but often what we hear is not what he/she means at all.
2. Experts point out that when you talk with another person there are actually six messages that can come through.
  - a. What you mean to say.
  - b. What you actually say,
  - c. What the other person hears.
  - d. What the other person thinks he hears.
  - e. What the other person says about what you said.
  - f. What you think the other person said about what you said.

- g. The book of Proverbs is a book of ancient Hebrew wisdom. The writer of this book gives us clear ways to practice godliness in all relationships, especially marriage. Dr. Gottman, family researcher and therapist corroborates the principles thought in the book of Proverbs. Let's see what we can learn from both resources.
- h. The first predictor of divorce is criticism.

#### A. Criticism

- a. Criticisms are like termites. The longer they are left the more they multiply
- b. Studies have shown that most marital conflicts start with criticism
- c. Guttman concludes that wives are more prone to criticism than husbands.
- d. It seems that the wives see themselves as the gatekeepers of relationships and often bring the thorny issues to the table.
- e. Couples cannot live without criticism altogether. That would be impossible.
- f. Spouses should criticize behavior not character.
- g. Criticism should be done softly and in a loving manner, not in a harsh or angry tone.(Eg. Instead of saying, "Why are you so irresponsible with money?" You should say, "When you fail to heed our budget I feel afraid that we will get into financial difficulty." The latter statement goes to behavior not, character).
- h. The book of Proverbs says: "A gentle word causes life and health, griping brings discouragement" (Proverbs 15: 4).
- i. Proverbs 12:18 "Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing."
- j. Proverbs 16:24 "Kind words are like honey-- sweet to the soul and healthy for the body"
- k. Proverbs 17: 9 "Love forgets mistakes, nagging parts the best of friends." "In the home the spirit of criticism and faultfinding should have no place. The peace of the home is too sacred to be marred by this spirit. But how often, when seated at the meal table, the members of the family pass round a dish of criticism, faultfinding, and scandal. Were Christ to come today, would He not find many of the families who profess to be Christians cherishing the spirit of criticism and unkindness? The members of such families are unready to unite with the family above." {Adventist Home, 440.3}

#### B. Stonewalling

1. Most men meet criticism with stonewalling.
2. This is defined as avoidance of the issue in any way possible.

3. It can be verbal, "Why are you bringing this up and ruining a perfectly good evening?" or "I refuse to discuss this now," or nonverbal like walking away, gesturing, or pouting.
4. Women can also stonewall, but statistically men seem to reign supreme in this area. The problem with stonewalling is that difficult issues do not get resolved and resentment grows.
5. The healthy way to resolve conflict is to learn to communicate in positive ways and bring closure to difficult issues when possible.
6. The book of proverbs talks about accepting disapproval and responding in healthy ways when spoken to.
7. Proverbs 24: 6 states, "It is an honor to receive a frank reply." (Proverbs 20:18)
8. Proverbs 25: 12 says, "It is a badge of honor to accept valid criticism."

### **C. Defensiveness**

1. Basically, defensiveness is just what it says it is.
2. You defend; instead of seeing what part of your partner's criticism might be true, you simply defend your point and desire to be right.
3. Often times, the more the wife hurls details of wrong doings to the husband, the more defensive he becomes.
4. He starts to make excuses, lay blame, or develop some criticisms of his own. "I'm only doing this because of you...."
5. This ignites her defensiveness and they both protect, and fortify their standpoint.
6. Leaves little room for you to see your partner's perspective and also to see what part you may be playing in the conflict.
7. There is a little truth in almost every criticism
8. Defensiveness keeps you from finding it.
9. "The fool who provokes his family to anger and resentment will finally have nothing worthwhile left." Proverbs 11:29
10. Proverbs 12:16, "A fool is quick tempered; a wise man stays cool when insulted."
11. Proverbs 13:3, "Self-control means controlling the tongue! A quick retort can ruin everything."
12. And finally Proverbs 14:1, "A wise woman builds her house, while a foolish woman tears hers down by her own efforts."
13. Criticism begets criticism, and defensiveness begets defensiveness. No one is truly being heard when this happens.

14. Because each partner has been wounded, and attempts to heal these wounds have been unsuccessful, each person begins to build resentment and even unforgiveness toward his or her mate.
15. Their souls no longer feel nourished and safe. Their needs are not being met as they once were. This leads to the last predictor of divorce, contempt.
16. Argument: Top 5 Hot Buttons
  - a. Money
  - b. Sex
  - c. Work
  - d. Children
  - e. Housework

Note: More than 70% of couples talk to their partners about money at least once a week

#### **D. Contempt**

1. Since it takes 20 positive comments to make up for one “zinger,” you can see that couples who are in this criticism/defensiveness pattern are moving quickly downhill, in terms of building a caring warm relationship.
2. Some even quit. They may quit literally, or emotionally, by having an affair or diving into television, work, or children.
3. Either way, they are emotionally divorced. The pain of this behavior pattern causes contempt.
4. All the passion and energy that once filled the relationship has now turned into a seething ember of hostility in their souls.
5. This anger can move on the continuum from mere apathy--I don't care, I'll just do my own thing, and get my own needs met--to pure hatred--I cannot forgive my mate or trust him or her ever again.
6. This bitterness and resentment can cause a couple to be overwhelmed with negative emotion.
7. Because of this they have a hard time seeing anything positive in the marriage at all.
8. The writer of Proverbs says, “It is better to live in a corner of an attic than to a beautiful home with a cranky quarrelsome woman” (Proverbs 25: 24).
9. Proverbs 26: 21, states, “A quarrelsome man starts fights as easily as a match sets fire to paper.”
10. Proverbs 30: 33, echoes, “Anger causes quarrels.”
11. Proverbs 15:18 “A hothead starts fights; a cool-tempered person tries to stop them.”
12. Proverbs 17:14 “Beginning a quarrel is like opening a floodgate, so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.”

13. Proverbs 29:22 “A hot-tempered person starts fights and gets into all kinds of sin.”

## **THE POWER OF WORDS: SCRIPTURAL HELP**

- A. Words can and do hurt a person.
  1. Words can help or harm a partner; heal or wound; build up or break down.
  2. Ephesians 4:29 “Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you.”
  3. Proverbs 18:21 “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (NASB)
  4. You can help your partner experience life by using the right words and so build his/her self-esteem or you can be responsible for causing death in your partner to the extent that he/she feels utterly worthless and withdraws into a shell.
  5. Job 19:2 “How long are you going to trouble me, and try to break me with your words?” (TLB)
- B. Think before you speak
  1. Husbands and wives should not just blurt out whatever they are thinking or feeling.
  2. Proverbs 29:20 “Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him” (NIV)
  3. The Christian partner should be able, (through the grace of God and the strength which the Holy Spirit gives us), to choose words that are kind and suitable for the time and purpose.
  4. Because “if you want a happy, good life, keep control of your tongue, and guard your lips...” Proverbs 21:23(TLB)
  5. Words represents small portion of communication but can destroy the entire body - (James 3: 1-12)

### **What Should You Do**

1. Focus on each other’s well being
2. Sense of safety and comfort
3. Sharing of joys and hardships
4. Continuing to learn about each other
5. Making time for fun and enjoying each other's company
6. Reduce and manage the negatives.
7. Build and sustain the positives
8. Shared view of what is good and a common commitment to pursue it
9. Mutual respect for each other’s good points
10. Teamwork to attain their common purposes
11. Commitment to the marriage

12. Personal decision to be the best spouse, even when the partner is not

### Couple Exercise

1. For one week try to be aware of your tendency to criticize, to see what is missing, to focus on what is not there and comment on it. Notice what you have and what others contribute. Praise, appreciate and offer thanks.
2. Give at least one genuine heartfelt praise to your spouse each day for an entire week. Notice the effects of this exercise on your partner and yourself. Take note of the positive qualities in your spouse and appreciate those qualities. Keep extending the days after the week.

### Conclusion

1. Read these principles from Proverbs
2. Apply their wisdom

And they will help prevent unhealthy patterns of criticism; stonewalling, defensiveness and contempt that eat away at your relationship and possibly lead you to divorce.

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### Developing Healthy Relationship Between Parents and Children

Every parent has dreams and hopes for their children to grow up into successful men and women. Growing up into the perceived dream depends on how the parents relate with children, how comfortable the children feel talking to the parent(s), how they trust each



other and how they share mutual respect. How do we create that healthy atmosphere or relationship to help our children achieve our shared dreams?

Just like any relationship, building this positive relationship between parent and child is one that requires work and effort to make it strong and successful. Parenting is a tough job, and maintaining close relationships and open communications helps to ensure parents and their children stay connected through all ages of their upbringing. Here are 12 simple tips for enhancing the bond between parent and child.

**1. Let them know you love them**

Tell your child you love him every day -- no matter his age. Even on trying days or after a parent-child disagreement, when you don't exactly "like your child" at that moment, it is more important than ever to express your love. A simple "I love you" goes a long way toward developing and then strengthening a relationship.

**2. Teach Your Faith through your lifestyle.**

Teach your child about your faith and beliefs. Tell him what you believe and why. Allow time for your child to ask questions and answer them honestly. Reinforce those teachings often. (Gen 22; Deut 8:2-3, 16)

**3. Provide Your Children Identity**

Help your children to know who they are, what they stand for and where they are going

**4. Establish A Special Name Or Special Word**

Create a special name for your child that is positive and special or a secret word that you can use between each other. Use the name as a simple reinforcement of your love. The special word can be established to have special meaning between your child and you that only you two understand.

**5. Establish And Maintain A Special Ritual**

For younger children, reading a favorite bedtime book or telling stories is a ritual that will be remembered most likely throughout their life. Older children should not be neglected either. Examples can be, a hug before and/or after school, a knuckle touch to show approval or support, saying good night to them at bedtime and saying grace before meals.

**6. Let Your Children Help You and Learn from them**

Parents sometimes inadvertently miss out on opportunities to forge closer relationships by not allowing their child to help them with various tasks and chores. Unloading groceries after going to the store is a good example of something that children of most ages can and should assist with. Choosing which shoes look better with your dress lets a child know you value her opinion. Of course, if you ask, be prepared to accept and live with the choice made!

**7. Have A Play Time With Your Children**

The key is to really play with your children. Play with dolls, ball, make believe, checkers, sing songs, or whatever is fun and interesting. What you play is not the focus. It should be to enjoy each other! Let kids see your juvenile side. Older kids enjoy cards, chess, computer games, while younger ones will have fun playing about anything...as long as it involves you!

### **8. Eat Meals As A Family**

Eating together sets the stage for conversation and sharing. Turn the TV off, and don't rush through a meal. When schedules permit, really talk and enjoy one another. It can become a quality time most remembered by young and old alike.

### **9. Take Opportunities for One-On-One Often**

Develop special nights or "standing dates" with your children to create that one-on-one opportunity. Whether it is a walk around the neighborhood, a special trip to a playground, or just a movie night with just the two of you, it is important to celebrate each child individually. Although it is more of a challenge the more children in a family, it is really achievable! Think creatively and the opportunities created will be ones that they will remember in the future.

### **10. Open The Lines of Communication**

Talk to your child about what they want, and why. Listen to what they have to say, this will be the building blocks for proper communication later in their life. Children like to be heard by talking to them about what they think, you are able to give them to opportunity to explain to you how they feel about the situation. Then this also gives you the chance to tell your children how you feel about the situation and why you are making the choice you are making for them. This does not mean they will be happy about it, but it does give them experience in communicating with you their thoughts and feelings. This is also giving you the chance to teach them; by talking to them about how you feel and why you have made your decision.

### **11. Allow Your Children Some Independence and Respect Their Choices**

You don't have to like their mismatched shirt and shorts or love how a child has placed pictures in his room. However, it is important to respect those choices. Children reach out for independence at a young age, and parents can help to foster those decision-making skills by being supportive and even looking the other way on occasion. After all, it really is okay if a child goes to daycare with a striped green shirt and pink shorts.

### **12. Make Your Children A Priority In Your Life**

Your children need to know that you believe they are a priority in your life. Children can observe excessive stress and notice when they feel you are not paying them attention. Sometimes, part of being a parent is not worrying about the small stuff and enjoying your children. They grow up so fast, and every day is special. Take advantage of your precious time together while you have it!

## **Family Exercise:**

### **Family Weekly Meeting**

Family Meeting is a time when the family comes together to connect and to reflect on recent family and personal experiences. This helps family members to feel supported and gives a new energy and sense of solidarity to the family system.

1. Make sure everyone participates
2. Establish a regular time and place – perhaps after family devotion or after dinner
3. Encourage and share ideas. Do not criticize or critique.
4. Discussion
  - a. What do you feel was the best thing that happened to you or happened within the family this week?

- b. What was the worst thing that happened to you or within the family this week?
- c. What could have been done differently (on an issue on b)?
- d. What are the individual/family goals for the next week?

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## APPENDIX C

### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD REQUIREMENTS

#### Abstract

<b>Researcher:</b>	John K Amoah
<b>Research Title:</b>	Development of Seminars To Improve Family Relationships Among Ghanaian Emigrant Families In Adventist Immigrant Churches In New England
<b>Advisor:</b>	Dr. Richard Trott
<b>Department:</b>	Family Ministry, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Andrews University
<b>Population Group:</b>	Adult Ghanaian Immigrant Seventh-day Adventists in New England (Manchester, CT; Worcester, MA; Pawtucket, RI).

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop and implement a seminar to improve some of the major problems that alter or disrupt immigrant family relationships between spouses and between parents and children in the New England Ghanaian, Providence and Connecticut Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches, in New England.

At the end of the research, it is hoped that the dissertation will furnish pastors of immigrant churches as well as teachers a potential model to help families who experience relational problems due to emigration.

Having pastored Ghanaian immigrant churches for eleven years, two noticeable happenings are observed among the Ghanaian immigrant families. First, personal observation in my immigrant churches suggests that there is laxity in the religious experience of migrant members, resulting in limited regular family devotions, prayer, and Bible study. Second, there are observable relational difficulties not only between husbands and wives but also between parents and children. Furthermore, it appears that these two problems are related—altered and disrupted family relationships following emigration seems to affect the immigrant family's spiritual experience. Improvement in family relationships will, hopefully, provide a needed fertile environment for the flourishing of spiritual life.

This study will be done in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry program and will be done in the spring of 2009.

he planned research is of qualitative nature. Three congregations have been identified in the New England (Connecticut Massachusetts, and Rhode Island) which 300-400 participants are expected to take part. These congregations are Connecticut Ghanaian, New England Ghanaian and Providence Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches.

## ***Research Protocol***

This study will be done in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry program and will be done in the spring of 2009.

Three congregations have been identified in the New England (Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island) which 300-400 participants are expected to take part. These congregations are Connecticut Ghanaian, New England Ghanaian and Providence Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches.

An assistant in each congregation will give a brief explanation of the study and ask for member participation. He/she will then supervise the handing out of the surveys and informed consent forms. Volunteers will then be asked to read and sign copies of the informed consent form. As each participant completes the form, he/she will then bring both the signed informed consent form and the completed survey to the rear entrance of the sanctuary and place each form in a separate secure box. My volunteer will supervise the placing of the forms in the two boxes to ensure that there is one returned consent form for every returned survey. Once all have done this, both boxes will be sealed and returned to me that same day.

Once I have collected all the secured boxes, I will open the informed consent form boxes, count and then file these forms (and hold them for 36 months). I will open the four survey boxes, indicating the congregation of origin on each survey, again doing a count to make sure that I have one consent form for each survey received.

The surveys will then be processed by me and the results entered on my computer. Once this has been done I will then destroy the surveys and work only with the tabulated information on my computer. Only this information will be available to my advisor. Once the research has been completed the results and conclusions of my research will form part of a Doctor of Ministry dissertation and be available to the public.

April 13, 2009

John K. Amoah  
1 Cataline St  
Worcester, MA 01605

**RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

**IRB Protocol #:** 09-060                      **Application Type:** Original      **Dept:** Seminary  
**Review Category:** Exempt      **Action Taken:** Approved      **Advisor:** Richard Trott  
**Title:** Development of Seminars to improve family relationships among Ghanaian emigrant families in Adventist immigrant churches in New England

This letter is to advise you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your proposal for research. You have been given clearance to proceed with your research plans.

All changes made to the study design and/or consent form, after initiation of the project, require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions. In all communications with our office, please be sure to identify your research by its IRB Protocol number.

The duration of the present approval is for one year. If your research is going to take more than one year, you must apply for an extension of your approval in order to be authorized to continue with this project.

Some proposal and research design designs may be of such a nature that participation in the project may involve certain risks to human subjects. If your project is one of this nature and in the implementation of your project an incidence occurs which results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, such an occurrence must be reported immediately in writing to the Institutional Review Board. Any project-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to University Medical Specialties, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We wish you success as you implement the research project as outlined in the approved protocol.

Sincerely,

Administrative Associate  
Institutional Review Board

Institutional Review Board  
(269) 471-6360 Fax: (269) 471-6246 E-mail: [irb@andrews.edu](mailto:irb@andrews.edu)  
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355

APPENDIX D

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS SURVEY

Thanks for your interest in participating in this  
Family Relationship Survey of Ghanaian Immigrant Churches in Central Massachusetts.

I have received and read the informed consent given to me and recognize that by completing and returning this survey, that I am giving my informed consent to participate

No personal identifying information is asked and total secrecy will be assured.

Family Relationships Survey

1 Cataline St

Worcester, MA

No identifying information is requested in the survey.

The aim of this survey is to identify families' relational needs as they inform on their religious needs, to assist the range of local churches and communities to tailor their services and, conceivably especially, to improve relationships among Ghanaian Immigrant families in need of service. The survey will help pastors as well as migrant community leaders to understand Ghanaian immigrant families in their communities.

Collection of data will continue for at least three months.

**Religious Background**

What was your family's religious affiliation when you were growing up? (E.g. Adventist, Baptist, Catholic, Jewish, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Unitarian, Methodist, Unity, Mormon, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Pagan, Pentecostal, Apostolic, etc.)

Please specify, Primary \_\_\_\_\_, also \_\_\_\_\_,  
 None

Not at all Very much

**Directions:** Read the following statements and circle the response that indicates your degree of agreement. Choices range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

There are no right or wrong answers. Please take the time to be as accurate as possible in your responses.

**5 = Strongly Disagree**

**4 = Disagree**

**3 = Not Applicable**

**2 = Agree**

**1 = Strongly Agree**

### **Section One: Relationship Roles**

1. I want my partner to consult me when making important decision  
5 4 3 2 1
2. Each person has the same amount of household chores  
5 4 3 2 1
3. When it comes to roles and responsibilities, both partners should be willing to adjust.  
5 4 3 2 1
4. There is an even balance of power in our relationship  
5 4 3 2 1
5. There are certain tasks that are MORE the woman's responsibility, such as cleaning house, fixing meals, etc  
5 4 3 2 1
6. My regular job takes me out of the home for most of the day  
5 4 3 2 1
7. My partner is too controlling  
5 4 3 2 1
8. We both work to take care of the family  
5 4 3 2 1
9. When I am under more stress than usual, my partner will usually do extra things for me.  
5 4 3 2 1
10. The children can relax when my partner is at home  
5 4 3 2 1
11. My partner has too much rules in the house  
5 4 3 2 1

### **Section Two: Financial Management**

12. We usually agree on how to spend money  
5 4 3 2 1



13. My partner alone decides on how to spend the money  
5 4 3 2 1
14. We have a joint account  
5 4 3 2 1
15. We send money to my partner's family regularly  
5 4 3 2 1
16. Married women should not work because our culture has it that husbands should take care of their wives' financially  
5 4 3 2 1
17. Husbands should take all financial responsibilities of their wives.  
5 4 3 2 1
- We agree on how we spend our money  
5 4 3 2 1
- We decide as a couple where our money is spent  
5 4 3 2 1
- We have equal access to the bank accounts  
5 4 3 2 1
- We both share a responsibility in the spending of money  
5 4 3 2 1
- We often argue about money  
5 4 3 2 1
- Financial demands from my partner's extended family is a problem  
5 4 3 2 1
- One person controls the money in the house  
5 4 3 2 1

### **Section Three: Family Spiritual Priorities**

18. We attend church regularly (once a week).  
5 4 3 2 1
19. We can identify our spiritual gift(s).  
5 4 3 2 1
20. We have personal time of devotions with God every day  
5 4 3 2 1
21. We enjoy helping, serving and/or supporting other Christians  
5 4 3 2 1
22. We tell others about our faith in Christ  
5 4 3 2 1
23. In my daily life, I make Christ the center of my desires rather than being preoccupied with myself.  
5 4 3 2 1
24. We participate in the worship service in our church (singing, praying, listening attentively to the sermon/lesson, meditation, etc.)  
5 4 3 2 1
25. We seek to let Christ control every aspect our life (business, finances, taxes, sex, etc.).  
5 4 3 2 1

26. We have family prayer morning and night  
5 4 3 2 1
- Husbands should be the leader of the house  
5 4 3 2 1
- We go to the church that my husband has chosen  
5 4 3 2 1
- We pray together as a family  
5 4 3 2 1
- We study the Bible as a family  
5 4 3 2 1
- We believe that God is first and prioritize our lives in that way  
5 4 3 2 1

**Section Four: Conflict Management**

27. When I get angry at my partner, he/she usually gets angry back  
5 4 3 2 1
28. We can talk about how we feel without a fight  
5 4 3 2 1
29. We argue more than five times in a week  
5 4 3 2 1
- We often have physical fights  
5 4 3 2 1
- Verbal insults are thrown in the heat of arguments  
5 4 3 2 1
- We discuss all our problems openly  
5 4 3 2 1
- We don't hold secrets from one another  
5 4 3 2 1
- We have a trusted counselor that we can turn to in times of need  
5 4 3 2 1

**Section Five: Family Communication**

30. Disagreements and conflict are likely to increase  
5 4 3 2 1
31. I wish my partner were more willing to share his/her feelings with me  
5 4 3 2 1
- We hold weekly family meetings  
5 4 3 2 1
- We take each other's feelings into consideration when there is a problem  
5 4 3 2 1
- We don't go to sleep angry  
5 4 3 2 1
- We watch our words when we are communicating  
5 4 3 2 1

We always look for the best in each other

5 4 3 2 1

32. When we are having a problem, my partner often refuses to talk about it

5 4 3 2 1

33. My partner is a very good listener.

5 4 3 2 1

34. It is hard for me to ask my partner for what I want

5 4 3 2 1

35. My partner sometimes makes comments that put me down

5 4 3 2 1

36. My partner often doesn't understand how I feel

5 4 3 2 1

37. My partner never asks about how I feel

5 4 3 2 1

38. I can share my extended family problems with my partner

5 4 3 2 1

39. In our conversations, one partner usually talks quite a bit more than the other

5 4 3 2 1

40. My partner and I both rarely call each other names (such as "dumb", "selfish", "inconsiderate") even when we are angry with each other

5 4 3 2 1

41. I do all I can to make amend when I am aware that I have offended my partner

5 4 3 2 1

### **Section Five: Children & Parenting**

42. In our family, both parents spend enough time with our children

5 4 3 2 1

43. It bothers me that my partner and I have different styles of parenting

5 4 3 2 1

44. We decided together when we would start our family

5 4 3 2 1

45. We argue or insult each other in front of the children

5 4 3 2 1

46. We decided together which church we would raise our children in

5 4 3 2 1

47. Children should only be seen and not heard

5 4 3 2 1

48. Children have too much in freedom and expression

5 4 3 2 1

49. We agree on how to discipline our children

5 4 3 2 1

50. It has been a challenge to relate to our children

5 4 3 2 1

51. Our children are not happy at home  
5 4 3 2 1
52. Our children's future is a major priority for us  
5 4 3 2 1
53. We argue a lot in presence of our children  
5 4 3 2 1
54. Our children freely share their feelings with us  
5 4 3 2 1
55. We know our children's friends  
5 4 3 2 1
56. We agreed on the number of children we would have  
5 4 3 2 1
57. We agree on the form of discipline our children will receive  
5 4 3 2 1
58. We decide together on the names we would give our children  
5 4 3 2 1

### Section Six: Profile

(No identifying information is asked)

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Age: 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s 80s 90+

Check all that apply:

Male  Female, Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Education Grade school High school Some College College degree  
Graduate degree Trade school Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Income Less than \$30K \$30K-\$70K \$70K-\$100 \$100K-\$150K More than \$150K

Prefer not to answer

### Conclusion

59. Good relationship with God should make a difference in the quality of one's family life.

5 4 3 2 1

60. I am satisfied with my current relationship with my partner

5 4 3 2 1

61. My faith is the most important controlling factor in my life

5 4 3 2 1

62. I am satisfy with our financial situation

5 4 3 2 1

63. Our relationship with our children is very good

5 4 3 2 1

64. We have a happy relationship

5 4 3 2 1

65. If you could improve one thing about the dynamics of your family relationship, what would it be? (Choose whatever applies) Time spent together Communication style Rules Family devotion Our financial situation Our Relationship with the children Roles)

Comments?

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