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ABSTRACT

REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN HARTFORD, CT,  
THROUGH THE USE OF BLACK HERITAGE BIBLE STUDIES

by

Stephen L. Williams Sr.

Adviser: R. Clifford Jones

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN HARTFORD, CT, THROUGH  
THE USE OF BLACK HERITAGE BIBLE STUDIES

Name of researcher: Stephen L. Williams Sr.

Name of faculty adviser: R. Clifford Jones, Ph.D.

Date completed: July 2011

### Problem

For the past ten years, the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hartford, Connecticut has not been very successful at winning African American males. It appears that this is because a significant number of African American males hold the Bible as “the white man’s book” and a tool of enslavement that has no relevance today. This makes our traditional evangelistic approach and materials ineffective.

### Method

The project was to (1) raise the level of awareness about the dilemma of the African American male, (2) examine the factors that have led to the negative stereotype and their unwillingness to attend church, (3) establish a biblical foundation for the

development of a strategy to reach them, and (4) develop a model for drawing African American males to the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church in the north end section of Hartford, Connecticut, where Faith is located.

The project informed and offered practical skills on how to reach the African American males. It involved a six-week seminar meeting three nights per week covering fourteen lessons known as the Black Heritage Bible Lessons which teach the Advent message from a culturally sensitive perspective by highlighting a person or nation of color in the Bible. A graduation program was planned with an appeal for baptisms at the end of the seminar. The seminar was advertised in local community papers and though it was designed to target black males, no restriction was made as to who could register.

All fourteen lessons were given to the registered participant at the beginning of the seminar, and they were told to complete each lesson before returning to the next class. At the end of the classes, all participants who attended every seminar were invited to a graduation ceremony where they received a certificate and a gift.

### Results

In the project, nineteen men and eleven women registered for the Black Heritage Bible Seminar and fifteen men and ten women eventually attended. Of the men that attended, eleven came every night and graduated from the seminar, with three getting baptized along with four women.

The Black Heritage Bible Lessons used in the seminar did highlight the fact that African culture did have an impact upon the Bible. There was discussion on Moses being described as an Egyptian (Exod 2:19), Egypt being a country on the Continent of Africa, the Apostle Paul mistaken for being from the same country (Acts 21:38), and that these

two men are responsible for nearly two thirds of the books of the Bible.

### Conclusions

A higher percentage of black men are attracted by the black heritage approach to evangelism than are women. Black history and culture was very attractive to the black male. A traditional evangelistic event would have attracted nine males and twenty-one females, while the "black heritage approach" nearly reversed the trend completely by attracting nineteen men and eleven females. Seventy-five percent of the people who showed for the seminar were black men, and forty-three percent of the baptismal candidates. So the percentage of men completing the seminar and graduating nearly tripled that of the females who attended and graduated, which is unheard of in traditional evangelism.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN HARTFORD, CT,  
THROUGH THE USE OF BLACK HERITAGE BIBLE STUDIES

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

by  
Stephen L. Williams Sr.

July 2011

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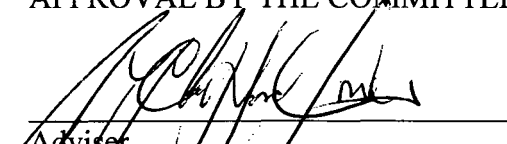
A STRATEGY FOR REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN  
MALES IN HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
WITH THE GOSPEL

A project dissertation  
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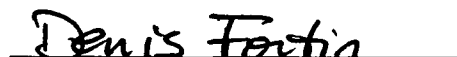
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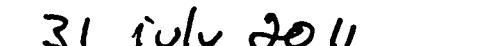
  
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31 July 2011  
Date approved



## DEDICATION

This project would not have been completed without the encouragement and support of my wife Cellierose Williams. I would like to dedicate this dissertation to her and to my four beautiful children Stephen Jr., Natalie, Jonathan, and Jennifer whose very existence encourages me each day to be the best I can be as an example for them. I would also like to dedicate this to my mother, Ometha Williams, who did not live to see the project completed (laid to rest June 15, 2009), despite encouraging me on a consistent basis. Also, I dedicate this work to my father, Carlton Williams, whose affirmation and involvement in my life is ever a source of strength and stability.

Finally, to my friends who continually encouraged me to finish this project, Dr. Ralph Peay, Dr. Dedrick Blue, Pastor Earnest Flowers, Dr. Kevin Jenkins, Dr. Jerome Crighton, and Sister Desreen Petgrave who helped with the manuscript, along with my sisters, Roma, Donna, Colleen, and Michelle, whose love and support are always evident, and my brother Carlton Williams Jr., who fed me and housed me whenever I came to Andrews to work on this project.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Prior to my pastorate, the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hartford, Connecticut was not very successful at winning African American males. It appears that this is because a significant number of African American males hold the Bible as “the white man’s book” and a tool of enslavement that has no relevance for today. This makes our traditional evangelistic approach and materials ineffective.

#### **Statement of the Task**

The task of this project is to develop a program to evangelize the African American male community. Such a program contemplates that if it can be demonstrated that the African culture had an impact on the Bible’s development, then this will counter the myth that the Bible is the white man’s book and this information should be used to produce materials that can be used to evangelize the African American male.

#### **Justification for the Dissertation**

The Bible commissions all to go into the entire world and preach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, which would include the African American males. For the past ten years the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hartford has shown no significant increase in the percentage of African American males joining the



church even though the church has grown tremendously. Research needs to be done as to whether or not Africans and their culture have had any impact upon the development of the Bible. I wanted to explore the reasons for this and investigate whether the failure to win the African American male is due to the fact that most biblical characters are presented as European by the Adventists Church in general, and whether or not African American males are reluctant to accept the Bible as being the authentic Word of God for their lives because of this. Research also needs to be done as to whether other religious groups have been successful in winning African American males.

### **Description of the Dissertation Process**

Current literature was reviewed, including books and articles on the African American males, evangelism, reaching the African American males, development of the Bible, history of the Bible, biblical characters, and the culture and times in which the Bible was recorded and later translated. Special emphasis was placed on the special needs of the African American males, which included mentoring, image building, affirmation, black history, and culture along with evidence which suggests African culture and African personalities were in Scripture.

Multiple interviews were conducted with previous pastors and clerks of the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church to gather data on the number of African American males who joined the church in the past. An evaluation of two programs successful in reaching African American males was done to ascertain why they were successful in reaching them. Finally, a strategy of how to win African American males was developed.

The project was completed with a six-week seminar in which Black Heritage Bible Lessons were used and seven people were baptized in which three of them were

African American males and four were women.

### **Definition of Terms**

*African American Males:* Any black male living in America, regardless of whether or not he is an immigrant or a descendant of immigrants.

*Clerk:* The elected officer of the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church who is responsible for keeping official records of the church, including board meetings, business meetings, and baptismal records.

*Adventism:* Shortened form of the term Seventh-day Adventist Church. The denomination which believes the Ten Commandments are still binding today, that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, and who is waiting for the second Advent of Jesus Christ.

*Cultural Imperialism:* The practice of promoting, distinguishing, separating, or artificially injecting the culture of one society into another

*Racism:* A belief or doctrine that inherent differences among the various human races determine cultural or individual achievement, usually involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule others

*Slavery:* A system under which people are treated as property and are forced to work.

*Mentoring:* A formal or informal relationship between two people where one mentors the other.

*Public Evangelism:* The practice of sharing information about Jesus and Adventism to others in a non-targeted way in an attempt to convince as many as possible to become members through baptism.

*Evangelism:* The winning or revival of personal commitments to Christ.

*Evangelist:* One who is “announcing the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Targeted Evangelism:* The practice of sharing information about Jesus and Adventism to a specific people group, culture, race, or targeted area in an attempt to convince them to become members through baptism

### **Limitations**

The intent of this project dissertation was not to render an exhaustive analysis of why black men do not attend church; it was simply to ascertain whether or not an African Heritage Approach to evangelism would in fact draw a greater percentage of black men than the traditional approach of evangelism.

### **Methodology**

The first step in developing this project was to establish a theological foundation for reaching African Americans. Next I reviewed current literature seeking to ascertain what the special needs of the African American males were, and why was it they were not coming to church. There was a look at history, culture, racism, cultural imperialism, slavery, poverty, under education, and a myriad of sociological situations which would impact one’s desire and drive to join the church.

I then took a look at the history of the Faith Church to see where they were successful in evangelism and what some of the factors that affected this success were. I later evaluated two programs, Islam and St. Paul’s, groups that are documented to be successful in reaching the black male. Finally, I developed a six-week program in which advertising was made and people were encouraged to come to a Black Heritage Bible

class, where the Adventist message was presented from a black historical perspective, highlighting the accomplishments of blacks, while at the same time teaching an Adventist doctrine. At the end of the six weeks, a graduation was held and an appeal for baptism was made of which seven of the fifteen graduates made a decision to be baptized, three of which were men and four women.

### **Expectations from the Dissertation**

This project will help to increase the percentage of male members in the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hartford, Connecticut, and also serve as a model for reaching black men anywhere in the United States. It will help evangelists to understand the role black history can play in evangelism and reveal the importance of avoiding cultural imperialism.

I think the project could also provide the motivation for a more creative ministry and hasten the coming of Jesus Christ by allowing the gospel to go faster among the African American community. I believe it should also reveal the need for culturally sensitive materials to reach every people group.

On a personal note, I expect the project to widen my horizon in developing a strategy to reach disenfranchised people all over the world. In an age where the internet has provided the opportunity for global evangelism, understanding the role, culture, history, and other factors that play in evangelism will help to expand the walls of the church.

## CHAPTER 2

### A BIBLICAL RATIONALE FOR REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES AT THE FAITH ADVENTIST CHURCH IN HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT WITH THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BLACK HERITAGE STUDIES

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I demonstrate a theological rationale for reaching a disenfranchised, marginalized, poor group of people, words that could also be used to describe the African American male. I begin by looking at Matthew's gospel which includes the "Great Commission." I then address the issue of targeted evangelism, universal evangelism as directed in the great commission, and culturally sensitive evangelism. I consider Jesus' ministry to tax collectors, sinners, and women and what this meant at that time. Next, I consider the Pentecostal experience, and its implication for evangelism; finally, I draw some conclusion as to what this means.

#### **The Book of Matthew**

The biblical rationale for developing an African-oriented approach for reaching African American males can be found in both the Old and New Testament Scripture. I begin this journey in the Book of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament.

The book of Matthew is best understood as a book written for a Jewish Gentile church some years after the Jewish Roman war (AD 66-70). The church for which

Matthew wrote was threatened on one side by Pharisaic legalism and Gentile antinomianism on the other side. Fighting on two fronts, Matthew points to a way which escapes, on the one hand, the pride, superficiality, and irrelevance of legalism and on the other, the moral breakdown and ethical irresponsibility of the license which masquerades as liberty.<sup>1</sup> Matthew offers to the people Jesus as the way that salvation is offered in mercy to sinners without condemnation of sin.

The church was also divided for other reasons. The Jewish Roman War had destroyed the Sadducees. The Essenes had lost their center at Qumran in AD 68, the Zealots had been crushed, and the Pharisees now remained the unrivaled leaders of Judaism. But around AD 85, they had included in the Eighteen Benediction (the daily synagogue prayer) the following: "For persecutors let there be no hope, and the dominion of arrogance do thou speedily root out in our days; and let Nazareans (Christians) and minim perish in a moment, let them be blotted out of the book of the living and let them not be written with the righteous."<sup>2</sup> This had practically barred Christians from the Synagogue and discouraged Jews from becoming Christians. It happened because Paul and others fought for uncircumcised Gentiles to be allowed at the table of fellowship. They wanted to fulfill the gospel commission and this required that all races and culture be given a chance to accept the gospel. The Jewish Roman War was over Nationalism, and a gospel in which there was no Jew or Gentile was not compatible with Nationalism,

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<sup>1</sup>Clifton J. Allen, "The Great Commission," *The Broadman Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1969), 62.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 63.

so Christianity was driven deeper into the Gentile world, becoming more and more cosmopolitan.

One of Matthew's purposes was to argue that true Judaism had its fulfillment in Christ and not in Pharisaic Judaism centered in Jamnia. He shows Jesus as not only the son of David and Abraham, but also the son of God and the fulfillment of the Covenant with Abraham and David. To Matthew, the essence of God's law was love and salvation as a free gift. He reveals all men as a sinner who daily requires forgiveness. His Gospel was designed to meet many needs: evangelism, missions, apology, teaching, discipline, and worship. It is arranged topically to suggest it was produced for public reading, and its basic purpose was to portray Jesus Christ, who He is, why He came, what He demands, and what He offers.<sup>3</sup>

The book of Matthew is divided into five major discourses: (1) Sermon on the Mount, 5-7; (2) Apostleship, 10; (3) Parables of the Kingdom, 13; (4) Church discipline, 18; and (5) Last things, 25-25. The person of Jesus Christ is the dominant theme. Matthew presents his divine origin, identity, mission, authority, gifts, demands, deeds, and teachings. He shows Jesus as human and divine. He is interested in the earthly Jesus and the risen Lord. The one who loved so much that He became like the ones He loved, so that He might win them. Here Matthew is revealing God's method of evangelism, identifying himself with those He wants to save, becoming like them, so He could win them. One could readily call this, friendship evangelism.

In Matt 3:7 and 12:24, 38, Matthew reveals the Pharisees as the opponents of Jesus. Where Luke used crowds and Mark used scribes when describing opponents,

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<sup>3</sup>Allen, "The Great Commission," 66.

Matthew says Pharisees as in 21:45, 22:34-35, and to get to heaven, he says our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisee. In 9:34 it was the Pharisees who charged Jesus with casting out demons by the prince of demons, thus Matthew reveals the so-called religious leaders as the enemy of the savior and are in constant conflict with Him.

Addressing the plot of the gospel of Matthew and the conflict it portrays, Robert Charles call this a Satanic Conflict<sup>4</sup> which could be readily used to describe the day-to-day battles for survival which face the African American males in Hartford, a small city with tremendous poverty and crime and with one of the highest murder rates in the United States. Another author, John Barnes, claims the words of Jesus as shared by Matthew as not directed to the players in the book so much but to the readers of the book,<sup>5</sup> as if to say, the intended audience of Matthew is one who would be experiencing similar issues and the solution to their problems would be found in the Gospel itself.

### Evangelism Defined

Christians generally accept that when Christ commissioned the disciples in Matt 28:16-20, to go and make disciples, He was sending them out as evangelists to do evangelism. The *Webster Dictionary* defines evangelism as the winning or revival of personal commitments to Christ. *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* defines the evangelist as one who is "announcing the good news."<sup>6</sup> The term in a general sense

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<sup>4</sup>Robert Charles Branden, *Satanic Conflict and the Plot of Matthew* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006).

<sup>5</sup>John A. Barnet, *Not the Righteous but Sinners* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2003).

<sup>6</sup>Merril F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), s.v. "evangelist."



applies to anyone who proclaims the mercy and grace of God although it came late to refer to a special class.

### Targeted Evangelism

The early church had no theory of evangelism and when it started out, it was not a universal push to reach everyone. Their target audience was a very narrow one. They were trying to reach Jews only. Jesus Himself had directed them earlier to go not in the way of the Gentiles (Matt 10:5).<sup>7</sup> This I believe reveals Christ's sensitivity to culture. He demonstrated that there was a time to reach specific people groups, in this case, His own culture and race. Matthew carefully outlines the Jewish roots of Jesus in Matthew 1 and also documents the early directions of His ministry. William J. Abraham in support of this idea writes:

Early evangelism clearly took place in the Jewish circle which gave birth to Christianity, and the shift to evangelize Gentiles was accomplished by deep reluctance and enormous tension. The picture of the early Christians marching out to evangelize the Roman Empire in order to fulfill the Great Commission is a myth. It took determined leadership by figures like Stephen and Paul to carry the day on the issue. The apostle Peter, if Luke is right, needed nothing less than a special divine Revelation to convert him to evangelistic work among the Gentiles.<sup>8</sup>

So from the beginning, evangelism was targeted to a specific people group. The Bible states that Jesus came to save the world, and that He showed no bias in His dealings with other races, I believe He used this approach because of the prejudice of His disciples which would not have allowed them to successfully evangelize others at the time and also because their work with Gentiles, would have prejudiced the Jews against them and

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<sup>7</sup>Paul W. Chilcote, C. Lacey, and Williams J. Abraham, *The Study of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 19.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

reduced the effectiveness of their ministry. This reveals a second element in God's method of evangelism, targeting a specific group, culture, or race at a specific time for specific reasons. This demonstrates that there is a place and time for evangelism which targets a specific people group; I must first tell my friends and family, before I venture to tell the world.

#### The Great Commission—Matthew 28:16-20 NRSV

<sup>16</sup>Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This passage is sometimes referred to as "The Great Commission." It serves as a summary of the basic themes in Matthew as well as a dramatic forceful conclusion of the gospel itself.<sup>9</sup> Crucified as King of the Jews, Christ declares Himself as having all authority and fulfilling the covenant made with Abraham and David. This covenant refers to a universal kingdom. Christ declared that all nations are to be brought under His discipline to be accomplished by His disciples, whose job was to go and evangelize all and to bring them to observe all that Christ commanded. So the command is to reach every people group with the gospel.

Jesus had made an arrangement with his disciples to meet Him at an appointed time and place. When the time came, the disciples made their way to that place. That place according to the Scriptures was Galilee, which means "Circuit." *Unger's Bible Dictionary* describes it this way: "The name of a region of northern Palestine bounded on

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<sup>9</sup>Allen, "The Great Commission," 251.

the north by Syria, on the west by Sidon, Tyre, Ptolemais and their territories and the promontory of Carmel, on the south by Samaria and on the east by the Jordan. It was divided into Upper Galilee and Lower Galilee.”<sup>10</sup>

This meeting place of Galilee is significant for a number of reasons: Christ began His ministry (Matt 4:12-16), and this was the primary place of His ministry. The report of him leaving Galilee does not take place until Matt 19:1. But Galilee was also a place for the outcast; a fringe community where Gentiles and Jews mingled freely. And if it is true as Ulrich Luz argues, “the Gospel of Matthew has a very concrete intention in the period after AD 70. It seeks to provide a new perspective for the Jewish Christian communities in Syria, in the name of the exalted Lord, calling them to mission to the Gentiles now that their mission to Israel had failed.”<sup>11</sup> Then Galilee also represented the fact that the book of Matthew was directing itself to a people who would also live on the fringe of society. This again reveals another of God’s evangelistic method, to reach people living on the fringe.

For Luz, Matthew’s story is a Jesus story with double meaning. It tells the story in a manner which makes it transparent for the community’s own story. In this way, Matthew’s gospel works through the history of the community and prepares it for reorientation.<sup>12</sup> Christ was about to move them from targeted evangelism to universal evangelism. This emphasized that even though I have a responsibility to my family, this does not negate my responsibility to the world.

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<sup>10</sup>Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), s.v. “Galilee.”

<sup>11</sup>Ulrich Luz, *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 11.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

Matthew 28:16 had the risen Lord command His disciples in accordance with the authority over the whole cosmos which He had been given, to go and make disciples of all nations. In other words, they were challenged to not focus on the main stream, but on everyone, especially the neglected Gentiles.<sup>13</sup>

When the disciples get to Galilee and the appointed spot, they encounter the risen Jesus. One can only image what the journey was like, but I am sure it was nothing like the actual meeting. To think that everything was over only a few days earlier when they watched Jesus die, and now to see Him alive and have Him commission them must have been absolutely astounding. The Bible says they worshiped Him even though some doubted. The word doubted is the same word Matthew placed in the mouth of Jesus when Peter sank beneath the water because of his doubt? Matthew does not focus on the doubt, but one can understand the dissonance of the disciples who had watched Christ die, and now see Him alive. This is just not how things normally happen, and so the doubt seems normal. But then Jesus speaks, and His words have the force to eradicate doubt, and instill confidence. He first claims all power in heaven and earth. This is the first of four alls in this particular passage. All power, all nations, all I have commanded, and always. Jesus claims all power or authority. Prior to this, He demonstrated His power through His ministry, but He never claimed all power. Now however He claims his position, as the Son of God, and He has all power in his hand. And if the disciples are to preach the gospel to everyone, including the marginalized people, they needed His power. Jesus reassures them, that whatever He commands them to do is possible, because He can make it happen. Their success was not dependent upon them, but upon

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<sup>13</sup>Luz, *Studies in Matthew*, 26.

Him. He had the power, and He would guarantee them success.

Jesus then gives them an assignment, what is now known as the great commission. It says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt 28:19).

Prior to this, the gospel had gone primarily to the Jews. The chosen people of God had received most of the attention of both Jesus and His disciples. On the few occasions when ministry to the Gentiles was accomplished, it was generally with some kind of reservation on the part of the disciples as in the case of the Syro-Phoenician woman or the woman at the well. But now Jesus seeks to break down the barriers and go outside the mainstream culture. The gospel was no longer reserved for the "righteous" it was to be sent to the sinners. This is the whole point of Matthew's book. Jesus, the Son of God, had come to open up a door for all people, especially those who would be termed sinners.

### **Cultural Diversity Even in a Pluralistic Environment**

At Pentecost, God did something extraordinary through his disciples. Acts 2 reveals that gathered at Jerusalem was a large diverse group drawn from all over the world. They were suddenly confronted by a most unusual spectacle of a shaking and the proclamation of the Gospel. When the Gospel was delivered through the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples, the testimony of the people was that they heard the gospel in their own dialect. Verse 7 and 8 of Acts 2 reads: "And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue; wherein we were born?" It was as if God felt a need to deliver the

message in a culturally sensitive way, even among this large mass of people, which suggest there is nothing wrong with the modern church doing the same today.

### Marginalized to be Evangelized

It was always Jesus' plan to reach everyone with the gospel. John 3:16 says, "for God so loved the world" not just the Jews. He desired to save the world. This was demonstrated in a number of encounters.

1. Sinners and Tax Collectors: In Luke 7:34 the attraction of Jesus for the marginalized is demonstrated.<sup>14</sup> Jesus disturbs the Pharisees when He invites Matthew to become one of His disciples demonstrating God's love for the outcast. Matthew throws a party where many tax collectors are invited and Jesus freely associated with this group, again demonstrating God's method of evangelism, drawing close to those He intended to save and building a relationship with them. The oppressiveness of the Roman tax system, coupled with Jews collecting these taxes, proved to be a source of constant irritation within Palestine. Jewish tax collectors were terrible offensive to all Jews and especially to the Pharisees, thus this move of Jesus demonstrated that his movement was distinguished by radical love from all other movements of its time.<sup>15</sup>

2. Women: "Eastern women take no part in public life. This was true of Judaism in the time of Jesus, in all cases where Jewish families faithfully observed the Law."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Harold Dollar, *St. Luke's Missiology: A Cross-cultural Challenge* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996), 27.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 29.

Women were not expected to, and often were positively discouraged from getting education, not expected to speak in public and not expected to move very far from their homes unless under the sponsorship of a male.<sup>17</sup> Yet with Jesus, women played a vital role in his ministry. Not only are Elizabeth and Mary prominent in both the beginning of the gospels of Luke 1-2 and Matthew 1-2, but women are the first to know that Jesus is resurrected, they play prophetic roles in the birth of both Jesus and John, in the dedication of Jesus and in support of the ministry of Jesus (Luke 8:1-3).<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus seems to clearly turn the traditional understanding of women upon its head when in the story of Mary and Martha, Mary is said to have chosen the good part, “sitting and learning” when Jewish teachers were generally opposed to this.<sup>19</sup> What was even more striking was that in Luke 8:1-3, Luke reveals that there are women among the evangelistic team of Jesus and His disciples providing for their needs as they preach the word of God. Dollar says, “Women who are marginalized in Jewish life are brought to the center of life in the Jesus movement.”<sup>20</sup> This again demonstrated another principle of God’s evangelistic strategy, to use whosoever will, regardless of the barriers society has setup up.

Though the culture to which Jesus belongs was opposed to tax collectors and women playing important roles in public life, the ministry of Jesus included these marginalized people, because it was His plan to reach them all with the gospel, and I believe the church is called to do the same today.

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<sup>17</sup>Dollar, *St. Luke's Missiology*, 29.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 30.

## Jesus and His Attitude to the Downtrodden, Poor, and Disenfranchised

In Matthew 5 as He declared the laws of the kingdom, Jesus emphasized the rewards that would come to the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted. In the book of Luke (4:18), He declared his ministry as one directed to the poor, the broken hearted, the captives, the blind and those that needed liberty, so this declaration to go to all the world was just a re-emphasizing of what God had originally intended with the coming of his son Jesus Christ.

When Jesus began his ministry He declared not only who He was, but also what His ministry would be. This ministry, He announced, was to be a healing ministry which was to restore men spiritually, physically, and emotionally, this according to Constantino Ziccardi was the coming of the Kingdom of God.<sup>21</sup>

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18).

Luke is extremely interested in Jesus’ ministry to the poor and marginalized.<sup>22</sup> In the book of Acts, he reveals the church’s willingness to share all its wealth with its members. For Luke, generosity to the needy was an important part of Christianity.

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<sup>21</sup>Constantino Ziccardi, *The Relationship of Jesus and the Kingdom of God According to Luke* (Rome, Italy: Gregorian University Press, 2008), 463.

<sup>22</sup>Craig Bartholomey, Joel Green, and Anthony Thiselton, *Reading Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 85.



When one considers that a large portion of the African American community in Hartford, Connecticut, live in poverty, it becomes apparent that Luke, if he was here today, would be demanding the church to produce a strategy to reach this section of the Lord's vineyard.

This passage reveals many aspects of the ministry of Jesus, including physical healing, emotional healing, and spiritual healing. Beset by all kinds of physical and social ailments, the African American male community in Hartford, is in desperate need of healing. Commenting on Luke 4, Richard Blight in his commentary on Luke 4:18 says,

This group characterized those who are most in need of God's help, and who are most eager to hear his word. They are the people with little to expect from their circumstances and so are most dependent upon God. This refers to economic poverty, but probably includes spiritual poverty as well in which the poor realize their sinfulness before God.<sup>23</sup>

Jesus' ministry to the downtrodden, oppressed, disenfranchised, and poor is demonstrated in His experiences with the woman of Canaan in Matt 15, whom the disciples thought was not worthy of Jesus' time. He stopped to heal her daughter and even made comments regarding her faith (Matt 15:22). Then there was the Leper of Matt 8:2 who the Bible says came to Jesus and asked Him to cleanse him. This resulted in Jesus putting forth His hand and touching him, declaring "be though clean." Next, there was a blind man named Bartemaeus of Mark 10:47 and the two blind men of Matt 8:27 and Matt 20:30 who were all healed. When accused of sitting with Publicans and sinners, Jesus made it clear what His intentions were. He said, "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but

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<sup>23</sup>Richard Blight, *An Exegetical Summary of Luke 1-11* (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2008), 160.

sinners to repentance” (Matt 9:13). All these acts, argues Peter Mallen, defines the mission of Jesus.<sup>24</sup>

Jesus scolded the scribes and Pharisees because they neglected judgment, mercy, and faith. He stated, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Matt 23:23). He emphasized to His disciples where they should place their focus in ministry by saying: “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. . . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matt 9:12).

The story of the Good Samaritan, demonstrated how God feels about those who minister to the poor and those in need, and there is no religion acceptable to God where His representatives walk over on the other side leaving helpless those who cannot help themselves. During the ministry of Jesus He took special note of people who fell into these categories and the church of today should do the same.

#### The Old Testament Prophets and Ministry to the Poor

The attitude of Jesus towards the disenfranchised is rooted in the Old Testament scripture. The book of Amos, Jeremiah, Micah, and Isaiah emphasizes this, as well as the Exodus experiences, which African Americans are quick to claim parallels their own experience and demonstrate and highlight God’s concern. In this story God is presented

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<sup>24</sup>Peter Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2008), 100.

as a compassionate protector of his people. He heard their cry and was determined to do something about their condition.

And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites (Exod 3:7, 8).

Here God is presented as the great deliverer who would personally release His people from bondage and into the Promise Land, again which demonstrated God's method of evangelism, to come close to his subjects and be personally involved with them. Even though He commissioned Moses, it was God who led the way in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. The purpose of God's deliverance was so His people might have the freedom to worship Him. "And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain (Exod 3:12). "And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Exod 10:3).

#### Ellen G. White and Ministry to the Poor

Ellen G. White has much to say on the responsibility of the church in ministering to the poor. She shared the concern for the poor that Jesus shared and actively encouraged the church to minister to this sector of society. In the book *Medical Missionaries* she writes:

Every gospel minister should be a friend to the poor, the afflicted, and the oppressed among God's believing people. Christ was always the poor man's friend and the interests of the poor needs to be sacredly guarded. There has too often been a wonderful dearth of Christ's compassion and loving interest in the poor and afflicted. Love, sacred, refined love, is to be exercised in behalf of the poor and unfortunate.<sup>25</sup>

Then referring specifically to the responsibility of the church to African Americans living particularly in the south she writes:

The Southern race has been neglected. Men have passed by on the other side, as the priest and the Levite passed by the wounded, robbed, bruised, and beaten one. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed that way, not only saw him, but he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, set him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. How many have left the colored race to perish by the wayside? Since the slaves gained their freedom at a terrible loss of life both to the North and to the South, they have been greatly neglected by those who professed to know God, and as a result thousands of them have failed to gain spiritual freedom.<sup>26</sup>

To Ellen White, ministry to African Americans or as she called them the colored race, was greatly needed and not to be taken for granted. She encouraged families to become missionaries and target this community to bring them salvation. She wrote:

Why should not Seventh-day Adventists become true laborers together with God in seeking to save the souls of the colored race? Instead of a few, why should not many go forth to labor in this long-neglected field? Where are the families who will become missionaries and who will engage in labor in this field? Where are the men who have means and experience so that they can go forth to these people and work for them just where they are?<sup>27</sup>

According to Ellen White, the church had a duty to minister to and evangelize black people, because to use her words, "They have been wounded by a so-called Christian nation. They have been left by the wayside, and decided efforts will have to be

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<sup>25</sup>Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1963), 210.

<sup>26</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Southern Work*, 1898, 1901 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1966), 25.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.1.

made to counteract the wrong that has been done them.”<sup>28</sup> This was in keeping with the action of both Jesus and the Old Testament prophets.

### Summary

The Holy Scriptures shows a clear pattern in regards to how to conduct evangelism. The method Jesus used targeted a specific group of people and then evolved to include the whole world. Even in the context of mass evangelism, God used a culturally sensitive approach by speaking to the Pentecostal crowd in their own dialect.

Matthew started out by highlighting the Jewish lineage of Christ and then demonstrated his commitment to his people. He describes the condition of the church in terms of its division, but shows Christ as the solution.

Luke reveals God’s sympathy for the poor and how Jesus directs His ministry to this group. The Old Testament scripture reveals God’s desire that people be free to worship Him and His willingness to bring about deliverance personally, and Ellen G. White speaks about the need for ministry to the black community, which she calls a long-neglected field. It is with this biblical understanding that I set out to develop a strategy to reach the African American males in the north end of Hartford with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>28</sup>White, *The Southern Work*, 29.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

The African American male is a unique creature which requires specialized evangelism in order to reach him and bring him to Christ. He is the sum total of a number of experiences which has fashioned and shaped him and his descendants over the years. These experiences, both positive and negative, have not only left him scarred, but also with inherited tendencies that are not always to his advantage. Slavery in all probability was the most devastating of all these experiences.

Slavery did not begin in America and the Africans surely were not the first to be enslaved. When America declared its freedom from Britain, slavery was a common practice in North Africa where Islamic Sultans enslaved Westerners who were either taken in war or on ships due to piracy.<sup>1</sup> Any traveler not able to pay the required ransom when captured was liable to be enslaved in what came to be known as the Middle East. The slaves were able to become members of the family, grow wealthy, and when freed could easily be assimilated into the community.

The American system of chattel slavery was different, however. At its height, it was a highly structured, regulated, and restrictive system. Slavery in the Old World was

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<sup>1</sup>Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East; 1976 to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007), 122.

a matter of business and family relationships, while American slavery revolved around the economy. The laws and religious institutions were designed to support the system, rendering mobility and kinship ties marginal.<sup>2</sup> Manumission or purchasing one's freedom was the only way out of American slavery and freed blacks were always vulnerable. Living with intense prejudice, there was always the possibility that freed blacks would be sold back into slavery. This made African Americans live in constant fear.

Apart from slavery, there were the pressures of economics, prejudice, and even Christianity. These pressures continued to mold and define the African American male, and left him, according to Marc Maur, "disproportionately suffering from social ills."<sup>3</sup>

Describing some of these social ills, Maur writes that

49% of prison inmates nationally are African American, compared to their 13% share of the overall population. Nearly one in three (32%) black males in the age group 20-29 is under some form of criminal justice supervision on any given day—either in prison or jail, or on probation or parole. As of 1995, one in fourteen (7%) adult black males was incarcerated in prison or jail on any given day, representing a doubling of this rate from 1985. The 1995 figure for white males was 1%. A black male born in 1991 has a 29% chance of spending time in prison at some point in his life. The figure for white males is 4%, and for Hispanics, 16%.<sup>4</sup>

Add to these pressures the effect of public housing, lack of financial resources, broken homes, poor marital relationships, and parents who are poorly prepared or just too young to care for or train him, and you will soon begin to see the dilemma of this segment of our society.

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<sup>2</sup>Anne C. Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2005), 159.

<sup>3</sup>Marc Maur, The Sentencing Project, [www.sentencingproject.org/pdfs/5022.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/pdfs/5022.pdf) (accessed August 8, 2005).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

## Slavery

Slavery had a negative impact on the development of the African American male, and its effects are still being felt today. In a bid to explain the effects of slavery upon the black family, Richard Williams shares with us the following insight:

Most of the inhabitants of the beautiful sun kissed land of Africa had strong family ties. The family would collectively care for the appropriate needs of its members. A man, woman, and child could find comfort in their family and from their family. Often, grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren all lived together. The grandparents received the highest respect and honor from the family members. It was through the grandparents that the children learned family history, folklore, and proverbs. The oldest male was usually the head of the family. The immediate extended families cared for their widows, their sick, and their orphans. Family ties were firm.<sup>5</sup>

To make the African a slave, the slave master had to break down the family ties. Prior to slavery, marriage was the uniting of two families, but after slavery this was very different. Human rights such as marriages, family privileges, parental and child relationships were taken from blacks.

Not only was the slave removed from his family structure, but he was never allowed to enjoy the structure of the American family. The law refused to recognize marriage among slaves. Moreover slave owners would often choose spouses and mate slaves for breeding purposes. Many slave owners went as far as to have breeding farms where slaves who had never seen each other before were forced to have sex, and if they refused, they were beaten into submission.<sup>6</sup>

The so called wedding ceremony consisted of slaves jumping over the broom and

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<sup>5</sup>Richard Williams, *They Stole It, But You Must Return It* (Rochester, NY: Hema Publishers, 1990), 10.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.



spouses were often abused and beaten in the presence of each other without being able to do anything about it. They saw each other only when the slave masters thought it okay and if they dated without permission, they would be severely beaten. These occurrences indubitably taught the black woman to disregard her body and her children, as well as destroyed the manhood of the black male.

“To the white American the black man was just a bull, his wife a cow, and their children calves”<sup>7</sup> who were treated as if they were insensitive to pain and loneliness. The dignity of marriage was destroyed for black America by white America and unspeakable hardships and social-economic circumstances threatened to grind away the African American family’s resolve to endure intact.<sup>8</sup>

Those who survived the middle passage from Africa to the New World saw, of every one hundred slaves, 5 percent murdered before ever entering the ship; 13 percent of those who made it on board die from disease and suicide; and 33 percent slain by the slave masters. Then if liberated he watched beatings and lynchings to victims, whether innocent or guilty by law, and he could do nothing about it.

In the new world there were whole other sets of dynamics which further complicated things.

The black father had no legal marriage, no legal family, and no legal control over his children. The black male did not have complete choice of who his mate would be. Also, once a mate was chosen and child was born, the black father did not have authority over his own child. White America took away the male’s role as father and husband. Therefore, responsibility, discipline, and direction for his family, including his children was not in his hand. The black man was only a breeder. Parental authority was in the hands of the slave master. As a father, the black man was so humiliated that he was not looked upon as a father or a man. Slavery for the black

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<sup>7</sup>Williams, *They Stole It*, 10.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

males prevented their coming to emotional maturity by inflicting on them a perpetual childhood, and imposing their masters flogging on them, resulting in their identifying themselves with their masters. . . . The slave was the child, and the slave master was the father. In his boy role, the black male had to approach white America with bowed head. The black male had to answer with a yes suh, and the slave master called the black man, boy.<sup>9</sup>

The black boy though innocent was not immune to the awful consequence of being born black in America. Regrettably, he was robbed of his childhood: he watched as his mother was raped and his father whipped; he went to work at the age of seven and was sold into slavery at the age of twelve; and sometimes he was needlessly killed by white women if she suspected their white husbands were the father. Moreover, he had little time with his mother who was forced to go to work as soon as he was born, let alone with his father whom he rarely knew.<sup>10</sup>

To overcome some of the problems the black male faced, the black mother compensated to protect the survival of the black race. She became the leader of the home and her son and taught him to be physically strong but submissive and instructed him not to settle on any one woman. She also discouraged him from doing anything against the system because he would more often than not be killed; hence, the initiation of a vicious cycle that would take a miracle to break. It gradually took hundreds of years of planning and execution to destroy the black family, and it might take just as long to fix it.

Just as an observation, I have noticed that many black males from the Islands of Jamaica and Haiti that I have met seem very assertive in fighting for their rights. I speculate that this might be because of the fortune of their ancestors from these countries

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<sup>9</sup>Williams, *They Stole It*, 23.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

in leading successful rebellions in their country that led to the abolition of slavery. The third and fourth generation African American males, however, at times seem to be less assertive. Though firm as to his needs and not willing to accept handouts, many I have met seem less assertive and a lot more laid back than recent immigrants from places such as Haiti and Jamaica. Some argue that this is so because in America the African American males were far outnumbered by whites and their fight for freedom usually meant the loss of their lives if their plans were discovered. Others argue, however, that the African American male is less assertive, because the civil rights movement of the sixties got the assertive men killed, and now there is a drought of assertive leadership.

Be as it may, living in America from slavery time until now has always been a challenge for African American males. White slave masters found no moral or spiritual contradiction in professing Christianity that extolled a God of love and peace while at the same time engaging in the heinous and violent white supremacist culture of enslaving African people.<sup>11</sup> As a result Americans had to find ways to cope in order to survive.

In the American Society, Black Americans dealt with the dynamics of racism, oppression, and injustice in various ways. Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, and W. E. B. Dubois by their lifestyles and writings represented these different approaches and responses.

For instance some members of the black community never left their communities to encounter directly the structures and customs of the dominant culture. Others lived within the black experience but interacted with the white culture for the benefit of the black community. In other words they lived as cultural brokers for other members of the black community. There were also others who were proponents of the black experience and self reliance. Although members of this group held a range of

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<sup>11</sup>Drew Smith and Frederick C. Harris, *Black Churches and Local Politics* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 123.

perspectives on the meaning of the white experience, they focused their attention on promoting the black world and people. At the same time another group lived on the edge of these two worlds—rooted in the black world while solidly footed in the white world. I like to compare the stance of those in the last group to that of Joseph in the court of the Pharaoh of Egypt. In that situation, Joseph possessed the gifts and graces to live fully in the Egyptian world, yet he used them to benefit his people. Of these four approaches this last is undoubtedly the most precarious and its adherents are the most vulnerable.<sup>12</sup>

However, all the options that were used to survive in America caused serious ego damage to many African American males. Their ego and self worth were scarred and damaged by numerous years of defeat and hopelessness, institutional racism and denied rights, water hoses and high-powered rifles, snarling dogs, and “red neck” racists. These racists were terrified that the African American male might take their jobs and their women, and for that reason they counted it their joy to keep him in his place. For this reason I believe an African-oriented approach to reaching the males must be developed in order to not only bring him to Christ, but also a component of this approach must be to restore that damaged ego as well.

### Racism

The end of slavery did not mean that everything was satisfactory for the African-Americans. They simply replaced one master for another. One freed man exclaimed, “Freed colored men of the north were not whipped or feared to have their wives and children torn from them, but everywhere we feel the chains galling us.”<sup>13</sup> They had been given their physical liberty but they were now held captive by the economics of their

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<sup>12</sup>Charles Foster and Fred Smith, *Black Religious Experience* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 26.

<sup>13</sup>Davis, Brion David, *Inhuman Bondage* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 48.

situation and the prejudice of the times in which they were living.

A recent study by the St. Louis University called “The Road to Jobs” revealed that in jobs where college degrees are not required, blacks are still disproportionately miss-represented. They discovered: “African Americans have been systematically excluded from better-paying, skilled trades, including those in the construction industry, since slavery was abolished.”<sup>14</sup>

That in 18 metro areas where the University’s study was conducted, blacks were substantially underrepresented in construction and that, where they are employed, they have been concentrated in the unskilled and most poorly paid parts of the industry.<sup>15</sup>

The report also points out that if blacks were employed in construction at the same rate they are employed in the overall workforce, 42,700 more blacks would have jobs in just those 18 metro areas. In a metro area as large as Philadelphia’s, that level of participation could translate into 6960 new African American construction jobs. By comparison, today, in the Philadelphia metro area, the 174 black construction companies ‘with employees’ employ 1138 persons, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>16</sup>

The report continues to say that the shortage of decent-paying jobs for workers without a college education has reached crisis proportions. There are approximately 8.5 million people in this country employed in construction, but the report also indicates that only 10 percent of them have college degrees, and yet blacks are not getting these jobs.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, other research indicates blacks are not building on the wealth of

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<sup>14</sup>Bruce Crawley, “It’s time for Philadelphia Construction Industry to Include Black Workers,” December 12, 2007, <http://theblackissue.blogspot.com/2007/12/its-time-for-philadelphias-construction.html> (accessed September 5, 2009).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

their families as the children of middle class blacks many times find themselves in poverty, unlike their white counterpart.<sup>18</sup>

In the United States, African Americans as a socioeconomic group due to economics and prejudice have universally received lower annual incomes than white Americans for the same jobs. On account of this, many blacks are forced to live in worse neighborhoods with poor housing, low-income school systems, and dangerous environments. According to the 2003 U.S. Census report, the median white income was \$45,572, while the median for blacks was \$29,689. And although 10.5% of whites in America were statistically in poverty, the percentage of blacks in poverty was 24.4%.

To understand the extent of racism in America from the earliest times, one must consider the words of Woodrow Wilson, the twenty-eighth President of the United States, who asked:

What could you expect of individuals who are little more than a host of dusky children insolent and aggressive, sick of work, covetous of pleasure.” The lineup of highbrow intellectual magazine that endorsed this gobbledygook included popular science monthly, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*, and the *North American Review*. They all chimed in with volumes of heady research papers, articles and scholarly opinions that proved blacks were hopelessly, crime and violence prone.<sup>19</sup>

Much has not changed in recent times because, according to Jawanza Kunjufu, the education of the African American male is probably the most damaging part of his experience. Jawanza argues that from the third grade the African American male has a problem. This happens because his teachers cannot identify with him since his teachers,

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<sup>18</sup>Michael Fletcher, “Middle Class Dreams Elude African American Families,” *Washington Post*, November 13, 2007, para. 1.

<sup>19</sup>Earl Ofari Hutchinson, *The Assingation of the Black Male Image* (New York: Touchstone Press, 1997), 24.

for the most part, are white females who do not understand his activeness. Furthermore, she is threatened by him and teaches him from the perspective of white dominance and intuitional racism.<sup>20</sup> Jawanza claims that if you successfully correct these problems, you can successful grow African American boys into productive men.<sup>21</sup>

Robert M. Baird, speaking on the effect of institutional racism, writes: “Even though there is nowadays wide agreement that racism is wrong and to describe a policy, law movement or nation as racist is to condemn it.”<sup>22</sup>

When members of a racial minority are overwhelmingly among the poorest members of a society, living in a deprived area, holding jobs low in pay and status, or no jobs at all, and less well educated than the average member of the community, racial discrimination serves to perpetuate a divided society in which race becomes a badge of a much broader inferiority.<sup>23</sup>

This badge is worn by the African American male. From the earliest times, “the Negro’s color sets him radically apart from others. It also served as a highly visible label identifying the natives of a distant continent which for ages Christians had known as a land of men radically defective in religion.”<sup>24</sup> To add insult to injury, Kelly Brown Douglas argues:

In order to justify horrible atrocities to the world, the Negro was being branded a race of rapist, who were especially mad after white women. “I found that white men who had created a race of mulattoes by raping or consorting with Negro women were still doing so wherever they could; these same white men lynched, burned, and

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<sup>20</sup>Jawanza Kunjufu, *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*, vol. 1 (Chicago: African American Images, 1982), 22,

<sup>21</sup>Jawanza Kunjufu, *Keeping Black Boys Out of Special Education* (Chicago: African American Images, 2005), 17.

<sup>22</sup>Robert M. Baird and Stuart E. Rosenbaum, *Hatred Bigotry and Prejudice* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1999), 175.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Foster and Smith, 26.

tortured Negro men for doing the same thing with white women; even when white women were willing victims, she argued.<sup>25</sup>

Under those circumstances, black men in American were forced to acclimatize to the social structure for their own well being. Many were compelled to join gang activities in order to survive. In fact, men and boys are gunned down in the streets not because they were in gangs, but because they were not. The pressures they were under were tremendous from the school, home, and church.

As a matter of fact, in many cities across America, the social order held black men as second class citizens and laborers unworthy of hire or competitive wages.<sup>26</sup> This stigma was the basis of making the African American males enraged and he had every reason to be so. Not only was he enraged at the establishment that allowed him to be treated so poorly, but in many instances he was angry with God, the Christian God who seemed to care little about his plight and whose followers seemed to have been responsible to a great extent for much of his plight.

When the civil rights movement began, the cry was: Give us equality! White America realized the situation and reasoned they had a responsibility to correct the problem because two fearless men were on the scene and the eyes of the world were watching from the television screen. Malcolm and Martin with the television as their stage were feared men. The media created this larger-than-life personage of Martin because he seemed easier to deal with. They soon discovered however, that the

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<sup>25</sup>Kelly Brown Douglas, *What's Faith Got to Do with It? Black Bodies/Christian Souls* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 109.

<sup>26</sup>Marla F. Frederick, *Between Sunday* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 120.



movement could not be stalled, because despite his non-violence stance, Martin King moved under a divine imperative that demanded change. As a result white America was forced to the bargaining table, and henceforth a solution was found. Minority rights were championed. The problem was that the largest portion of the white American population was declared a minority—white women. Thus the jobs created went to the white female rather than the black male. The woman's movement began in full swing, white families now had two bread winners and the black family still had none.

### Cultural Imperialism

Cultural imperialism has manifested itself in two obvious areas of the church: biblical illustrations and worship styles.

Christianity is many times presented in one cultural milieu. The church, in its attempt to be main stream, has been quick to adopt the Euro-centric norms and cultural presentation as it relates to religion and the Bible. These norms have presented everything good as coming out of Europe. Christianity which grew up and was preserved in North Africa, is presented from a European cultural perspective. The biblical characters, many of which appear to be Hametic or what is now called African today, are presented as European men. The saints, the Church fathers, the theologians, including the African ones, are all presented as Europeans. Add to this the stain glass windows in the churches, the pictures in our books; the style of worship most find acceptable, and anyone will note that they are in fact European in nature. How then can the African American male expect to be at home in such a religion? In the first place it is culturally dishonest, and, secondly, it is repulsive to him. Let us take for example a historical look

at one of the most famous Bible characters, Moses, the author of nearly one third of the entire Old Testament Scripture.

### Moses

Moses was born on the Continent of Africa to Hebrew parentage. Because of a decree by the Pharaoh of his time,<sup>27</sup> the parents of Moses were forced to abandon him on the Nile River where he was discovered by the daughter of Pharaoh and adopted as her son. As the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses grew up in the Palace of Egypt and became beloved and renowned as a military strategist. Unfortunately he was forced to run from Egypt as a result of a terrible mistake of killing an Egyptian. Nevertheless after living in the Mountains of Median for a while God called Moses and sent him back to Egypt to deliver the Israelites.

Moses had a unique relationship with God and was able to talk with Him like no other man before or after him. These dialogues between them reveal a depth in relationship that is unusual, considering the imbalance of power between them.<sup>28</sup> God introduced himself to Moses as I YHWH and then used the same introduction after delivering the Israelites when He spoke the Ten Commandments later when the people have been delivered and stand before Him on the Mount.<sup>29</sup>

In the African American community it is commonly accepted that Moses looked enough like the Egyptians to be accepted as one of their own. In fact, later when he was

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<sup>27</sup>Dianne Bergan, *People of the Covenant* (Franklin, WI: Sheed and Ward, 2001), 77.

<sup>28</sup>Karla R. Suomala, *Moses and God in Dialogue* (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 2008), 35.

<sup>29</sup>Frank E. Eakin Jr., *The First Tablet of the Commandments* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2004), 45.

forced to flee from Egypt to the home of Jethro, Moses was described as an Egyptian.

And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, "How is it that ye are come so soon to day?" And they said, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock" (Exod 2:17-19).

Describing the Egyptians, Herodotus writes in 440 BC, "Thirdly, it is certain that the natives of the country are black with the heat."<sup>30</sup>

Speaking about some woolly hair, black skin people living in Europe, he also writes:

There can be no doubt that the Colchians are an Egyptian race. Before I heard any mention of the fact from others, I had remarked it myself. After the thought had struck me, I made inquiries on the subject both in Colchis and in Egypt, and I found that the Colchians had a more distinct recollection of the Egyptians, than the Egyptians had of them. Still the Egyptians said that they believed the Colchians to be descended from the army of Sesostris. My own conjectures were founded, first, on the fact that they are black-skinned and have woolly hair, which certainly amounts to but little, since several other nations are so too; but further and more especially, on the circumstance that the Colchians, the Egyptians, and the Ethiopians are the only nations who have practiced circumcision from the earliest times.<sup>31</sup>

Studies need to be more objective as to the skin color of Moses. It is possible that Moses had black skin and kinky hair like the Egyptians mentioned by Herodotus, therefore this possibility should be reflected in the poplar illustrations.

According to Ellen G. White, prophetess of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Moses wrote the Book of Genesis and Job while living among the Midianites.

The long years spent amid desert solitudes were not lost. Not only was Moses gaining a preparation for the great work before him, but during this time, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the book of Genesis and also the book of Job,

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<sup>30</sup>*History of Herodotus*, Library of the Future Series, 2nd ed., s.v. "Herodotus," CD-ROM version 4.01 (Garden Grove, CA: World Library, 1992).

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*

which would be read with the deepest interest by the people of God until the close of time.<sup>32</sup>

These Midianites were also described as Ethiopian people. They were the descendants of Abraham and his African wife Keturah. Ellen White writes: “As Miriam became jealous of Moses, she was disposed to find fault with the events of his life which God had especially overruled. She complained of Moses because he married an Ethiopian woman, instead of taking a wife from among the Hebrews.”<sup>33</sup>

One could easily surmise that the information Moses used to write the books of Job and Genesis was influenced by the knowledge and experience of Jethro. After all, while the people of Moses were enslaved on the Continent of Africa, the people of Jethro were free to carry on the worship of the true God and share His wonderful works in their oral tradition, without the influence of Egyptian worship and culture.

Furthermore, in writing these books, Moses drew from his Egyptian education using words which were common in Egypt. Words such as *Ham*, which came from the Egyptian word *Kemit*. This word was used to describe themselves and their land. This in fact re-enforces the biblical presentation of the Egyptians being descendants of Ham.

So Moses, the major author of the Old Testament scripture, was influence by the Continent and culture of Africa and may have even looked like an African. The same evidence exists for people like Saul of Tarsus, the prolific writer of the New Testament scripture, and others, however these figures are rarely presented other than Europeans. Addressing issues such as this in his book, James Cone suggests how African Americans

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<sup>32</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Time*, February, 1880.

<sup>33</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1969), 286.

dealt with such incongruity. “The early slaves brought to America thought the slave masters God was far more powerful than theirs, but could not understand how the slave masters could serve God and still be so abusive.”<sup>34</sup> So they were selective in what they accepted from this new religion. This led to syncretic religions such as Obeah, Voodoo, and others, which were a mixture of African religions and Christianity. All things considered, I believe this is why the African American males are adapting in a similar fashion today—that is, becoming five percenters, Hebrew Israelites, Muslims, and the likes. This probably may also explain why movements such as “Father Divine” and others grew in the black community during and right after the depression. One must admit though that movements such as “The Father Divine” movement, though very successful, drew few men. In fact, with a membership of over 10,000 this movement was 90 percent female. (Father Divine himself estimated that he had over 1 million members at the height of the movement.)<sup>35</sup>

It was in this context of synchronized religion that Black Theology later developed. Barbara Holmes, describing the times and movement that created black liberation theology, wrote, “Oh how we marveled at the hatred, the spittle, the exposed genitals and urine aimed in our direction. To be hated so completely was almost a relief. There it was for the world to see. We had not been paranoid and deluded; this was the struggle we had opposed from the beginning.”<sup>36</sup> This was Barbara’s description of the way blacks were treated in the Montgomery March in the sixties.

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<sup>34</sup>Albert J. Roboteau, *Slave Religion* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 1978), 75.

<sup>35</sup>Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, *African American Religion* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee, 2002), 217.

<sup>36</sup>Barbara Holmes, *Race and the Common* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002), 32.

Black Liberation theology was forged during this time of unrest. Of course the discipline of theology had been defined so as to exclude any engagement with the African American struggle against racism,<sup>37</sup> but the black theologian would not allow this to continue. The themes of justice, liberation, equality, and love demanded action. Their lives were in upheaval and they sought harmony. The core themes of faith, equality, love, justice, and hope all spoke to harmony,<sup>38</sup> and that was what black theology sought to accomplish—to bring harmony to a life of disharmony.

### Worship Styles

Life in a congregation is the story of persons who are engaged together on a journey and adventure with God and under guidance of God's spirit. It is a story of relationship and interaction.<sup>39</sup> The African American community has always been one of action and emotions, passionate and sensitive. They have not been afraid to show their emotions in everything they do, especially in worship services.<sup>40</sup>

When one looks at the worship styles of various African American churches such as the African Methodist Episcopal churches, the Holiness churches, and others whose memberships are in actuality drawn from the African American community, something significantly different can be noticed. These churches are in fact more free spirited than

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<sup>37</sup>Alton B. Pollard III and Love Henry Whelchel Jr., *How Long This Road* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 120.

<sup>38</sup>Douglas, *What's Faith Got to do with It?* 109.

<sup>39</sup>Michael Dabs and Christine D. Chapman, *The Shape of Zion* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2003), 7.

<sup>40</sup>Curtis J. Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 33.

the average Adventist church including Faith in Hartford, Connecticut. Some argue that after having difficulties with the bills and problems of life, African American are anxious to go to a church where they can kick back and enjoy themselves. It is more than worship. It has to do with socialization, relaxations, enjoyment, and education. The African American is seeking to re-establish his and her connections and uniqueness. All week their identity is lost or obscured in the context of the American life: They must wear European clothes, speak a European language, watch European television, and not to mention act European to be accepted in the work places and schools. On the other hand, in church they have the opportunity to be African American: they can wear their African clothing, clap their hands African style, shout "hallelujah" if they choose, dance a holy dance, and nobody is offended. Moreover this might be the only place, apart from their homes, where they can be African Americans without offending others. Is it any wonder then that the African American once enjoyed going to church?

But now, amid this postmodern generation, African Americans have become cultured and educated and the black church mainstreamed to the point where it has accepted the American norms. Should it be a surprise to any that the African American, especially the males, now finds themselves displaced? The freedom and individuality which once distinguished the black church has been replaced by the cold, formal style of the white church. He feels freedom and individuality is easier found on the streets rather than in the pews. On the corner the boys speak his language and dress just like him. Rap has now replaced the preacher's moan, and the homeboys have now replaced congregational socialization, so church is no longer appealing to him.

Since the 1970s the level of activism of social justice in the United States has

dissipated and the country has moved to the right. The growing backlash against the black freedom struggle, the rise of movements hostile to civil rights such as the neoconservative and “new state and local offices has resulted in reversal of some of the civil rights gains made in the 1950 and 1960s.”<sup>41</sup> This has pushed the church further out of the minds of African American males who in the inner cities have taken matters into their own hands. They have purchased guns and setup drug operations where fast money and quick death have become the norm for many. This is why it is imperative that an African-oriented approach to win the African American males be developed, to stem the steady decline that is happening in the black community in general, but particularly in the city of Hartford, Connecticut.

## **Mentoring**

Horace Hall in his book *Mentoring Men of Color*, suggests that no approach for reaching African American males can exclude mentoring which he sees as the starting point. He defines mentoring as “a relationship where a person with greater experience assists another with less. This relationship is generally viewed as a one-on-one interaction of unrelated individuals of different ages networking on a regular basis.”<sup>42</sup> I disagree with Hall however, when he says, “in mentoring one with greater experience assist one with less.” This is sometimes possible, but I see mentoring as reciprocal. Louis Zachary seems to support this view in this statement: “Mentoring is best described as a reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship between two or more individuals

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<sup>41</sup>Smith and Harris, *Black Churches and Local Politics*, 23.

<sup>42</sup>Hall, Horace R. *Mentoring Young Men of Color : Meeting the Needs of African American and Latino Students* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Education, 2006), 9.



who share mutual responsibility and accountability for helping a mentee work toward achievement of clear and mutually defined learning goals.”<sup>43</sup> Moreover, there is the term “power mentoring.” Power mentors are those who have multiple mentors and mentee positions and it happens at a fast pace due to the changing nature of the context. These would best describe conference evangelists and the like.<sup>44</sup>

Mentoring takes place in various situations and under various conditions. Hall deals with mentoring in a school environment while Zachary is thinking in the context of the workplace. I believe the principles outlined by both Zachary and Hall can be applied to evangelistic situations, because any approach that will enable us to reach the African American males needs to include a considerable amount of education and collaboration.

According to Hall, mentoring involves the mentor being a guide, a tutor, an advocate, and a friend. He also suggests that mentoring can be effective if the mentor is not a friend. Here I disagree as I believe that in order for mentoring to work effectively, the mentee must see the mentor as a friend—someone who is looking out for his best interest. Furthermore, I do believe one of the problems of today is that our evangelistic approach does not always allow our students to see that evangelists are looking out for their best interest. The push for baptism or numbers can hinder people from understanding that they are genuinely loved. For this reason, I am convinced that developing friendships is an important aspect of evangelism and mentoring. Brad Johnson and Charles Riley in their book *The Elements of Mentoring* suggests that all good mentors must select their protégé carefully and know them well. They also suggest

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<sup>43</sup>Louis J. Zachary, *Creating a Mentoring Culture* (San Jose, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 3.

<sup>44</sup>Ellen Ensher and Susan Murphy, *Power Mentoring* (San Jose, CA: HB Printing, 2005), 53.

that encouragement and nurture are an integral part of mentoring, which in my mind suggests a friendly relationship.<sup>45</sup>

Building a friendly relationship is not always easy in an evangelistic campaign which has a defined start and ending date over a limited time. The mentor evangelist is more than just a mentor, he is a spiritual mentor. He is not just building a relationship with someone, but he must bring that person to Christ. This is not something that can be achieved by just following a set of rules, but by becoming partners with the Holy Spirit. Ele Parrot says, “When we spiritually mentor, we enter into a partnership with the Holy Spirit who has the potential to transform all aspect of a person’s life.”<sup>46</sup>

According to John Maxwell, some people do not mentor because of insecurity, ego, the inability to determine people’s success seed, wrong concept of success, and lack of training.<sup>47</sup> These problems can be overcome by mentoring the prospective mentors. By becoming mentees themselves, the prospective mentors develop the skills necessary to be effective mentors. It stands to reason therefore, that in order to develop adequate mentors, the church needs a strong training program which is constantly turning out mentors. They must be taught how to take self out of the picture, what real success is, and to be confident of the inner potential of each person’s success seed or successful potential.

Hall suggests that a mentor to be effective that person must have confidence in

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<sup>45</sup>W. Brad Johnson and Charles R. Ridley, *The Elements of Mentoring* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>46</sup>Ele Parrot, *Transforming Together: Authentic Spiritual Mentoring* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2009), 16.

<sup>47</sup>John Maxwell, *Mentoring 101* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 7.

what they do, strong family support, strong spiritual support, affirmation and encouragement, education, and self awareness.<sup>48</sup> I am not sure that strong family support is necessary, although I can see how family resistance could have a negative impact. Hall's emphasis on strong family support appears to be rooted in the idea that mentoring must be long term and mentors cannot keep up a long-term relationship without strong family support. In the context of evangelism, I can see how strong family support can indeed impact positively the effectiveness of the mentor. If an interest felt accepted into a family unit, this could increase the likelihood of that interest making a decision for Christ. On the other hand, if a mentor builds a good relationship with the interest while teaching him or her the Bible, I believe this would be sufficient to bring them to Christ—providing the church acts as a family in accepting and acclimatizing the new convert.

### **Evangelism That Builds Self-esteem**

Mentoring bolsters self esteem, advances knowledge and skills, and expands social networks.<sup>49</sup> As Christians sharing the gospel, many times self esteem and expansion of one's social network importance are overlooked. The Advent message presented with all European illustrations tends to have a negative impact upon the self esteem of African Americans and in many communities these pictures are out right rejected by the community. For instance, while visiting evangelistic efforts over the past years, I have heard many questions asked as to the sanity of using all European illustrations in the inner city where the only place they see white people is on the

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<sup>48</sup>Hall, *Mentoring Young Men of Color*, 12.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

television screen. Many have also confirmed that they refuse to return to the effort because of the insensitivity demonstrated by these pictures and illustrations. An African-oriented approach to evangelism would help to correct this problem and alleviate one of the barriers to successfully reaching the African American male. So it is important that our method of evangelism for reaching the African American male have elements of self esteem building to overcome the impact of racism.

Douglas Cecil in his book *The 7 Principles of Evangelistic Life* outlines seven principles for effective evangelism: (1) keep your priorities straight; (2) understand that evangelism is an event in the process of disciple-making; (3) make the Gospel clear; (4) understand evangelism is more spiritual than methodological; (5) passionately pursue the lost; (6) evangelism must move forward as God's people gets involved in ministry and service; and (7) evangelism must include discipleship, nurture, and assimilation.<sup>50</sup>

Cecil defines evangelism as "the zealous preaching and dissemination of the Gospel, as through missionary work."<sup>51</sup> He says Christian evangelism centers on proclaiming that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead, and this the New Testament calls the good news. It is intended to invite the listener to trust and follow Christ.<sup>52</sup> It has then two main parts: information and invitation. The church has always been anxious to give the invitation, but the invitation is not readily accepted unless the information is presented in a palatable way. Therefore if our approach to evangelize the African American males does not improve their self esteem but in fact diminishes it, then

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<sup>50</sup>Douglas C. Cecil, *The Seven Principles of an Evangelistic Lifer* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003).

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 35.

our evangelism cannot be as successful as it should be. This I believe is where the Adventist Church is failing the African American male community. If the information is delivered in a manner that suggests he is not a part of biblical history and with no sensitivity to his self esteem, it is just not readily digestible and for this reason many are rejecting the invitation. To correct this, the evangelist must adjust the packaging of the gospel and present the information differently; because in today's world, information must not only be accurate, but it must also be presented in a culturally sensitive manner. This method in the context of the African American male would improve self image.

#### Keeping the priorities straight

To keep the priorities straight, one must abide in Christ, love one another, and evangelize the world. If the Christian does not abide in Christ, then it becomes impossible to love one another and evangelize the world. Without true love, one cannot empathize with the plight of the African American male. True evangelism is an outgrowth of abiding in Christ. Christ must be the number one priority of the church—not survival, not cultural imperialism, not even evangelism. The church's success starts and stops with Jesus; therefore, when the church stops making Christ a priority, the church ceases to evangelize. It may try to evangelize, but will not be successful. I believe too often the church moves away from making Christ the priority and this affects our growth rate in the western world especially among African Americans in North America. Sometimes it appears that the church is more concerned with its image and its survival than it is with being Christ centered. As a result this leads non-Christians to think the church is not particularly concerned about them but simply wants to increase its size and ensure its viability; however, when Christ is the center, then people will feel

loved and secure in the presence of Christians. A Christ-centered church will not be so ignorant as to be culturally imperialistic in believing that a book, written by thirty to forty different authors over a period of 1,600 years who lived in various time periods and different places and spoke various languages, could in fact, only be illustrated by one culture, totally eschewing all others. This I deduce is one of the greatest hindrances to winning people of non-European cultures in the western world. Many non-believers are very culturally biased and are looking for a religion which considers their culture—after all, worship is more or less done in a cultural manner. For this reason, an African-oriented approach is needed to correct this problem and present the Bible in a more culturally relevant manner.

Understanding evangelism is an event  
in the process of disciple-making

There are several different kinds of evangelism strategy. Cecil identifies three: (1) a Proclamation strategy where a speaker speaks to large crowds; (2) an Aggressive evangelistic strategy, where an individual aggressively seeks to lead someone to Christ as in the case of Phillip with the Ethiopian Eunuch; and (3) a Relational strategy which relies on making friendship with the potential disciples in order to make them disciples. He sees most evangelists as using one of these methods to evangelize. Of course, I realize all these strategies can be used to evangelize the African American male. However I do believe that a combination of all three works best, although, I still do not see the proclamation method working well without dealing with the cultural baggage that is placed on Christianity. This cultural baggage must be removed so that the unadulterated gospel can work its way into the hearts of the African American male

without experiencing the suspect it now receives due to its cultural imperialism. The phases as described by Cecil could also be described as plowing, sowing, and reaping, which are common evangelistic terms in traditional evangelism.

### Making the Gospel clear

Cecil defines the Gospel as news and not action.<sup>53</sup> He sees it as the good news that Christ died for our sins and provided for our salvation. In other words the Gospel involves sin, substitution, and faith. Sin is what separates us from God, sin is what destroys, sin is our problem, and the world needs to know it. The good news is: Christ died for our sins and in my place as my substitute. This is a message which the African American male needs to hear, “that somebody cares for him.” He reads his history and it is a long train of slavery, abuse, institutional racism, marginalization, incarceration, and humiliation. As far as he knows, nobody loves him and nobody cares for him. Jesus loves him—Jesus died for him, Jesus does not care about his past because he can take care of it. If there is any community which needs this message of faith and substitutions, it is the African American male community. One need to make the Gospel clear and an African American approach would help us do that for the African American.

It is consequential to note that the faith aspect of the gospel serves as a reminder: We cannot earn our way to heaven, as well as, salvation is achieved only by placing our trust in Christ. When people have damaged egos or low self esteem, it is easy for them to believe they must work to earn something. Howbeit in Christianity this is not the case and this fact is a key component when developing an African American approach as it

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<sup>53</sup>Cecil, *The Seven Principles of an Evangelistic Lifer*, 74.

alleviates the burden that comes from the idea that I need to work our way into heaven.

On the other hand, good works as a means of salvation is a strong part of the Islamic message and it needs to be made clear that this is one of the many ways Christianity separates itself from Islam. For the Christian, salvation in Christianity comes by accepting by faith Christ's death for us.

Understand evangelism is more spiritual than methodological

Cecil suggests that the method alone will not make us successful. People have to drink from the fountain of Christ Jesus which satisfies and causes them not to thirst again. Furthermore, this fountain is available to everyone. Our failure in reaching the African American male should make us aware of this fact. If the method was all it took, then the Faith Adventist Church in Hartford would be full of African American males because it has many seasoned saints who know the method. The faith community has pitched many tents, hosted many revelation seminars, and conducted many Bible studies, yet its reach of the African American males has been minimal, inferring that it takes more than methods. If Christ is not central to what the Christian does, he will fail, and have failed. An African-oriented approach must involve the reality that method alone will not be successful.

Being a good witness

Being a good witness means passionately pursuing the lost in love: Here Cecil explains that pursuing the lost passionately involves sacrificial, attentive, and loving action towards each individual's needs. One should show sinners what a friend they have in us and this, he argues, takes sacrifice. When the sinner begins to approach God's love,



when he begins to see just how much worth or value God places on him, how can he not respond to the gospel?

According to Cecil, one can be a “life witness,” a “verbal witness,” and/or a “corporate witness.” A “life witness” witnesses merely by his presence, service, and acts of kindness or Christian service. A verbal witness uses his faith story of God’s deliverance and power to share with others—this is where an Afro oriented approach would work best. Being an African American myself who is living with the issues that other African American males face and having seen God work in wonderful and mysterious ways, my verbal witness would resonate with other African Americans. This is what the African American male needs—mentors or other African Americans who understand where they are, where they are heading and where they should be going. Nobody wants to join a church that cannot identify with their situation, so an African-oriented approach must make it clear that one understands. A corporate witness is based on the way each of us treat each other. When non-Christians are among us, they should be impressed by the love and concern that exist among us. A good corporate witness not only demonstrates love, but demonstrates compassion, sensitivity, and thoughtfulness towards one another. This would require a more inclusive method of illustration and documentation.

Evangelism moves forward as God’s people get involved in ministry and service

Evangelism moves forward as God’s people get involved in ministry and service: Cecil suggests here that evangelism is a corporate moving, and that one cannot do it alone. God’s plan is for the whole to be involved in evangelism, not just an individual. I

personally believe however, that it only takes one to get the fire going and if one waits on the whole church, one probably would never evangelize. Therefore one must go forward. Yet on the other hand, if you do not have the resources and energy of the church behind you, especially when it involves reaching special groups such as the African American males, then it can be quite difficult. (The corporate attitude can and will turn away those you are trying to win.) For example, in the case of the African American male, if there is not a corporate understanding as to the impact of cultural imperialism on the use of images and language used in evangelism and one continues to use all white images and illustrations because the corporate body rejects cultural inclusions, then one risk offending the African American male causing him to reject our message. So though I do not fully agree with Cecil regarding the idea of waiting on the corporate body, I am sympathetic to the reality that the attitude of the corporate body will affect the results.

Evangelism must include discipleship,  
nurture, and assimilation

Evangelism must include discipleship, nurture, and assimilation: Cecil describes the importance of following up with the new believer, encouraging them, giving them assurance about salvation, helping them develop a consistent devotional life, and encouraging them becoming involved in the corporate life of the church. This helps to assimilate and fortify the Christian. This last phase in the context of the African American male should be called mentoring. This goes back to the argument of Horace Hall that a key part of reaching the African American male is mentoring, where you model behavior, educate by sharing information, assimilate, and bring self awareness thus bonding the African American male to the new church institution.

## **Black Achievement and Black History**

Two questions that beg to be asked as one considers American racism and its effect upon our effort to evangelize the African American male are: How do you counter it? What can be done so that this is no longer a barrier? One author, Jacob B. Gordon, suggests that the study of black achievement and black history is one way of dealing with it.<sup>54</sup>

Gordon reveals that research suggests that both gender and race play an important role in the dilemma the African American male experiences in America. Boys, when they enter school, are usually less prepared than girls in both white and black America and black children are generally less prepared than whites.<sup>55</sup> This means that the black male enters with a double disadvantage. Hence from the time he gets to school, the African American male has a problem. This problem grows over time and can only be overcome with affirmation and special attention.

Gordon takes the time to trace black men in various walks of life through research in higher education, science, journalism, and politics. To use the words of William B. Harvey, “Structural and psychological obstacles have been consistently paced in their paths to deter their effort to achieve the inalienable rights of freedom, justice, and equality that America has promised as a fundamental element of citizenship.”<sup>56</sup> Gordon then proposes thirteen strategies for reaching the black male and they can be found in the book *The Black Male in White America*. They are as follows: (1) organization to

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<sup>54</sup>Jacob U. Gordon, *The Black Male in White America* (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 2002), 7.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 14.

highlight plight and achievement of African American males; (2) creating centers to stimulate change in education and employment; (3) organization to proclaim the contribution of African American; (4) dialogue on race matters; (5) technology centers; (6) film production that highlights black achievement; (7) black history; (8) organized trips to museums, parks, and national historic monuments which reference African Americans; (9) library programs to increase the use of the library by African American males; (10) international summits to improve the image of African American men; (11) community centers to highlight the role of fathers develop positive works skills and allow participation and success; (12) a national foundation for teaching entrepreneurship; and (13) the establishment of George Washington Carver clubs throughout the United States.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly enough, these thirteen strategies fall into five of the six areas discussed by Horace in his book on reaching the African American males through mentoring. The one area absent in Gordon's book is the strong spiritual support. I am not sure if this is because Gordon is anti-spiritual or because his list came about as a result of a conference sponsored by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, a secular institution, or for some other reasons.

My concept is any attempt to reach the black male that does not include a strong spiritual component would be questionable, because whether it is Islam, Christianity, or any other faith, the African American male seems drawn to the recognition of some supernatural power at work in his life. Gordon's emphasis seems to focus on black history, education, self awareness, affirmation, and encouragement. All these areas are vitally important in any approach to reaching this section of our society, but the spiritual

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<sup>57</sup>Gordon, *The Black Male in White America*, 196.

component must be included. The object of this paper is to develop an African American approach that will effectively evangelize the African American males, so one can easily see the gravity of that emphasis for this project.

Re-arranging Gordon's suggestion to reflect his emphasis on black history and black achievements as a solution for the group appears as follows:

1. Form an organization to highlight plight and achievement of African American males
2. Form an organization to proclaim the contribution of African Americans
3. Produce films that highlight black achievement
4. Highlight black history
5. Organize trips to museums, parks, and national historic monuments which reference African Americans
6. Start dialogues on race matters
7. Organize library programs to increase the use of the library by African American males
8. Arrange an international summit to improve the image of African American men
9. Establish George Washington Carver clubs throughout the United States.

The following ideas are those that did not have a strong emphasis on black history and black achievements.

1. Creating centers to stimulate change in education and employment
2. Create technology centers

3. Organize community centers to highlight the role of fathers in developing positive work skills and allow participation and success

4. Organize a national foundation for teaching entrepreneurship

According to Gordon, reaching the African American male has to do with affirming black achievement and black history. The first five suggestions all emphasize the importance of highlighting black achievement when attempting to reach the African American male. This approach recognizes the impact of racism and seeks to counter its effect.

Marilyn J. Sorensen submits that low self-esteem is developed over time as a person is constantly subjected to abuse, poor treatment, and negative images.<sup>58</sup> These experiences reduce one's ability to process information correctly. Instead of hearing compliments, they hear criticism; after internalizing this viewpoint, they become negative, following which they begin to act in a destructive manner. This behavior must be corrected before the person with low self-esteem can be whole, and one of the ways to counteract this is through affirmation and education. Therefore one cannot just present the gospel anyhow and expect African American males to respond to it positively. One must seek to affirm them and restore their self image.

Film production that highlights  
black achievement

Black characters in scripture and Christianity would have a positive effect upon the African American male. I believe Hollywood has taught us its standard of loose

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<sup>58</sup>Marilyn Sorensen, *Breaking the Chain of Low Self-Esteem* (Prescott, AR: Wolf Publishing, 2006), 26.

morality and illicit sexuality by producing sitcoms and movies that flaunt this lifestyle. However, the church could stem the tide by producing films and sitcoms that teach the African American male community a positive lifestyle, certainly one of the areas that the church has, in many ways, neglected and it is about time to get started.

### Black history

The truth that yes, there are blacks in the Bible, will only help to strengthen the appeal of the church to the African American male. The reluctance to admit such a truth or to act as if this is impossible when history and the Bible suggest otherwise, makes it even more difficult for the African American male community to trust the church.

### International summit to improve image of African American men

An international summit to improve the image of African American men would be a major source of attraction for African American males. Research seems to indicate that the nation of Islam's approach, which includes trying to improve the image of black men has been one of the reasons the movement has survived so long and been so successful at time. If the church would engage itself in this kind of activity, I strongly believe the evangelistic growth rate for African American males would increase.

### Dialogue on race matters

The issue of black and white conferences has always been the cause of great concern to many, but this issue cannot be discussed until the underlying causes which created this system is dealt with in the first place. This dialogue would be in the interest of the entire church and, I am sure, would go a long way in helping the African American

male to recognize that the church acknowledges the mistakes it has made over the years and is willing to find a solution. This may also help the African American male to see himself in a more positive light, although it could become counterproductive if the dialogue is not positive.

### Technology

One can argue that as long as the African American male is behind in the use of technology, he will always be at risk and his care will demand more resources and special attention. By assisting to bring the African American male up to par technologically, the church frees up its own resources which can be used to further their cause.

### Community centers

One cannot over-emphasize the impact of community centers in low income communities. These centers have served as a safe haven and have saved the lives of many young black men who otherwise would be in jail or in the grave. Churches which have used this kind of approach in the black community are usually bursting at the seams. An African-oriented approach which involves this resource would definitely have a positive effect upon our evangelistic results.

A national foundation for teaching entrepreneurship and the establishment of George Washington Carver clubs

These clubs throughout the United States would have a similar result as community centers for they are essentially the same. The difference is the level of support and direction is much greater. George Washington Carver Clubs are essentially community centers run by the Boys and Girls Club of America. They offer things such



as: cheerleading/dance programs, golf lesson with Charlie Yates Golf Courses, A.C.E. Tennis Programs, Falcon Fitness Zone, Girl Scout Programs, Teen Programs, and Kilometer Track Club. These are just sophisticated mentoring programs where African American males are mentored in sports, recreation, or other activities. This is an excellent way to evangelize the African American male although they would be beyond the scope of this project.

The problem I see with Gordon's approach is the over emphasis on others doing something for the African American male. There seems to me to be little emphasis on the African American male taking responsibility for his plight and situation. Now I am aware that biased laws, crooked judges, institutional racism, and poverty have a lot to do with the plight of the African American male. And as previously outlined in the chapter, I also believe that society in general has done much to harm the black male and put him in the predicament he is currently in. I must also confess that people associated with Christianity with the way they have conducted themselves in the past, has had a negative impact upon how the black male perceives them, specifically Adventism. But I also believe the African American male must realize where he is and seek to do something about it for himself. Sure there are biased drug laws which put away large numbers of young African American males each year unfairly, but the alternative is one could avoid drugs and stay out of jail.

In his dialogue on reaching the black male, Gordon discusses black males, successful and unsuccessful, from kindergarten to the Clinton Administration. He looks at the black male in a variety of situations and circumstances, including politics, art, schools, and universities. After spending some time dealing with their plight from the

onset of kindergarten to their successful life in both corporate America and government, Gordon concludes that there are many obstacles that prevent the success of the African American male as a group. His approach is from the perspective that there are some corrections that need to be made, in order to bring this section of our community to wholeness. According to Gordon, wholeness is not bringing them to Christ, but to the point where they enjoy the same kind of success that white males enjoy in society. This, Gordon argues, will benefit the entire society with less crime and social problems. Though Gordon's utopia is the viability and success of the African American male, the intent of this paper is evangelism. I believe the suggestions of Gordon do in fact cover some, if not most, of the grounds that need to be covered in bringing the black male to Christ.

Floyd Schneider, in his book *Evangelism for the Faint-Hearted*, though not speaking on the issue of the African American male in particular but just evangelization itself, suggests the following: "The only visible progress that has been made in evangelism has been through personal friendship with the unsaved."<sup>59</sup> "We need to meet people with practical needs," York Moore suggests.<sup>60</sup> He also encourages us to remember the following points when evangelizing:

*Become a friend before you become a preacher.* This stance is a good one, but sometimes the opportunities to share our faith are spur of the moment opportunities and one may never see that person again. The context, therefore, must determine how one

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<sup>59</sup>Floyd Schneider, *Evangelism for the Faint-Hearted* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publication, 2000), 19.

<sup>60</sup>R. York Moore, *Growing Your Faith by Giving It Away* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 155.

starts evangelism. Of course, if our interaction with the candidates is one that will result in long-term association, then this is a very good idea and generally yields the best results.

*Do not condemn your friend.* One should allow people to come as they are, rather than leading them to believe that they have to clean up or be good enough to come to Christ. This is especially applicable to the African American males because many young men have done things they are ashamed of and sometimes this can cause them to reject God. I cannot forget the experience I had with one young man who just could not accept the fact that God could forgive him. He kept saying, “You don’t know how bad I have been” and could not come to grasp the truth that the blood of Jesus has the power to wash away all sins. This is one of the most important points to highlight when evangelizing anyone, especially a disenfranchised group who are very conscious of their precarious position.

*Look for a need to use as a starting point.* Undeniably, when it relates to the African American males, the needs are tremendous. The average black male struggles to stay employed, to stay in school, and to avoid gangs. All these struggles offer us opportunities for a starting point to share Jesus. Just the thought that there is a better way can be a great relief to people who have tried everything they know and still finds themselves in trouble.

R. York Moore, in his book *Growing Your Faith by Giving It Away* says, one needs to meet people with practical needs,<sup>61</sup> while avoiding cultural imperialism. He defines cultural imperialism as “when one tosses their culture upon another and causes

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<sup>61</sup>Moore, *Growing Your Faith by Giving It Away*, 155.

them to reject many things in their own culture.”<sup>62</sup> One must also avoid imposing, which he defines as when authority and power is used to force people to follow the Christian religion, and one must avoid manipulation which is the use of things alien to the gospel to in an effort to induce individuals to accept Christianity.<sup>63</sup>

Moore proposes that if evangelism is to be successful in reaching people who do not like us, the evangelist must meet them on their grounds as well as never see them as the enemy even when they are hostile. This would particularly be useful since in my experience, I have found that many African American males are angry—angered at how Christianity is presented, and how it was used in slavery times. This anger is revealed at times when communicating with them thereby making it very difficult to talk to them; however, by not making him the problem and meeting him on his grounds, by starting with a need, can be useful in reaching him.

*Make others curious.* This is usually easy when an African-oriented method is used. For example, black men are always interested when you highlight men and women of color in the Bible. This gets their attention most of the time. Effective evangelism must employ various strategies and the most effective evangelist is he who can hold his audience captive by their curiosity.

*Ask questions.* I have found that in my dealings with the brothers that they love to talk, and asking questions gives a great opportunity to open up a dialogue. The drawback on the other hand is that sometimes you might not be able to get a word in. So, you have to be careful with this approach.

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<sup>62</sup>Moore, *Growing Your Faith by Giving It Away*, 157.

<sup>63</sup>Ajith Fernando, *Sharing the Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House, 2001), 233.

*Do not defend yourself.* Christians are not perfect and the brothers have a lot of resentment and ammunition for the Christian's treatment of black folks in the past. But, if one accepts that Christians have not always done it right, this disarms them and opens them to the Gospel. This is why an African-oriented approach must not defend the sins of the past.

*Do not try to prove the Bible is true or your viewpoint right.* Allow the Bible to be its own defense. It is powerful enough to win those who read it, and it will clarify many misunderstanding. This is especially important when associating with the African American males. The Bible presented in an honest and candid manner, taking into consideration the races and cultures of Genesis 10 and others, will in fact draw the African American males and disarm him.

*Show your friends that their thinking could be wrong.* I believe this is best done by asking questions. An accusing tone should definitely be avoided especially since African Americans are distrusting of Christianity and some of the inconsistencies presented. They have been exposed to the Nation of Islam and others who see Christianity as the white man's religion and responsible for African slavery. They expect to be accused of being wrong so one must be careful of their tone and attitude. Much of this is inaccurate and can be easily cleared up if one can get them to listen honestly. So one needs to be careful, thoughtful, and thorough.

*Do not answer all your friends' questions and do not give them answers.* One should allow the Bible to do the talking. It is quite capable of drawing men to Christ. So instead of trying to answer every question, one would do well just to direct the seeker to what the Bible has to say.

*Ask your unsaved friends if they would like to read the Bible with you.* Since the Bible is powerful, it has the ability to convert those who read it. Therefore try to get others to read it with you. This recommendation is similar to other points discussed by previous authors.

*When witnessing to strangers, be ready at any time to get involved in a conversation about your faith.* One should always be ready to give a word on God's behalf. When you first open the conversation, do not mention God or the Bible unless they do. This is a good attitude to have since it allows for a godly life to be the testimony rather than words.<sup>64</sup>

In conclusion, the literature suggests that an African-oriented approach to reaching the African American male would include mentoring, education, and the development of a long-term relationship. It would be culturally sensitive involving highlighting the achievements of black people in the Bible and history, and its illustration, and literature should include experiences of African Americans. Let us now turn our attention to developing such a program after looking at the context of the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church in the city of Hartford, Connecticut.

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<sup>64</sup>Schneider, *Evangelism for the Faint-hearted*, 117.

## CHAPTER 4

### SURVEY OF PROGRAMS TO REACH AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES

#### **Introduction**

The challenges associated with the evangelization of African American males are highlighted in the difficulties of finding a successful program that reaches this group. Jawanza argues this is a problem for the black male from the day of his birth, since his mortality rate is so high. According to Jawanza, five issues which confront a successful program designed to reach African American males are:

1. Keeping them alive past age twenty- five, given the rate of homicide and violence among and against African American males.
2. Preparing them adequately for encounters with racism, prejudice, and discrimination that will affect their ability to take advantage of opportunities in life and achieve success.
3. Ensuring that they have a good education—helping them to see its importance and advantages as they chart their life path.
4. Helping them become responsible adults—persons who understand the importance of commitments, collective unity, and partnership.

## 5. Developing a positive racial identity.<sup>1</sup>

As I looked for programs which are successful in reaching African American males, two which are documented in books come to mind: The Nation of Islam and Saint Paul's Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York.

The average attendance of men at most black churches is about 30 percent of the regular attendance. Kunjufu claims, however, that there are a number of black churches that have significantly higher numbers of black males attending. He calls these churches liberation churches and describes them as follows: (1) Having a thriving men's ministry, and (2) having study sessions where the twenty-one reasons black men give for not going to church are discussed.<sup>2</sup> Jawanza Kunjufu does not identify these churches; he does, however, mention in passing St. Paul's in Brooklyn, New York, whose success is chronicled in the book *Upon This Rock* by Samuel Freedman. Kunjufu also mentions the success of Islam.

### **Islam**

Islam is estimated to be the second largest religion in the United States with some 4-6 million adherents, 45 percent of whom are African Americans. The two largest groups of Muslims are the Orthodox Muslims led by Warith Deen Mohammad, and the Nation of Islam, led by Minister Louis Farrakhan. Both branches of Islam appeal to African Americans, but the Nation of Islam, for various reasons which has been exceptionally successful in reaching African American males.

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<sup>1</sup>Boyd-Franklin, Nancy Franklin, and A. J. Franklin, *Boys to Men* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 2000), 6.

<sup>2</sup>Jawanz Kunjufu, *Adam Where Are You?* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 1994), 115.



Arabia, where Islam was born, is a large peninsula separated from Africa by the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden on the west, and from Asia by the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman on the east. The area is virtually uninhabited, 80 percent of which is covered by the nation of Saudi Arabia, providing 25 percent of the world's oil supply.

The Arabian Peninsula was occupied from the earliest by the biblical sons of Ham, who essentially were nomads, but eventually were united (7th century) under Muhammad's caliphs, and eventually became the "cradle of Islam," and the home of Mecca and Medina, the holiest cities of Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca in AD 570. About AD 610 he received a series of revelations that convinced him that he had been chosen as God's messenger. He then began to preach the message he claimed was entrusted to him—that there is but one God, to whom all humankind must commit themselves. Today, Islam has adherents not only in the Middle East, where it is the dominant religion in all countries (Arab and non-Arab) except Israel, but also in other parts of Asia, Africa, Europe, and the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Adherents of Islam are called Muslims and consist of many different sects. In 1976 a new group of Muslims was born in America, called "Black Muslims." At the time of their birth, they were called, "The Lost-Found Nation of Islam" and later "The World Community of Islam in the West." Wallace D. Fard, known as "Prophet Fard," "The Great Mahdi" or "The Savior," attracted 8,000 followers between 1930 and 1934 when

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<sup>3</sup>Black Muslims, <http://utminers.utep.edu/ajkline/islam2.htm> (accessed September 17, 2008).

he disappeared. His main message at first was black history, culture, and diet.<sup>4</sup>

Before his disappearance, “Fard set up the office of The Minister of Islam which, with the aid of a well trained staff, ultimately ran the whole organization. In three short years Fard has acquired some 8,000 followers. Under the direction of The Minister of Islam and his staff, the Nation of Islam continued to prosper and its main message was black history, culture, and diet.”<sup>5</sup>

Headquartered in Chicago, Elijah Muhammad, Fard’s successor exercised strong leadership until his death in 1975. He is best known for his feud with Malcolm X, which ultimately resulted in the death of Malcolm at the hands of his Muslim brothers in 1964. “New converts to the Nation of Islam were told to stop using their slave master name and apply to have an ethnically appropriate name given to them. Until it was given, they were referred to as ‘X.’ The X had a double meaning. It first indicated that their original name was still unknown, and there was also the idea of ‘ex’ incorporated in the name as well.”<sup>6</sup> This was something that appealed to African American males because it gave them a way to disconnect from the ways of the old slave masters and forge a new identity.

Elijah Muhammad saw himself as the “prophet and apostle of Allah,” claiming that God had appeared in the figure of Fard. Preaching an anti-integrationist message, Elijah Muhammad frequently voiced warnings about “the human beast, the white race.” He called “every Black Man in America to be reunited with his own” and urged a sense

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<sup>4</sup>Black Muslims, <http://www.bible.ca/islam/islam-nation-of-islam.htm> (accessed September 17, 2008).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

of black self-reliance and separation from the white society. This idea to identify with a religion that could help them overcome the domination of the white man was very appealing to the black male,<sup>7</sup> so also was the fact that the movement rejected the fundamental values of the powerful majority, even offering a black God and a black nation.<sup>8</sup>

After his father's death, Elijah Muhammad's son and successor, Warith Deen, called for a new sense of patriotism, urging blacks to "identify with the land and flag."<sup>9</sup> Advocating the "religious unification of the world's Muslims,"<sup>10</sup> Deen announced the dissolution of the American Muslim Mission in May 1985 and tried to unify its members with the worldwide Muslim community. Louis Farrakhan splintered off his own group, however, which retains the earlier separatist principles and the name "Nations of Islam."<sup>11</sup>

Many argue that the Black Muslim movement grew in America because the Christians in America neglected their responsibility of demanding equity and justice for the black race, while Islam succeeded, using social activism. They also demanded discipline, work ethics, community involvement, and community policing from their adherents. The black male having been lynched, mugged, locked out from jobs, attacked by police officers, and disenfranchised with no monies to take care of their families,

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<sup>7</sup>C. Eric Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1994), 29.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>9</sup>Black Muslims, <http://www.bible.ca/islam/islam-nation-of-islam.htm> (accessed September 17, 2008).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

sought for a way to vent their hatred against the community which had forgotten them, and the Nation gave them a way to do so. One commentator writes, “The Black Muslims came with temples and schools, apartment houses, grocery stores, restaurants and farms. Most important of all, a new sense of dignity and a conviction that they are more than the equals of the white man whose tricknology is a constant threat to their well-being.”<sup>12</sup>

Black Muslims call the white men Blue Eyed Devils and blame all of the suffering in the world upon them. One of the most consistent concepts that flows through the teachings of the Nation of Islam is its racial focus. Everything negative and bad that has happened to the black man is attributed to the white man. It is even claimed that Christianity is a white man’s religion, and is not an appropriate religion for any black person. The natural and true religion of the black man is Islam as defined by the Nation of Islam. The sad social and economic plight of the black man can be blamed on the white man. The white man is said to have robbed the black of his true heritage by forcing the teachings of Christianity upon his ancestors while they were slaves. By forsaking the slave master’s religion and turning to Islam, they are reclaiming their true religion. Thus, Christianity becomes the religion of slavery for the black.<sup>13</sup> This teaching has been particularly successful among the prison population, where large numbers of black males have accepted Islam for two reasons: (1) as a mean of explaining why they are locked up at a higher rate than any other sector of the American population, and (2) as a means of protection, security, and self-worth.

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<sup>12</sup>Black Muslims.

<sup>13</sup>Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, 30.

When a brother indicates interest in becoming a Muslim, the Nation assigns him a big brother who will be in touch with him daily. Then there are formal gender-specific classes on how to be a Muslim. These classes are gender specific because Islam believes that males lack the discipline to acquire knowledge while in the presence of women.

In the classes, the brothers are taught about their history and culture. They are taught to respect their wives and children and to be good providers. They are given instruction in having respect for their body by not putting pork, cigarettes, or alcohol in it. They are also expected to give ten to twenty hours each week to Nation Activity. If successful they then become eligible for the "Fruit of Islam," which teaches them self-defense, specialized drills, and the pillars of Islam, as well as to pray to Allah five times a day. So when a man joins the Nation, he understands his history, his culture, and how to keep his community safe without weapons.

### **Saint Paul Community Baptist**

It all started as a pastor's prayer request to bring a room of strong black men to Jesus Christ.<sup>14</sup> Formally called Eldad Medad, it began with an appeal by Pastor Youngblood in 1984 to make every Sunday Men's Day. Each week he would ask the men to stand, and then he would encourage and affirm them.

Pastor Youngblood later initiated a men's chorus, a father-son banquet, and an all-male retreat. He assigned men specific tasks to raise the money for elementary school desks, to attend the rallies of East Brooklyn congregations, to cook and serve breakfast

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<sup>14</sup>Samuel G. Freedman, *Upon This Rock* (New York: Harper and Collins Publishers, 1993).

for the church between eight to eleven each Sunday morning, and he arranged a board of male elders that would manage the church.

The names Eldad Medad were taken from Num 11 in the Bible and refer to the two men who were not prophets, but prophesied in the camp. When Joshua encouraged Moses to rebuke them, Moses responded, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and the Lord would put his spirit upon them." Pastor Youngblood saw this as God making room for other men, who were not among the formal prophets, and this became the name of his men's ministry.

The group met each Tuesday night and anything could be discussed, from the pastor's sermon, to a taped speech of Dr. Martin Luther King. There was laughter, vulnerability, and safety. Young men as well as old men came and everything was kept completely private.

At their first meeting, the newspaper headlines were all about the Sentencing Projects report. A nonprofit group based in Washington, the Sentencing Project reported that 23 percent of all black men between the ages of twenty to twenty nine were in prison, on probation, or on parole. The proportions was more than double that of Hispanic men, and nearly quadruple that of white men, and the number of young black men already tainted with criminal records exceeded 173,000, the number of black men attending college.<sup>15</sup> This inspired the men of Eldad Medad to make a difference, and they have been doing that ever since.

In an interview with Dr. Ralph Peay, Youngblood argued that the reasons men were not attending church were:

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<sup>15</sup>Freedman, *Upon This Rock*, 60.

1. Women were not inviting them.
2. The dress code was too restrictive.
3. There were inconsistencies in the lifestyle of regular church attendees.
4. A large number of them were in prison or on parole.
5. They were not being affirmed by pastors.
6. The pastor's sermons were too long.

By addressing these issues, he has changed the equation at Saint Paul. He argues he accomplished this by encouraging the following:

1. Women invite their husbands to church and introduce them to the pastor who makes a conscious effort to remember names and faces, inviting the brothers to return and referring to them by their nick names while preaching sermons of hope and affirmation.

2. The pastor sees men as natural leaders and encourages them to use their spiritual gifts in the church and on behalf of their women. He also helps them mentor young black males.<sup>16</sup>

Though the pastor does not mention it, he also uses black history as a part of the affirmation of the black male. He argues that a church ruled by an all-male Board of Elders is also appealing. His disdain for moral hypocrisy and the all male Eldad Medad which combine Bible study, group therapy and lodge camaraderie has made his church an

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<sup>16</sup>Ralph Peay, "A Model for Reaching African American Males in Southeast Atlanta" (D.Min. dissertation, Andrew University, 2005), 129.

effective center for reaching black males where female and male attendance and accession are equal.<sup>17</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Though I must reject the racist approach of Islam to evangelizing the African American male, the Christian church could learn something about mentorship, affirmation, self-worth, and understanding one's history and culture as being important ingredients of effective evangelization. It is clear that the discipline and work ethics of the Nation of Islam, along with the bonding and protection that it offers, provides strong incentive for African American males to join. The firm emphasis on providing for one's family, respecting one's wife and body, stabilizes the black family and provides a valuable example for the Christian church as to how to effectively evangelize and strengthen the black family.

The St. Paul model teaches us that by paying close attention to the needs of the black male community, by affirming and by living what is preached from the pulpit, and by encouraging females to invite black males to church, along with providing a safe place for bonding, camaraderie, and involvement, one can effectively evangelize the African American male in the city of Hartford, and I believe a specialized program like this will help the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church to do so as well.

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<sup>17</sup>Freedman, *Upon This Rock*, 8.



## CHAPTER 5

### A MODEL TO REACH AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN THE HARTFORD AREA WITH THE GOSPEL

#### **Introduction**

“Founded by Dutch traders in the early 1600s and established by the Reverend Thomas Hooker in 1636—what started as a fort called the ‘House of Hope’ is now a land of growth and opportunity for an enormously diverse population,”<sup>1</sup> says Eddie Perez, former Mayor of Hartford, describing his city. Hartford’s 2006 population of 124,512 ranks Hartford as the state’s second-largest city, after Bridgeport. The city of New Haven which is located some forty miles south of Hartford has a population nearly identical to that of Hartford. Greater Hartford is also the largest metro area in Connecticut and 45th largest in the country with a metropolitan population of 1,188,841.<sup>2</sup>

According to the census of 2000, there were 121,578 people, 44,986 households, and 27,171 families residing in the city. The racial makeup of the city was 38.42 percent Hispanic, 25.42 percent white, and 36.05 percent African American, with Native American, Asian, and Pacific Islander, making up the balance. The Hispanics predominantly claim Puerto Rican heritage and Hartford is considered the second largest

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<sup>1</sup>Mayor, Hartford city webpage, Hartford.org (accessed August 8, 2009).

<sup>2</sup>Hartford city, population, Wikipedia Online, [http://en.wiki.org/wiki/Hartford,\\_Connecticut#Demographics](http://en.wiki.org/wiki/Hartford,_Connecticut#Demographics) (accessed August 8, 2009).

concentration of Hispanics and Jamaicans on the U.S. Mainland. This has fueled the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in these areas, as it has been very successful at reaching this sector of the community.

### **History of Hartford**

The Connecticut River Valley where Hartford is located was once a thriving tobacco producing region—one of the world’s finest. The leaf tobacco grown here was very mild and was used extensively in cigars made in the Caribbean. This was the draw that brought the large population of Jamaicans and Puerto Ricans to the region.

Puerto Rican farm workers pruned trees and watered plants in nurseries in Meriden, weeded tomatoes in Cheshire, picked mushrooms near Willimantic, and worked the tobacco plantation in the Connecticut River Valley. The region known as “Tobacco Valley” once extended from Hartford, Connecticut, to Springfield, Massachusetts, covering an area thirty miles wide and ninety miles long.<sup>3</sup>

Changes in tobacco growing at the end of the 19th century had created a great demand for workers. In 1899, one year after United States troops stepped onto Puerto Rican soil, and the same year that Hurricane San Ciriaco devastated the island’s coffee crop, Connecticut farmers were experimenting with new ways of cultivating tobacco. For centuries, the rich soil of their valley had produced a good crop. Now tobacco farmers tried to duplicate tropical conditions by growing their plants under white netting. This process shielded plants from direct sunlight, created a humid atmosphere, and produced

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<sup>3</sup>Michael Lapp, “Managing Migration: The Migration Division of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans in New York City, 1948-1968” (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1990), 185.

high quality leaves. After an elaborate cutting, sorting, and curing process that took several years, these “shade tobacco” leaves were then used to wrap the most expensive cigars.

Chronic shortages of labor plagued Connecticut’s tobacco industry. During the early part of the 20th century, growers employed many Polish, Lithuanian, and Italian immigrants, but post-World War I immigration restrictions and the lure of factory jobs depleted that workforce. The growers began to recruit African American college students from the South. Among those who came in 1944, was the young Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>4</sup> During World War II, this student labor force was joined by thousands of Jamaican contract workers.<sup>5</sup>

When the United States began fighting in World War II, a serious labor shortage occurred because workers who normally filled these jobs either went off to war, or were employed in manufacturing establishments which were primarily producing goods for use in the war effort. As a result, there was a serious shortage of agricultural labor in Connecticut. Virtually all of Connecticut’s farmers, particularly those who grew the labor intensive tobacco crop, established new sources of migrant labor in order to address this extreme labor shortage. Agreements were made with the Jamaican government to import hundreds of Jamaicans as temporary workers. Local families were encouraged to send their children, fourteen years and older, to work in the fields, including the tobacco

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<sup>4</sup>Richard Arthur Newfield, “Tobacco and the Tobacco Laborer in the Connecticut Valley,” Senior Research Thesis, Department of Industry, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, 1936, 13-15; Richard Arthur Newfield, “Shaping Character: Martin Luther King Jr.’s Tobacco Summer,” *CT Magazine*, August 2000, 144.

<sup>5</sup>Fay Clarke Johnson, *Soldiers of the Soil* (New York: Vantage Press, 1995).

fields, to help with the war effort. Young women from West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and other states were brought in to work primarily in the tobacco barns. Morehouse College was among the southern black colleges that recruited young African American men, mostly their own students, to ride the train north to work on tobacco farms in Connecticut in order to earn college tuition money. The colleges usually sent professors, who were paid to supervise the young men, with the students.<sup>6</sup>

Connecticut hosts over 17,000 migrant farm workers annually. This population is the poorest group in the United States with the highest rate of occupational injury and illness with little or no access to health care. They provide an invaluable service to the economy and yet went without health coverage, Medicaid, and Social Security, and often are unaware of their Worker's Compensation benefits.<sup>7</sup>

As the growers' requests for laborers implied, the work was strenuous. Tobacco plants and leaves were fragile and had to be handled carefully. Moreover, both the tenting process and the curing of leaves in heated sheds made the work unbearably hot and humid. A high level of stress and accidents resulted from the constant pressure to work faster.

Accommodations for the workers usually consisted of large barns or barracks where as many as fifty or sixty men slept on flimsy cots. In the still-cold nights of April or the growing chill of October, the workers frequently suffered from lack of heat and adequate blankets. Anyone willing to give them a hand was considered a friend, and this

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<sup>6</sup>Glenn Collins, "The Perfect Place to Make a Good Cigar," *New York Times*, August 13, 1995.

<sup>7</sup>Migrant farm workers in Connecticut, [http://publichealth.uconn.edu/aboutus\\_mfwc.php](http://publichealth.uconn.edu/aboutus_mfwc.php) (accessed July 7, 2010).

is where the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church found a rich harvest of souls.

### **North End Upper Albany/Clay Arsenal Neighborhoods**

The north end where the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church is located is referred to as the Upper Albany and Clay Arsenal neighborhoods in this document. Here Hartford's poorer residents live, look for work, and go to school. Fashionable "R.I.P." tags and t-shirts worn by middle-school students, dropout teenagers, and grieving relatives perpetuate the memory of fatalities over the years. Spray paint artists immortalize murder victims, as t-shirt vendors profit from R.I.P. merchandizing. Dozens of homicides have been memorialized, as violence in Hartford's north end is "Remembered in the Present."

In many ways, residents of Hartford's north end are subject to a double jeopardy—being poor, uneducated, and underemployed, while also being sensationalized as either victim or criminal in daily news reports. As the years roll on, the people and streets may change, but the stories remain the same for North Hartford: poor schools, broken families, high unemployment, lowered expectations, teenaged drug dealers, persistent violence, and contradictory crime indicators. The trauma of living underprivileged and at high-risk is daily reinforced by an opportunistic mass media.

A close look at this situation highlights the condition which has been created by racism in America which I propose to address in this unique evangelistic method. The conditions described here are what Marc Maur called the social ills<sup>8</sup> which have defined African American males over the years, and in my estimation, demands the development

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<sup>8</sup>Maur, "The Sentencing Project."

of some type of special evangelistic outreach designed to compensate for these particular disadvantages and restore their damaged egos.<sup>9</sup>

Marla Fredrick's "social order," in which the African male must function, deems him unworthy of hire or competitive wages,<sup>10</sup> which she argues makes the African American male not only angry at the establishment that treated him like this, but also at the Christian God who seemed to care little about his plight and whose followers were presumed to be responsible for his situation,<sup>11</sup> highlights the importance of the church doing something to rectify this situation. This demands an approach that is culturally sensitive as I believe cultural imperialism has helped to create this situation. And I say this because many places in America where there are predominantly African American and Latino populations seem to have similarities as it relates to crime, drugs, poverty, and gun violence.

The population of the north end where the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church is located is predominantly African American and Latino as noted in table 1 below. Young African American and Latino males aged eighteen to twenty-four are the primary perpetrators of narcotics-related crime which is prevalent in this area. These young men usually have dropped out of high school, have no job skills, and have given up on a future outside of making large sums of quick money in the drug trade. They frequently belong to gangs with gang involvement often starting when they are in middle school. The root cause of the problem is poverty. These young men of color believe that they have no

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<sup>9</sup>Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 48.

<sup>10</sup>Frederick, *Between Sunday*, 120.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

**Table 1. Demographic, economic, and social data of the city of Hartford and the community of the Faith SDA Church**

<b>Demographic/Economic/Social Data</b>	<b>Faith Church community</b>	<b>City of Hartford</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Source</b>
Population	11,435	121,578	2000	Census 2000
Ethnicity	Latino: 18% African American: 72% Caucasian: 5% Asian: 1% Other: 4%	Latino: 40.5% African American: 38.1% Caucasian: 27.7% Asian: 1.6% Other: <1%	2000	Census 2000
Percentage of Families Living in Poverty	25%	28.2%	2000	Census 2000

other viable option for developing an income that will raise them out of poverty.

They grow up underprivileged and with a significant number losing ground academically and failing to graduate from high school. Parents are losing their kids to the streets and the temptations of gangs or drug life. For some children and families who are bound to live in substandard housing and pay rent to absentee landlords, there is a growing desperation and hostility. These residents complain of being unable to afford to live in a safer neighborhood. They say they live in fear and despair. When one considers that generations of families continue this downward slide which results in poor achievement and many ending up as drug abusers, single parents, or incarcerated this reinforces the need for an evangelistic model that would include mentoring, education, and the development of a long-term relationship as was discussed in the previous chapter. Then when you consider the economic drain as a result of their conditions, it soon becomes evident that there is a great need for the church to do something about this. And

I believe this can be addressed by an evangelistic method specifically designed to target this sector of our community and improve its lot. Frankly, I believe this is not just necessary, but required if the church is to fulfill its God-given responsibility of showing love to the less fortunate.

According to my friend Richard Legrier, who works as the Police Community liaison for the North End of Hartford, he has related, that “in recent years, the profile of a drug dealer and the related street culture has changed in the north end. There has been an evolution—the younger crop work in small ‘crews’ controlling a street or a corner, instead of establishing formal gangs. Owing allegiance to no one, they’ve become increasingly trigger-happy.” This has resulted in increased shootings and funerals around the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church. By 2005, the newest cycle of street crime and violence had regained the attention of the highest state officials, law enforcement task forces, and the news media. Most disturbing have been the gang (aka “crew”) trends and the younger ages of drug and violence offenders.

Increasingly the drug gangs and crew battles have penetrated Hartford’s “Drug Free Zones.” Today, grade schools in Upper Albany/Clay Arsenal remain in need of protection from gang violence. In April 2006, a youth was shot on the playground at Milner Elementary School; and three Fox Middle School students were shot in separate instances. Only one child lived out of the area, and all these schools are within walking distance of the Hartford Area School run by the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church. To make matters worse, in these neighborhoods, community policing has been made tougher with a “No Snitching” creed.

In a recent community meeting in the North End, the former Connecticut Chief



State's Attorney Christopher Morano is reported to have said, "What used to be settled with a fistfight is now being settled with a gunfight and those participating in violence are getting younger and younger." More and more, I see the need for the church to get involved, because if it does not, the church itself might find it difficult to survive in this particular neighborhood. The failure to address the underlying causes of urban violence is having deadly consequences. The General Assembly of Hartford region continues to focus considerable attention on criminal activity by youthful offenders and how the system deals with these young people. And more people are demanding that examination be made as to why young people are coming into the system and what can be done to keep them out of trouble. I believe the Faith church must play a significant role in seeking to change this situation.

It has been exceedingly apparent that there is a need for jobs and mentoring programs as well as employment opportunities and training for youth.

Authors Hanes Watson Jr. and Robert C. Smith argue that until the end of slavery, because blacks in the south could not acquire property, and they were kept out of the mainstream of society (the economy, government, education, and community), they were subject to highly prejudicial beliefs about their inferiority and bestiality.<sup>12</sup> This stereotype is perpetuated in the Hartford area today and this is the environment in which Faith now exists and is forced to evangelize.

The community to which Faith must direct its ministry is 72 percent African Americans, 18 percent Latinos, and 5 percent whites as noted in table 1. Because the

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<sup>12</sup>Hanes Watson Jr. and Robert C. Smith, *American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom* (New York: Anderson-Wesley Longman, 2000), 205.

predominant member of this community is African American, poor, in desperate need of jobs, besieged daily with gun violence, and living in substandard housing, the evangelization of this population requires a unique approach which I believe must be designed to combat the lingering effects of slavery, racism, and cultural imperialism. There must be a strong emphasis on mentoring, self-esteem development, and a unique worship style. There must also be inclusions of Black Achievement to highlight to the youth of today that their situation is not hopeless, because other blacks faced it in the past, and yet were able to accomplish extraordinary things.

### **The History of the Faith Church**

The Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church began right after the depression of 1929 when Wellington Clark conducted a series of evangelistic efforts in Hartford, Connecticut. Clark won Maud Crawford, who began using her living room as a meeting place for a small Bible study class. In 1946 the Northeastern Conference sent Literature Evangelist Matthew Bell to work with the group in the Hartford area and a church was organized with sixteen members. Matthew's approach, according to interviews with his descendants who are still members of the church, was directed to personal one-on-one contact. He walked from door to door selling books and introducing the people to Jesus Christ and the Advent message. Kind, godly, and loving, Matthew built good relations with the community by demonstrating Christ in his daily life as he patiently taught them about his church which demanded Sabbath day worship; modesty in dress; and abstinence from sex before marriage, liquor, and tobacco.

Matthew's approach had positive results as the church grew and thrived under his influence. For over twenty years Matthew remained the first elder as pastors came and

of mentoring<sup>16</sup> and no doubt helped Bell to successfully expand the Faith Church during these years.

Bell's priorities seem to have been much focused. He made the gospel clear, and he passionately pursued the lost. Thus one could argue that his discipleship included what Cecil would call nurture and assimilation.<sup>17</sup>

Cecil defines evangelism as "the zealous preaching and dissemination of the Gospel, through missionary work."<sup>18</sup> He says Christian evangelism centers on proclaiming that Christ died for our sins and arose from the dead. This "good news," according to the New Testament, is intended to invite the listener to trust and follow Christ.<sup>19</sup> Bell seems to have mastered this approach.

This method is a relational strategy as described by Douglas Cecil. It relies on making friends with the potential disciples in order to make them disciples.

As the workers joined the church, it was not too long before the first church building became too small and the church membership was forced to move to larger quarters. Under the nurturing leadership of Pastor Lloyd Wilson and Pastor Dudley Thorn (1965-1972), Edward Smith replaced Bell as First Elder and the church continued to expand its membership. Pastor Wilson developed strong spiritual leaders in the pew, increased social interaction through his Ingathering banquets, and liquidated many of the church's debts. Thorn, who led the move to larger quarters at 25 Cornwall Street, had a strong

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<sup>16</sup>Cecil, *The Seven Principles of an Evangelistic Lifer*, 75.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 35.

community emphasis, which saw him conducting stop smoking programs, organizing inner city work, acquiring a community service van, and empowering his members to share their faith in the Hartford area. There was a strong sense of community improvement and involvement and this increased the membership of the church. When Pastor Jerry Lee arrived in Hartford in 1972, the city was ripe for an evangelist of his caliber. A charismatic, emotional, and fiery African American preacher with the special anointing of the Holy Spirit upon him, Lee used his extraordinary gift of preaching and celebration style of worship to rouse the people of Hartford to join the Advent message. Challenging the city's ban on tent meeting, Lee was successful in impressing the city fathers that tents were safe enough to be used for a public gathering. Tents had been banned in Hartford since the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus fire. Some 6,800 people were attending this circus when a fire broke out which killed 167. Lee expanded the church to a membership of over 500 with a celebration type of worship which attracted large numbers of African Americans who resonated with this style of worship. There was a strong emphasis on culture in worship, and people were proud to be called African Americans and associate with the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church.

When Pastor Jerry Lee left Hartford in 1974, he was replaced by Pastor Keith Dennis who in four years moved the membership of the Faith Church to over 700 members. Many of the workers baptized earlier were now bringing their families to America and this was expanding the membership of the church. Dennis continued the evangelistic thrust started by Lee and baptized over 100 people the following summer in a tent meeting. He organized a scholarship fund for needy students and increased morale at Faith by fostering a great working relationship between the different cultures and

classes who were now a part of this very large church. Again Faith needed to find larger quarters and Dennis led them to 500 Woodland Street, with a seating capacity of over 1,000. The church was blessed from 1978-1990 to be led by a series of great evangelists: Raymond Saunders (1978-80), Jonathan Thompson (1980-1984), and Reginald Washington Sr. (1984-1990) pushed the membership of Faith to over 1,100 members and nearly one million dollars in tithe.

Saunders, an evangelist par excellence, like Pastor Jerry Lee before him, used a Pentecostal style and a strong cultural emphasis to draw large crowds to his evangelistic campaigns and won hundreds to the Lord. He opened the Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church and a few years later, the Faith Seventh-day Adventist School opened with nine students, later enrolling up to 300. Just ten years after the 500 Woodland Street was purchased, Pastor Jonathan Thompson led in the liquidation of the mortgage and the opening of the Nurture Nest Day Care Center and Faith Seventh-day Adventist schools as the church grew and thrived with a strong cultural and nurturing community emphasis. This move highlighted Pastor Thompson's (1980-1984) strong community emphasis. He also developed a strong inner-city program and led in a cross cultural ministry to bridge the growing tension between the American and West Indian communities. This tension was increasing as the Caribbean members of the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church were demanding a more conservative worship style and less emphasis on culture in worship.

Thompson was replaced by Pastor Reginald Washington, who had grown up at the Faith church in Hartford. Bred on community involvement, nurture, and culture at Faith, Washington opened a soup kitchen to meet the needs of the poor in the community,

He also organized a new church in Bloomfield, Connecticut, under the direction of Pastor Howard Weems and revitalized the Wednesday night prayer meeting where hundreds came to be blessed and developed a closer relationship with the Lord.

Before long, tension increased between the growing populations of West Indians and Americans. The Americans seemed to enjoy the addition of drums, gospel music, the lifting of hands, and a rich praise and worship experience, which reached its zenith under Pastor Michael Bernard who pastored Faith from 1991-1998. A West Indian himself, Bernard was all about inclusive worship. He ordained the first female elder (Kathy Edwards), led in the praise and worship celebration, increased awareness for Christian education, purchased a new site, and completed the building of a brand new school. He also implemented the area school concept with the Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, sharing the cost of running the Hartford Area School, and liquidating the debt on the school.

Poor record keeping has resulted in little documentation of the number of males and females who were won to the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church over the years, but there is a record of the baptisms performed by Pastor Bernard, which show his years as very successful in reaching the Black male (see table 2).

Walton Rose Sr., pastored Faith from 2001-2003 and his tenure, according to some, was marked by friction and strife. Greatly loved by many Faith members, Rose was an extraordinary preacher, but by the time he left Faith, the church had lost over 250 members. These members formed the newly established Grace church in the Southern New England Conference and Faith struggled financially for its survival. Rose was

**Table 2. Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church baptisms, 1993-2004**

Pastor	Year	# of Females	# of Males	Years Total
Michal Bernard	1993	26	16	42
	1994	13	11	24
	1995	20	13	33
	1996	19	09	29
	1997	09	13	22
Walton Rose	1999			
	2000			
	2001			
	2002			
Stephen Williams	2003	06	07	13
	2004	05	11	16
	2005			
	2006	12	14	26
	2007	03	04	07
	2008	23	25	48
Totals		116	99	215

Missing data indicates the Northeastern Conference has no record.

replaced by a number of interim pastors, including Pastor Jessie Bevel who spent almost one year at Faith. Bevel, the Family Life Director of the Conference at the time, brought a strong Family Life emphasis and a charismatic attitude which began to heal the wounds resulting from the previous administration.

When I pastored Faith, from October 2003 to the summer of 2008, I had a strong emphasis on building relationships with the African American males, solid black history presentation, and regular black heritage seminars. There was a strong community emphasis, partnering with the city to help the poor, through feeding programs, furniture and light assistance, food distribution, summer camps, basketball camps, weight loss programs, and a health emphasis. Many of the principles discussed in chapter 3 and this chapter were incorporated into the church's ministry. Principles such as mentoring, self-esteem building, and affirmation were put into place. Though at the time I was not aware

of or had ever discussed the twenty-one reasons men do not attend church, we did talk about the effects of slavery, and tried to counter cultural imperialism by using culturally sensitive images in church services and seminars. By highlighting the people of African descent in the Bible, and encouraging an inclusive worship experience which sought to meet the needs of all cultures, especially the African Americans in whose community the church was located, a higher percentage of males than normal were won during my tenure as pastor. Part of this ministry included the completion of my dissertation project in 2004, which definitely impacted the percentages of accession and demonstrated just how successful one can be in reaching African American males if this innovative approach is used.

The Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church seemed to have experienced greatest growth for many reasons.

1. The nurture and mentoring style of Matthew Bell
2. Strong outreach through tent meetings
3. Charismatic preaching style of many of its pastors
4. Celebration style worship
5. Strong inner-city programs
6. Good interaction between the cultures
7. Strong cultural and self-esteem building programs

In recent times, however, with a strong West Indian population, there has been tension over worship style, which has led to reluctance by African Americans to join the Faith church. The church is about 75 percent female, though it is blessed to have a large number of youth and children attending regularly. It has not been very successful in



reaching large amounts of males, except during the time of Matthew Bell and later under the leadership of Michael Bernard (1993-1997) and yours truly (Pastor Stephen L. Williams Sr., 2003-2008).

### **My Personal Interest in This Topic**

I am of West Indian descent having been born in Jamaica, West Indies, where I spent the first twenty years of my life. I am actually a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist whose family name of Patterson is believed to have been given by the first missionary to Jamaica, James Patterson, who met my great grandmother as a pregnant teenager in the 1890s and taught her the Advent message.

From the tender age of seven I wanted to be a pastor. It was the only profession I ever wanted. While visiting a camp meeting in 1966 I heard an appeal to study the ministry at West Indies College (now the Northern Caribbean University), which had been founded in 1907 and had recently been upgraded to West Indies College. I indicated my interest in studying the ministry and received an application a few weeks later. Of course, since I was only in grade school, the application had to sit for a few years to say the least.

I finally did attend West Indies College in 1978 with every intention of pastoring in Jamaica and winning many to Jesus Christ. But after my sophomore year, my family migrated to the United States and I left Jamaica in 1980 on the premise I could return to West Indies College if I so chose the following school year. But that was not to be, limited finances prohibited that and after settling into a job at the Dime Savings Bank in New York, I was suddenly confronted with a decision to break the Sabbath or quit the job which offered so many benefits and opportunities. I chose to quit the job and was unable

to find a job for many months. Finally, I was challenged by a church member of the Lebanon Seventh-day Adventist Church in Laurelton Queens, to go down to Oakwood College and complete my education as a pastor as this was my calling. With a plane ticket, and \$200 in hand I left New York for Oakwood and through the miracles of God, graduated two years later. Anxious to return to Jamaica to work and having sent my resume to no other conference, I called up my conference president in Jamaica, and told him I had graduated from college and was anxious to return to Jamaica to preach the gospel. He indicated there was no place for me in Jamaica, because I was a graduate of Oakwood and I was suddenly confronted with the reality that I had to make new plans.

Through the miraculous working of God, and the influence of my friend and mentor, Pastor Robert Lister, I was soon hired by Northeastern Conference and started a successful ministry in Elmira, New York, in 1986. After conducting a number of evangelistic efforts in the late eighties, I began to notice a trend. I would baptize many women, both white and black, but very few men went into the baptismal pool, especially African American males. I began asking myself, why? Why were there so few black men coming to Christ. I saw the brothers on the corner, on the basketball court, and in the bars, and thought surely there must be a way to get them into the church also.

It was while attending the Evangelism Council at Oakwood College one year that I purchased the book, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* by Chancellor Williams. While reading this book, I began to think that one of the reasons I was not successful in reaching black men was because the gospel I preached was just packaged inappropriately and had totally ignored black history and culture. Some black men just could not relate to my hymns, my illustrations, and my religion which they were told was responsible for

African slavery. It was while thinking about this, in a Boston Condominium, while on vacation, that I heard a voice say one evening, “If you want to reach black men, you must learn some black history.” Puzzled as to what this meant, I moved to the bedroom where my wife was watching television to share with her what the voice just said. Stating that it was either God or the Devil, (I thought it may have been the devil, because being from Jamaica, I thought the teaching of black history would be divisive) who was telling me to learn black history to reach the black male. My wife responded, “The devil would not tell you how to reach anyone, so it must be God.”

I wondered what all this meant however. How would black history change my evangelistic results? What kind of black history was the voice talking about? Biblical black history, African American history, or African history? I was a seminary graduate, and was not sure I was ever introduced to anyone black in the Bible except for the cursed Ham. Could there actually be other blacks in the Bible, I wondered. The books and illustrations I had encountered so far sure did not suggest this. Some black authors had suggested that the wife of Moses and Simon of Cyrene were black, but many other scholars disagreed. The words haunted me all that night—“learn black history and you will reach black men”—but where would I start, what kind of black history would I learn? Was there such a thing as biblical black history, and if so, why did I not learn it in the seminary? As a Jamaican living in America for less than ten years, I understood about American racism or the African American struggle, but I surely had no interest in black history. But the voice continued to haunt me—learn black History and you will win black male—so I started out on a journey to learn black history and to see if indeed it would draw black males to the church.

Ever since that time in 1989, I have been on a journey to effectively evangelize black males to Jesus Christ, and the pursuit of this doctoral degree was to help accomplish this goal. Since that time, I have been blessed through the years to baptize more men to the Adventist church than women in many evangelistic efforts and this has continued, I believe, because of the way I package the gospel, the illustrations I use or do not use, my knowledge of black history including blacks in the Bible, and because it is my passion. I want more than anything in life, to be an evangelist to the African American male. I feel his struggle and believe the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the best thing that could happen to the black male and his family. It will change his life and the direction of his family for generations and put him on course to meet Jesus in peace.

### **Background to the Project**

When I first started this project, I was pastoring the Calvary Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and worked in bringing many black men to Christ in that city. But having been transferred in 2003, to the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hartford, I began to focus on winning black men to Christ in the north end of Hartford.

Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church has a listed membership of 1,029 according to the Northeast Conference website. Its regular attendance is about 500, two thirds of whom are women. The church is one of the few churches in the Northeastern Conference which has a decent population of blacks who have been in this country for two or more generations. About one third of its membership is at least third generation African American but still the church is perceived as a West Indian church by many.

## Worship at Faith

The worship style of the church switches from celebration to conservative-based on the pastor or music director. There is always tension between the various cultures and a delicate balance exists as to what is the norm. Many people enjoy the gospel music, rhythmic drums, and electric guitar which graces the worship journey each week, while others complain that the beat of the drums are just too strong, and the organ too loud. There are those who come to church after the praise and worship is over, and others who complain weekly about the “loud drums” and “people acting in church as if they are in a dance hall.”

Whenever there is a community outreach day planned, it is not uncommon to see Faith filled to capacity. Attendees would include the mayor, local congressmen and women, and council men and women who could be found seated in Faith’s beautiful sanctuary, all coming in support of a large urban church which is very active in its community, and it is one of the largest social service organization institutions in Hartford whose African American members are very connected politically and served nearly 400,000 needy people in 2010 according to the report of the Community Service Director, Reginald Hardwick. Pastoral anniversaries generally included citations from the Congress of the United States, State and City elected officials who generally delivered the officials themselves at the Sabbath morning services.

## Community Service at Faith

Each week at Faith, hundreds of community people, mostly African Americans, line up on Woodland Street on Fridays and Wednesday to receive dry goods and fresh vegetables which are distributed freely. Each Sunday the church feeds about 100 people,

mostly African American males, from the various shelters and other places who come to have their needs met. Sitting and talking to them, for me, has been a treat as I learn their individual stories and large pool of talent which goes unused as they neglect to find themselves a church home where they could be active participants. Every Christmas and Thanksgiving season finds dozens of Pathfinders and their leaders packing care packages and presents to present to the needy that live and work in the North End community.

There is no shortage of black men who are connected to faith through its various outreach programs, but the unfortunate reality is that they do not necessarily become church members, and the question is how to move them from the soup kitchen to church membership.

### The Project

In the winter of 2004, I embarked on a journey to win black men to the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church. A “Black in the Bible Seminar” was planned as the means of doing this. The idea was to use the Black Heritage Bible Lessons (appendix A) which I had developed years before as the main teaching tool each night, and at the end of the fourteenth lesson, which would be taught three times per week for five weeks, I would have a graduation and make an appeal for the those who attended to join the church. The plan also included a sermon each Sabbath for the month of February on some aspect of blacks in the Bible which would be promoted to the community in the local community papers and to the attendees of the Black History seminar, with a strong appeal to each visitor to give their lives to the Lord and join the Adventist Church. Though I would not limit anyone from registering for the seminar, or attending the

weekly Sabbath services, I fully expected that because it was advertised as “Blacks in the Bible Class,” the predominant students would be black men.

### Focus of the Seminar

I thought Black History month would be a good time to hold this seminar and the plan was to host it in a neutral site, which was a building owned by the church, that previously housed the congregation before it became too small to do so anymore.

In chapter 2 of this dissertation, while discussing a biblical rationale for developing an evangelistic approach for reaching African American males, I shared that one of Matthew’s purposes was to argue that true Judaism had its fulfillment in Christ and not in Pharisaic Judaism centered in Jamnia. He shows Jesus as not only the son of David and Abraham, but also the son of God and the fulfillment of the Covenant with Abraham and David.

In the black history seminar, the plan was to try to emphasize the culture as well as the nature of Jesus, arguing that the Messiah of John and Daniel had bronze skin and woolly hair which would best be described as a man of color and this is the God I invite African people to come and serve, not the image popularized by the great classical painters. I would try to show Christ as a multi-racial personality emphasizing people of color in his lineage such as the Harlot, Ruth, Bathsheba, Solomon, and the likes. I would talk about Jesus’ parent’s trip to Egypt to escape Herod, and the implications of a family going to Africa to hide in Egypt. Like Mathew I would emphasize the essence of God’s law as love and salvation as a free gift which I believed would be appealing to the poor and disenfranchised. I also planned to show humanity as sinners who daily require forgiveness, encouraging my audience to forgive and forget any atrocities that may have

been done against them by others, especially of the dominant culture. Just as Matthew's purpose in writing his gospel was to reveal Jesus Christ, who He is, why He came, what He demands, and what He offers,<sup>20</sup> so the Black Heritage Seminar would do the same.

In the seminar, like the book of Matthew, my plan was to make Jesus Christ the central theme. His mission, origin, identity, and authority would be placed in the context of meeting the needs of the black male. That fact that Matthew presents men of color being led to Jerusalem by angels (Matt 2) while the established religion is ignorant of the birth of Christ; the slaughtered infants which highlights the themes of abuse and brutality; the prophecy in Matt 1, that Jesus will save his people from their sins which reveals the hopelessness of humanity without Christ's salvific death; the unjust treatment of an innocent individual (Matt 5:38-42), and the martyrdom of John the Baptist<sup>21</sup> would be highlighted as these are all appealing themes which are active in the African American community and could provide a good backdrop for an appeal to come to Christ.

Addressing the plot of the Gospel of Matthew and the conflict it portrays which Robert Charles calls "a Satanic Conflict,"<sup>22</sup> the plan was to use this to describe the day to day battles for survival which face the African American males in Hartford and remind them that Jesus can help them win these battles.

The seminar would share that just like the audience of the early church which was a narrow one, with even *Jesus himself commanding the disciples to go not in the way of*

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<sup>20</sup>Sorensen, *Breaking the Chain of Low Self-Esteem*, 66.

<sup>21</sup>Dale C. Allison Jr., *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 221.

<sup>22</sup>Branden, *Satanic Conflict and the Plot of Matthew*, 134.



*the Gentiles* (Matt 10:5, emphasis mine),<sup>23</sup> so I have a responsibility to the narrow audience of the African American male to share with them the gospel of Jesus Christ. After they come to Christ, my hope was to inspire them with the great commission of Matthew to go into all the world and make disciples.

In the seminar when Egypt was discussed, I would talk about slavery, revealing that it was a common practice in North Africa.<sup>24</sup> And emphasizing that Africans Americans are not the only people to have been enslaved and that African have been responsible for others being enslaved, encouraging a spirit of forgiveness to those who held our fore parents in slavery. I would also talk about the firm family ties of early Africans<sup>25</sup> and the need to rebuild these ties.

#### Advertising

I started to advertise the seminar in January 2004, some four weeks before the first lesson would begin. I used the two local community papers, one which served the West Indian community and the other which serves the second and third generation African American community. I also printed and distributed thousands of flyers in the community and gave them to the church members who were challenged to invite their sons and husbands. I then organized a team to be responsible every night for the following: (1) registration and attendance, (2) distribution of books, Bibles, and materials, (3) collecting the quiz and offering, (4) greeting and welcoming visitors each evening, (5) distributing refreshments each evening, and (6) acting as prayer warriors.

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<sup>23</sup>Chilcote, Williams, and Williams, *The Study of Evangelism*, 19.

<sup>24</sup>Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy*, 122.

<sup>25</sup>Williams, *They Stole It*, 10.

The advertising included a registration card and the church telephone number where people could call to register or mail their registration. There was a registration fee of twenty dollars which would be returned to each participant who completed the seminar with a perfect attendance and attended the graduation ceremony. Since the classroom size was limited only about thirty people were allowed to register for the class. Our registrants included nineteen males and eleven females. Only twenty-five eventually showed up on the opening night with some fifteen attending every night and completing the seminar.

Attendees included ten females and fifteen males from the community and five women from the faith church who attended each evening. Attendees included one local pastor, and all the attendees were already active in some church in the local community. None of the attendees were non-church attendees which surprised us, as I was expecting brothers from the streets to attend.

### The Class

The class was conducted on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights in a question and answer format. The class lasted for one and a half hours, which included a time for questions and answers. A projector and screen was used with PowerPoint slides showing both the question and answers. A chalk board was also used as notes were given and taken each night along with a lively discussion. People were encouraged to share their views and give comments and feedback as the class proceeded. Every night at the end of each session a quiz was given on the evening topic, along with a decision question asked, inviting each person to give themselves to God.

opportunity to greet each class member personally. This was designed to develop a mentoring relationship and help each participant feel as if he was an important part of what was happening. Team members were encouraged to follow up with class members, calling, visiting, and encouraging each to study their lessons and not miss the nightly presentation. Refreshments were served, and the seminar staff was encouraged to use these informal times to get to know each class attendee personally.

### Fighting Cultural Imperialism and Countering Racism

Each night, there was a strong emphasis on a person or empire of color in Scripture. Earlier in chapter 3, it talked about the badge worn by the African American male, which sets him radically apart from others, and also served as a highly visible label identifying the natives of a distant continent which for ages Christians had known as a land of men radically defective in religion.”<sup>26</sup> The black heritage seminar tried to take that badge and make it a badge of honor, rather than a curse. By highlighting the achievement of people of color, the seminar sought to build self-esteem and self-worth, turning black skin color which was perceived as negative into a positive. There was no European illustrations used to describe biblical characters and if no African image was available, no image was used. One of the topics discussed was black music. Here I discussed the worship experience of 2 Chronicles 5 and God’s reaction to the loud boisterous music, and its similarities to African American worship today.

Everyone present expressed surprise at what they learned, and was excited to know that there were indeed blacks in the Bible. When the doctrinal subjects were

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<sup>26</sup>Foster and Smith, *Black Religious Experience*, 26.

presented, the class grew smaller and smaller, with some expressing dissent at the idea of keeping the Sabbath, not wearing jewelry, getting baptized, and leaving their church to join the Adventist church.

The high interest in the class was demonstrated in the fact that one Friday evening, while travelling from Bridgeport where I lived, I got caught in traffic and could not get to the seminar until long after the time it usually ended. I arrived at the site to find all the students still there, one hour after they were told to leave because I would not get there before the class would end, patiently waiting for the class to start. They stayed until the class was over, as I led in the study of Simon of Cyrene.

#### The Results

Fifteen people completed the class and graduated and seven were baptized which included three males and four females, one of whom was a teenage daughter of one of the church members. Most all of those baptized are still active at Faith today. Five male members of the class who were not baptized attended church on a regular basis for awhile, but were reluctant to leave their church even though they were convinced of the Advent message, especially the validity of the Sabbath. After a few years, I saw them only occasionally.

From time to time, those who were baptized have requested more black history seminars, and the preaching of blacks in the Bible, but since the church at large does not readily embrace such a philosophy, I was reluctant to present these topics, except during black history month or on special occasions.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This project was motivated by my experience as an evangelist and my inability to successfully win African American males to the Adventist church in my early years as a pastor. I was deeply troubled by the fact that I saw the brothers on the corner, at the liquor store, on the sports field, but not in the church. The Bible says, “this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all the world, as a witness, and then shall the end come” (Matt 24:14), and I deeply believe that all the world included the African American males, who seem convinced that Christianity was not for them but was the religion of the “white man” and responsible for African slavery. Furthermore, I believe that the conditions that existed in the North End of Hartford, and commonly found in most poor communities which include crime, violence, school dropout, drug addiction, the drug trade, teenage pregnancy, broken homes, and the like can be greatly curbed by the Advent message which can build stable homes and safer communities.

With the assistance of a team of volunteers, mostly women, I started out to plan a Black Heritage Bible Seminar to reach African American males with the hope that they would see the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church as a viable option to help restore their relationship with God and improve the quality of their lives.

My intension in this project was to: (1) raise the level of awareness about the dilemma of the African American males, (2) examine the factors that have led to the

negative stereotype and their unwillingness to attend church, (3) establish a biblical foundation for the development of a strategy to reach them, and (4) develop a model for drawing African American males to the Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North end section of Hartford, Connecticut, where Faith is located.

In the first chapter of this project, I tackled some of the assumptions and problems associated with reaching the African American males, mainly that a significant number of African American males hold the Bible as “the White man’s book” and a tool of enslavement that has no relevance for African people today. This makes our present evangelistic approach and materials less effective than it could be. The task of this project was to develop a program to evangelize the African American male community. It was to evaluate whether or not, if it could be demonstrated that the African culture had an impact on the Bible’s development, would this help to counter the myth that the Bible is the white man’s book and can this information be used to produce materials effective in reaching the African American male.

I also wanted to ascertain whether or not Africans and their culture had any impact upon the development of the Bible and whether or not the fact that most biblical characters are presented as European by the Adventist church may in fact be having a negative effect upon our evangelism strategy for reaching black men and may be responsible for African American males being reluctant to accept the Bible as being the authentic Word of God for their lives.

#### **Findings 1: The Blacks in the Bible Approach Attract African American Males**

As noted in the tables listed on page 124, at the end of the project, nineteen men

and eleven women registered for the Black Heritage Bible Seminar and fifteen men and ten women eventually attended. From this I concluded that a higher percentage of men are attracted to the black heritage approach of evangelism than are women. The results indicate our assumption that “highlighting black history and culture was very attractive to the black male.” According to Jawanza Kunjufu in his book *Why Men Do Not Go to Church*, only 30 percent of regular attendance at a local church service is male and 70 percent female. Figure 4 shares the dramatic difference between the results from a black heritage seminar, and what it would be if this was a traditional evangelistic event. A traditional evangelistic event would have attracted nine males and twenty one females, while the “black heritage approach,” nearly reversed the trend completely attracting nineteen men and eleven females.

Though nineteen men and eleven women originally registered for the seminar, only fifteen men and ten women showed up on the first night. Seventy-five percent of the people who showed up were men, though only 63 percent of those who registered were men. So the Black Heritage Seminar had a higher percentage of male attending than registered. Of the men that attended, eleven came every night and graduated, with three getting baptized. So the percentage of men completing the seminar and graduating nearly tripled that of the females who attended and graduated. Six females did drop out of the class, or miss too many nights to graduate. I did not do any study to see why those who dropped out did, but this will be something to consider for the future.

#### **Findings 2: The Blacks in the Bible Approach Increase the Percentage of African American Males Who Get Baptized**

Three men and four women were eventually baptized at the end of the five weeks.

Forty-three percent of the baptisms were male, while in a traditional evangelistic campaign; I would expect 30 percent to be male and 70 percent female. The result were negligible, as only three men were baptized and this sample is not large enough to be conclusive, but it did result in a higher percentage of black males being baptized.

The Black Heritage Bible Lessons used in the seminar did highlight the fact that African culture did have an impact upon the Bible. I discussed that Moses was described as an Egyptian (Exod 2:19) which is a country on the Continent of Africa and the Apostle Paul was also mistaken for being from the same country (Acts 21:38), and these two men are responsible for nearly two thirds of the books of the Bible.

**Table 3. Comparison of Black Heritage seminar and traditional evangelism results**

	Black Heritage Seminar Results					Traditional Evangelism Results				
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Registered	19	63	11	37	30	9	30	21	70	30
Attendance	15	75	10	40	25	6	30	14	70	20
Graduated	11	73	4	27	15	5	30	11	70	15
Baptized	3	43	4	57	7	2	30	5	70	7

The constant request to do more seminars of this kind or preach black history subjects for those who were baptized suggests that if this approach is used, then this is one area which must be considered

The results of the seminar do suggest that black men are more attracted to religious events when culturally sensitive images are used. This was evidenced by the fact that more males than females signed up for and attended the seminar, which was way



above the norm. The discussions at the seminar also suggest that when placed in its proper perspective, black males also understand that the African slavery was an unfortunate experience, but others have experienced slavery and Africans were also involved in slavery, and they appear to forgive and move on, without making this a permanent handicap in their lives.

### Recommendations

Overall I am very satisfied with the results of this project, and feel it has sustained the premise that being culturally sensitive will in fact increase our effectiveness in winning black men. In looking back at the project there were some things I would have done differently and would recommend to anyone who is considering a project such as this one.

1. Survey the male spouses of the church members to see why they were not members of the church and target them.
2. Evaluate the reasons why some were not able to complete the project.
3. Evaluate the reason why no non-Christians registered for, or attended the seminar.
4. Evaluate the reason why the seminar attracted more males than females.
5. Survey the attendees to see what were the factors that resulted in so few men joining the church.
6. Try to get more men involved in the team, rather than women.
7. Do the seminar over a longer period of time to develop greater opportunities for mentoring and nurturing and include the thirteen recommendations of Gordon as described in chapter 3.

8. Survey those who joined the church to find out what led them to this decision.

### Final Thoughts

The completion of the project was the fulfillment of a life's goal and I am sorry my mother who died in June 2010, did not live to see this as it was very important to her. I hope this project will be useful to those who desire to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the members of the black community, and I am sure it has implications for reaching all races and culture. I do know that it has deepened my understanding of the African American male's experiences, and the forces that has shaped his life both historically and emotionally.

APPENDIX A

LESSONS

*The Black Heritage Bible Lessons*  
*Volume 1*

**“Teaching the History of the African Race directly  
from the Bible.”**

Stephen L. Williams, Sr.  
[www.sdahosting.com](http://www.sdahosting.com)  
Bridgeport CT 06606

The numbers in brackets at the end of each question represents pages in the Original African Heritage Bible where the passages can be found.

Cover design by Wanderlie DiSilva

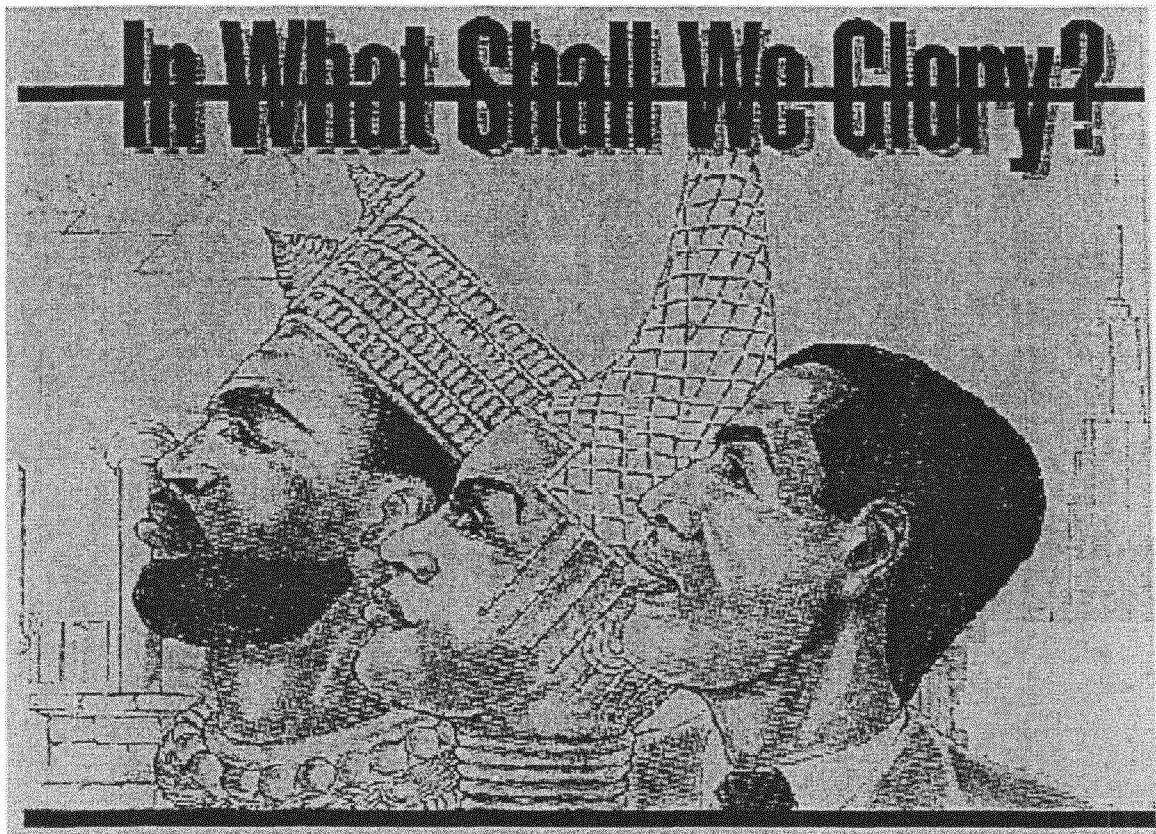
The Black Heritage Bible Lessons

“14 Powerful Lessons teaching the History of the African race directly from the Bible.”

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New Edition

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**International Standard Book Number: 1-59196-003-7**



From the dusty beds of Africa, comes a story more exciting than fiction. Civilizations long dead now speak with thunderous tones to this generation, saying in the words of Marcus Garvey: "Stand up, you mighty people, you can accomplish what you will." We ruled the world, built centers of learning, understood the stars, left our bones and our gold in hidden caves and decorated pyramids with drawings and writings that still tell of our accomplishments. We gloried in our golden empires, our wealth, and our fame. Things Europeans now claim as their own. Nevertheless, the sons of Africa create new history every day.

In their determination and ability to succeed against all odds our ancestors forged new paths across time, forcing some to wonder how in the world they did it. The massive pyramids of Meroe and Egypt send their voices ringing from the distant past, telling the story of ancient Africans who tried to defy death by building structures that defied time and embalming their bodies with ointments that defied aging. Men of color, Africans of the highest order, who sat in the seats of greatness, now lie beneath sand and massive stones, breath returned to the God who gave them life. Yet the ancient empires of

Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Ethiopia, Egypt, and the Ashanti nation bear evidence to this generation that here on the continent where civilizations originated lived a people who feared no one but God and whose greatness is now abated because they thought themselves gods.

Long before we were conceived, Yahweh had declared, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," but we would not heed (see Genesis 3:19). God sent us word through the prophet Jeremiah, who lived and died on the continent of Africa. His message: "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:23, 24, KJV)

God knew there would eventually be a point where Africans would acknowledge Him. "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God" (Psalm 68:31, KJV). Even Zephaniah, the prophet, saw them drawing closer to God: "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering" (Zephaniah 3:10, KJV). In fact, Ethiopia, called the land of the gods, became a center of Christianity, where churches flourished in magnificence and beauty. It was Cyriacus, king of kings, as he was called in Africa, who marched against Islamic-ruled Egypt with 100,000 soldiers and commanded that the Muslims refrain from destroying churches and persecuting Christians.

One who considers the American slave experience will soon discover that most slave rebellions took place around 1840, during a time of great religious awakening. It was as if Black Americans sensed that it was a time of judgment and that liberation was imminent. In fact, Leonne Bennett, in his book *Before the Mayflower*, states that during this time there were people on the plantation telling their slave masters that they would no longer work, because the Lord was coming soon. Slaves could not read the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, but a divine hand must have directed them in understanding that the time of liberation from slavery was at hand. Thus Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, and others took on the role of a modern day Moses who sought to free God's children. Even when the Emancipation Proclamation was made, it was only God who helped the ex-slaves.

Here they were liberated from slavery with no jobs, no homes, no money, and ex-slave masters roaming the streets looking to kill any Black person they could find. The slaves never for one moment imagined that the United States of America would set them free without some sort of remuneration— at least a piece of land to cultivate.

One thing is very clear. No people could have survived, through the historical events that took place, as the people originally from Africa have, unless a supernatural force had continuously been with them. There is no doubt God's divine providence ensured our forebears' survival.

In my mind's eye I see the Diaspora of African people not as they are, but as God would make them in heaven. I see them dressed in their royal robes, wearing crowns of glory, sitting on their braided hair. I see their kente cloth and dashikis blowing in the wind, as they follow Jesus from world to world. I see them in the great number which no man could number, drawn from every nation on earth. African mothers who cried at night over their children will cry no more. African fathers who died in the lynchings, riots, and slave rebellions will be remade by the Potter's hand. I see them working on the earth made new, again building their pyramids, not for the body of death, but a place of eternal life, a place from which their legacy will never be removed.

Therefore let not the Ethiopians glory in their knowledge.

Let not the Egyptians glory in their pyramids.

Let not the Ghanaian glory in their golden empire.

Let not the Ashanti nation glory in their mighty warriors.

Neither let the sons of Songhai glory in their great universities.

But let all Africans and their descendants' glory in this—that they know and understand Yahweh, that He is Lord, who exercises loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness. In this shall the sons of Africa glory.

Let us not turn our attention to fourteen powerful lessons designed to teach the history of the African Race directly from the Bible.

*Note: This article was first published in The Black History Special of Message Magazine, February 1997. Review and Herald Publishing Association, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740, USA.*

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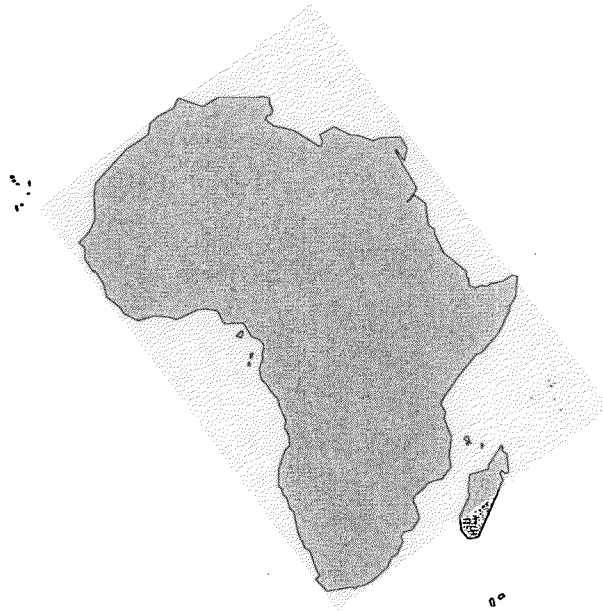


**Dedicated to my wife Cellierose, with love!!**

# LESSON 1

# AFRICA

**"Home of the Blacks"**



# THE BLACK HERITAGE BIBLE LESSONS

Africa is a continent stretching for some 12 million square miles, comprising 22 % of the world's land mass and 16% of the world's population. "It is a land of amazing contrast; arid desert, dense tropical forest, swamps and floating islands. It has vast stretches of savanna land, meadow lands, mountains ranges, great rivers, lakes as large as seas, elephant grass and even snow near the Equator, on the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro."<sup>1</sup> It was called by the Greeks "Ethiopia," which means 'Home of the Blacks,' and by the Arabs, "Billad of Sudan."

On the continent of Africa the oldest remains of civilization were found along with the evidence that these people knew not the meaning of failure. It is clear that whenever adversities came and powerful armies were introduced, unlike any other nation on earth the Africans showed a remarkable ability to pick up the pieces of their lives, and start another great kingdom in some other location. When Egypt fell, Nubia then Meroe became the center of black power. Then there was Ethiopia or Axum center of Christianity, this nation was called the "Land of the Gods"— here Christian churches flourished in magnificence and beauty. In the Empire of Ghana the Africans were traders with the world while Songhai specialized in scholarship. In Songhai it was reported that men made more money selling books than gold. It was in Songhai that the famous University of Timbuktu was organized with the greatest library in the world where men came from Greece, Europe, Arabia, Spain and Palestine to study at the feet of the great African scholars. If there is any continent that deserves attention, surely it is this great continent of Africa. Let us therefore examine some of the things the Bible has to say about this continent and its people.

---

<sup>1</sup>Margret Shinnie, *Ancient African Kingdoms* (New York, St. Martins Press), 1965.

**1. What two African countries are mentioned most often in the Bible? Genesis 2:13, & Psalm 105:23 [OT 2, 471]**

A.

---

*\* Ethiopia is known in the Bible as Cush —Egypt is known as Mizraim.*

**2. Who inhabited the countries of Egypt and Ethiopia? Genesis 10:6 [OT 7]**

A.

---

*\* The continent of Africa was inhabited by two sons of Ham called Mizraim and Cush. Mizraim is translated Egypt and Cush Ethiopia.*

**3. What does the Bible have to say about the Ethiopians? Jeremiah 46:9 [OT 596]**

A.

---

**4. Who came to the rescue of Hezekiah King of Israel, when the Assyrians besieged Jerusalem? Isaiah 37:9. [OT 538]**

A.

---

**5. Which prophet of Israel was born to an Ethiopian? Zephaniah 1:1 [OT 692]**

A.

---

*\* The word Cush is another name for an Ethiopian or people who were black. Cush was one of the sons of Ham.*

**6. Name two popular Africans who were leaders in Israel?  
Exodus 2:10, Numbers 27:18 [OT 45, OT 136]**

A.

---

B.

---

*\* The Nile is a river of the continent of Africa, and both Moses and Joshua were born to Israelite parents while Israel was enslaved in Egypt. Joshua was born of the tribe of Ephraim which was of African descent and Moses looked like an Egyptian (Exodus 2:15-19), which means both were black men.*

**7. Who did Moses marry? Numbers 12:1 [OT 121]**

A.

---

*\* Since the Bible also calls her a Midianites, it appears the black Midianites who lived in Horeb were also considered Ethiopians.*

**8. Who did Joseph marry? Genesis 41:45 [OT 35]**

A.

---

*\* Asenath was an indigenous African Egyptian who would later be the mother of two of the tribes of Israel.*

**9. What two tribes of Israel were of African descent? Genesis 41:50-52 [OT 36]**

A.

---

B.

---

**10. In what African country, did Jesus spend the early years of His life? Matthew 2:13 & 14 [NT 2]**

A.

---

**11. A queen of what country later sent her Eunuch to find out about Jesus? Acts 8:27 [NT 107]**

A.

---

**12. What would eventually happen to the Africans? Psalm 68:31 [OT 456]**

A.

---

**13. What is God's plan for the Africans along with others who remain faithful to Him? Isaiah 11:11 [OT 522]**

**A.**

---

*\* The word Cush is translated Ethiopia.*

**14. Is there any difference between the Jews and the Africans as far as God is concerned? Amos 9:7 [OT 680]**

**A.**

---

**15. What Does the Psalmist say about the Black nations of Babylon, Ethiopia, Egypt, Philistine and Tyre? Psalm 87:4-6 [OT 464]**

**A.**

---

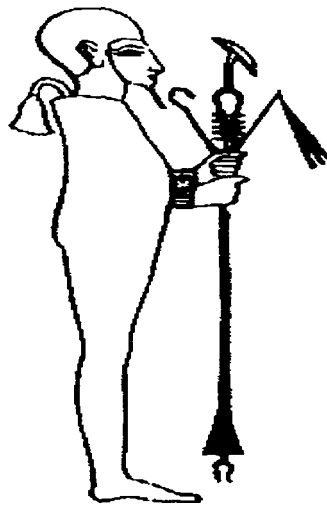
*\* The Nations of Babylon, Ethiopia and Egypt were started by the sons of Ham Nimrod, Cush and Mizraim while Philistia was begun by Ham's grandson. The Bible says they will be numbered among the people of God in Zion.*

**Is it your desire to be in the New Jerusalem with all the other sons and daughters of Ham?**

Yes  No

## ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 1.

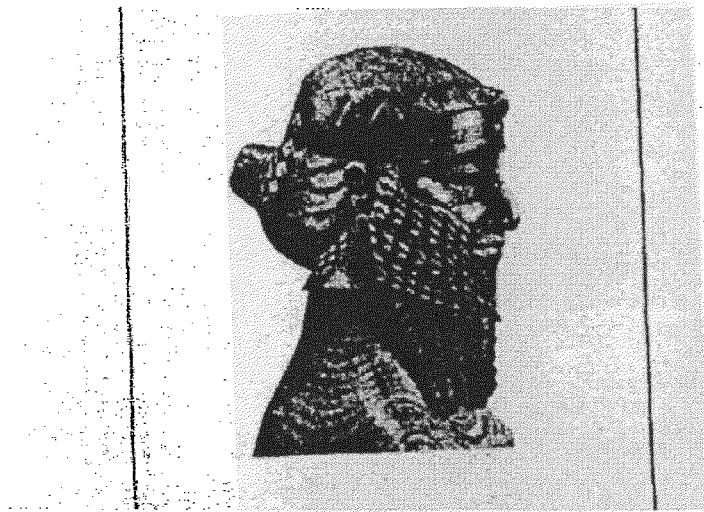
1. A. Ethiopia B. Egypt.
2. The Sons of Ham.
3. They were mighty men who captured Israel.
4. Tarhaka, King of Ethiopia.
5. Zephaniah.
6. A. Moses B. Joshua.
7. Ziporah the Ethiopian.
8. Asenath.
9. Ephraim and Manasseh.
10. Egypt.
11. Ethiopia.
12. They would turn to God.
13. To recover them from the Islands of the Sea.
14. Before God they were the same.
15. They will be in Zion as God's people.



## LESSON 2

# BABYLON

“The Gate of God”



## THE BLACK HERITAGE BIBLE LESSONS



His name was Nebuchadnezzar and his Kingdom was Babylonia. He was in the tradition of a long line of great Hametic king ruling over a proud and astute people for some 4000 years. His city was Babylon a term which means "The gate of God," the second black empire to rule the world, and maybe the greatest empire to ever exist.

Nimrod was responsible for the establishment of the nation of Babylon. This nation began before recorded history at the time of the Tower of Babel, when Nimrod, a grandson of Ham and a hunter of great strength and power, decided he would challenge God and build a tower that would reach into the heavens. God the Bible states on recognizing that Nimrod was about to accomplish his task, intervened and confounded the language of Nimrod and his subjects. No longer able to understand each other, the descendants of Noah were force to migrate into various people groups according to their languages. Thus began a multitude of nations and Nimrod's purpose was defeated.

Nebuchadnezzar ruled Babylon some 4000 years after Nimrod. It was his plan to set up a Kingdom that would be universal and include all the peoples' of the world. The inhabitants of his kingdom lived in solidly build villas of thirteen or fourteen rooms walked on broad well-paved streets, divided the day into twenty-four hours of sixty minutes and were even able to read and write along with having problems with their income tax returns.

For Nearly 2000 years, Babylon was the capital of an extensive Empire called Babylonia. The first documented King during the dynasty period was Sargon of Akkad, a most powerful potentate. "He like Nimrod and Nebuchadnezzar after Him, dreamt of an empire which would stretch form Anatolia to the Nile valley where there would be no national differences, only citizens with the same rules, the same status, the same rights, who would look submissively towards his glorious capital."

The first golden age of Babylon began under Hammurabi who was known in history as 'the law giver.' Hammurabi paid detailed attention to proper administration and patronized literary and scholarly pursuits. It was he that Nebuchadnezzar patterned when he came to the throne in 605 BC.

Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar was founder of the new Chaldean dynasty in Babylonia. It was this dynasty that restored black rule by defeating the Assyrians and destroying Nineveh establishing Babylon as 'Golden Capital of the World.'

Let us now examine what the Bible has to say about this great black metropolis, its origin and its king.

**1. Who was responsible for the beginning of the kingdom of Babel, later called Babylon or Babylonia? Genesis 10:8-10 [OT 7]**

A.

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**2. Whose Grandson was Nimrod? Genesis 10:6 & 8 [OT 7]**

A.

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*\* Ham is the father of the black race which means Nimrod was the first black empire builder*

**3. What impossible task did Nimrod and his people undertake? Genesis 11:4 [OT 8]**

A.

---

**4. What was the result of Nimrod's action? Genesis 11:5-8 [OT 8]**

A.

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**5. What other Babylonian King does the Bible speak about extensively? Daniel 1:1 [OT 653]**

A.

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**6. Of what did this black King dream? Daniel 2:1, 31-35 [OT 654]**

A.

---

**7. What was the meaning of His dream? Daniel 2:37-44 [OT 655]**

A.

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**8. Of what did this great Black King dream a second time? Daniel 4:10-16 [OT 657]**

A.

---

**9. Who does the tree represent? Daniel 4:20-22 [OT 657]**

A.

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**10. What was to happen to the tree? Daniel 4:23 [OT 657]**

A.

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**11. What does this mean? Daniel 4:24-25 [OT 658]**

A.

---

**12. What happened to Nebuchadnezzar? Daniel 4:29-33 [OT 658]**

A.

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**13. What was the end result of his insanity? Daniel 4:34-36 [OT 658]**

A.

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**14. What was the end result of Nebuchadnezzar's conversion? Daniel 4:36 [OT 658]**

A.

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**Is it your desire to accept God as Lord of your life as Nebuchadnezzar did?**

Yes  No

## ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 2.

1. Nimrod.
2. Ham's.
3. Build a city whose tower reached into the heavens.
4. God came down and confused their language.
5. Nebuchadnezzar.
6. He dreamed of an image of various metals which was destroyed by a stone.
7. There would be four world empires, then the divided nations of Europe followed by God's eternal Kingdom.
8. A tree rich with fruits that was later chopped down.
9. Nebuchadnezzar.
10. To be chopped down.
11. God would take Nebuchadnezzar's throne.
12. He became insane.
13. He was converted.
14. His reason and Kingdom was restored.

## **Where Is the African?**

*Where is the African you took from my shore?  
That ingenious fighter the world once adored?  
I hear he is endangered, sleeping in jail,  
Dying on the streets, by bullets assail.*

*Where is the African, you took form my shore?  
That proud Black man, the world once adored?  
Crack cocaine, he's into these days?  
Marijuana! Illegitimate babies? Not part of his race.*

*Where is the African you took from my shore?  
The proud strong Black man the world once adored?  
They say he is lazy, unable to learn,  
What is he eating? Where does he live?  
Who teaches his children?  
By whose law does he live?*

*Where is the African you took from my shore?  
That free Black youth the world once adored?  
I hear he's in prison, he worships Allah!!  
But Allah's people sold him, and destroyed his land!  
His forefathers died at the Muslims hand.*

*Where is the African you took from my shore?  
Where is the Black man the world once adored?  
Tell Him Jesus is gathering a remnant you see  
A remnant of Africa like you and like me  
He is gathering us all, from the lands of the sea!*

*Stephen L. Williams, 1992*

# LESSON 3

# “Hammurabi”

## “The Law Giver”



# THE BLACK HERITAGE BIBLE LESSONS

Hammurabi was the sixth king of the Amorite dynasty that ruled Babylonia between 1792 and 1750 BC. He came to the throne just after God called Abraham from Ur, a major black city of Babylon. While king, Hammurabi was responsible for the first golden years of Babylon. He conquered the ancient city of Sumer and spread the wings of Babylon from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

The kingdom Hammurabi established was one of extreme wealth. It boasted a highly sophisticated business world with extensive contract writing, rental agreements and partnerships. It also appears that these blacks were intent on worshipping their God, since every city was dominated by temples.

Babylonia appeared to be a scientific heaven. Its subjects' dissected rats to study their anatomy and divided the days into 24 hours of sixty minutes. It was the people of Babylonia, who first used multiples of sixties as their means of calculations, a concept that still is the foundation today of the measurement of inches as well as the 360 degrees that compose a circle. They were practicing geometry, mathematics and algebra, when the people of Europe were still trying to figure out how to hunt.

Hammurabi was a genius politician and a tremendous military leader who loved scholarship and literature. His greatest legacy was a set of laws discovered by archeologist in 1901. These laws were found carved on a column at Susa in the palace of the Assyrians. The Assyrians held Babylon as a vassal state until Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar freed his people. Hammurabi is represented in the column as having received his law directly from heaven just as Moses did on the mount. The code was kept in public view so that it was not the secret of the ruler, but available to everyone. Even the King himself was subject to the laws.

The code of Hammurabi deals with such topics as family, labor, personal property, real estate, trade and business.

The laws protected the weak from the strong, required all men who divorced their wives to pay alimony and granted divorce to women on the grounds of abuse, neglect and desertion. It is interesting that the law also regarded adultery, bigamy, theft, cowardice, lying, incest and kidnapping as capital crimes.

Let us now take the time to investigate the Amorites, and another law later given to Moses after the Hebrew people were freed from their African enslavement.

**1. Who were the Amorites? Genesis 10:15-16 [OT 8]**

A.

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*\* Canaan was the black son of Ham who was cursed by the drunken Noah. (This curse has been used by many to say the entire black race was cursed Genesis 9:20-27.) The Amorites therefore were black race.*

**2. What did the prophet Amos have to say about them? Amos 2:9 [OT 677]**

A.

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**3. What was to become of the Amorite's land? Deuteronomy 1:20, Amos 2:10 [OT 146, 677]**

A.

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*\* This included Salem that later came to be called Jerusalem. The Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem were black people, and so was the High Priest that collected tithe from Abraham.*

**4. What else did God give to Israel? Exodus 31:182 [OT 72]**

A.

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**5. Summarize what these commandments say? Deuteronomy 5:4-22 [OT 150]**

1.

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2.

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3.

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4.

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5.

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6.

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7.

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8.

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9.

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10.

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**6. Why were the Amorites to be destroyed? Deuteronomy 20:17-18 [OT 167]**

A.

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**7. What is Sin? 1 John 3:4 [NT 202]**

A.

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**8. What are the wages of Sin? Romans 6:23 [NT 132]**

A.

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**9. What is man's duty? Ecclesiastes 12:13 [OT 511]**

A.

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**10. What did Christ say one had to do to have life? Matthew 19:17 [NT 18]**

A.

---

**11. What is said of those who claim to know God but does not keep his law? 1 John 2:4 [NT 202]**

A.

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**12. What became of the Amorites? Ezra 9:1-2 [OT 389]**

A.

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**13. Who was one of the most famous Amorite's? Genesis 14:18 [OT 10]**

A.

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*\* Salem was an Amorite city ruled by an Amorite Priest King. The Jebusites who lived there were never evacuated but lived there and were assimilated into the Jewish race. This just continued the amalgamation of Blacks and Jews that continued for centuries.*

**14. What was his title and Responsibility? Hebrews 7:1 [NT 187]**

A.

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**15. Who did this black Priest King represent? Hebrews 6:20 [NT 187]**

A.

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**16. What is Christ now doing for us? Hebrews 7:25 [NT 187]**

A.

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*\* To make intercession means to plead on one's behalf. Christ is before His father ever asking forgiveness of our sins in an attempt to bring us into right relationship with God.*

**17. Why is Christ pleading for forgiveness for us? Romans 3:23 [NT 130]**

A.

---

**Would you like to ask God to forgive you of your sins and teach you to keep His ten commandments?**

Yes  No

**ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 3.**

1. Descendants of Canaan.
2. They were Giants.
3. It was given to Israel.
4. His Ten Commandments law.
5. 1. Have no other gods. 2. Make no graven Image 3. Don't take the Lords name in vain. 4. Keep the Sabbath. 5. Honor thy father and mother. 6. Thou shall not kill. 7. No Adultery 8. No stealing. 9. No lying. 10. Don't covet.
6. Their sins of abominations.
7. The transgression of Gods law.
8. Death.
9. Keep his commandments.
10. Keep his commandments.
11. They are liars.
12. They intermarried with the Jews.
13. Melchizedek.
14. Priest King.
15. Christ.
16. Making intercession.
17. Because all have sinned.

# LESSON 4

## CANAAN

"Land of Promise"



## THE BLACK HERITAGE BIBLE LESSONS

Canaan was a son of Ham whose descendants came to be known as Canaanites, one of their most famous nations being the descendants of Sidon, known in history as Phoenicians.

“The Phoenicians called themselves Canaanites, even when Alexander took Tyre. They were the first people to develop an alphabet with letters from A to Z, which the Greeks called Phoinikia grammar.”

Sidon was the first Son of Canaan and grandson of Ham. He was responsible for the formation of the first city of Phoenicia called Zidon. His descendants later ruled the coastline of Palestine and started many colonies, which included Carthage, Tyre and Tarsus, home of the Apostle Paul.

The Phoenicians were master seamen. They lived on the coast and the world was their trading partners. They traveled the world in their ships and carried on trade with all the peoples of the world. These black men came and went bringing with them the greatest of the world goods. All over the countries of the Mediterranean one could find their vessels carrying flasks, glass beads and glazed tiles.

They were ingenious traders and top notch Engineers. Having very little to trade, they made the most of what they had, going as far as developing goods from the natural resources they found around them. One of their greatest achievements was sand. Realizing sand contained quartz, they develop the making of glass, a secret many believed they stole from their brothers in Egypt. The Phoenicians also used the small warm water snail found on their beaches to produce purple dye, for which they became famous. They were a tiny people, yet were able to developed storehouses and hideaways that had more bounty than many kings could acquire in their lifetime. Even their powerful black brothers who ruled Egypt and Babylonia, could only dream of achieving some of the feats of thePhoenicians.

The Phoenicians are believed to have visited America long before Columbus. They mastered the art of shipbuilding, sailing and the development of astronomy. With the help of Pharaoh and their black brothers in Egypt, they even built the first Suez Canal.

When David decided to build the temple of Yahweh, it was to the Phoenicians that he turned. They supplied the lumber, workmen and other expertise needed to finish Solomon’s magnificent structure. Solomon, David’s black son was later to invest jointly with the Phoenicians in silver mining. This venture some prophets of Israel resented, because the Phoenicians would at times encourage the

breaking of the Sabbath for financial gain. A fascinating people, the Bible speaks extensively about them, let us discover some of these truths as we study the topic: "Canaan, land of promise."

**1. Who was Canaan? Genesis 9:18, 10:6 [OT 7]**

A.

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*\* Ham is the father of the black race, which means the Canaanites were black.*

**2. Who were his first four descendants? Genesis 10:15 & 16 [OT 8]**

A.

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B.

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C.

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D.

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*\* Sidon — Zidonians or Phoenicians. Zidon was an extremely powerful state at the time of the conquest of Canaan by the Hebrews. The Phoenicians were then calling themselves Zidonians even when they were citizens of neighboring counties. The people of Carthage including "Hannibal the Great" were descendants of the Phoenicians.*

*Heth — Hittites*

*Jebusites - People of built the original city of Jerusalem.*

*Amorites - Ruled from the border of Egypt to Babylonia, the most famous Amorites being Hammurabi a contemporary of Abraham who wrote the laws of Hammurabi.*

**3. What was the name of the area in which the descendants of Canaan lived? Genesis 11:31 [OT 9]**

A.

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*\* The Phoenicians called themselves Canaanites even up to the time of Alexander the Great.*

**4. What was to happen to the land of Canaan? Psalms 105:11. B. Genesis 17:8 [OT 471, 12]**

A.

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B.

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**5. Later when the Israelites moved into the land, what was it called? A. I Samuel 13:19. B. Genesis 40:15 [OT 532, 34]**

A.

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B.

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**6. What became of the Canaanites when Israel came to the land? Ezra 9:2, Joshua 17:12-18 [OT 389, 190]**

A.

---

**7. What was the name of the Canaanite daughter-in-law of Judah through whom Jesus the Messiah would come? 1 Chronicles 2:4.**

A.

---

**8. What was to happen to the Canaanites? Genesis 9:25-27 [OT 7]**

A.

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*\* Note that only Canaan was cursed by his drunken Grandfather, not Ham and his descendants as is commonly taught by ignorant scholars today. This is reported to be the reason God eventually took their land and gave it to the Israelites, who were later overrun by the white nations of Medes, Greece and eventually Rome.*

**9. When was this prophecy fulfilled? Joshua 9:23 & 24 [OT 184]**

A.

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**10. What does the Bible have to say about the descendants of Zidon? Isaiah 23:8 [OT 529]**

A.

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*\* Tyre was a Phoenician city.*

**11. What does the Bible have to say about the extent of Tyre's wealth? Zechariah 9:3 [OT 529]**

A.

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**12. How did Jesus refer to the black woman who came to Him requesting to have her daughter healed? Matthew 15:21-24 [NT 14]**

A.

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**13. Did the blacks of Tyre also become disciples of Jesus?**

**Acts 21:3 & 4 [NT 120]**

**A.**

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**14. How did the black people of Canaan relate to Jesus? Mark 3:8-10**

**[NT 31]**

**A.**

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**Is it your desire to come to Jesus, as the black Canaanites did thus allowing Him to heal your sins?**

**YES    NO**

#### **ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 4**

1. A son of Ham
2. Sidon - Phoenicians. B. Heth - Hittites. C. Jebusites - Original inhabitants of Jerusalem. D. Amorites.
3. Land of Canaan
4. Given to Abraham and his descendants.
5. Land of Israel. B. Land of the Hebrews.
6. They mingled with Israel.
7. Tamar.
8. They would serve the Shemites.
9. At the time of Joshua's entry into the Promised Land.
10. Her merchants are Princes, her traffickers are honorable.
11. She heaped up silver like dust.
12. As the lost sheep of Israel.
13. Yes.
14. They came to see Him and were healed.

# LESSON 5

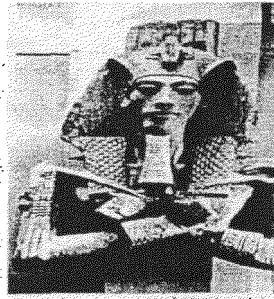
## EGYPT

(THE BLACK LAND)

&

## ETHIOPIA

(LAND OF THE BURNT FACE)



*Akhenaten Pharaoh of Egypt 1360 BC*

# THE BLACK HERITAGE BIBLE LESSONS



Egypt, today called "The Arab Republic of Egypt" was once the glory of the African people. She is the first daughter of Africa and a living tribute to the ability of Africans to build a lasting empire that could withstand the onslaught of time and armies.

Egypt is a country which occupies the northeastern corner of Africa. It is actually a part of the Sahara desert which gets its fertility from the Nile River that carries the wealth of Africa from the highlands of Ethiopia to the Fertile Crescent, called Egypt. Cairo, Egypt's capital is the largest city in Africa and when Islam came to Africa in the 7th Century; Egypt was one of the African Nations it completely engulfed.

In recent times the Europeans have been trying to claim Egypt as their own. Many refuse to acknowledge that the African people built the first and greatest civilizations and were responsible for the spread of knowledge including Medicine, Astronomy, Mathematics, Geometry and Writing. In Biblical times however, Egypt was considered as Ethiopian territory and her people Ethiopians.

"The Ancient inhabitants of this African land called the country Khem, or Kam, which literally means "the black land" and they call themselves Khemi or Kamites, or Hamites, meaning the black people. Melanin test has been done of Egyptian mummies which have proven beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Egyptians were black."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore the early historian Herodotus describes the Egyptian as dark with woolly hair.

It was the great King Menes who first united what was known as upper and Lower Egypt under one Government. During one of the longest reigns in history, Menes brought stability to Egypt and set the ground work for Egypt to spread its wings and become one of the greatest and most enduring Empires to ever exist in the history of the world. It was this black king that was to later give Egypt its name when the Greek called the city Memphis after him.

The black nations of Egypt and Ethiopia are spoken of extensively in the Bible and this lesson was designed to reveal to the reader some important information concerning these two great black empires.

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<sup>2</sup>Dwight McKissi, *Beyond Roots, The search for Blacks in the Bible* (Wenonah, NJ: Renaissance Productions, 1974), 21.

**1. What are the names of the three sons of Noah? Genesis 10:1 [OT 7]**

A.

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B.

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C.

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*\* Shem is regarded as the father of the Asiatic Race, Japheth of the White race and Ham of the Black race. Prior to the flood the evidence indicates that all men were Negroes coming from the Garden of Eden through Adam, the first African.*

**2. What were the Names of Ham's Sons? Genesis 10:6 [OT 7]**

A.

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B.

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C.

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D.

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*\* The following races resulted from Hams four Sons.  
Cushites - Ethiopians - Phut-Arabian Cushites, who later moved to Africa. Mizraim — Egyptians. Canaan — Canaanites, people who settled Palestine*

**3. What does the Bible have to say about Egypt? A. Psalms 105:23, 106:22. B. Matthew 2:13-14. C. Isaiah 19:19-20, Psalms 68:31 [OT 471, NT 3, OT 527, 456]**

A.

---

B.

---

C.

---

**4. What prominent disciple looked like an Egyptian? Acts 21:37 & 38 [NT 121]**

A.

---

*\* Paul appears to have been a black man. He was mistaken for an Egyptian and his hometown of Tarsus was started by the black Phoenician. When one couples this with the fact the Jews were surprised Paul spoke Hebrew, (Acts 22:2) we must assume he could not be differentiated from an Egyptian African.*

**5. What other prominent Israelite looked like an Egyptian? Exodus 21:15-19 [OT 45]**

A.

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*\* Moses also was a black man.*

**6. When were the Egyptians allowed all the privilege of an Israelite and considered part of the congregation of Israel? Deuteronomy 23:7&8 [OT 165]**

A.

---

**7. What other black empire does the Bible speak of extensively? Acts 8:27, Isaiah 45:14 [NT 107 OT 544]**

A.

---

**8. Who was responsible for saving the Prophet Jeremiah's life? Jeremiah 38:7-10 [OT 591]**

A.

---

**9. What experience would the Ethiopians encounter? Ezekiel 30:9, Zephaniah 2:12 [OT 635, 693]**

A.

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B.

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*\* This text appears to address the system of slavery that blacks of Africa would encounter. It shows messengers coming in ships to make the Ethiopians afraid, and slaying many by the sword. It is noteworthy that Ethiopia itself was never occupied by a colonial nation. The Ethiopians were such tremendous warriors, that men were beginning to trust themselves rather than God, therefore God used them as his tools of evangelism by uprooting them and sending them to various nations to act as evangelist.*

**10. Why were they taken from their homeland? Isaiah 66:19 [OT 557]**

A.

---

*\* They that draw the bow is euphony for Ethiopia.*

**11. Who are the Gentiles? Genesis 10:2-5**

A.

---

*\* Japheth was the Son of Noah who was the father of the Europeans. The word Gentile later came to refer to all who were not Jews but originally referred to Whites, or descendants of Japheth.*

**12. Who was responsible for destruction of the Ethiopians? Isaiah 43:3 [OT 542]**

A.

---

**13. Why did God give Egypt and Ethiopia for Israel? Ezekiel 30:8 [OT 635]**

A.

---

**14. What does the Bible have to say concerning the protection offered to No by both Ethiopia and Egypt? Nahum 3:8 & 9 [OT 689]**

A.

---

*\* This text indicates just how mighty a military machine both Egypt and Ethiopia were. The Bible calls their military protection infinite.*

**15. Who offers the greatest protection for us today? Isaiah 41:10-13 [541]**

A.

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**16. How can we receive Divine protection? Acts 2:21 [NT 100]**

A.

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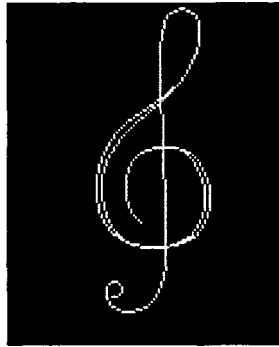
**Is it your desire to call on God's name and allow Him to be your protector?**

Yes  No

## ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 5

1. A. Shem B. Ham C. Japheth
2. A. Cush B. Mizraim C. Phut D. Canaan
3. A. Land of Ham B. Home of Jesus C. Accept God
4. Paul the Apostle.
5. Moses
6. After 3 generations.
7. Ethiopia.
8. An Ethiopian Ebed-Melech.
9. Taken from their homeland in ships.  
    B. They would be slain by the sword.
10. To evangelize the Gentiles.
11. The Sons of Japheth or Whites.
12. The Lord Jehovah
13. So all would know that Jehovah is God.
14. It was infinite.
15. The Lord.
16. Calling on His name.

LESSON 6  
**BLACK  
MUSIC**



THE BLACK  
HERITAGE BIBLE  
LESSONS

Israel had been Yahweh's people for nearly 2000 years. When He took them from the continent of Africa, He was calling them from the greatest Empire that existed, and He promised He would make them an even greater nation.

He led them in fire by night and clouds by day. He fed them manna from heaven and water from a rock. He overthrew cities without ramparts, took armies without weapons and terrified nations without instruments of war.

He spoke with thunder upon the mountain-side and gave them His commandments written with His own finger. He taught them what to eat, how to live, and what to wear. Then He made it clear that He did not do it because He was partial, neither was it done, because they were special, but they were the smallest of Nations, and He Yahweh God by His power, would make them the greatest of Nations.

He gave them peace from their enemies, and some of the greatest rulers to ever rule any nation. Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Samson, Gideon, Samuel, Caleb, were men whose names struck fear in the hearts of the surrounding people.

Then one day He commanded them to build Him a house. "Let them build me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them," He said. It was to be a place of worship, a place where He would meet with them. It was to be a synagogue of happiness and joy, where people came to bring their gifts in thankfulness to Yahweh for His goodness to them. The sanctuary was an armory for weapons of war, a coronation center for inauguration of the kings, and a refuge for the hunted and disenfranchised.

When the building was completed, Yahweh God came down in all His glory to show His approval of their service. He did not visit when the church was quiet and holy, He did not interrupt when the people were on their faces in worship. God condescended when the singer's sang with all their might and a hundred and twenty trumpets roared their boisterous music. The massive choir filled the place with their

Melody as cymbals, psalteries and harp joined in to lift one harmonious chorus.

Some would have us believe that to God such a scene would be inappropriate worship. Black people have been worshiping God

in this manner however for thousands of years. Let us therefore search the scriptures to get God's final word as we study the topic of "Black Music."

**1. What did God command the people to do? Exodus 25:8. [OT 65]**

A.

---

**2. What was David's desire? 1 Chronicles 22:7? [OT 345]**

A.

---

**3. Who eventually built the temple? 1 Chronicles 22:9 & 10, Acts 7:47. [OT 345, NT 106]**

A.

---

**4. What request did Solomon make of the Black King of Tyre? 2 Chronicles 2:3 & 7 [OT 353]**

A.

---

*\* The people of Tyre were descendants of Ham through Canaan. They were known as Phoenicians. Ham is regarded as the father of the African Race.*

**5. What was brought to the temple when it was completed? 2 Chronicles 5:5 [OT 355]**

A.

---

*\* The Ark was a sign of God's presence.*

**6. What was done in the presence of the Ark? 1 Chronicles 13:8. [OT 339]**

A.

---

**7. What did The Priest's do in the temple? 2 Chronicles 5:13. [OT 355]**

A.

---

**8. What were the responsibilities of some of the Levites? 1 Chronicles 16:4-6. [OT 341]**

A.

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*\* This was a paid musical staff as the Levites were paid from the tithe. Music was considered as a ministry.*



**9. How did God respond to the music? 2 Chronicles 5:13 & 14 [OT 355]**

A.

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**10. What other instruments of music were used in the temple? Psalm 150:3-5. [OT 487]**

A.

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B.

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C.

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D.

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E.

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F.

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G.

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**11. What about clapping of the hands, was this allowed in the temple? 2 Kings 11:12 Psalm 47:1 & 2. [OT 312, 449]**

A.

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**12. How are we commanded to come before the Lord? Psalm 95:1 & 2, Psalm 100:1-4 [OT 467, 469]**

A.

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**13. Why should we sing before God? Psalm 47:7 [OT 312]**

A.

---

**14. Why did Moses and his people sing songs before the Lord? Exodus 14:31 & 15:1. [OT 57]**

A.

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**Would you also like Moses and his people commit yourself to praising God for His great acts on your behalf?**

Yes  No

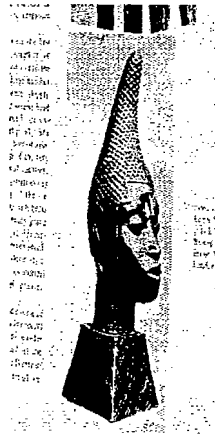
## ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 6

1. Build Him a Sanctuary.
2. Build God a house.
3. Solomon.
4. To send him a specialist in gold and purple.
5. The Ark of the Covenant.
6. Sang and played instruments.
7. Made one sound with trumpet, cymbals and singers.
8. To Minister before the Lord.
9. God came down and filled the house.
10. A. Trumpet. B. Psaltery. C. Harp. D. Timbrel. E. String instruments F. Organs. G. Cymbals.
11. Yes.
12. Making a joyful noise with thanksgiving and praise.
13. Because He is King of all the earth.
14. Because of His great work.

Δυρινγ της χεντυριεσ ωην της χηυρχη ωασ το τυρν φ  
ρομ της τρυε Σαββατη το Συνδαψ κεεπινγ, της Ετηιοπ  
ιανσ ορ Χυσηιτεσ ασ τηψ χαλλεδ τηεμσελπεσ, χομμ  
ιτεδ τηειρ ωαψ□σ το Γοδ, ανδ υπηελδ της ναμε οφ Ηι  
σ σον ανδ Ηις Σαββατη. Ηερε σπρυγγ α τρυε βρεεδ ο  
φ Χηριστιανιτψ πρεαχηεδ βψ Χηριστ ιν της φιρστ Χεν  
τυρψ.

LESSON 7  
**SABBATH**

**"Sign of Liberation"**



THE BLACK  
HERITAGE BIBLE  
LESSONS

In the early years of Christianity Africa flourished as a Christian center. Ethiopia converted to Judaism since the time of Solomon were among the first to accept Christianity. Some claim the first leader of an African nation to be won to Christ took place in the fourth century with the conversion of Ezna, king of Ethiopia. The people of Africa were Christians for centuries before however, and were in close contact with their Lord and Master.—When the world itself followed Catholicism and the Crusades and Holy wars raged, there was one nation quietly serving God in seclusion, — Cut off by Moslems invaders and fighting for survival the “Land of the Cushites” vigilantly upheld the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*‘The History of the church in Ethiopia and Abyssinia is especially significant. Amid the Gloom of the dark ages, The Christians of Central Africa were lost sight of and forgotten by the world, and for many centuries they enjoyed freedom in the exercise of their faith. But at last Rome learned of their existence and the Emperor of Abyssinia was soon beguiled into an acknowledgment of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ. Other concessions followed. An edict was issued forbidding the observance of the Sabbath under the severest penalty, and Papal tyranny soon became a yoke so galling that the Abyssinians determined to break it from their necks.*

*After a terrible struggle the Romanists were banished from their dominions, and the ancient faith was restored. The churches rejoiced in their freedom, and they never forgot the lesson they had learned concerning the deception, fanaticism and despotic power of Rome. The churches of Africa held the Sabbath as it was held by the church before her complete apostasy.”<sup>1</sup>*

During the centuries when the church was to turn from the true Sabbath to Sunday keeping, the Ethiopians or Cushites as they called themselves, committed their way’s to God, and upheld the name of His son and His Sabbath. Here sprung a true breed of Christianity preached by Christ in the first Century before Colonialism or Catholicism. Islam would have us believe that the Muslim faith is

the natural religion of the Sons of Ham. This is far from the truth. Consider the following facts: Rome accepted Christianity in 322 AD with the conversion of Constantine, Christianity entered England in 597 AD, Germany in 476 AD when Rome fell to the Barbarians and Russia in 956 AD, when Vladimir the Grand Prince of Kiev accepted Christ.

On the other hand, Philip baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch in AD 30-40 when Amanateree Queen of Ethiopia, sent him to ascertain the truth concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Simon of Cyrene was in Jerusalem at the crucifixion in AD 31 and was responsible for helping Jesus carry the cross to Golgotha and his sons became strong leaders in the Jerusalem church.

Blacks therefore were among the first converts to Christianity and at one time were its major defenders. It was Ethiopia that stopped the Muslims from completely engulfing the world, and the time has come for the "Sons of Ethiopia" to return to the keeping of God's true Sabbath.

**1. Where was the Garden of Eden? Genesis 2:10-13. [OT 2]**

A.

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*\* Havilah was a Son of Cush. Gen. 10:7. Both the Jewish Historian Josephus and the 11th Century Bible commentator Rashi agree that Gihon River that departed from Eden was the Nile in Africa.*

**2. Where and when did God create the Sabbath day? Genesis 2:1 & 2. [OT 2]**

A.

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*\* Sabbath keeping began before sin on the continent of Africa and later spread to the rest of the world. Thus the people of African descent should be Sabbath keepers. Sunday keeping is a European institution and*

**3. Which day is the Sabbath? Exodus 20:10, Gen. 2:2-3. [OT 61]**

A.

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**4. Which day comes immediately after the Sabbath? Matthew 28:1. [NT 28]**

A.

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**5. On what grounds were the Hebrews commanded to keep the Sabbath? Deuteronomy 5:15. [OT 151]**

A.

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*While slaves the Hebrews could not keep God's Sabbath, but now freed, they are commanded to keep it as a sign of liberation from slavery. The people of African descent also freed from slavery should keep God's Sabbath for the same reason.*

**6. When the earth is recreated, will man continue to keep the Sabbath? Isaiah 66:22 & 23. [OT 557]**

A.

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*\* The Sabbath is eternal and will be kept in the earth made new. It existed before sin and will continue when sin and sinners are eradicated.*

**7. What day did Jesus go to Church? Luke 4:16. [NT 51]**

A.

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**8. What day did Jesus say He was Lord of? Matthew 12:8. [NT 10]**

A.

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**9. What day did the Apostle's go to Church? Acts 13:14, 15 & 42. Acts 17:1 & 2. [NT 112]**

A.

---

**10. How does the Bible say we should honor Christ's death burial and resurrection? 1 Corinthians 11:24-26.**

A.

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*\* Today millions of Christians claim to go to church on Sunday to celebrate Christ resurrection while nowhere in scripture is such a thing encouraged.*

**11. What did Paul say would happen before Jesus returns? 2 Thessalonians 2:3.**

A.

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**12. What does this man of sin do? 2 Thessalonians 2:4.**

A.

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**13. What else does this man of sin do? Daniel 7:25.**

A.

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B.

---

C.

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*This institution takes on God himself by persecuting Christians and thinking to change God's ten commandment laws in particular the 2nd and fourth commandments.*

**14. Out of What Empire would this Man of Sin arise? Daniel 7: 23 & 24.**

A.

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*The four world empires were 1. Babylon, 2. Medes and Persians. 3. Greece 4. Rome. Out of Rome came the 10 nations of Europe and the Papal institution that subdued three nations and was different from all other powers. He was different because he claimed ecclesiastical powers while the others were political. The Catholics boast: "We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." 2*

**15. What Does God caution us to do? Exodus 20:8**

A.

---

*Catholicism is responsible for the world rejecting God's Sabbath for a man made institution.*

**16. Why are we to remember the Sabbath? Exodus 31:13.**

A.

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**Is it your desire to begin observing God's Holy Seventh Day Sabbath?**

Yes  No

## ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 7

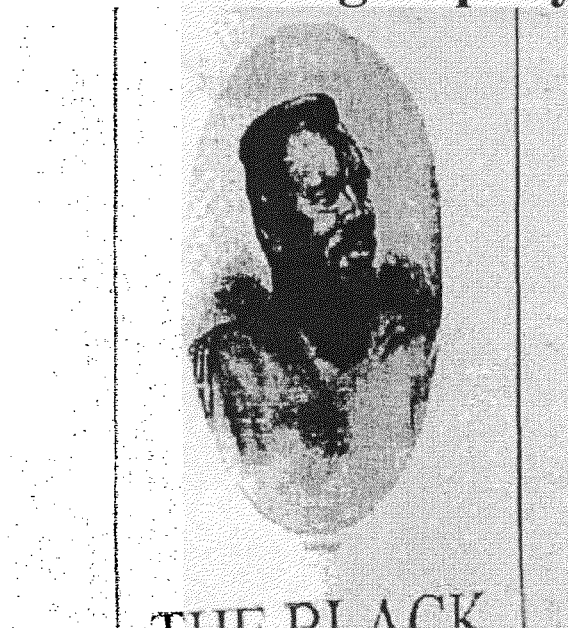
1. On the Continent of Africa.
2. In the Garden of Eden.
3. 7th Day.
4. The first day of the week.
5. On the grounds God liberated them from slavery.
6. Yes.
7. The Sabbath Day.
8. The Sabbath Day.
9. The Sabbath Day.
10. By celebrating the Holy Communion.
11. Falling away and revelation of the man of sin.
12. He shows himself to be God.
13. A. Speak great words against God. B. Wear out God's saints.  
C. Think to change time and Laws.
14. The white empire of Rome.
15. Remember the Sabbath Day.
16. As a sign of sanctification.



## LESSON 8

# Simon of Cyrene

"The answering of prayer"



## THE BLACK HERITAGE BIBLE LESSONS

He too was black, this Simon. He lived on the Continent of Africa, his country Cyrene laid on the border of Egypt. For many years his people were traveling to Israel to worship at the temple of Yahweh. He knew about the power of Yahweh to heal the sick and raise the dead, he knew about Yahweh's power to part the sea and cause bread to fall from heaven. Simon knew well the story of the black brothers of Egypt whose bodies washed upon the shores of the red sea because they refused to allow Yahweh's people to go free.

The word all over his country was "the Messiah has come," so Simon packed his bags, gathered his two sons Alexander and Rufus, then traveled to Jerusalem on the day of the Passover to discover the truth of the rumor. It was something black men and women were doing for at least three hundred years since Alexander the Great had displaced the Jews on his march to Egypt, forcing many to settle on the Continent of Africa and mixing with the indigenous black population converting many to Judaism. Furthermore the lost tribes of Israel who chose to remain when the others left in the Exodus were also traveling to Jerusalem on the Holy Days.

It was a strange and faithful morning when Simon started on his journey. Here he was a devout Jew from Africa crossing the Red Sea to worship the God of his fathers in Jerusalem. Finding the city full to overflowing, he found some lodging in a neighboring village. In the morning he was on his way to the temple, his heart beating with holy hope, the dream of a lifetime within his grasp. He would appear before God in Zion, there in the courts of the Lord's house he would feel the Divine presence and taste the joy of salvation.

As he entered the gate of Jerusalem, Simon's pious dream was rudely broken as he found his way suddenly barred by a rabble on their way to a place of execution. Before them walked three criminals and numbered among them was Jesus the Son of God. Upon His back he bore a heavy cross and upon his head Simon observed a crown of thorns. Jesus was exhausted; the beatings he had received drained him of every ounce of energy. As He approached Simon it was evident to the callous Roman Soldiers that He could not go much further. They had a problem. A Jew would not touch the cross this sign of Roman despotism, to force a Jew from Jerusalem to carry the cross was to incite rebellion since blood flowed freely in these very streets for less. Quickly the soldiers sought a solution to their problem. They looked around for someone who was not from Jerusalem and they saw him, his black skin and tall stately figure

distinguishing him from the crowd. 'You,' they bellowed to Simon, 'carry the cross.'

No doubt he tried to resist, but he could not get away. The soldier reached for his sword and Simon was quick to obey. Blood dripped from Jesus' body down his thorn crossed brow as they walk the street together, African and Jew, Simon's strong muscle flexing under the weight of the cross as the blood of Jesus, flowed freely from the cross and unto his shoulder.

On they walked together as the God of heaven reached over to lean on Simon as His tired body stumbled under the pressure His human body unable to take the strain of exhaustion. Simon came to Jerusalem to be rescued from his sins but now he finds himself rescuing Jesus, the Savior of his sins from the weight of the Cross.

Together they walked on to Calvary, the strong and the weak, the weak and the strong, the creator and the created, God and man. Together they walked on to Calvary an African and Christ. Others watched and laughed, some cried and wailed, His disciples lost in the background, but this black man exhibits no shame in carrying a cross of shame, as if he is aware that the cross he carried did not belong to Jesus but Mankind. All people Black, White, rich; poor, free and bond were to be recipients of this cross. Let us therefore investigate the importance of the cross for our people and the world.

**1. Who was forced to bear Christ's cross? Matthew 27:32. [NT 27]**

A. \_\_\_\_\_

**2. What were the names of Simon's two sons? Mark 15:21 [NT 45]**

A. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. For what reason was Christ crucified? Isaiah. 53:4 & 5. [OT 549]**

A. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Why did Christ need to die for man? 1 Corinthians 15:22. [NT 149]**

A. \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Who was responsible for Adam's deception? Genesis 3:3-6. [OT 2]**

A. \_\_\_\_\_

**6. What was God's response to Adam's fall? John 3:16. [NT 79]**

A.

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**7. Why was it necessary for Christ to die? Romans 6:23. [NT 132]**

A.

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**8. What did Christ's death actually do for us? Romans 3:25. [NT 131]**

A.

---

**9. How did Christ death remit my sins? Romans 5:6-8. [NT 131]**

A.

---

*\* Christ's death indicates we no longer have to die should we accept His death.*

**10. How do we accept Christ death? Acts 16:31; Matthew 4:17; Romans. 10:9. [NT 115, 3, 135]**

A.

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B.

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C.

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**11. What does God do for the saved? Acts 2:47. [NT 101]**

A.

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**12. What is the Church called and who is its head? Colossians 1:18. [NT 170]**

A.

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B.

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**13. How many true Church bodies does God have? Ephesians 4:4 [NT 164]**

A.

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**14. What are the identifying Marks of God's true Church? Revelation 14:12 [NT 215]**

A.

---

**Is it your desire like Simon and his sons to accept Jesus and become a part of his true church?**

Yes  No

### **ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 8.**

1. Simon of Cyrene
2. Alexander & Rufus.
3. Our Transgression.
4. Because of Adam's sin.
5. Satan.
6. He sent His Son to die for man.
7. Because the wages of Sin is death.
8. Remit our sins.
9. Christ died for me personally.
10. A. Believe. B. Repent. C. Confess.
11. God adds them to His Church.
12. A body. B. Christ
13. Just one.
14. It Keeps the Commandments of God, and faith of Jesus.

# LESSON 9

## **The Ethiopian Eunuch**



### THE BLACK HERITAGE BIBLE LESSONS

Ethiopia is an African Nation never colonized by the Europeans. In Biblical times it was called Nubia, its people were called Negroes and its Bible name was Cush, a name derived from Ham's first son. Like the Libyans and Egyptians who lived on the continent of Africa, the Ethiopians were Black people. "Their nation included not only that area beginning below the first Nile Cataract at Aswan, but also western Arabia bordering on the red sea."<sup>1</sup>

This African nation was highly coveted for its wealth which included gold mines, cattle, ivory, hides, topaz and ebony.

The most famous Israeli and African contact took place when the Queen of Sheba, left her Nubian home and traveled to Israel to see if all the things she heard about the Black King Solomon were true. Until the Queen traveled to Jerusalem, Ethiopia that ruled Egypt was the dominant Black nation, and the thought of a King wiser than the Pharaoh of Egypt was unheard of, especially from a people who were recent Egyptian slaves. "Legend has it that when the Nubian Queen came to Solomon, they were joined in Holy Matrimony and conceived a son named Menelik. This son became a famous Ethiopian ruler and his lineage was to rule Ethiopia for some 2000 years."<sup>2</sup>

*"When Menelik was crowned King of Ethiopia by his father at Jerusalem, he returned to His mother with 1000 of the oldest sons of each of the 12 tribes of Israel. 12,000 in all of which twelve were judges. Among the number was Azariah, son of Zadok, the high Priest."*

"Solomon's plan was to establish the religion of Judah in Ethiopia, and in consequence, he made a duplicate of the Ark of the Covenant for Azariah and his 1000 Levites. Azariah on leaving is said to have exchanged the Ark and took the original to Ethiopia."

*"Once returned to Ethiopia, Menelik established the religion of Israel, choosing 6000 Black virgins as the Daughters of Zion according to their law."*

*"In the Church of Axum in Ethiopia there is a copy of what is said to be one of the Tables of Law that Solomon gave to Menelik, and also the crown of gold and precious stones that He placed on the Queen of Sheba's head."*

*“Arka in the Tigre and Axum were the principal residence of the Queen of Sheba. Her tomb as well as the ruins of a great temple and twenty two obelisk of her period were excavated at Axum.”<sup>3</sup>*

In the time of Jesus, Ethiopia was ruled by a succession of queens whose capital was Meroe which lies about 130 miles northeast of Khartum. Each of these queens carried the title Candice and their dynasty lasted until AD 350 when the land became known as Abyssinia, and its religion became Christianity instead of Judaism. The most famous Candice ruled Ethiopia when Alexander the great marched into Egypt. Candice hearing the General was near, massed her massive elephant army near the first Cataract and dared Alexander to invade Ethiopia. Alexander respecting the Queen as a militarily renowned tactician turned his army at the first cataract rather than risk defeat at the hands of a woman.

No doubt Candice Amanatere who reigned in Ethiopia from Ad 25-41 was of the lineage of Menelik. It was this Candice who commissioned the Ethiopian Eunuch to Jerusalem. Let us examine the Bible to discover the encounters of this African with Christianity.

**1. Who directed Philip to go from Jerusalem to Gaza? Acts 8:26 [NT 107]**

A.

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*\* Gaza was Hametic country. It belonged to the Philistines who were no longer considered a threat to Israel. It is not certain whether Black people still lived in Gaza at the time of Jesus, because Alexander is reported to have massacred the inhabitants of the city when they refused to surrender to him. Arrian a Greek historian born about AD 90 does say that Alexander repopulated the area from surrounding cities; if this is true, then Blacks still occupied this city since nearly all the surrounding cities were Phoenician and thus of Hametic descent.*

*It is unlikely that Alexander was prejudice against Blacks since his closest friend and commander of his cavalry who incidentally was his foster brother, was a Black man by the name of Clitus. It was the death of Clitus that later caused Alexander to drink himself to death.*

**2. Who did Philip meet on the way? Acts 8:27. [NT 107]**

A.

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**3. What was the Ethiopian reading at the time? Acts 8:28 [NT 107]**

A.

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*\* The Ethiopians were students of the Bible since the time of Solomon some 971 years before the birth of Jesus.*

**4. What did the Lord command Philip to do? Acts 8:29. [NT 107]**

A.

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**5. What did Philip ask the Ethiopian? Acts 8:30. [NT 107]**

A.

---

**6. What was the Ethiopian's response? Acts 8:31. [NT 107]**

A.

---

**7. Who was this African reading about? Acts 8:32-35. [NT 107]**

A.

---

*\* The Ethiopian learned about Jesus from the Old Testament. Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy which indicates he was the Son of God. No other prophet in all the scriptures was foretold as was Jesus. If the Bible is correct, Jesus is the Son of God. If Jesus is not the son of God, then He is the greatest liar on the face of the earth, and the Bible is not God's inspired word.*

**8. After Philip explained the scripture, what was the African's response? Acts 8:36. [NT 107]**

A.

---

**9. What did Philip do? Acts 8:37 & 38. [NT 107]**

A.

---

*\* Philip went down into the water: The word baptism means to be submerged, and anyone who is not completely submerged into the water, is not baptized.*

**10. What does the Bible have to say about believers? Mark 16:16. [NT 46]**

A.

---

**11. How did God respond to the baptism of Jesus? Matthew 3:16. [NT 2]**

A.

---

**12. How are we guaranteed an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven?  
John 3:5.**

A.

---

**13. What did Jesus and His disciples do while he was on Earth? John  
3:22. [NT 79]**

A.

---

**14. What was the people's response on the day of Pentecost after the  
preaching of Peter? Acts 2:41. [NT 101]**

A.

---

**15. Were there Africans and Arabs in the baptism which resulted in the  
formation of the Christian church? Acts 2:9-11. [NT 100]**

A.

---

*\* Islam was not yet in existence, and Arabs were accepting Christianity  
like all others.*

**16. What does baptism do symbolically? Acts 22:16.**

A.

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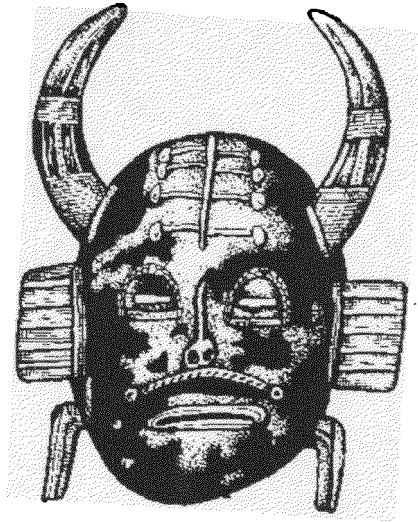
**Is it your desire to be baptized like the Ethiopian Eunuch?**

## ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 9

1. The Angel of the Lord.
2. An Ethiopian.
3. The book of the prophet Isaiah.
4. Join him.
5. Do you understand what you are reading?
6. How can I, without a guide?
7. Jesus.
8. He wanted to be baptized.
9. Philip baptized him.
10. One must be baptized to be saved.
11. He opened heaven and showed His approval.
12. By being born of water and Spirit.
13. They baptized.
14. Repented and was baptized.
15. Yes.
16. It washes away our sins.

Blacks are dying from hypertension, diabetes, sickle cell anemia and other deadly diseases far more often than they should, not realizing God's word has the answers to these problems. To further complicate things, as sons and daughters of former slaves, they have picked up eating habits that are hard to shake, placing them at the mercy of the health system of America, and also taking them to an early grave. These habits cause the body to break down, and require hospital stay or visits which for the most part we cannot afford.

LESSON 10  
**Soul Food**



THE BLACK  
HERITAGE BIBLE  
LESSONS

**I**n recent times, the African American community finds

itself besieged with tremendous health and social problems.

They are forced to sometimes live as foreigners in their homeland and pay more for food that is left over from neighboring communities. These foods are not shipped to their local supermarkets which are owned and operated by people who live in their communities, nor have any sympathy for their needs.

Blacks are dying from hypertension, diabetes, sickle cell anemia and other deadly diseases far more often than they should, not realizing God's word has the answers to these problems. To further complicate things, as sons and daughters of former slaves, they have picked up eating habits that are hard to shake, placing them at the mercy of the health system of America, and also taking them to an early grave. These habits cause the body to break down, and require hospital stays or visits which many cannot afford.

When African Americans go to the doctors today, they find that the doctors know very little about the healing of the body. Doctors today for the most part are prescribers of drugs. These drugs rarely heal but simply relieve the symptoms until the body has healed itself. Nearly all these drugs have side effects, yet they are prescribed freely without much discussion as to their long term effect upon the body.

There is evidence that African-Americans are many times used as guinea pigs, and don't fear too well in the hands of the present medical system. This is probably best illustrated in the claim that some 96 Million people in Africa were infected with the AIDS virus because they placed their faith in the hands of the medical system of the European nations. They were told they were being immunized against smallpox, while the AIDS virus was introduced into their system.<sup>1</sup> If this is true, then blacks cannot afford to put themselves at the mercy of the present medical system.

Furthermore, blacks sometimes eat things they have no business eating, because of the slavery experience. Some foods are called soul food which should be more appropriately called poisons. Careful research indicates that many of the foods' blacks eat today were not a part of their pre-slavery diet.

When blacks were kidnapped from their homeland in Africa, they had to be physically strong in order to endure middle passage. Slaves were fed

two meals a day consisting of rice and yams or corn meal and yams. “Each slave was given one half pint of water a day” yet surviving. “This is a miracle that baffles the medical world even today.”<sup>2</sup> When they got to the “plantation, the black slave developed bad health habits and life styles. This happened because the slave master forced on the black slave a rigid schedule with limited resources. The slaves were allowed a weekly allowance of corn meal and salt pork”<sup>3</sup> and these have continued as parts of their diet, but are these foods good for human consumption?

In order to be liberated, blacks must study to find the proper way to care for their bodies and the proper diet that would allow them and their children to compete in this present society. I am happy to report that God’s word is filled with directions for healthy living and recommendations on good food. The intent of this lesson is to explore some to the foods the Bible state is not good for us and to encourage us to eat the right things.

<sup>1</sup>Habitku, “Black Men Single Obsolete and Dangerous.”

<sup>2</sup> Richard Williams, *They Stole It: You Must Return It* (Rochester, NY: HEMA Publishing, 1986).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

**1. What was the original diet God gave to man when he was first created? Genesis 1:29 [OT 2]**

A.

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*\* The word translated herb is best translated seed bearing plant or greenery.*

**2. When did God give man the right to eat meat and under what conditions? Genesis 8:15 & 16; 9:3 [OT 6]**

A.

---

*\* The eating of flesh food directly affected the life expectancy of mankind. Prior to the eating of meat, man lived for nearly a thousand years, after he began to consume meat however, his life span shortened dramatically.*

**3. How long was man living before meat eating became common? Genesis 5:5-13 OT 4]**

A.

---

**4. How long did man live when he began eating meat? Genesis 11:32; 25:17 [OT 9]**

A.

---

**5. How did God divide the animals in the days of Noah? Genesis 7:2 & 8 [OT 5]**

A.

---

*\* Clean and unclean animals are not Jewish. No Jew lived at this time.*

**6. How many clean beasts was Noah commanded to take into the ark? Genesis 7:2 [OT 5]**

A.

---

*\* Noah was allowed to take 7 clean beast and two unclean beasts because God would later allow him to eat the animals, while preserving the species. If Noah was allowed to eat unclean animals, these species would have become extinct.*

**7. What are some unclean animals that God said we should not eat? Leviticus 11:4-6; 13-16 [OT 89]**

A.

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*\* God sees no difference between the pig and the ravens, they are both scavengers.*

**8. What are the characteristics that make an animal clean according to the Bible? Leviticus 11:3 [OT 89]**

A.

---

*\* God as author of these animals knows why he made them and is indicating to us that there are some that are not good food. We disobey the laws of health to our detriment by ignoring God's plan.*

**9. What does the Bible have to say about the pig as a source of food? Leviticus 11:7 Deuteronomy 14:8 [OT 9, 557]**

A.

---

**10. What does God say He will do to those who eat swine's flesh? Isaiah 66:16-17 [OT 557]**

A.

---

**11. What does the Lord call the eating of swine's flesh? Isaiah 66:17 [OT 557]**

A.

---

**12. What about the lobster and crab? Leviticus 11:9 & 10 [OT 89]**

A.

---

*\* Lobsters, crab and shrimp have no scales and according to the Bible, should not be eaten by humans.*

**13. What about alcoholic beverages? Proverbs 23:31-32; 20:1 [OT 500, 495]**

A.

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**14. What is God's desire for us? 3 John 1:2 [NT 205]**

A.

---

**15. Why does God expect us to be careful about what we eat? 1 Corinthians 3:15-17 [NT 141]**

A.

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**Is it your desire to treat your body as God's temple and place only those things in it which are good for your health?**

### ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 10

1. Herb and fruits.
2. Just after the flood. All vegetation had died.
3. Over 1000 years.
4. 205 years and under.
5. Into groups of clean and unclean.
6. 7 clean 1 pair unclean.
7. Camel, Coney, hare, pig, eagle, falcon, raven.
8. Must be cloven footed and chew the cud.
9. It is unclean.
10. He will destroy them by fire.
11. An abomination.
12. Unclean.
13. We should not mess with it.
14. That we prosper and be in good health.
15. Our bodies are His temple.



# LESSON 11

## **Jewelry**

**“Objects of Personal  
Adornment”**



**THE BLACK  
HERITAGE BIBLE  
LESSONS**

**J**ewelry, one of the oldest decorative arts, is a collective

term used to describe objects of personal adornment, prized both for their craftsmanship and for the intrinsic value of their precious materials. The earliest jewelry were amuletic, protecting its wearer from the hostile forces of war and nature.

In the tropical regions of Africa, Central America and the Pacific, jewelry is virtually all that is worn and serves as both traditional decoration and as a financial investment. Jewelry sometimes denotes rank—a function that survives today in regalia, badges of office and military insignia.<sup>1</sup> Rarely however was jewelry used to glorify self as is common in the western world today.

In ancient times, when forced to migrate because of famine or wars, the wearing of one's jewelry was the safest thing to do. Today however, the primary purpose of jewelry is to adorn its wearer and enhance his or her glamour and sexual attraction.<sup>2</sup>

Virtually all-modern kinds of jewelry—necklaces, earrings, rings, bracelets, and their ornaments—were in use as early as 2500 BC in the Sumerian civilization. Long before this however, the Egyptians and other Africans had extensive jewelry making ability. Their pictures reveal them sitting on golden throne, drinking from golden goblets and even binding prisoners in golden chains, but rarely ever wearing the jewelry itself.

The Israelites picked up jewelry wearing while enslaved on the continent of Africa. They wore it as they migrated to the promise land and it became a tremendous catalyst for straying for Yahweh and bringing them pain. God made it clear, that the wearing of jewelry was not a habit he wanted his people to continue.

Today jewelry has become commonplace, and hard earned money is wasted on ornamentation. Let us explore what the Bible has to say concerning this very popular method of adornment.

**1. Who was the first person to receive Jewelry in scripture? Genesis 24:53 [OT 19]**

A.

---

*\* The word translated jewelry here is the word "keliy" that means something prepared and is used to denote a utensil, dress, vessel or weapon. It does not mean Jewelry as we know it but is better translated Jewels.*

**2. What did God command Jacob to do? Genesis 35:1 [OT 29]**

A.

---

*\* Bethel means the house of God. Jacob was commanded to go there and worship God.*

**3. What did Jacob command his household to do before they arrived at Bethel? Genesis 35:2 [OT 29]**

A.

---

**4. What did these foreign gods include? Genesis 35:4 [OT 29]**

A.

---

*\* The earrings are considered as strange gods because they serve no other purpose than self-glorification.*

**5. What did Jacob do with the earrings? Genesis 35:4 OT 29]**

A.

---

*\* It is best to part with anything that would hinder you from serving God. Do not keep them as a souvenir since the devil will tempt you at some future date.*

**6. When God told the children of Israel he would not go with them because they were stiff necked, how did they respond? Exodus 33:4-6 [OT 73]**

A.

---

*\* It appears that the jewelry Israel wore had separated them from God.*

**7. Where did they get this jewelry in the first place? Exodus 12:35 [OT 54]**

A.

---

*Since the Israelites had no intention of returning these Jewels, they must have regarded it as payment for the many years of slavery. It is too bad that blacks in America and the new world were not afforded the same privilege when they were freed from slavery.*

**8. What did God say he would do in the Day of Judgment? Isaiah 3:18-23 [OT 517]**

A.

---

**9. What does God call all these ornaments? Isaiah 4:4 [OT 518]**

A.

---

**10. After the filth is removed what will God's people be called? Isaiah 4:3 [OT 518]**

A.

---

**11. What did the father of the prodigal son give to him when he returned home? Luke 15:22 [NT 66]**

A.

---

*\* The ring here noted is the ring used as a seal. This was used as a means of signing ones signature. This is not just an ornament but functional jewelry. Today we use pens and pencils for such functions, and have no use for this kind of ring. The giving of this ring was like giving the power of attorney to someone to act in your behalf.*

**12. How did the scribe give authority to the letter he wrote on behalf of Esther's people? Esther 8:10 [OT 409]**

A.

---

**13. What was the result of sealing with the King's seal? Esther 8:8 [OT 409]**

A.

---

**14. How did Pharaoh transfer authority to Joseph? Genesis 41:42 [OT 35]**

A.

---

**15. What did God command the children of Israel to do before they left the mountain? Exodus 33:5 [OT 73]**

A.

---

**16. When Jacob and his people cast off their jewelry, how did God respond? Genesis 35:4-5 [OT 29]**

A.

---

**Is it your desire to put away your jewelry so God will be able to provide divine protection for you?**

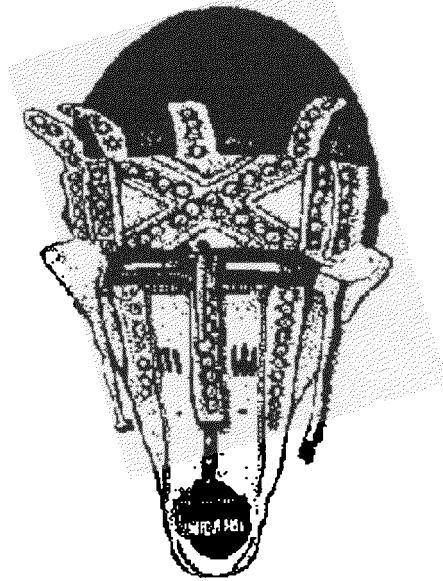
Yes  No

### **ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 11.**

1. Rebekah.
2. Go up to Bethel and worship.
3. Put away the strange gods.
4. Ear Rings.
5. Buried them
6. Took off their jewelry.
7. From Egypt.
8. Take away all ornaments.
9. Filth.
10. Holy.
11. A Ring.
12. Sealed it with the Kings Seal.
13. It could not be reversed.
14. By giving Him his ring.
15. Put away the ornaments.
16. He gave them divine protection.

<sup>1</sup>CompuServe, Grolier Electronic Encyclopedia. Jewelry.

LESSON 12  
**Who is Jesus?**



THE BLACK  
HERITAGE BIBLE  
LESSONS

**I**n recent times a dispute has been raging as to who was the

historical Jesus. Some people feel He was a man of color, others feel He was a prophet while there are those who believe He was the “Son of God.” Since the Bible is the fullest revelation of Christ we have, it is only appropriate that we consult the Bible to find the answer to this most important question.

It is noteworthy that this same question was being asked when Jesus walked the earth. In fact Christ Himself asked a similar question of His disciples when he asked “Whom do men say that I the Son of Man Am?”

The disciples did not report the idle and thoughtless gossip of the evil minded slanderer. There were some who said he was a glutton and a wine bibber but they did not mention that. Others who mocked Him called Him a friend of Publicans and sinners, but that was not reported. The disciples ignored these ill-judged and occasional venomous characterizations and reported the serious talk. “Some say that you are John the Baptist, because you preach with such fearlessness and absolute sincerity. Others say that you are Elias, because you pronounced the coming of the kingdom and cleansed the temple. Others say you are Jeremiah, compassionate and kind. They see the sorrow in your eyes for the weakness of man. They saw you weeping at the funeral of Lazarus and heard your pleas as you spread your arms and said, ‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, oh how I would have gathered you under my wings as a hen gathers her young ones, but you would not have me.’ We have even heard them say that you are a prophet, a teacher sent from God.”

These are verdicts. Conclusion drawn by misled men who saw Jesus as being too kind to be God, yet too powerful to be man. Verdicts drawn after comparing the facts and making a summation. Are these verdicts what the Bible teaches about Jesus? Come discover with us as we study the topic, Who Is Jesus?

**1. What was Peter's response to the question of Jesus as to who He was? Matthew 16:16.**

---

**2. What was the response of Jesus to the words of Peter? Matthew 16:17.**

---

*Jesus here accepts the title as the Christ, thus claiming God-ship.*

**3. How did Jesus prove that He had come into this world for a special purpose? Luke 24:25-27.**

---

**4. What was the testimony of Philip when he found Nathaniel? John 1:45.**

---

**5. How did Apollos prove the divinity of Jesus? Acts 18:28.**

---

**6. Of what tribe was Christ born? Matthew 1:3, Revelation 5:5.**

---

*The word Jew really is a corrupt form of the name Judah. This name is used to describe the tribes of Benjamin and Judah who remained loyal to the house of David after 10 tribes rebelled. Hebrew is the race of the original Israelites and Judaism their religion.*

**7. What two tribes remained faithful to the house of David? I Kings 12:20 & 21.**

---

*The tribes of Judah and Benjamin came to be called Jews. These were the tribes which composed the Jewish nation when Christ was born.*

**8. What nations were assimilated into the tribe of Benjamin? Judges 1:21**

---

*The Jebusites were the original descendants of Ham through Canaan who first inhabited Jerusalem.*



**9. What was the prophet Ezra's problem with the Jews? Ezra 9:2.**

---

*The people of the land were the descendants of Ham.*

**10. Who else settled with Judah and Benjamin? Judges 1:16.**

---

*The Kenites were the Ethiopian in-laws of Moses who traveled with Israel to be their scouts.*

**11. What problem was Judah having with the people of color who lived in the land they inherited? Judges 1:19.**

---

*Since Judah eventually lived in the cities of the valley, Judah and Ham's descendants who inhabited these cities became one people.*

**12. Why couldn't Judah drive the people out? Judges 3:1-6.**

---

*The tribe of Judah was mixed with people of color through Judah and his Canaanite daughter-in-law. This continued through the numerous Canaanites and Egyptians who married into the tribe and became the lineage through which King David and then Christ the Messiah eventually came.*

**13. What did Jesus have to say of Himself? John 14:8-10.**

---

*Jesus is here claiming to be God. Either He is correct, or He is a liar. If He is a liar, he cannot be a great prophet.*

**14. What did the prophet Micah have to say about the Messiah? Micah 5:2.**

---

*Out of the thousands of places the Messiah could be born, the prophet Micah pointed out the exact location. The Holy Family lived in Nazareth and had no intention of moving to Bethlehem. Just a week before Jesus was born, a decree caused all men to return home to be taxed. Thus they traveled to Bethlehem where Christ was born.*

**15. What was Isaiah's testimony? Isaiah 7:14.**

---

*A virgin birth is something that is impossible without Divine intervention, yet Mary had not been with a man before her son was conceived.*

**16. What did Jesus have to say about Himself? John 8:58**

---

**17. Why did Jesus come to this earth in the first place? John 3:16.**

**Is it your desire to accept Jesus as the Lord of prophecy?**

Yes  No

**BLACK HERITAGE QUIZ 12**

1. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
2. "Flesh and blood did not reveal it to you."
3. By using scripture.
4. "We have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write.
5. By the scripture.
6. Judah.
7. Judah and Benjamin.
8. The Jebusites.
9. They were marrying too many Canaanites.
10. The Kenites.
11. They could not drive the blacks from the plains.
12. They were too strong.
13. He is in the Father and the Father in Him. They are one.
14. He would be born in Bethlehem.
15. He would be born of a Virgin.
16. He existed before Abraham.

# LESSON 13

## **White Robe, Black Justice**



THE BLACK  
HERITAGE BIBLE  
LESSONS

**H**is name was John F. Kennedy, and he was the young,

energetic, intelligent 35th President of the United States. He was standing at the podium at one of the Universities in the State of Alabama, and these were his words as he sought to provide justice for the African citizens of America.

*“One hundred years of delay has passed, since Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons are not free. They are not free from the bonds of injustice, they are not free from social and economic oppression; and this nation with all its hope and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“We preach freedom around the world and we mean it, and we cherish our freedom here at home. But are we to say to the world, and much more importantly to each other, that this is the land of the free, except for the Negroes. That we have no second class citizens except for the Negroes. That we have no class or caste system, no ghettos, no master race, except in respect to the Negroes.”<sup>2</sup>*

The reality of America’s justice system was and still is, even though the justices wear black robes, there is little or no black justice. The Bible is clear however that the time is coming when justice will be available for all people of all races since all of us have a case pending at the judgment bar of God, and for those who are faithful to God, we need not fear, because in God’s court, only the truth will be told.

No doubt many citizens and political leaders of America will have a problem explaining to God the abuse and mistreatment of many in the midst of her security. How can we explain such poverty in the midst of her prosperity, or miss- education in the midst of her great Universities? The truth is that God will not white-wash her answers, neither will He overlook important evidence. There will be no entrapment or character assassination allowed and all witnesses will tell nothing but the truth as the angels pull out the books and read from the recorded annals all the doings of our lives.

All of us are going to the judgment. The young with their baggy pants crutch hanging down to their knees; the old with their faltering steps and their longing for the times of yesterday, the middle age with their

conservative nature along with the half hearted callous Christian who readily get dress and walk by their down trodden brothers on there way to church, we are all hastening to the judgment.

The preachers who have stole our money and lied to us for centuries are heading to the judgment. The rich in their fine cars and boats, the judges in their black robes and the sinners treading on the mercy of Jesus and trampling upon the merits of his blood is hastening to the judgment. Black men are going to the judgment, white men are going to the judgment, Presidents and paupers will have to stand in the judgment and finally the black man along with all others will be able to find justice. The greatest lawyer in the universe will plead our case. Jesus Christ the Son of God will present the evidence and plead on the behalf of all those who have accepted him as their personal savior from sin and the verdict for the faithful will be not guilty. Let us take the time to study this most important topic.

<sup>1</sup>Lerone Bennett, *Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America*, 391.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

**1. What does the Bible say God has appointed a day to do? Acts 17:31 [NT 117]**

A.

---

**2. What scene was Daniel showed in vision while his people were living in Babylon? Daniel 7:9-10 [OT 661]**

A.

---

*\* Daniel's people were enslaved in Babylon and Daniel was concerned about the end of this slavery. Daniel felt the debt was paid, and liberation was nigh.*

**3. Who does the judging? John 5:22 [NT 24]**

A.

---

**4. What color robe was Christ wearing when Daniel saw Him in the judgment? Daniel 7:9-10 [OT 661]**

A.

---

*\* This is quite the opposite of the justices in America, and all men black and white will find justice in a white robe.*

**5. What Did the Apostle Paul say all men will have to do in the judgment? Romans 14:12 [NT 138]**

A.

---

**6. What will face all in the Judgment? Ecclesiastes 12:14 [OT 511]**

A.

---

**7. What about our idle words? Matthew 12:36-37 [NT 11]**

A.

---

**8. Out of what instrument were the dead judged? Revelation 20:12 [NT 219]**

A.

---

**9. What African witness will God call to testify in the Judgment? Matthew 12:42 [NT 11]**

A.

---

**10. What message did the black King Solomon have for the youth of the world? Ecclesiastes 11:9 [OT 511]**

A.

---

**11. What is the whole duty of Man? Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 [OT 511]**

A.

---

**13. What will happen to those who were disobedient in the judgment? Matthew 13:40-42. & 49 [NT 12]**

A.

---

**14. What will God bring with Him when he returns the second time? Matthew 16:27 [NT 15]**

A.

---

*\* Many believe Christ is coming back to judge us, but according to the Bible, when Christ returns, the judgment will be over and he will be returning with His reward.*

**15. What will happen when the judgment is completed? Matthew 25:32-34 [NT 24]**

A.

---

**Is it your desire to prepare yourself for the judgment so you will be a part of God's new kingdom?**

Yes  No

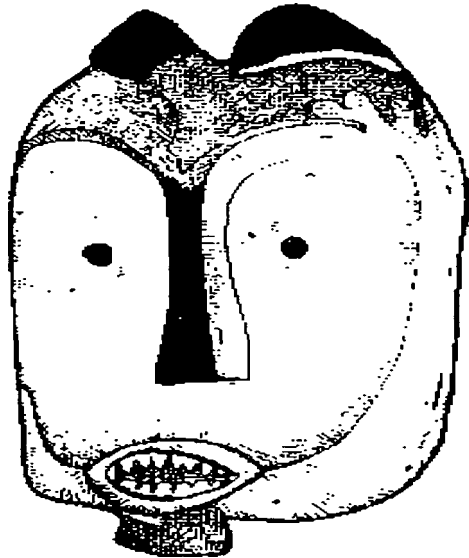
### **ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 13**

1. To judge the world.
2. The judgment scene.
3. The Son.
4. White.
5. Give an account
6. Every word, and every secret thing.
7. They will come up in the judgment.
8. Books.
9. The Queen of Sheba.
10. Enjoy youth, but don't forget the judgment.
11. Fear God and give glory to Him.
12. God will not know them.
13. They will be cast into the fire.
14. His reward.
15. God will separate the good and the evil and the good will inherit the kingdom of God.

# LESSON 14

## Melchizedek

"Home of the Blacks"



THE BLACK  
HERITAGE BIBLE  
LESSONS



**T**he Jews look with glee upon the Priesthood of Aaron, it

is with fond memories that they reflect upon the one through whom along with his descendants God had ordained a system for salvation--an imperfect system mind you, but still a powerful system whereby the sinner who strayed from God could find himself in right relationship with God. It was a system that came revered the world over and the whole nation was organized around the system.

The sick or diseased before he could be declared clean, must present himself to the priest; the king if he would be chosen must be anointed by the priest; the nation dared not go to war unless directed by God through the priest--this Levitical Priesthood was indeed powerful yet with all its power it could not compare to the Priesthood of the Black King Melchizedek.

According to the Bible Melchizedek was an Amorite King who ruled the city of Salem during the time of Abraham. Salem later became known as Jerusalem--city of David. It appears that long before Salem became the city of Jerusalem, it was the city of God. It may have been the city of God for thousands of years before David, because even though we have no record of God choosing Jerusalem before the coming of the Israelites, when the father of the Israelite's was introduced to us in the book of Genesis, he is presented as bowing before Melchizedek King of Salem, and presenting to him his tithe.

The real power of Melchizedek's priesthood is best demonstrated in the fact the when God ordains Jesus a priest he is not ordained after the order of the Jewish priesthood, but after the Hametic priesthood of Melchizedek. This priest the Bible state had no beginning or end, no father or mother but appears abruptly on the biblical scene and disappears just as suddenly.

The Hametic Amorites over whom Melchizedek ruled must have been worshipers of the true God since the Bible says Melchizedek their King and Priest was "Priest of the most High God", Yahweh himself. Let us therefore examine the scripture to find out more about this extraordinary black figure.

**1. Who are the first two characters we see in the Bible associated with the tithing Principle? Genesis 14:18-20 [OT 10]**

A.

---

*\* Since we are aware that Abraham had at least three wives, two of which were black. Since we are also aware that God called Abraham from a city located within the confines of one of the first black Empires, and since Abraham travels freely among the black Canaanites and Egyptians and causes no major stir except for his wealth, we must presume Abraham was a black man. Furthermore we are fully aware that the Amorites were descendants of Ham and therefore were a black race, therefore both people associated with tithing from the beginning were black people.*

**2. What did Abraham present to Melchizedek? Genesis 14:20 [OT 10]**

A.

---

*\* The word tithe means 1/10. The tithe therefore is 10% of ones gross income. So here we see Abraham presenting to this black Priest, one tenth of all the spoils of war.*

**3. What word does the Bible use to describe this Black Priest who receives tithe of the “Father of the Jews”, Abraham? Hebrews 7:1-4 [NT 187]**

A.

---

**4. How are we commanded to Honor God by the black King Solomon? Proverbs 3:9. [OT 488]**

A.

---

**5. What part of the income does God claim? Leviticus 27:30 [OT 107]**

A.

---

*\* The word Tithe means 10%. Therefore God is claiming the first ten percent of all we make as His own.*

**6. On what bases does God claim 10% of our income? Psalms 24:1[OT 440]**

A.

---

**7. To whom does the wealth of this world belong? Haggai 2:8 [OT 694]**

A.

---

**8. How did God impress this upon the mind of Adam? Genesis 2:2 & 3, 16 & 7. [OT 2]**

A.

---

**9. What did God command Adam to do to the animals of the world? Genesis 1:28 [OT 2]**

A.

---

*\* Fire flood tornado and conquest now makes ownership impossible.*

**10. How did Solomon state his understanding of the Stewardship principle? Ecclesiastes 2:18 [OT 506]**

A.

---

*\* One takes nothing out of this world, but leaves it behind for another to enjoy. In other words, God takes it all back at the end, and give it to someone else.*

**11. What other great black personage acknowledged God's ownership? Job 1:21 [OT 412]**

A.

---

*\* The Bible calls Job the "greatest man in the east." The east refers to the place where the black descendants of Abraham resided. These black descendants included the Midianites who taught Moses about Horeb, "the Mount of God." These people from the east, which included the wise men who came to acknowledge the birth of Jesus, were worshipers of the true God, and keepers of His commandments.*

**12. What must we do before we can be faithful in tithe paying? Malachi 3:7 [OT 704]**

A.

---

**13. What is the function of the tithe? Numbers 18:21 [OT 128]**

A.

---

*\* The children of Levi were the Priest of Israel. God had ordained a system whereby those who committed themselves to his service would be provided for. This provision also included the Ministers of Music, because certain Levites were ordained to this ministry.*

**14. What did Jesus have to say about tithe paying? Matthew 23:23 [NT 22]**

A.

---

15. Of what are we guilty if we are not faithful in returning tithes? Malachi 3:8. [OT 704]

A.

---

**Is it your desire to become a faithful Tithe payer?**

Yes  No

### ANSWER SHEET QUIZ 14.

1. Melchizedek and Abraham.
2. His Tithe.
3. Great.
4. With the First Fruits.
5. The Tithe or 1/10.
6. Everything belongs to God.
7. The Lord.
8. Giving Him the Sabbath and the Tree of Good and Evil.
9. Have dominion over them.
10. By stating we take nothing from this life.
11. Job.
12. Return to God.
13. To pay the children of Levi.
14. We ought to do it.
15. Robbing God.

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APPENDIX B

ADVERTIZING

**Looking  
at our  
Past and our Destiny**

**"A Black History Celebration"  
with**

**Pastor Stephen L. Williams, Sr.**

**every  
Saturday in  
February 2004 at 11:00 a.m.**

*Feb. 7 - A call to the Remnant of Africa*  
*Feb. 14 - An African Woman named Abigail*  
*Feb. 21 - Black Men dangerous and endangered*  
*Feb. 28 - In what shall we Glory?*

**Everyone is invited.  
You cannot afford to miss it**

## APPENDIX C

### SERMONS

#### ABIGAIL

##### **1 Sam 25:2-3**

*2 And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.*

*3 Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.*

She was a woman of charm, beauty and poise. Possessing both good understanding and a beautiful countenance. Abigail had in the confines of her adorable physique, both winsomeness and wisdom. Someone said, she had brains as well as beauty, looks to kill and wit to defy. She was loveliness and intelligence walking hand in hand.

Her intelligence emphasized her physical attractiveness. Indeed this was one of God's greatest creations, a beautiful woman with a beautiful mind.

Added to here charm and wisdom was the characteristic of personal piety. She knew God, and although she lived in an ugly unhappy home, she remained steadfast in her belief and trust in Him.

One author says writing of Abigail, "She possessed in harmonious combination these two qualities which are valuable to everyone one, but which are essential to one who has to manage men. The tact of a wise wife and the religious principle of a good woman.

Eugenia Price who writes of Abigail as "a woman with God's own poise" says that "only God can give a woman poise like Abigail possessed, and God can only do it when a woman is willing to cooperate as Abigail cooperated with Him on every point."

True to the significance of her own name, Abigail - which means "my father is Joy" experienced in God her Father a source of joy enabling her to be independent of the adverse, trying circumstance in her miserable home. She had implicit confidence in God and this confidence she demonstrated when forced to protect her family against the destruction shore to come because of her drunken husband.

Her faith shone like diamond in the darkness of the night, Like an ornament of gold, in the crown of a king. And indeed the words of the poet captures the importance of a woman like herself in this messed up world of our:



*Abigail, the splendor of your beauty demonstrates itself in your meek and gently demeanor.*

*Abigail, like a beacon light in the darkness of the night, your faith and confidence in God shines through.*

*Abigail, come grace our homes and grace our church, and let the world see what the characteristic of a Christian woman should be. Abigail.*

The Bible says, she was married to a man named Nabal, a son of Belial, a worthless man. Just the kind of guy your mother warns you never to marry.

The fact that according to 2nd Chronicles 25:3, He was of the House of Caleb indicates we are dealing with a man and family of African descent, because the house of Caleb, like the tribes of Judah and Ephraim and Manhasset, were people of color.

Nabal, the Bible says, was a drunkard. Though extremely rich, and at least smart enough to marry a beautiful, wise godly woman, Nabal was a constant pain in his community. After a hard days work, he would gorge himself with the liquid of death, to the detriment of his family.

He is described as the man churlish and evil in his doings? (1 Sam 25:3), and his record proves him to be all that. Churlish means, a bear of man, harsh, rude and brutal. Destitute of the finer qualities his wife possessed, he was likewise avaricious and selfish. Rich and increased with goods and gold, he thought only of his possessions and could be classed among those of whom it has been written.

*The man may breathe but never lives  
Whoever receives but nothing gives  
Creations blot, creations blank  
Whom none can love and none can thank.*

Along with being a drunkard, Nabal was unmanageable, stubborn, and ill tempered. He bowed his knees to the gods of this world and not to the God of his ancestors who lived in the Mount of Median and called themselves Midianites. His forefathers, the Ethiopians who had mixed with the Father of the Jews Abraham to create a new clan called the Midianites, had worshipped Yahweh. When the other descendants of Abraham stood enslaved on the continent of his ancient ancestors, Caleb's people lived in the Mount of God, and worshipped the God of the Bible. It was to Caleb's ancestors that God directed Moses, there to find Himself an African woman, and come to know the God of the African Midianites. It was the forefathers of Caleb that had directed Moses to the Mount of God where he met the "I am within the confines of the burning bush. Moses had invited these worshipers of Yahweh to go with him to Palestine as the eyes to the Israelite people, but now Nabal acts like angel of the devil. He has strayed from the part of righteousness and took the well being of his family with him.

The story begins with David, who is totally disillusioned and discouraged after the death of Samuel. Samuel kept in check the intent of the wicked King Saul who now sat upon the throne. David is now vulnerable and hungry, and sends to request of his wealthy neighbor, food to provide for the needs of his men. David though an outlaw of Saul had preserved the flocks of Nabal at no expense to their owner. Sheep owners would normally be happy to reward those helping them against losses. David's request for supplies was therefore legitimate and in harmony with the custom of his time.

*1 Samuel 25:4-*

*4And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.*

*5And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:*

*6And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.*

*7And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.*

*8Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.*

*9And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.*

*10 And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.*

*11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?*

*12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.*

*13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.*

David shows his youthful inexperience. In later years he would not be so quick to act. The pressure of being on the run might have clouded his ability to think rationally, so in haste and anger he decided he was going to kill the entire family of the churlish Nabal including the beautiful Abigail, whose only sin was that she was married to a fool. Thanks however to an observant servant, David was stopped from committing an awful sin.

### **The Wisdom of the Servant.'**

*14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.*

*15 But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:*

*16They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.*

*17Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.*

### **Intervention of a Godly Woman. 1 Sam 25:18-24**

*18Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.*

*19And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.*

*20 And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.*

*21Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.*

*22So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.*

*23And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,*

*24And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.*

*(KJV)*

Having often acted as peace-maker between her intemperate husband and his neighbors, on hearing the story and how imprudently her husband had behaved, realizing that no time could be lost, with a clever woman's wit she saw that grave consequences would surely follow the churlish refusal and the rash words which betrayed at once the jealous adherent of Saul and the bitter enemy of the powerful outlay.

Gathering together a quantity of food and wine, sufficient she thought for David's immediate need, Abigail rode out on an ass and at the covert of a hill met David and his men - and what a momentous meeting it turned out to be. With discreet tact Abigail averted David's just anger over Nabal's insult to his messengers, by placing at David's feet food for his hungry men. She also revealed her wisdom in that she fell at the feet of David, as an inferior before a superior, and acquiesced with him in his condemnation of her brutal foolish husband.

As a Hebrew woman was restricted by the customs of her time, to give counsel only in an emergency in the hour of greatest need, Abigail, had risked the displeasure of her husband whose life was threatened. This was not an impulsively act however, in going to David to plead for mercy, she followed the dictates of her disciplined will, and speaking

at the opportune moment her beautiful appeal from beautiful lips captivated the heart of David.

As his own harp had appeased Saul, the musical voice of Abigail exorcised the demon of revenge, and woke the angel that was slumbering in David's bosom. We can never gauge the effect of our words and actions upon others. The intervention of Abigail in the nick of time teaches us that when we have wisdom to impart, faith to share and help to offer, we must not hesitate to take the risk that may be involved. Abigail had often made amends for the infuriated outburst of her husband. Neighbors and friends knew her drunken husband only too well, but patiently she would pour oil over troubled waters, and when she humbly approached with a large peace offering, her calmness soothed David's anger and gave her the position of advantage. For her peace-making mission she received the King's benediction. Her wisdom is seen in the fact she did not attempt to check David's turbulent feelings by argument, but won him by wise kind words. Possession heavenly intelligence, self control, common sense and vision, she exercised boundless influence over a great man and marked herself out as truly a great woman.

### **Abigail Speaks 1 Sam. 25:25-28**

*25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.*

*26 Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.*

*27 And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.*

*28 I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.*

### **VS 26. God sent her.**

### **He was fighting the Lords Battle. Vs 28**

Whose Battle are you fighting?

### **He would be incurring guilt.**

A. God did not send David on this mission

B. David inquired of the lord in the past with he confronted Goliath, but now he was about to wage his own war.

### **David responds to Good Counsel I Sam 25:32-**

*32 And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:*

*33And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.*

*34For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.*

## **The Response of Nabal. - A Heart Attack. 1 Sam 25:36-**

The Result of sin.

*36And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.*

*37But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.*

*38And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.*

It is to the credit of this noble woman that she did not leave her godless husband or seek divorce from him, but remained a loyal wife and protector of her worthless partner. She had taken him for better or for worse, and live for her was worst that the worst. Wretched though her life was, and scorned, insulted and beaten as she may have been during Nabal's drinking bouts, she clung to the man to whom she had sworn to be faithful, because she believed in marriage. Abigail manifested slavery stronger than death. But the hour of deliverance came ten days later. Nabal's worthless life ended. When David hearkened to the plea of Abigail and accepted her person, he rejoiced over being kept back by her counsel from taking into his own hands God's prerogative of justice.

When David said to Abigail, "Blessed be thy advice," he went on to confess with usual frank generosity that he had been wrong in giving way to wild, ungovernable passions. If Abigail had not interceded he would have carried out his purpose and destroyed the entire household of Nabal which massacre would have included Abigail herself. But death came as the great divorcee or arbiter, and Nabal's wonderful wife had no tears of regret, for amid much suffering and disappointment she had fulfilled her marriage vow.

## BLACK MEN DANGEROUS AND ENDANGERED

Joel 2:14-20

Offerings for the LORD your God.

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly.

16 Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber.

17 Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

18 Then the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people.

19 The LORD will reply to them: 'I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.

20 'I will drive the northern army far from you.'

(NIV)

### ***Acts 21:39-22:3***

39 *But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.*

40 *And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,*

## **CHAPTER 22**

1 *Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense which I make now unto you.*

2 *(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)*

3 *I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.*

Paul was a most unusual character. Despised by the authorities, mistrusted by His Christian brethren. He was a loner. Yet he loved people wherever he went and accepted them as mothers, brothers and sister.

Born in the city of Tarsus, a city that was a part of the Roman Province Paul was to have been immune to flogging or punishment without a trial. Unfortunately for Paul however, his looks were a problem.

Paul was not readily identifiable as a Jew or Roman. His Hametic or African characteristics sometimes cause him to be flogged and abused without a trial. Ever since Paul met Jesus, Paul was considered a dangerous man. His interest was not the interest of the State, his mission was no longer the mission of the state and his intent was to tare up the devils Kingdom, and build up the Kingdom of God.

Paul marched to the beat of a different drummer. He feared no one but God, hated nothing but sin and loved nothing more than to see the souls of his fellow men saved, you could say he was on Lucifer's extermination list.

Paul was soon caught up in a racial problem.

### **Acts 21:27-31**

27 *And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,*

28 *Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.*

29 *(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)*

30 *And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.*

31 *And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.*

### **Acts 21:37-22:2**

37 *And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?*

38 *Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?*

39 *But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.*

40 *And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,*

## **CHAPTER 22**

1 *Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.*

2 *(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)*

This encounter ultimately led to Paul's death, because of racism; He was an man who looked like an African, killed because some Asians had a problem with his behavior.

*African American men must still live with this problem today, in fact he is on the endangered species list, because he is considered dangerous.*

His name was Gabriel and he was a deeply religious man. Day and night Gabriel meditated on the Bible. The words of Jesus rung clear and burned deep within his breast, "If the son hath made you free, you shall be free indeed.

Born a free man on the continent of Africa, captured and brought to America as a slave, Gabriel dreamed of freedom, not freedom in Africa, but of building a little Africa in America. Gabriel dream of an Israel rising up from slavery and settling in the promised land of Virginia.

For four to five months Gabriel held meeting at fish fry and Barbecue. Every Sunday he slipped into Richmond and studied the town, making a mental note of strategic points and location of arms and ammunition. Gabriel's plan was simple, three columns would attack Richmond. The right wing would grab the arsenal, the second the guns, then the left wing would take the powder house. When Richmond was secure, other cities would be attacked with lightning speed. If successful, he would be declared King of Virginia, and if unsuccessful the freedom fighters would flee to the mountains and fight a gorilla war. Gabriel was a dangerous man.

The names and voices of black men have been causing fear and bring anxiety to the hearts of many for centuries. Picture the sight of two men of Hametic descent running towards each other in the valley of Elah. For many days the voice of one rang over the hillside, send me a man that I may fight against him. Finally it eventually happened. A young descendant of Rahab and Ruth named David was visiting his brothers when he heard this uncircumcised man and declared who is it that defy the God or Israel. Thus two fearless men of Hametic descent came charging towards each other. The real difference between them is not their statue, but that David had Yahweh in his heart, and Goliath did not. Both were dangerous men, because they were fearless men....

Think of Hannibal the Great, who left Cartage in North Africa, the last stronghold of the Phoenicians and marched across the Alps with his massive elephant army, they said it was impossible the crossing of the Alps, but Hannibal was fearless, and that made him dangerous.

What of Pianki King of Ethiopia who marched into Egypt to reclaim the land of His ancestors, or Imhotep, the father of Medicine, a African whose name still bring awe to the medical students of today. Thutmose 111 who in 1500 BC won the respect of the world as one of the mightiest conquerors to ever live, or Akhenaton, the first Messiahs who led Egypt in the worship of one God, and wrote many Psalms who David King of Israel would later to emulate.



Then there was Seostris, who according to the Greek Historians, sent his ship to every corner of the world, capturing Palestine, Arabia, Asia, and Europe and setting his Stele for all to see.

Hear the Words of Shabaka, King of Ethiopia to the great Persian King Cambyses, "Until you can fire the arrow as far and as accurately as an African can, you dear not set foot into Ethiopia, and until then, thank the gods that they have not placed it in the hearts of the Sons of Ethiopia the need to win another man's country. What of Cetewayo Zuso, Son of Chaca, who sent word to the English General declaring, go tell the British, and let them hear me well, I give Him till sunset to leave my territory or the sons of the African soil will die throwing him out. Then finally the old Jamaican Seer called Boukman in Haiti, who declared: Good God, the white man do things we cannot do, give us justice, or give us vengeance", and fires raged all over Haiti, signaling the end of slavery. These Black men were dangerous.

Black men for their own survival, must be fearless in America in order to survive. He is forced into gang activities for his very survival. Men and boys are gunned down in the streets, not because they are in a gang, but because they don't belong to a gang.

In School they are under pressure, at home they are under pressure, in the church they are under pressure. Everywhere they turn there are forces pulling and pushing, and to make matters worse, many have no jobs, so before long he explodes and his family is abused.

If we would stop the deterioration of the African American family in America, the African American male must be returned to the workplace. Deny a man the right to work, and you deny him his very reason for existing.

When the civil rights movement began, the cry was give us equality. White America realized what was going down. They realized they had no choice because two fearless men were on the scene, Malcolm and Martin. They feared Malcolm, so the media made Martin bigger than life figure, hoping they could stall the movement. They soon discovered however they couldn't, because despite his non-violence stand, Martin was a fearless man. White American was forced to the bargaining table, and they found a solution, "minority rights", only problem was, the largest portion of white Americas population was declared a minority, white women. Thus the jobs created went not to the black male but to the white female. The woman's movement began in full swing, white families had two income household and the black family still had none.

When accused of a crime, the black male received long prison terms. The death sentence was reserved primarily for him and welfare locked him out of his home, because his woman could get no help as long as he was in the home. The Black man was on his way to becoming extinct. He was endangered.

How do we save our male? The Jews had a similar dilemma. Troubled because of exploitation and racial bigotry Joel declared to them the solution of the problem.

## **Joel 2:15-18**

15 *Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:*

1. **Warn all to return to God**

16 *Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.*

2. **Get everybody together to work on the problem.**

17 *Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?*

3. **The preachers must be involved.**

4. **Pray for good leadership.**

18 *Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.*

5. **God will respond.**

Gentlemen, this is not the time to turn away from God, it is time to turn to God.

Some of us will be casualty of war, just as Paul the Apostle was, but we must remember, this world is not our home, we are just a passing through.

Look what God says in Psalm 126.

## **Ps 126:4-6**

5 *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*

6 *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

We have sowed in tears, and one day we will come home rejoicing.

## A CALL TO THE REMNANT OF AFRICA

### Isa 11:11

*Isa 11:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.*

Africa, the land of Cush, is a continent stretching for some 12 million square miles, 22 % of the world's landmass and only 16% of the world's population.

It is "a land of Amazing contrast, arid desert, dense tropical forest, swamps, and floating islands, vast stretches of savanna land. Great rivers, lakes as large as seas; and even snow near the Equator, on the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro."<sup>1</sup>

She is believed to be the Mother of all civilizations.

Country of the Burnt faces, called by the Greeks Ethiopia,

By the Arabs, the billad of Sudan, which means "Land of the Blacks."

Africa is a land whose people knew not the meaning of failure.

Whenever adversities came, and powerful armies were introduced, unlike any other nations on earth, the Africans showed a remarkable ability to pick up the pieces of His life, and start another great kingdom in some other location.

When Egypt fell, Nubia, then Meroe became the center of Black power.

There was Ethiopia or Axum center of Christianity. Called the Land of the Gods, where Christian churches flourished in magnificence and beauty.

Then there was Ghana, Mali, and Songhi, Glorious Kingdoms whose names the history books pass by.

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<sup>1</sup>Margaret Shinnie, *Ancient African Kingdoms*, 13.

In Songhi it is reported that man made more money selling books than gold. It was in Songhi that the famous University of Timbuktu was organized, with the greatest library in the world, where men came for Greece, Europe, Arabia, Spain and Palestine to study at the feet of the Great African Scholars.

Africa, the land that had what all other men wanted most. Gold, diamonds, ivory, copper, iron ore, and agriculture. This continent was so rich, that according to Herodotus, the Africans bound their prisoners in golden chains in about 430 BC.<sup>2</sup>

The people of Africa were a great people excelling as a line of builders of empires dating back to the Stone Age. They had scholars, scientists, scribes, architects, priests, mathematicians, engineers, stone brick masons, generals, carpenters, artists and sculptors, cloth makers, farmers, teachers, smiths, and blacksmith.

When war was coming, it was to Africa that men looked for military assistance, because the people of Africa had the military might and ability to defeat the coming armies when Senecharib was at the gates of Jerusalem and commanded Hezekiah to surrender Jerusalem. It was to Africa, that word was sent, come quickly, deliver your brothers from the hand of the King of Assyria, and Shibitku ruler of Nubia, sent his brother Tarhaka to the assistance of the Black King Hezekiah, ruler of Israel.

When Senecharib was at the gates of Egypt the Egyptian king wrote to Ethiopia, "Let there be peace among us, let us come to a mutual understanding, let us divide the land between us, no foreigners should rule over us."

Tarhaka according to the Historian Strabo conquered all lands from African to Europe.

The Persian King Cambyses, after he had captured the black Empire of Babylon because Nabonidus was a drunkard and busy partying when he should have been on the guard, decided Africa was to be taken, after all. The men of Africa posed a

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<sup>2</sup>Margaret Shinnie, *Ancient African Kingdom*, 41.

serious threat to His power base, he sent spies into Nubia to check out the land and they were discovered by the Nubian king who asked why they were there. They informed him and he told them their king was unjust, and he took a bow and fired it and told them to go back and tell Cambyses that until he could draw a bow as large, and fire it as far, then he dare not enter Ethiopia, and until then, he should thank the gods who have not put it in the minds of the Sons of Ethiopia to win another man's country. Cambyses was furious and started to make immediate preparation to attack Ethiopia.

The people of Africa and the people of Israel have shared a close relationship. Abraham, father of the Jews, traveled into Africa on a number of occasions to avoid famine in His own land. Jacob's descendants, the Israelites, lived on the continent of Africa for some 450 years. By the time Christ was to be crucified, many Africans had become believers.

It was in Africa, that the strongest churches were to develop, which challenged the very authority of Rome itself, and the African church was so strong with its center at Alexandria, that ultimately there was a split between the African church and the Roman church,

When the world itself followed after Catholicism, and the Crusades and Holy wars were being fought, there was one nation that was quietly serving God in Seclusion. Cut off by Moslems invaders, and fighting for survival, the Land of Cush vigilantly upheld the gospel of Jesus Christ, and during the centuries when the church was to turn from the true Sabbath to Sunday keeping, the Ethiopians or Cushites as they called themselves, committed their ways to God, and upheld the name of His son and His Sabbath. Here sprang up a true breed of Christianity preached by Christ in the first century. It was a Christianity deeply rooted in African soil, with no taint of Colonialism and Catholicism.

The Africans worshiped God as black people usually worship God, with lively services of praise and fervor. "Oh clap your hand all ye people, the Psalmist David wrote, shout unto God with the voice of Triumph, for the lord most High is terrible, he is a great King over all the earth. . . . Sing Praises to our God.

The demise of Africa began with the coming of Islam. Mohammed born in Mecca AD 570 antagonized most of his fellow townsmen, and in 622 he was forced to flee for safety to Medina. A few years later the Prophet returned with an army, cleansed the Kaaba of its idols, and vigorously spread the tenets of His faith throughout Arabia.

After Mohammed's death in AD 632 his monotheistic teachings were compiled in what became known as the Koran at once the Holy of the holies to all Muslims and the repository of Islamic doctrine and obligations. Then followed the most amazing epoch of religious expansion in history. Mohammed had succeeded in organizing the Arabs into a militant proselytizing force which set about to annex new territories and peoples under the banner of Islam. They had one motto, acknowledge Allah as the one and only God, or die.

Islam soon compassed three continents. And the sale of slaves of Africa followed the goods that crossed the continents.

### **Isa 43:3, 10-11**

Isa 43:3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

God gave Egypt and Ethiopia for Israel Why:

Isa 43:10-11

SA 43:10, Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

Isa 43:11, I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

God had caused the downfall of Africa to prove a point, whether black man or white, there was no race on earth powerful enough to withstand Him.

He was the creator God, He was the protector God and the sustainer God. And even though the Africans had extraordinary strength and intellectual genius,

should the African not turn to Him, he would bring his downfall, but not only the African, but any people who would not obey Him

## **What Was the Result of Gods Action?**

### **Ezekiel 30:4-9**

*Eze 30:4 And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down.*

*Eze 30:8 And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and when all her helpers shall be destroyed.*

*Eze 30:9 In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for, lo, it cometh.*

Thus because of our carelessness, God brought judgment upon us and sent us into slavery. Messengers came and took our forefathers to a strange land. They forced us to work on plantations and raped us of our dignity and allowed us to suffer more abuse than any people on earth had suffered before. Why, because we turned from the worship of the true God to the worship of Nature.

I submit to you that the time has come for the Cushite to return to God. In America we live in a land that has robbed us of our heritage, and our historical past we can trace no further back than slavery. They came in their ships, and stole us from our homeland, and our Muslim brothers encouraged it by selling us because we were Christians and they would not tolerate our Christianity.

Or Kingly past, or royal heritage, our mighty forefathers have been robbed from our lineage, and we travel as a people without a history, but God says, I will gather the remnant from Cush. And I am glad the test said Cush and not Ethiopia, because I believe Cush represents blackness, and God was saying He would gather black people from all around the world, the remnant that would remain faithful to Him.

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