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ABSTRACT

A FAMILY ENRICHMENT WORKSHOP TO ENHANCE
COMMUNICATION SKILLS AMONG
AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILIES AT
THE BEREAN SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH IN
BATON ROUGE,
LOUISIANA

by

Robert L. Davis, Sr.

Adviser: Jeffrey Brown, PhD

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A FAMILY ENRICHMENT WORKSHOP TO ENHANCE
COMMUNICATION SKILLS AMONG AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILIES
AT THE BEREAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN BATON
ROUGE, LOUISIANA, USA

Name of researcher: Robert L. Davis, Sr.

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Jeffrey Brown, PhD

Date completed: February 2015

Problem

Research has established that healthy communication skills contribute to marital and family satisfaction among African-Americans. African-American families, in particular, are in need of communication skills and enhancement resources that address their specific ethnic and cultural dynamics.

The Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church is a predominately African-American church located in the Belfair community of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Currently the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not provide any researched family enrichment resources that address the specific dynamics of African-American Seventh-day Adventist families, which makes it necessary for research, resources, and programs to be developed

that assist Seventh-day Adventist African-American families with healthy communication skills to produce greater family satisfaction.

Method

The African-American families of the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church were selected for investigation of improvement of healthy communication skills. Research was conducted and a family communication enrichment seminar was tested as a means of providing the African-American families of the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church with resources to improve family communication skills. The program was comprised of the following:

1. A review of the extant literature was conducted to identify the relevant components to be addressed in the program.
2. A six-week pre-seminar sermon series was presented that taught the biblical principles of healthy family communication.
3. A survey evaluating the effectiveness of the six-week pre-seminar sermon series was administered.
4. A baseline family communication assessment inventory was administered to establish a benchmark of participants' current use of positive communication skills.
5. A one-day, three-part family communication seminar designed to teach healthy family communication techniques was presented.
6. A survey evaluating the effectiveness of the family communication enrichment seminar was administered.
7. An exit family communication assessment inventory was administered to collect data for comparison to the baseline.

8. The data was evaluated, conclusions were made, and recommendations were suggested.

Results

Survey results indicated that participants benefited from the six-week sermon series and also viewed the seminar as beneficial to their understanding of positive family communication. Analysis of the pre- and post-family communication seminar intervention indicated a slight increase of respondents reporting positive family communication between pre and post-seminar assessment inventories. Of the 39 results 20 showed an increase, with seven being statistically significant. Of the 39 results 19 showed a decrease, with six being statistically significant. Statistically significant improvements were made in the areas assessing communication frequency, communication avoidance, and the quality of family of communication.

Conclusions

Five recommendations emerged as a result of this project: a) Replicate research using a larger sample size (100 or more samples) and multiple interventions; b) In the future, allow a longer period of time between assessments to allow participants a greater opportunity to internalize the information presented during pre-sermon series and seminar; c) In the future, have trained surveyors administer inventories; d) In the future, design an inventory to assess family communication that is culturally sensitive to African-American families; e) In the future, include in each component of the program all family members (i.e., children, other adults) of the household, and have them complete pre and post-intervention assessments.

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Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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LOUISIANA

A Project Document
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Robert L. Davis, Sr.

February 2015

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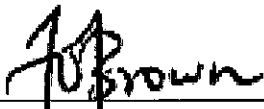
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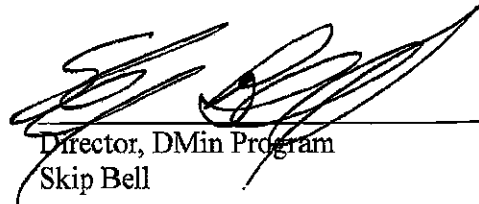
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02/04/2015

Date approved

DEDICATION

To my beautiful wife, Denise: You are my inspiration and my best friend. I was in love with you before I ever knew you. I love you more today than yesterday, but not as much as I will tomorrow. Without you I wouldn't be half the man I am today.

Samantha, Leah, Bobby, and Elise, you are the best children a father could ever ask for! I love y'all so much!

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There are my children: Samantha, Leah, Bobby Jr., and Elise, who remind me how much easier it is to read, research, and write about being a good father than it is to actually be one. I know I have not lived up to the ideal of fatherhood that Jesus exemplified, but this paper represents what I am striving to be by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Last, but actually first, there is my loving wife Denise. Your love and support is so constant that I often take it for granted. You are my greatest cheerleader, and everything I have accomplished in ministry, in life, is because you have stood by my side for richer or poorer, in prosperity and adversity, in sickness and in health. After the ministry of Jesus, you are the greatest proof that God really loves me.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Profile of Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church Community

The Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Baton Rouge, LA was organized in 1936 under the leadership of Elder J. G. Dascent, and has ministered in the Baton Rouge, Louisiana Belfair (Mid-cities) neighborhood for the last 77 years. The Berean community (zip code 70802) has a population of 30,434, of which 80% are African-American. Berean itself is a 100% African-American congregation, averaging approximately 180 attendees per Sabbath, including children and infants.

The demographics of Berean are divided into the following age groups: 17% 0-12 years old, 23% 12-17 years old, 12% 18-25 years old, 13% 26-39 years old, 10% 40-49 years old, 15% 50-59 years old, 8% 60-69 years old, and 2% 70 or above. The marital demographics of the Berean congregation are as follows: 36% single never married, 6% widowed, 27% divorced, 23% married, and 8% separated or in the process of divorce.

The following represents the educational attainment of the members of Berean: 8% no high school, 11% some high school, 14% high school diploma, 3% GED, 33% some college education, 28% college degree or higher. The employment status of the members of Berean is; 55% employed, 14% retired, 29% unemployed or currently enrolled as full-time students. Of the individuals who are currently employed, the

following represents the various income levels of the Berean Church members; 21% \$10K or less, 45% \$11K-39K, 18% \$40K-65K, and 15% \$66K or above.

The following is an overview of the level of member involvement in the main religious services of the church. The following represents the consistency of Berean members' weekly worship service attendance: 87% attend weekly, 3% attend once per month, 3% attend twice per month, and 7% attend 5-20 times per year. The following represents the consistency of the Berean members' weekly Sabbath School attendance: 44% attend weekly, 8% attend once per month, 14% attend twice per month, 15% attend 5-20 times per year, and 19% never attend. The following represents the consistency of the Berean members' AYS attendance: 20% attend weekly, 10% attend once per month, 9% attend twice per month, 31% attend 5-20 times per year, and 30% never attend. The following represents the consistency of the Berean members' weekly Prayer Meeting service attendance: 14% attend weekly, 10% attend once per month, 9% attend twice per month, 31% attend 5-20 times per year, and 30% never attend. The following represents the consistency of the Berean members' evangelistic revival attendance: 17% attend nightly, 31% attend 1-4 per week, 24% attend few times, and 28% never attend.

Statement of the Problem

Research has established that healthy communication skills contribute to marital and family satisfaction among African-Americans (Brooks, 2006). African-American families, in particular, are in need of a communication skills enhancement program that addresses their specific dynamics (Dixon, 2007).

The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist is comprised of 30% African-American compared to only a 12.8% share of the national population, which makes it the main demographic for new membership (Beckworth & Kidder, 2010). While there are resources available for enhancing communication skills within the Seventh-day Adventist families in general, there are not any comprehensively researched family enrichment resources currently developed that address the specific dynamics of African-American Seventh-day Adventist families (AdventSource, 2013). This makes it necessary for research, resources, and programs to be developed that assist Seventh-day Adventist African-American families with healthy communication skills to produce greater family satisfaction.

Statement of the Task

This project seeks to identify the use of positive family communication among the African-American families of the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Baton Rouge, LA. The project will develop and implement a six-week sermon series that teaches the biblical principles of healthy communication. The project will develop and implement a three-part family communication enrichment seminar, entitled “Seasoned With Grace (SWG),” that teaches healthy family communication skills from the ethnic and cultural communication style unique to African-American families. This will be done at the local church level with external information from current literature. The effectiveness of the pre-seminar sermons series and the family communication seminar will be evaluated through surveys and assessment inventories.

Delimitations of the Project

The scope of this project is limited to African-Americans 18 years and older, who are members of the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Baton Rouge, LA, who registered for the Seasoned With Grace Family Communication Seminar, and who heard at least two sermons from the six-week pre-seminar sermons series. This project does not seek to be exhaustive and will not try to research non-Seventh-day Adventist African-Americans, or non-African-American Seventh-day Adventist families. This particular focus has been chosen as it grows organically out of the present ministry context of the researcher.

Description of the Project Process

The theological reflection focused on the survey of the biblical teachings regarding healthy communication as revealed in the various divisions of the Bible, namely the Torah, the Nevi'im, the Ketuvim, the Gospels, and the Epistles. Lastly, the biblical mandate for families, husbands and wives, and parents and children, to employ these healthy communication principles in their family communication was explored.

Next, current literature was reviewed. This review examined literature that contributes to a deeper understanding of African-American family communication. Most of the literature represented recent scholarship. The literature was organized into four categories: First, current literature regarding theories of family function and communication. Second, research on positive (healthy) communication within families, with a section focusing on the writings of Ellen White relating to healthy communication within families. Third, scholarly works on the dynamics of the African-American family

and the African-American family structure. Fourth, literature discussing communication techniques and the African-American family.

Next, an intervention was conducted at the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church, with 49 African-American adult members participating. The intervention was twofold: First, a six-week pre-seminar sermon series was presented that taught the participants the biblical principles of healthy family communication. Second, a one-day three-part family communication seminar entitled “Seasoned With Grace” was presented, which taught participants positive family communication within the context of the African-American communication style.

Next, the intervention was evaluated. The perceived effectiveness of the six-week sermon series, in teaching the biblical principles on healthy family communication, was measured using Pre-Seminar Sermon Series Evaluation Form. The perceived effectiveness of SWG, in teaching healthy family communication skills, was measured using the Seasoned With Grace Family Enrichment Seminar Evaluation Form. The effectiveness of SWG intervention was measured using the 25-question assessment inventory Primary Communication Inventory (Narvan, 1967), and the 14-question assessment inventory Family Communication Scale (Olson & Larson, 2008).

Finally, the entire experience was documented and added to the final work of the project document in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree at Andrews University Theological Seminary, submitted May 2014.

Definition of Terms

The majority of the language used in this paper is terminology used in the study of the social sciences and theology. Below are a list of terms and their definitions to help clarify what is meant when these terms are used within this manuscript.

Positive (Healthy) Family Communication: Positive family communication refers to those communication skills that families employ when communicating with each other, that facilitate appropriate levels of cohesion and adaptability. This includes behaviors such as self-disclosure, clarity, attentive listening, demonstration of empathy, and staying on topic during conflict (Olson, 2000).

Ethnic Cultural: Ethnicity and culture are not the same. While the concepts of ethnicity and culture are broad, this paper refers to ethnicity from a physiological and biological perspective. This paper refers to culture from a sociological perspective, as a people group that share such things as artistic styles, religious beliefs, and community practices. Ethnic cultural is the term that refers to styles, practices and beliefs that are shared, not only by a group of people with the same ethnicity, but who also identify with the same culture.

African-American: African-American has several definitions, which include indigenous black Americans, as well as naturalized black Americans of Caribbean, South American, and African descent. The use of the term in this paper refers to individuals who are indigenous Americans of African ancestry, and whose families share the slavery and Jim Crow experience, as well as the modern history of Blacks in America.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Introduction

The theology of God's teachings and principles on establishing healthy communication among families emerges from examining two interwoven biblical perspectives. The first perspective is where God, through His word, lays out basic principles for how all humans can achieve healthy communication in their interpersonal relationships with each other. The second perspective is where God, through His word, gives clear mandates on how His followers should employ healthy communication in their family relationships.

This chapter seeks to explore these biblical perspectives by examining the biblical principles of healthy communication, and the biblical mandate for families to employ healthy communication techniques. The chapter is outlined in this way:

1. The Biblical Foundation of Healthy Communication
 - a. Survey of Biblical Principles Regarding Healthy Communication in the Torah
 - b. Survey of Biblical Principles Regarding Healthy Communication in the Nevi'im
 - c. Survey of Biblical Principles Regarding Healthy Communication in the Ketuvim

- d. Survey of Biblical Principles Regarding Healthy Communication in the Gospels
 - e. Survey of Biblical Principles Regarding Healthy Communication in the Epistles
2. Biblical Mandate for Families to Employ Healthy Communication Techniques
 - a. Healthy Communication Between Husbands and Wives
 - b. Healthy Communication Between Parents and Children
 3. Summary

The Biblical Foundation of Healthy Communication

The first biblical perspective on establishing healthy communication among families requires a survey of the basic biblical teachings and principles of healthy communication. From here a more complete picture of the biblical teachings and principles of healthy communication emerge as we investigate how these principles of healthy communication are applied to various family relationships.

Survey of Biblical Principles Regarding Healthy Communication in the Torah

Torah is the Hebrew word for law, and represents the first five books of the Bible from Genesis to Deuteronomy. Genesis, the first and largest book of the Torah, does not give any explicit commands from God regarding communication. However, there is evidence in the first few chapters of Genesis that there was open communication between God and man. First, according to Genesis 2:15-17 God communicates with Adam His desire for Adam not to eat from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Second, in

Genesis 2:22 God communicates with Adam through bringing him a wife; "...made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." Third, Genesis 3 provides an example of the Edenic face-to-face communication. Genesis 3:8 suggests that it was God's practice to daily communicate with Adam and Eve face-to-face, and they anticipated His arrival when He came to the garden. Lastly, Genesis 3:8-19 demonstrates that God engaged in open communication with Adam and Eve regarding expectations, relationships, consequences for actions, and reconciliation.

Genesis informs us that at the Tower of Babel God confounded the human language for the purpose of making it more difficult for humans to understand and communicate with each other (Gen 11:6-9). Keil and Delitzsch (1996) describe the miraculous event of Genesis 11 as a disturbance "in the unity of emotion, thought, and will" resulting in a "suspension of mutual understanding" (p. 111). This description of the account of Genesis 11 gives one explanation as to why it is necessary for other books of the Bible to address communication—to reestablish healthy communication that had been confounded at Babel.

Another observation of Genesis reveals that much of family communication demonstrated in Genesis is between father and son. Little communication of mothers with their children is recorded in Genesis, the case of Rebekah's communication with Jacob being the exception (Genesis 27). The majority of communication between father and son involved the transference of inheritance, and patriarchal succession from one generation to the next.

The final observation from Genesis that gives insight into healthy communication comes from the interaction of Joseph with his ten older brothers. "And when his [Joseph]

brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him” (Gen 37:4). Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown (1997) state, “The hostile relationship that Joseph’s brothers developed towards him impacted their ability to communicate with him peacefully. The habitual refusal of Joseph’s brethren, therefore, to meet him with ‘the salaam,’ showed how ill-disposed [hostile] they were towards him” (p. 57).

The remaining four books of the Torah present three principles relating to healthy communication. The three principles, not presented in any order of importance, are commands from God given to Israel upon their exodus from Egypt.

Principle one is God’s command to not act deceitfully. “Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another” (Lev 19:11). Swanson (1997) expounds upon the translation of “deal falsely” (שָׁחַד) as to act with deception in a relationship. Thus the command requires truthfulness in communications and to avoid any deceptive speech or tactics in communication. This principle is further expounded upon in God’s command to “neither lie to one another” (Lev 19:11). Landes’ (2001) elaboration of this principle highlights the fact that God was addressing communication within the context of a relationship, when he defines (שָׁקַר) as “to break faith” with one another.

Principle two addresses deliberate false misrepresentation regarding an individual’s character or actions. This principle has application in two human relationships, both the legal and the social. “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor” (Exod 20:16) is reiterated in Exod 23:1 and Deut 5:20. This bearing of false witness is deliberate misrepresentations within the context of a legal proceeding. “Do not go about spreading slander among your people” (Lev 19:16) (“NIV Bible,” 1984).

Slander or talebearer among the people refers to deliberate misrepresentations within the social context, as noted by Péter-Contesse and Ellington (1992). They observe the various Bible translations, “‘Among your people...’ But many modern versions interpret it with varying degrees of strictness: ‘your countrymen’ (NJV) or ‘your own family’ (NJB). NEB translates ‘your father’s kin.’”

Principle three is the command for children to demonstrate respect when communicating with their parents. Four scriptures from the Torah discuss this principle: Exod 21:17, Exod 20:12, Lev 20:9, and Deut 27:16. These four scriptures and their implications for healthy communication will be discussed in the section of this paper called “Healthy Communication Between Parents and Children.”

Survey of Biblical Principles Regarding Healthy Communication in the Nevi'im

The second main division of the Old Testament writings is the Nevi'im, or the prophets. This refers to the books of the Old Testament from Isaiah to Malachi. In the prophets, three basic principles are repeated building upon the instructions given in the Torah. The first principle is not as much a command as it is an example or warning of what happens when a community is full of deceit and lying. God declares that He will avenge the nations that speak deceit, describing the deceitful communication of the individuals and its ultimate results in Jer 9:3-9:

They bend their tongues like bows; they have grown strong in the land for falsehood, and not for truth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, says the LORD. Beware of your neighbors, and put no trust in any of your kin; for all your kin are supplanters, and every neighbor goes around like a slanderer. They all deceive their neighbors, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongues to speak lies; they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent. Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit! They refuse to know me, says the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: I will now refine and test them, for what else can I do with my sinful

people? Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks deceit through the mouth. They all speak friendly words to their neighbors, but inwardly are planning to lay an ambush. Shall I not punish them for these things? says the LORD; and shall I not bring retribution on a nation such as this? (NRSV)

The prophet Isaiah numerates the sins of Israel that has caused God not to hear their prayers. Again, deceit and lies are identified as key components of unhealthy communication. In this comprehensive list of sins, he refers to speaking lies as one of the downfalls of the Israel nation, saying in Isa 59:3 and vv. 9-10:

For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue hath muttered perverseness. . . . Therefore is judgment far from us, Neither doth justice overtake us: We wait for light, but behold obscurity; For brightness, *but* we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, And we grope as if *we had* no eyes: We stumble at noonday as in the night; *We are* in desolate places as dead *men*.

Another principle of healthy communication illustrated in the Prophets is frequent communication. This principle is demonstrated through the writings of Malachi who was contrasting those who complained against God, declaring how vain it is to serve God (Mal 3:14), with those who feared the Lord (Mal 3:16). However, those who fear God were identified as speaking often to “one another” (עִרְוֹ) (Mal 3:16). “One another” (עִרְוֹ) means more than mere acquaintances, but rather people we associate with, and for whom we have personal affection (Swanson, 1997), elevating this communication to the realm of intimate interpersonal relationships.

Lastly, the prophets articulate that one component of healthy communication is being able to offer encouraging words within a relationship. This principle is brought to light as Isaiah and Jeremiah give the rationale for their prophetic calling in Isa 50:4 and Jer 1:10, respectively. While many scholars, such as Keil and Delitzsch (1996), view these scriptures as referring to the prophetic responsibility of restoring the repentant (p.

28), these scriptures also establish a principle for utilizing encouraging or restorative words as part of healthy communication in relationships.

Survey of Biblical Principles Regarding Healthy Communication in the Ketuvim

Most of God's instruction and counsel regarding healthy communication in the Old Testament is found in the writings portion of the Bible called Ketuvim. The Ketuvim refers to the historical accounts of the Israelites as recorded in the books of the Old Testament from Joshua to Esther, and the poetry books of the Old Testament from Psalms to Song of Solomon. Below is a survey of the principles regarding healthy communication as revealed in the Ketuvim.

Communication should strengthen, and bring comfort and healing (Prov 15:4; Job 16:5, Prov 10:11; 12:6; 12:18; 16:24; 10:21; 12:25). Spence-Jones (1909a) elaborates on this principle, as revealed in Prov 15:4, by explaining the tongue that brings healing and that soothes by its words is speech from a refreshing source and "vivifies all who come under its influence, like the wholesome fruit of a prolific tree" (p. 291).

Communication should increase wisdom and knowledge (Prov 15:2 & 7; 16:23; 16:21; Pss 37:30; 49:3). According to Smith (1996), the words of those who practice healthy communication "provide encouragement and enlightenment to all who hear them. On the other hand . . . fools do not spread knowledge, but spiritual ignorance and misunderstanding" (p. 573).

Communication should be acceptable to God (Ps 19:14; Ps 34:13; Prov 12:13-14). Jamieson et al. (1997) suggest that Ps 34:14 reference to keeping the tongue from evil

and the lips from speaking guile, helps us to understand that healthy communication, as demonstrated in our relations to man, is based on us having a right relationship with God.

Communication should be thoughtful and demonstrate restraint, so we do not sin with our tongues (Ps 39:1; Eccl 5:2; Prov 15:28; 10:29; 17:27-28; 10:19; 12:23; 25:11; 10:32; 4:24; 13:3; 21:23; Eccl 10:12-13; Prov 18:13; 11:12; 15:23; Ps 141:3). Jamieson et al. (1997) maintain that these scriptures encourage the development of healthy communication through watching the use of the tongue, or to “literally, ‘muzzle for my mouth.’”

Communication should be truthful (Ps 15:2; Prov 17:20; 12:19; 12:22; 8:7-8; 24:26; 16:13). Harris (2006) asserts that healthy communication occurs when truthful statements are first formulated in the mind and then honestly revealed in one’s speech. Moreover, both Prov 28:23 and Prov 27:5-6 teach that even in the cases where it is necessary to rebuke someone, it is better to do so honestly than to deceive the person through tacit silence.

Communication should be gentle, and seek to avoid wrath, confusion and quarrels (Prov 15:1; 14:16-17; 14:29; 29:22). Spence-Jones (1909a) explains that the Bible teaches healthy communication is demonstrated when our answers are gentle and conciliatory. The Septuagint translates the expression “soft answer” (ὑποπίπτουσα) as a submissive answer designed to avert wrath. Moreover, this principle is in keeping with Prov 20:3, which demonstrates that the Ketuvim considers it honorable to be able to avoid strife.

Communication is enhanced thorough confessing and admitting faults (Prov 28:13; 6:2-5). Henry (1994) contends that healthy human interaction (communication) is

hampered when one minimizes, excuses, denies, extenuates, diminishes, or throws the blame of their sin upon others (p. 1018).

Communication becomes stressed thorough quarreling and strife (Prov 17:14; 27:15-16; 21:19; 25:24; 22:10; 26:21; 16:28). Henry (1994) makes the following observation regarding the effects of contention, quarrelling, and strife on healthy communication:

One hot word, one peevish reflection, one angry demand, one spiteful contradiction, begets another, and that a third, and so on, till it proves like the cutting of a dam. . . . A good caution inferred thence, to take heed of the first spark of contention and to put it out as soon as ever it appears. (p. 993)

Communication should have the confidence of confidentiality (Prov 11:13; 17:9).

Garrett (1993) states, “The wise not only refrain from lies and slander, but they also know how to keep a matter private” (p. 125). It becomes clear that this scripture has relevance in family communication when Reyburn and Fry (2000) explain that this trustworthy confidentiality refers to the keeping of private information “for the good of the life of the community [family or relationship]” (p. 247).

Survey of Biblical Principles Regarding Healthy Communication in the Gospels

The Gospels focus on the life and teachings of Jesus, and comprise the first four books of New Testament from Matthew through John. The understanding we have regarding the life and teachings of Jesus comes almost exclusively from the Gospels. Within this context we gain insight into Jesus’ teachings regarding healthy communication. Below is a survey of the principles regarding healthy communication as revealed in the Gospels.

Healthy communication is truthful (Matt 5:33-37). White (1896a) expounds upon this scripture with the following description of the necessity of truthfulness in communication: “These words condemn . . . the deceptive compliments, the evasion of truth, the flattering phrases, the exaggerations... They teach that no one who tries to appear what he is not, or whose words do not convey the real sentiment of his heart, can be called truthful” (p. 68). Tofilon and Tofilon (2007) suggest that this honesty (truthfulness) is also demonstrated in our ability to be transparent with each other, which establishes an opening for relationships. Individuals who are unable to be open, honest and transparent are referred to as “emotionally opaque.”

Healthy communication comes from a righteous heart (Matt 12:33-37; Luke 6:43-45). Campbell’s (2008) commentary teaches that this text, “means that we must weigh our words carefully. . . . Our words, according to Jesus, show the condition of our hearts (v. 34). That is why Jesus can say that words will either condemn us or justify us (v. 37), since they reveal our true character” (p. 73).

Healthy communication is thoughtful. Jesus reveals that we are judged by the idle things we say (Matt 12:36-37). Jesus refers to this idle speech with the Greek word *ἀργός*, which means things that are said “without careful thought, careless” (Friberg, Friberg, & Miller, 2000). Weber (2000) says, “Words must be used with care. Careless words are like loaded guns that are handled recklessly” (p. 178).

Healthy communication is free of personal attacks and insults (Matt 5:21-22). The word “Raca” comes from the word, *ῥακά*, which in Jesus’ times was an “expression of contempt” to refer to someone as “good-for-nothing” (Thomas, 1998). Thus healthy communication should be free of expressions of contempt.

Healthy communication should be for reconciliation not retaliation (Matt 5:23-24; 5:43-45; 18:15; Luke 17:3-4). According to Nolland (2005), the injunction “first be reconciled” is mentioned within the context of a relationship that has deteriorated to the point of insults and name-calling (p. 232). Jesus explains that a key component in bringing about reconciliation is a willingness to forgive. Jesus identified forgiveness as such an important step towards reconciliation that He stated if we do not forgive others God will not forgive us (Matt 6:14-15; Mark 11:25-26).

Survey of Biblical Principles Regarding Healthy Communication in the Epistles

The Epistles are the books of the New Testament from Romans through Revelation. They are comprised in large part of the Apostle Paul’s writings, and seek to translate the life and teachings of Jesus into everyday Christian living. Below is a survey of the principles regarding healthy communication as revealed in the New Testament Epistles.

Healthy communication happens when learning to control our tongue (James 1:26; 3:2-10; James 1:19-21). The Apostle James teaches that controlling our tongues helps rid our communication of wrath and filthiness. Robertson (1933) notes that bridle (*χαλιναγωγέω* [chalinagōgeō]) paints the picture of a man putting the bridle in his own mouth, indicting it is our responsibility to control our speech.

Healthy communication demonstrates grace (Col 4:6; 1 Pet 2:21; 1 Pet 3:8-9; Rom 12:14; Eph 4:29-32). Speech that is with grace, or that ministers grace, is communication that it seeks to build others up. In an attempt to build others up, healthy communication does not retaliate when it has been treated wrong. McNaughton (2006)

explains that we must be very careful to be gracious and wise when speaking. Our speech should not be abusive or vindictive, but truthful and loving. We must develop the habit of speaking the right words at the right time (p. 87). Paul further describes this type of communication by saying, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph 4:31-32).

Healthy communication is pure and holy (James 1:21; Col 3:8; Eph 5:4; Col 3:8; 1 Pet 2:1). Spence-Jones (1909b) observes that James is addressing speech that is of a vicious or malignant nature, which is bent on doing others harm. Furthermore, Paul admonishes us to avoid ungodly speech in 2 Tim 2:16: “Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly” (NIV).

Healthy communication confesses faults and mistakes (James 5:16). Vincent (1887) explains that the word confess comes from the Greek word, *ἐξομολογεῖσθε*. The use of the preposition *ἐξ*, (forth, out) implies our confessions should be full, frank, and open confessions.

Healthy communication is honest (Col 3:9; Eph 4:15, 25; James 5:12). Anders (1999) expounds on “lying” found in Col 3:9: “Perverved passions, hot tempers, and sharp tongues are to be removed. . . . These things, along with lying to each other, are not appropriate behavior” (p. 329). Melick (1991) further observes that this command speaks to more than just verbal lying. It addresses all falsehood, whether verbal or other actions.

Healthy communication does not speak evil about others (James 4:11; Titus 3:2). Ellsworth (2009) says, “To speak evil” . . . of a person is to find fault with him, to speak

disparagingly of him, to gossip maliciously about him” (p. 139). This type of communication is unacceptable and sad because we are members of the same body (family). It is far from a trivial matter when we are attacking one another.

Healthy communication does not retaliate (1 Pet 3:8-9; 1 Cor 4:12-13). A natural outgrowth of not retaliating when wronged is the act of forgiveness. Wuest (1997) says that the Greek words used for “rendering evil for evil” actually mean to exchange or to give back. In contrast, our communication should be constantly blessing. Paul, in Col 3:13, says that our forgiveness should mirror the Lord’s forgiveness, “bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive” (ESV).

Healthy communication encourages others through the use of God’s word (Col 3:16; Eph 5:19). Melick (1991) asserts that since true peace (especially within relationships) comes from Christ, the words we speak to each other should also be from Him. Thus, as the concept of admonishing has the element of strong encouragement, our speech should be used to encourage others. This principle is further illustrated in Eph 5:19 where Paul encourages the believers to encourage each other through the use of God’s word by saying, “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord” (NIV).

Healthy communication seeks to eliminate fights and quarrels (James 4:1-3; 2 Cor 12:20; 2 Tim 2:23-24). Paul identifies one of the qualities of being a child of God as someone who avoids arguing when he says in Phil 2:14-15, “Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God

without fault” (NIV, 1984). Paul states that constant bickering and arguing will ultimately result in destroying or consuming each other (Gal 5:15).

Biblical Mandate for Families to Employ Healthy Communication Techniques

God establishes himself as the ultimate model for humans to imitate in their interpersonal relationships (Matt 5:45, 48). “God’s communication to man is the model for our communication with each other” (Chapman, 2003, p. 38). Having surveyed the principles of healthy communication, as revealed in the various sections of the Bible, we have gained a better understanding of God, His ideals for interpersonal relationships, and His definition of healthy communication. This final section of this paper will explore ways the Bible suggests these principles of healthy communication are to be revealed within the family.

Healthy Communication Between Husbands and Wives

The principles of healthy communication between husbands and wives build on the principles previously examined throughout the scriptures. The essence of the principles regarding the specific uniqueness of the marital relationship is essentially revealed through four scriptures of the New Testament epistles: 1 Cor 7:3, Col 3:18-19, Eph 5:22-33, and 1 Pet 3:1-10.

When Paul begins his discussion concerning spouses being responsible for fulfilling each other’s sexual needs (1 Cor 7:4-7), he begins with these words, “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband” (1 Cor 7:3). Jamieson et al. (1997) summarize the interpretation of phrase “due

benevolence” similar to many other scholars, as to mean “the conjugal cohabitation due by the marriage contract” (p. 728).

Liddell (1996) observes a larger context for the uses of the term benevolence, from the Greek word, *εὖνοια*, to mean goodwill, favor, and kindness. Within this understanding of Paul’s admonition the term (*εὖνοια*) takes on larger implications beyond the sexual relationship to include spousal communication. For if benevolence, goodwill, and kindness are required in the intimacy of the sexual relationship, it stands to reason that Liddell’s definition transcends into all areas of spousal communication.

This concept is elaborated upon in Col 3:18-19 when Paul states, “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them” (NIV). Many scholars agree with Wuest (1997) and Robertson (1933) and do not include communication in their explanation of the Greek word (*πικραινω*) found in Col 3:19. Wuest does not translate (*πικραινω*) to mean harsh, but rather to “be bitter” or “to embitter, exasperate, irritate” (p. 229). Robertson observes that the Colossians uses the “present middle imperative in prohibition: Stop being bitter or do not have the habit of being bitter” (p. 529).

However, as we examine the Col 3:19 use of the word, *πικραινω*, we can also understand the text to include husbands’ verbal and nonverbal communication with their wives. The text suggests that Paul intends for husbands to communicate with their wives in ways that are not considered bitter or harsh. This becomes clear through the NIV translation of Col 3:19, “Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.”

The most thorough analogy and treatise presented in scripture regarding the relationship of husband and wife is given in Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus. Paul says,

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph 5:22-32)

It is beyond the scope of this paper to conduct a complete exegesis of the aforementioned text. For the purpose of this study we will look at Paul's summary given in verse 33. Paul says, "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband" (Eph 5:33). Paul teaches that the wife's interaction with the husband should communicate respect. This respect is shown in what Paul refers to as (*ὑποτάσσω*) submission. The Col 3:18 in the NIV says, "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord" (1984). Peter expresses this same sentiment when he says, "Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands" (1 Pet 3:1).

In Ephesians 5, Paul continues with the theme of the husbands communicating with their wives in ways that do not express harshness. However, in Ephesians Paul expands this principle by saying that all of the husband's communication with his wife should convey love (Eph 5:25-32; cf. Eggerichs, 2004). To emphasize the importance of

the husband conveying love in his communications with his wife, Paul concludes his discourse on marital communication by telling the husband, “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself” (Eph 5:33). Again, Peter expresses this same sentiment when he says, “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pet 3:7).

Finally, it is well to note that Paul begins (and Peter ends) his explanation of communication in marriage by explaining the mutual responsibility of both husbands and wives to communicate with each other in a way that implements all the biblical principles regarding healthy communication. Paul says healthy communication is a mutual responsibility: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Eph 5:21).

Peter highlights the basic tenets of the biblical teachings on healthy communication when he concludes his statements on communication in the marriage relationship. Like Paul, Peter says that healthy communication must be mutual, “one to another,” and “for one another,” when he says in 1 Pet 3:8-10, “Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing” (NRSV).

Healthy Communication Between Parents and Children

The communication between parents and children has to be seen within its hierarchal context of the child being the subordinate. A principle founded upon the fifth commandment of Exod 20:12 and reiterated through Paul, who in two separate writings

says, “Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” (Col 3:20); and “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Eph 6:1-3).

Four Scriptures from the Torah discuss the principle of respect when children communicate with their parents: Exod 21:17, Exod 20:12, Lev 20:9, and Deut 27:16. The most severe consequence is reserved for children who do not demonstrate honor in their communications. Moses command in Deut 27:16, “Cursed *is* the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt. And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’” (NKJV). God says, “And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death” (Exod 21:17). God repeats this principle when He says, “For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him” (Lev 20:9).

Hannah (1985) observes that there are four crimes punishable by death in Exodus 21: “premeditated murder (vv. 12, 14; cf. the sixth commandment in 20:13 and Gen. 9:6); physical violence against parents (Exod 21:15); kidnapping (v. 16; cf. Deut 24:7); and verbal abuse of parents” (p. 141). God strongly condemns children using verbal abuse and disrespect in their communication with parents. The tenor of the Bible is to teach that children’s communication with their parents should express respect.

The parents’ communication toward their children should be predicated upon the basic biblical principles of healthy communication already discussed. Paul, addressing the specifics of the parent-child relationship, adds two additional ideas: parents’ communication with their children should engender respect and not provocation; and

parents' communication with their children should nurture and instruct (cf. Eggerichs, 2013).

Parents should be careful that their communication with their children is not nagging, which is provocative. This principle is taught in Paul's words to the church in Colossae, "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged" (Col 3:21). Robertson (1933) notes the use of the present imperative of verb from *ἐρεθω* (provoke) literally means to habitually nag. Paul reiterates this principle and expounds when he says, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph 6:4).

The final words of the Ephesians 6 passage clarify the idea that parents' communication with their children should nurture and instruct. Paul further explains the proper method of communication using the terms nurture and admonition. His use of the word, *παιδεία*, suggests that parents' communication should instill discipline, and provide instruction, and training (Newman, 1993).

However, along with nurture, parental communication should provide admonition. Admonition, from the Greek word *νουθεσία*, refers to encouragement-based communication, which leads to correct behavior. According to Zodhiates (2000), this type of communication "appeals to the conscience, will, and reasoning faculties" (*νουθεσία nouthesia*, entry 3559). This is in harmony with the Old Testament passages discussing parental communication such as the proverb that says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6), and God's words to Israel, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when

thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut 6:6-7).

Summary

The theology of healthy communication emerges from a survey of the principles of healthy communication expressed in the various divisions of the Bible, through exploring God’s communication in His interpersonal relationships, and through examining the biblical mandate for healthy communication in the different family relationships. This investigation into biblical communication reveals that healthy communication is truthful, forgiving, seeks to promote harmony in the relationship, edifies the individuals in the relationship, and contributes to building the relationship rather than creating conflict.

Developing a sermon series, as well as a family enrichment seminar, that teaches individuals and families of the church how to apply these principles within their relationships in practical and contemporary ways is a task addressed more fully in Chapter 4. The biblical evidence supports the methods and materials in the proposed seminar and gives the guiding principles for implementation within the community of faith—the church. The greatest challenge is implementing these principles into specific individual relationships, especially in light of the challenges facing the African-American family.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Literature relating to communication and the African-American family is diverse. Socha and Diggs (1999) and Gudykunst and Lee (2001) have established the need for study of family communication within the context of ethnicity and culture (Vangelisti, 2004). Early research by Du Bois (1908), Frazier (1939), and Moynihan (1965), as well as studies by Dixon (2009) and others, have documented the cultural specifics of African-American family life. Kochman (1972, 1981), Jackson (2004), Socha and Diggs (1999), and others have explored the uniqueness of African-American communication, and have called for additional studies to be conducted, arguing that there is much need for additional research into the African-American family, the specifics of communication within African-American families, and how communication affects family satisfaction.

This literature review will examine literature that contributes to a deeper understanding of positive (healthy) communication, the uniqueness of the African-American family and African-American communication, and positive (healthy) communication within the African-American family.

The works considered for this paper are limited to those published between 2003 and 2013, except for the writing of Ellen White, historical reports, or other works that are

deemed of special value to this study. The literature reviewed was divided into four subsections: First, current literature regarding theories of family function and communication. Second, research on positive (healthy) communication within families, with a section focusing on the writings of Ellen White relating to healthy communication within families. Third, scholarly works on the dynamics of the African-American family and the African-American family structure. Fourth, literature discussing communication techniques and the African-American family. The chapter is outlined in this way:

1. Introduction
2. Family Communication Theory
3. Family Systems Theory
4. Healthy Communication Techniques
 - a. Olson's Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems
 - b. The McMaster Model
 - c. Conflict Strategies In Martial Observation Research
5. Children and Positive Family Communication
6. Healthy Communication Principles Identified in the Writings of Ellen White
 - a. Healthy Communication Between Husbands and Wives
 - b. Healthy Communication Between Parents and Children
7. Six Areas of Healthy Family Communication
8. Dynamics of the African-American Family
 - a. History of the African-American Family in America
 - b. African-American Family Structure

9. Communication Techniques and the African American-Family
 - a. The Need For Understanding Ethnic Culture In Family Communication
 - b. African-American Communication Style
 - c. Communication and the Dynamics of the African-American Family
 - d. African-American Communication and Family Conflict
10. Summary of Literature Findings

Family Communication Theory

Family communication theories need to be understood within the context of the theories of family relationships, because the two are uniquely interconnected (Segrin & Flora, 2005). Braithwaite and Baxter (2006) offer an eclectic definition of family as “a social group” of two or more persons, characterized by ongoing interdependence with long-term commitments that stem from blood, law, or affection” (p. 3).

Stamp (2004) examined 1,254 articles on family relationships, of which 1,152 were empirical in nature. Stamp identified the following 16 theories as those occurring most frequently, along with the number of times the theory appeared in different research articles: Attachment Theory (61), Family Life Course Theory (54), Family Systems Theory (50), Role Theory (38), Exchange Theory (34), Network Theory (28), Theory of Marital Types (24), Feminist Theory (18), Social Learning Theory (18), Attribution/Accounts Theory (15), Narrative Theory (14), Dialectical Theory (14), Social Construction Theory (10), Symbolic Interactionism (9), Equity Theory (9), and Interdependence Theory (9).

Braithwaite and Baxter (2006), relying on theoretical presence in family communication literature, identified over twenty family communication theories in their research. These theories are: communication accommodation theory, communication privacy management theory, family communication pattern theory, goals-plans-action theories (an array of theories from within theories of message production), inconsistent nurture as control theory, narrative performance theory, relational communication theory, relational dialectics theory, symbolic convergence theory, attachment theory, attribution theories, critical feminist theories, emotional regulation theory, social theories, social exchange theories, social learning theory, stress and adaptation theory, structuration theory, systems theory, and the theory of natural selection.

While Braithwaite and Baxter (2006) examine an array of family communication theories, other scholars, like Le Poire (2006), contend that role theory, family systems theory, and rules theory are the theories with the strongest “enduring ability to describe, explain, and predict communication behavior within families across a wide variety of situations and forms” (p. 56). Le Poire explains the three theories as follows: role theory is the way we communicate within our families to carry out the various roles we hold within the family structure: family systems theory examines the entire interdependent structure of the family to explain why individual family members communicate the way they do within the family structure: and rules theory examines the rules—verbal and nonverbal—that govern communication within the family structure.

Family Systems Theory

Of the various traditional and contemporary theories of family communication, family systems has the greatest influence on this project. Vangelisti (2004) explains why

she relies on family systems in her work by stating, “Families are systems. Family members and family relationships are interdependent. They simultaneously influence, and are influenced by each other. Change in one component of the system affects all other components. Because the various parts of family systems are interconnected, families are best conceived as ‘wholes’ and should be studied with regard to the interrelationship of the parts” (Vangelisti, 2004, p. ix).

Segrin and Flora (2005) recognize family systems as the “dominant paradigm in family science” (p. 32), but offer insight into various criticisms of the theory that scholars have raised over the years. They identify four criticisms of family systems: First, family systems should be viewed as a philosophical perspective, not a theory. Second, it is hard to test family systems’ hypothesis because of the ambiguity and generality that exist in family systems theory. Third, family systems theory places too great an emphasis on all family members in influencing the experiences of the family. Fourth, feminist scholars argue that family systems fail to take into account the imbalance existing in the greater power and resources that men possess.

Healthy Communication Techniques

Segrin and Flora’s (2005) claim that the foundation of power, decision making, conflict resolution, and intimacy within families is family communication, and Le Poire’s (2006) assertion that the two primary functions of family communication are nurturing and control, may be combined into a single framework for understanding what constitutes healthy communication. The evidence suggests that family communication revolves

around the exercise of power, decision making, conflict resolution and intimacy, and produces either nurture or control.

Much of our understanding about family communication centers on family conflict, and the way communication is employed to resolve conflict. The preponderance of research suggests healthy communication is often communication that produces the greatest family satisfaction resulting from efficient conflict resolution (Vangelisti, 2004).

As it relates to conflict, the focus of researchers has almost entirely been on the direct effects of family communication patterns on conflict behaviors and conflict management styles. Researchers have discovered that overall family conversation orientations, outside of the conflict resolution process, are associated with positive healthy conflict management and resolution skills. Family conversation orientation is also referred to as “communication climate” (Schrodt & Ledbetter, 2007, p. 334).

Researchers suggest that a family’s conversation orientation either creates a communication climate that encourages conflict avoidance behaviors, such as passive or passive aggressive acts, or a communication climate that promotes open discussion and allows for opinions on different topics and issues to be freely expressed (Barbato, Graham, & Perse, 2003; Schrodt & Ledbetter, 2007).

Thus the goal of improving communication skills within the family is to create a positive communication climate. Various empirically-based models identify the principles and elements of positive family communication. From these various family functioning models we gain an understating of the principles and elements of positive family communication.

Olson's Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems

Sergin and Flora (2005) state that the Circumplex Model is the “premier model of family functioning” (p. 17). Olson's Circumplex Model focuses on three dimensions that have been repeatedly considered highly relevant among a variety of family therapy models and family therapy approaches within the relational systems. The three dimensions of the Circumplex Model are family cohesion, flexibility, and communication (Olson & Gorall, 2003).

The third dimension within the Circumplex Model, communication, is regarded as a facilitating dimension. In other words, “positive communication” is essential for facilitating changes and creating balance in the other two dimensions of family cohesion and flexibility (Olson & Gorall, 2003). Sergin and Flora (2005) explain,

As families grow, develop and change it is often necessary for them to adjust their adaptability and cohesion in order to maintain optimal functioning. Positive communication behaviors such as self-disclosure, clarity, attentive listening, demonstration of empathy, and staying on topic are assumed to facilitate such adjustments in adaptability and cohesion. (p. 20)

For Olson and Gorall (2003,) what constitutes positive communication is measured by focusing on the family's level of ability with regard to

listening skills, speaking skills, self-disclosure, clarity continuity tracking, and respect and regard. Listening skills include empathy and attentive listening. Speaking skills include speaking for oneself and not speaking for others. Self-disclosure relates to sharing feelings about oneself and the relationship. Tracking refers to staying on topic, and respect and regard refer to the affective aspects of communication. (p. 520)

The McMaster Model

Another model of family communication that has been researched and evaluated over the years is the McMaster Model of Family Functioning (Epstein, Bishop, & Levin,

1978). The McMaster Model suggests that family communication can be clear or masked and direct or indirect, and has identified four communication patterns arising from these communication styles: clear and direct communication, clear and indirect communication, masked and direct communication, and masked and indirect communication. The McMaster model recommends clear and direct communication as the most effective form of communication for families (Miller, Ryan, Keitner, Bishop, & Epstein, 2000).

Conflict Strategies in Marital Observation Research

Vangelisti (2004) identifies four types of conflict strategies that varied along two continua employed by families: directness versus indirectness and cooperation versus competition. Vangelisti then synthesizes these communicative acts into the following popular coding schemes of conflict strategies in marital (family) observation research.

Direct and Cooperative (Negotiation)

This strategy employs agreement, appealing acts, analytic remarks, cognitive acts, communication talk, conciliatory remarks, concessions (statements that express a willingness to change or show flexibility), statements which describe a problem as external to both parties, expressing feelings about a problem, positive mindreading (expressing beliefs about emotions, attitudes, and the like—as well as explaining or predicting behaviors with positive or neutral affect), problem solving/information exchange, compromise, proposing termination or decrease of some negative behavior, proposing the initiation or increase of some positive behavior, reconciling acts, summarizing self-statements about one's expressed opinions, summarizing other

behaviors, validation of others, acceptance of responsibility, and compliance (fulfills command within 10 seconds).

Direct and Competitive (Direct Fighting)

This strategy engages in blame, criticism, hostile statements of unambiguous dislike or disapproval of a specific behavior of the other, statements of fact that assumes a negative mindset or motivation of the other, verbal or nonverbal behavior that demeans or mocks the partner, threats, coercive acts, personal attacks, personal criticisms, rejection (statements in response to the partner's previous statements that imply personal antagonism as well as disagreement toward the partner), hostile imperatives that seek to change the partner's behavior, hostile jokes (teasing, or sarcasm at the expense of the partner), hostile questions (directive or leading questions that fault the partner), presumptive remarks (statements that attribute thoughts and feelings to the partner that the partner does not acknowledge), denial of responsibility, invalidation, interruptions, withdrawal or rejecting acts, and negative mindreading.

Indirect and Cooperative (Nonconfrontation)

This strategy utilizes assent (listener states "yeah," nods head to facilitate conversation), disengagement (a statement expressing the desire not to talk about a specific issue at that time), excusing partner's behavior or statement by providing a reason for that behavior or statement, lighthearted humor (not sarcasm), metacommunication (statement that attempts to direct the flow of conversation), positive mindreading (statement that implies favorable qualities of the other), positive physical contact, paraphrase/reflection statements, smile or laughter, friendly joking (not at the

expense of the other person), noncommittal statements (statements that neither affirm nor deny the presence of conflict and which are not evasive replies or topic shifts), noncommittal questions, abstract remarks, procedural statements that supplant discussion of conflict, resolving acts (accepting the other's plans, ideas, feelings, introduce compromise or offer to collaborate in planning), topic shifts (statements that terminate discussion of a conflict issue before each person has fully expressed an opinion or before the discussion has reached a sense of completion), and topic avoidance (statements that explicitly terminate discussion of a conflict issue before it has been fully discussed).

Indirect and Competitive (Indirect Fighting)

This strategy is characterized by equivocation, direct denial (statements that deny a conflict is present), implicit denial (statements that imply denial by providing a rationale for a denial statement, although the denial is not explicit), evasive remarks (failure to acknowledge or deny the presence of a conflict following a statement or inquiry about the conflict by the partner), dysphoric affect (self-complaint or whiny voice tone), off topic comments (comments irrelevant to the topic of discussion), and withdrawal (verbal and nonverbal behavior that implies that a partner is pulling back from the interaction).

Children and Positive Family Communication

The final observation in this section relates to the development of positive communication skills during childhood and in the family context in particular. Socha and Yingling (2010) suggest the family is a critical venue where children develop positive communication skills. Children are family communicators, and we learn healthy

communication as children. They assert that positive communication is developed at childhood, saying, “Families communication with children from birth to age 5 creates the foundation upon which future communication development is build” (p. vii).

Researchers have identified several characteristics of a positive family communication climate that develops positive communication skills within children: fostering open expressions; valuing and promoting self-expression; stimulating the sharing of their thoughts, even if they disagree with others; encouraging animated storytelling; encouraging children to speak freely at home; giving positive feedback when children share personal experiences; and encouraging and allowing children to debate characterize a positive family communication climate (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Schrodt & Ledbetter, 2007; Socha & Yingling, 2010).

Socha and Yingling (2010) contend that teaching positive communication skills is a responsibility of the parents. As parents teach positive communication processes such as empathetic listening, prosocial humor, communicative support, forgiveness, prayer, and compliments they help improve overall family communication skills and assist their children in developing positive character strengths. Teaching and modeling positive communication to children allow parents/guardians/adults an opportunity to enhance their communication skills, nurture children at the time they need it most, and contribute to the advancement of healthy communication in the future of the family.

Healthy Communication Principles Identified in the Writings of Ellen White

Ellen White wrote extensively addressing the subject of family communication. The space provided in this paper would not allow for a recitation of all her writings on

this subject. However, as we review her writings on the subject of family communication, four themes (principles) repeatedly emerge. This section summarizes and illustrates these four themes (principles).

1. Positive family communication is manifested by not speaking harshly with your family. White (1903b) says,

Unhappiness is often caused by an unwise use of the talent of speech. The word of God does not authorize anyone to speak harshly, thereby creating disagreeable feelings and unhappiness in the family. The other members of the family lose their respect for the one who speaks thus, when if he would restrain his feelings, he might win the confidence and affection of all. (p. 70)

2. Intergenerational family communication should be pleasant and respectful. White (1896b) says,

Let only pleasant words be spoken by parents to their children, and respectful words by children to their parents. Attention must be given to these things in the home life; for if, in their character building, children form right habits, it will be much easier for them to be taught by God and to be obedient to His requirements. (paragraph 7)

3. Positive family communication is manifested by not blaming others. White (1952) says,

Let every family seek the Lord in earnest prayer for help to do the work of God. Let them overcome the habits of hasty speech and the desire to blame others. Let them study to be kind and courteous in the home, to form habits of thoughtfulness and care. (p. 438)

4. Positive family communication is manifested by refraining from impatient words, words of retaliation, and self-justification. White (1891) says,

What harm is wrought in the family circle by the utterance of impatient words; for the impatient utterance of one leads another to retort in the same spirit and manner. Then come words of retaliation, words of self-justification, and it is by such words that a heavy, galling yoke is manufactured for your neck; for all these bitter words will come back in a baleful harvest to your soul. Those who indulge in such language will experience shame, loss of self-respect, loss of self-confidence, and will have bitter remorse and regret that they allowed themselves to lose self-control and speak in this

way. How much better would it be if words of this character were never spoken! How much better to have the oil of grace in the heart, to be able to pass by all provocation, and bear all things with Christlike meekness and forbearance. (paragraph 10)

A further observation for this paper is necessary. White recognized the emotional and psychological effects of slavery on the African-American family (a subject which will be discussed more thoroughly later in this paper) when she admonished African-American ministers to practice positive family communication within their own families. White (1903a) said,

I am instructed of the Lord that ministers, colored laborers, often are in need of Bible education, to be kind in their own family, and never to practice slavery customs used by slavery masters in harsh speech and their own disorderly habits. Do your best to expect you are to change your own ideas, colored fathers and mothers, if you expect the white to treat you with compassion and sympathy and affection. Put away, ministering colored brethren who have wife and children, your harsh, authoritative practices, for the Lord will not accept your work; but consider “I am now a member of the Lord’s family and I am to sample His family in this world in having my lips [and] manners sanctified, my speech without passion. I am not authorized to be a tyrant because I have witnessed so much tyranny in those masters who have considered the slaves were [their] own flesh, heart, mind, soul and body, when God is their Owner. (p. 90)

Six Areas of Healthy Family Communication

Current literature identifies many principles and elements of healthy family communication. The intervention implemented in Chapter 4 of this paper, and evaluated in Chapter 5, is built upon these principles. To facilitate a greater internalization of these many principles, by the participants in the intervention (see Chapters 4 and 5), these principles and elements have been summarized into six areas of healthy family communication:

1. Communication frequency. Healthy family communication occurs when family members frequently communicate with each other about their personal life and everyday matters.
2. Communication intimacy and openness. Healthy family communication occurs when family members are comfortable with being transparent and open with each other, especially regarding sensitive and/or embarrassing matters.
3. Communication connectedness. Healthy family communication occurs when family members are able to understand each other's nonverbal communication, and are able to sense and/or anticipate what other family members may be thinking.
4. Communication conflict. Healthy family communication occurs when family members are intentional about avoiding behaviors that create conflict or hostility.
5. Communication avoidance. Healthy family communication occurs when family members do not avoid discussing certain subjects and matters with each other.
6. Communication satisfaction. Healthy family communication occurs when family members are satisfied with or are working to improve their family's communication.

Dynamics of the African-American Family: History of the African-American Family in America

The three landmark works that have been the primary foundation for research and study of African-American families are: *The Negro American Family* (Du Bois, 1908), *The Negro Family in the United States* (Frazier, 1939), and *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Moynihan, 1965). While more current scholars have added to the

understanding of the African-American family, these three publications have served as the starting point for research and dialogue regarding the African-American family.

Each of these works, and nearly every scholar and researcher to follow, contend that to understand the modern Negro (African-American) family structure and stability you have to examine the historical context of African-American in the United States. For each writer, slavery and Jim Crow shape this historical context. Moynihan (1965) contends that the African-American family was, to a large degree, shaped by the most awful slavery the world has ever known, citing the fact that American slaves were removed from the protections of organized society. Even slavery that lasted longer, such as in Brazil, did not have the same lasting effects on the population.

McLoyd, Hill, and Dodge (2005) observed that African-Americans have sought various ways, religion being one, to creatively negotiate the devastating impacts of slavery and the “terrible existential losses” due to the selling and trading of parents, siblings, and other family members.

After slavery in postbellum South, and de facto in the North, came Jim Crow, which was an extension of the dehumanizing practices of slavery perpetuated on the African-American race. Robinson (2001) notes that what followed slavery would perpetuate the family dynamics developed during slavery when he says, “No nation can enslave a race of people for hundreds of years, set them free bedraggled and penniless, pit them, without assistance in a hostile environment, against privileged victimizers, and then reasonably expect the gap between the heirs of the groups to narrow” (p. 74).

Recently scholars and clinicians have begun to document the psychological impact of slavery and Jim Crow on African-Americans and their descendants (Robinson,

1999; Wilkins, Whiting, Watson, Russon, & Moncrief, 2013). Researchers suggest there is a clear correlation between the status of African-Americans in America and the manifestation of symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Robinson, 1999). Robinson quotes Brooks, Hall, and Puig (1997) as stating, “When we acknowledge racism as a psychological event capable of generating a traumatic impact, we are able to understand and better view the debilitating effects of such a phenomena upon the psychological development and functioning of the Afro-American person [family]” (Robinson, 1999, p. 16). It is from within this historical experience that the current unique manifestations of the African-American family were formed, and from which we are able to understand the statistical realities that describe the African-American family.

African-American Family Structure

As a result of this history and the continued institutionalized racism that has existed in America, the African-American family still suffers many social and economical disparities with its White counterpart. Acs, Braswell, Sorensen, and Turner (2013) released a detailed report for the Urban Institute entitled, “The Moynihan Report Revisited,” in which they examine the current state of the African-American family. Their findings reveal the following: 53% of Black children live with their mothers but not their fathers; 54% of Black households are headed by single women (Belgrave & Allison, 2006); 73% of all African-American children are born to unmarried mothers; 25% of Black women are married and live with their spouses; the unemployment rate for black men is more than twice that for White men, 16.7% compared with 7.7%; on average Black men and women earned about \$32,500 per year, compared to White men and

women who earned an average of about \$43,500; 40% of Black children live in poverty compared with about 13% of White children; and one in six Black men have spent time in prison, compared with one in 33 White men. African American men are 6% of the U.S. population, but make up over 50% of the prison population (Dixon, 2009).

The remarkably high rate of incarceration of black men has a deleterious, destabilizing effect on the black families, perpetuating poverty and obstructing mobility (Acs et al., 2013). Hattery and Smith (2007) report that the decline in Black marriage rates, unwed childbirth, and the overall family structure of the African-American contribute to staggering poverty rates among African-Americans.

Barbarin (2002) reported studies showing African-American families displaying about 70 various structural formations, versus about 40 among White families. Elerman (2011) reports that Black children are twice more likely to live with grandparents or relatives than any other ethnic group. Segrin and Flora (2005) say 13% of African American children live in grandparent-headed households, and compared to European Americans, African Americans are more likely to enact the principle of substitution, which is older childless persons treating their child-age relatives as their own children. McLoyd et al. (2005) reported that 8% of African-American children live in households that do not include either birth parent. The above statistics demonstrate that the African-American family is unique, and is less likely to have a traditional family structure than other racial/ethnic groups in America. It is within this socioeconomic context that the modern African-American family is shaped, functions, and communicates.

Communication Techniques and the African
American-Family: The Need for Understanding
Ethnic Culture in Family Communication

The uniqueness of the African-American family structure, which has been created by history, ethnicity and culture, presents a compelling argument for the need for better understanding, research and teaching of healthy family communication shaped by ethnic culture and racial socioeconomic realities. Research by Socha and Diggs (1999) established the need for studying communication within the context of ethnic culture. In their research they offer three rationales for studying family communication within the context of race that are germane to this discussion. First, family communication has a primary influence on ethnic socialization. Second, family communication is an important context where individuals construct and manage ethnic/racial identities. Third, family communication shapes our understanding of how to communicate with other ethnic groups.

Diggs and Socha (2004) contend, “At this stage in the history of family communication studies, there is a need to keep at the forefront the goal of creating a portrait of family communication that is diverse, complex, and inclusive” (p. 259).

Gudykunst and Lee (2001) argue that ethnic and cultural identities are important factors that influence how family communication varies within and across ethnic groups. Understanding how cultural norms and rules provide guidelines for communication is important working with non-European American families, especially when considering most research on family communication is conducted within European American families. Gudykunst and Lee conclude, “Research based on European American families may or may not generalize to non-European American families. Ethnicity, in and of itself,

is only a good predictor of family communication when individuals who identify with their ethnic groups and maintain ethnic cultural practices are studied” (pp. 82-83).

Diggs et al. (2004) note the challenge family communication researchers face is insufficient amounts of skill in language and cultural studies, which has the possibility of producing ethnocentrism, parochialism, and ideological biases. This produces knowledge of communication, cultural, and social systems which is provincial rather than universal in nature. Thus, they recommend family communication scholars conceptualize and study family communication within the context of ethnic culture.

McLoyd et al. (2005), citing many scholars, argue that African-American communication has its own unique cultural expression, which they call style. They contend that traditional psychology (and by extension family communication research) has historically neglected to appreciate culturally different expressions of personality and emotions.

Jackson (2004) believes it is critical to emphasize the African-American’s indigenous cultural identity in communication behaviors because it helps us understand the broader contexts of African-American communication within families, relationships, and organizations. Similarly, Hecht, Jackson, and Ribeau (2009) argue for ethnic and culturally relevant study and teaching on communication, concluding African-American communication is a result of the unique historical and socially emergent experiences of African-Americans.

African-American Communication Style

Kochman (1972) was the first to compile an extensive exposé on the uniqueness of African-American communication. His work, covering both verbal and nonverbal communication within the African-American community, has given valuable insight into this subject. Nearly every work cited or referenced in this paper refers to Kochman at some point, signifying the magnitude of his contributions. The scholars cited in this section of the paper, like Kochman, cover many aspects of African-American communication. The scope of this section of the paper will focus on those portions of their works that contribute to a better understanding of African-American family communication.

Orbe (1995) was one of the early scholars to argue that research about African-American communication should avoid objective generalizations that negate the vast diversity of experiences within the African-American community; comparisons that conceptualize European American communication as the assumed standard of measure; and stereotypical interpretations of African-American communication, but rather acknowledge the vast continuum of communication styles among African-Americans.

Dixon and Osiris (2002) argue that African-Americans have unique practices and styles of communicating, and, even dating back to Africa, have traditionally accorded high status to those in their community who are gifted with verbal abilities.

Socha and Diggs (1999) identify nine dimensions of African culture that find expression among African-Americans: *Spirituality*, which is living as though God governs our lives; *Harmony*, which emphasizes versatility and wholeness over being discreet; *Movement*, which is approaching life rhythmically; *Verve*, psychological affinity

for variable and intense stimulation; *Affect*, which is placing a premium on emotional sensibilities and expressiveness; *Expressive Individualism*, which is valuing spontaneity and uniqueness of self-expression; *Orality*, which is the use of the spoken word to convey deep contextual meanings; and *Social Time Perspective*, which is a commitment to time as a social phenomenon.

Dixon and Osiris (2002), building on Garner (1998) and Kochman's (1972) work, argue African-American communication, born out of Africa, is characterized by several unique styles like *Indirection*, which is subtly making a point through asides and stories; *Inventiveness*, which is creating a new direction for a message, often characterized by saying such things as, "But you can also see it this way too;" and *Playfully Toned Behavior*, which is a non-serious, non-threatening verbal exchange often used to diffuse tension in a conversation.

Dixon and Osiris (2002) further note that within the context of the styles of indirection, inventiveness, and playfully toned behavior, African-Americans have artful communication strategies designed to deescalate conflict: *Playing the Dozens*, which is an artful way of making fun about someone regarding things both know are not true; *Signifying*, which is cracking jokes about someone in an attempt to cause them to examine their actions, but done in such an artful way that, while the statements are true, the receiver identifies them as non-threatening and non-insulting; *Rapping*, which is essentially male romantic talk, but used in conflict to deescalate tensions and signify a willingness to compromise; and *Boasting*, which is an exaggeration of one's own qualities, strength or abilities, and recognized as such by all parties (Kochman, 1981).

Communication and the Dynamics of the African-American Family

Jackson (2004) argues that more than European American, African-American marital stability depended on wives empathizing with and reassuring their husbands. Both husbands and wives experience significant positive marital wellbeing when the wife expresses understanding of her husband's constructive acts.

Socha and Diggs (1999) argue that compared to European Americans, African-American couples report more disclosure, more positive sexual interaction, fewer topics of disagreement, and more conflict avoidance.

Hecht et al. (2009) reports that assertiveness is an attribute common among and embraced within African-American relationship communication. One expression of assertiveness is the African-American eye contact pattern, which is the reverse of the Euro American pattern. In the African-American pattern, the speaker is the one who looks more at the partner (listener) while the listener tends to look less. This behavior can be viewed as aggressive in the European-American culture (Hecht et al., 2009).

Hecht et al. (2009) observed, that within the parent-child relationship, effective African-American parents exhibited the following characteristics: strong limit setting; child-focused love; high expectations; consistent open communication; positive racial and male identity communication; the active use of community resources; and highly contextual, person-centered (authoritarian) communication strategies, which included "the look," referring to a parent's ability to address a child's behavior with facial expressions, that were strict but remained warm and caring.

African-American Communication and Family Conflict

Hecht et al. (2009) asserts that while African-American families experience more conflict, they are more tolerant of conflict than European Americans. However, Dixon and Osiris (2002) note that if the unique communication styles and practices of African-Americans are used consciously and with intentionality it can be a resource to allow conflict management and resolution to be more constructive.

To better understand the dynamics of conflict management and resolution within African-American family we need to understand what constitutes a happy African-American marriage. For instance, Socha and Diggs (1999) contend African-American are more likely than European Americans to associate marriage with spirituality, religiosity with marital happiness, and to use spirituality to maintain the relationship.

Hecht et al. (2009) note that according to recent research, marital happiness among African-Americans is predicated on four major factors: spiritual compatibility, perceived support from spouse, frequency of destructive/negative conflict, and reciprocity of affection and sexual satisfaction. Scholars have identified four communication practices unique to African-American communication in relationships and conflict resolution:

First, African-Americans pay attention to body language (Kochman, 1981). Jordan-Jackson and Davis (2005), when researching differences in racial interaction between African-American men and European American men, noted African-Americans are more accurate in decoding nonverbal behavior, especially in judging facial expressions.

Second, African-American men are more apt to work as a team to solve problems. Stanik and Bryant (2012) report that African-American couples tend to be more egalitarian than European American couples. Jordan-Jackson and Davis (2005) found that African-American men emphasize conflict resolution strategies that require both participants to be responsible, and African-Americans are more likely to use active conversational improvement strategies versus passive strategies. Both African-American males and females described *problem solving* as appropriate behavior in conflict management. Problem solving is where one person brings up a problem and the other helps by offering a solution or enabling a solution to emerge (Hecht et al., 2009).

Third, African-Americans are more optimistic. Hecht et al. (2009) argues that within African-American communication, high value is placed on expressing positivity and resiliency, which is why African-Americans often use humor to confront hardship.

Fourth, African-Americans are more expressive (Kochman, 1981). Smetana, Daddis, and Chuang (2003), along with other scholars, have reported that African-American families employ a highly expressive style of communication in conflict management and resolution that includes frequent interruptions and intense affect. Hecht et al. (2009) assert that African-Americans employ different communication styles than European Americans such as, openness, directness, self-confidence, verbal expressiveness, and accelerated speech during conflict management, which European American may view as offensive. Yet, generally speaking, African-Americans still do not view family conflicts as particularly angry or intense (Smetana et al., 2003).

Summary of Literary Findings

The above works do not represent an exhaustive review of family communication or the African-American family. They are limited to the issues with most direct bearing on the scope of this study; namely, understanding positive (healthy) African-American family communication.

The literature gave insight into family theories that reveal the basic principles of positive (healthy) family communication, as well as the unique features of the African-American family, African-American communication styles, and African-American family communication. According to the literature, the African-American family has major structural challenges that can be traced to the effects of slavery, subsequent Jim Crow laws, and institutionalized racism in America. However, there are unique communication skills within the African-American family that provide opportunity for African-American families to improve family communication, and family conflict management and resolution.

The collective wisdom of the works cited reveals the need for additional research on and resources for the improvement of African-American family communication. In the next chapter, a method for developing a family enrichment seminar to improve African-American family communication will be described.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This chapter will provide a description of the project developed and executed at Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church. The information presented in this chapter will be discernibly built upon the foundations of the Theological Reflection and Literature Review found in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively.

This section of the paper discusses the design and implementation process of the six-week family communication sermon series and the “Seasoned With Grace” family communication enrichment seminar. The impact of the seminar will be assessed and analyzed in the three areas that advance African-American families of the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Baton Rouge, LA towards the development of healthy (positive) communication.

First, participants will learn the historical framework, socioeconomic realities, and the ethnic cultural foundation in which African-American family communication was formed, and what makes it unique. Second, participants will learn the various principles of healthy family communication as identified in the scriptures and current family communication research. Third, participants will learn how to implement the principles

of healthy family communication within the ethnic cultural style most natural to African-American families.

The chapter is outlined in this way:

1. Development of the Hypothesis
2. Description of Participants
3. Recruitment of Participants
4. Six-week Pre-seminar Sermon Series
5. Design of Seasoned With Grace Family Communication Seminar
6. Implementation of Seasoned With Grace Family Communication Seminar
7. Conclusion

Development of the Hypothesis

Among African-American homes in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, less than one-fifth of children live in homes with both parents (Rosiak, 2012). Among Berean church attendees 40% are minors, 58% of the congregation is above 25 years old, and 23% of the church is currently married. These statistics, coupled with what pastoral observation and inquiry has identified, may help explain the existence of various family structure formations, such as single-mother-headed households, single-father-headed households, several grandparents raising their grandchildren, aunts and uncles raising nieces and nephews, non-biological guardians raising children (i.e. stepfather raising his two deceased wife's daughters), blended family households, and other formations beyond the traditional mother-father raising their biological children household.

As discussed in Chapter 3 of this paper, the overwhelming majorities of family communication enrichment materials are weighted towards married couples, and are framed within a European-American ethnic cultural context. It is surmised that, due to the various structural formations of the African-American families of Berean, a family communication seminar, as opposed to couple's communication seminar, was necessary. It is further surmised that this family communication seminar needed to be ethnic cultural, specific to the unique communication styles of the African-American community.

The project hypothesizes that a family communication enrichment seminar, which is ethnic-cultural specific (Turner, Wieling, & Allen, 2004), and designed to teach healthy communication techniques, would increase positive family communication skills among the African-American families of Berean, and contribute to an increase in family satisfaction.

The project further hypothesizes that teaching healthy family communication skills from an African-American ethnic-cultural style would create measurable improvements in the six areas of healthy family communication (see Chapter 3). These six areas of healthy family communication are: communication frequency, communication intimacy and openness, communication connectedness, communication conflict, communication avoidance, and communication satisfaction (see Chapters 3 and 5 for a more detailed explanation of these six areas).

Lastly, this project hypothesizes that teaching healthy family communication skills from an African-American ethnic-cultural style would create measurable improvements in personal communication indicators, as measured by specific questions

on the Primary Communication Inventory and Family Communication Scale (see Chapter 5 for further explanation). Personal communication indicators are the specific questions on the two aforementioned assessment inventories that explore the respondents' personal use of positive communication techniques when communicating with family members.

Description of Participants

In order to implement the "Seasoned With Grace" Family Communication Enrichment Seminar, participants needed to be recruited. The criteria for participation in the seminar and evaluation were individuals had to be at least 18 years old, live in a home with one or more individuals who they identify as family, either be an African-American or live in a home with one or more individuals who identify as African-Americans, and have attended the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church at least once in six weeks prior to the seminar.

Recruitment of Participants

At a duly called meeting of the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church Board on August 4, 2013, it was voted to allow the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church to participate in the Seasoned With Grace Family Communication Enrichment Seminar. The seminar was scheduled to take place on November 2, 2013.

Program participants were recruited through five methods. First, beginning on September 21, 2013, announcements were placed on the screen every Sabbath morning during the 11:00 AM worship service. Second, flyers were distributed to the members and placed on the bulletin board of the church, announcing the time, date, and location of the seminar (see Appendix A). Third, the pastor and clerk made public announcements

from the podium on Sabbath mornings during the 11:00 AM worship service. Fourth, members were periodically reminded through telephone calls using the www.onecallnow.com telephone tree announcement service. Fifth, a six-week pre-seminar sermon series, presenting the theological content of the seminar, was presented.

During the six-week pre-seminar announcement period participants were encouraged to register, for this free seminar, using a registration form that was handed out to interested members and left at the reception center for individuals to pick up. By Sabbath, October 26, 2013, 79 individuals had registered for the seminar.

Six-Week Pre-Seminar Sermon Series

Prior to the seminar, a six-week pre-seminar sermon series entitled “Seasoned With Grace” was presented. There were two purposes of the pre-seminar sermon series. The first purpose was to minimize participants being overwhelmed with too much new information during the seminar. Because the seminar was designed to be a one-day seminar lasting four and a half hours, it was necessary to familiarize the prospective participants with the basic theological content and principles upon which the seminar was built.

The second purpose of the six-week pre-seminar sermon series was to illustrate the significance of the seminar and its potential to impact communication among African-American families. Since participants of the seminar heard at least one pre-seminar sermon, they were able to begin incremental implementation of these biblical principles in their family communication. A pre-seminar survey, to evaluate the effectiveness of the pre-seminar sermons, was distributed to the participants (see Appendix E).

The pre-seminar sermons were presented using handouts for the prospective participants to follow along and fill-in-the-blank spaces with the corresponding scriptures, phrases or words (see Appendix D). The following sermons and dates were presented:

1. September 21, 2013, “Seasoned With Grace: Form Dictates Function.” This sermon explored the biblical model of family structure, how the African-American family structure has deviated from this model, and what is necessary to restore the African-American family back to God’s original design.

2. September 28, 2013, “Seasoned With Grace: If My People Pray.” This sermon illustrated the biblical example of God encouraging open and honest communication between Himself and His people, which serves as a model for healthy family communication.

3. October 5, 2013, “Seasoned With Grace: Tearing Down and Building Up.” This sermon examined the biblical mandate to use our communication to build up and edify other family members.

4. October 12, 2013, “Seasoned With Grace: Pillow Talk.” This sermon explored and illustrated the biblical mandate and model for husband-wife communication, and admonished spouses to employ the biblical model in their communications with each other.

5. October 19, 2013, “Seasoned With Grace: Nurturing True Honor.” This sermon explored and illustrated the biblical mandate and model for parent-child communication, and admonished both parent and children to employ the specific

elements of healthy parent-child communication in their communications with each other.

6. October 26, 2013, “Seasoned With Grace.” An exegetical examination of Colossians 4:6, emphasizing God’s desire for all Christians to practice healthy communication in their interpersonal relationships.

Design of Seasoned With Grace Family Communication Seminar

Design elements for the Seasoned With Grace Family Enrichment

Communication Seminar (SWG) were selected from several prominent programs specifically addressing family communication. Prepare/Enrich (Olson, 2001); Collaborative Marriage Skills: Couples Communication I (S, Miller, Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 2007); Thriving Together in the Skillszone: Couples Communication II (S. Miller, Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 2010); and ThriveSphere (Malan, 2010) were examined, but not used exclusively in this presentation because they were specifically designed for couples and not the entire family. Also, these programs appear to primarily approach communication from a European-American ethnic-cultural perspective.

SWG was designed to be a seminar to improve family communication skills of African-American families of Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. SWG teaches the subject of healthy family communication from an ethnic-cultural specific model based on the principles of healthy family communication as identified in current scholarly literature, discussed in Chapter 3 of this paper.

The SWG seminar was designed as a one-day seminar, to be taught in three 90-minute segments, with a one-hour break for lunch. As pastor of Berean I have observed

how difficult it is to get members to attend workshops and seminars that are not completed in one day, and that are not held during the regular Sabbath morning worship time. In order to ensure the maximum participation possible the seminar was conducted as a one-day seminar, held on a Sabbath, beginning at the regular 11:00 AM worship service time. One hour was allocated, after the first session, for participants to eat lunch, which was provided for them. -Thirty-minute breaks were allocated between Session 2 and 3 for participants to stretch, socialize, complete surveys and/or inventories, and mentally prepare for the next session.

The seminar began Saturday, November 2, 2013 at 11:00 AM and concluded at 5:00 PM. The first segment, entitled “The African-American Family Yesterday and Today,” continued from 11:00 AM–12:30 PM. All church members and visitors were allowed to attend the first session. Lunch, for all participants and their children, was provided from 12:30 PM–1:30 PM. Lunch, as well as the second and third sessions, were reserved for registered participants. The second segment, entitled Positive Communication in a Negative World,” continued from 1:30 PM–3:00 PM. The third segment, entitled “That’s Just How We Talk,” continued from 3:30 PM–5:00 PM.

The information was presented from the front of the church using PowerPoint slide presentations and videos projected on a large screen. Each participant was given a 12-page SWG seminar booklet, used during Segments 2 and 3, that contained pertinent information being discussed as well as fill-in-the-blank sections for participants to follow along (See Appendix D). Each segment also had group discussion questions, which will be documented in the next section of this chapter.

SWG seminar provided childcare through the Children's Ministry of the church. We had 25 children and youth under 18 years old who attended. Parents who attended the seminar and had children under the age of 13 were provided childcare in one of the church's classrooms. The children between 13–17 years old were made junior counselors and encouraged to assist the staff in watching the children, providing snacks and lunch, and other related activities. This approach was employed to minimize youth ages 13–17 being in an environment where they could feel they were being babysat, and could have possibly distracted their parents by repeatedly coming into the seminar if they were bored or frustrated.

Implementation of Seasoned With Grace Family Communication Seminar

Segment 1: The African-American Family Yesterday and Today. The first segment of the seminar began at 11:00 AM. The first principle that was taught, which served as the foundation of the seminar, was what was referred to as the ABCs of communication – that is Always Be Communicating, and Always Be Conscientious. Always be communicating means that individuals should communicate with their family as often as possible. Always be conscientious means that individuals should be conscientious about what, why, and how they are communicating with their family.

The first task of the seminar was to teach participants the historical framework, socioeconomic realities, and the ethnic cultural foundation in which the unique style of African-American family communication was formed. To this end we explored how Africans arrived in America through the transatlantic slave trade. A video clip from the movie *Amistad* (Allen, Spielberg & Wilson, 1997) was shown. This clip dramatized the

experience of many African slaves from capture in their villages, to the inhumane conditions on the slave ships and the subsequent voyage, to the brutal introduction to slave life in the new world.

Comer's (1991) description of the slavery experience was then quoted, saying,

the most stabilizing aspects of African culture were destroyed. Families and kinsmen were often separated. The African kinship system, economic system, government system, work, recreation, and religious systems were not permitted. Far from home, easily identified, socially disorganized, and despised throughout the populace, it was fairly easy to force the black African into subservient, powerless position of forced dependency, exploitation, rejection, and/or abuse relative to an all-powerful white master and in a degraded position relative to the entire white population. (Comer, 1991, p. 593)

It was explained that once the slave began life in America, he/she was often subjected to what Robinson (1999) calls "ritual abuse." Robinson described the slavery experience for African-Americans, saying,

It was in fact rituals that maintained and perpetuated the system of what Morris (1993) called a 'pure system of human domination.' He described slavery as 'a complex piece of social machinery that was designed to produce maximum exploitation of black slaves while simultaneously controlling every aspect of their behavior.' The control of the slaves' minds, bodies, and souls were seen as important in the devaluation of this cheap and seemingly inexhaustible source of labor. (p. 16)

Participants then viewed the famous scene from the movie *Roots* (Margulies, 1997) where Kunta Kinte attempted to run away from slavery and was subsequently captured and tortured. It demonstrated the ritualistic nature of the abuse illustrated by the changing of Kunta Kinte's name to Toby, and forcing all the slaves on the plantation to watch the beating as a means to evoke such fear in them that they would never attempt to run away.

Next, in order to emphasize the psychological effects of slavery, participants were shown a clip from the upcoming movie, *The Monuments Men* (Clooney & Heslov, 2014).

In this film, George Clooney playing Frank Stokes said, “If you destroy an entire generation of people’s culture, it’s as if they never existed. That’s what Hitler wants, and that’s the one thing we can’t allow.”

This destruction of African culture and identity was demonstrated through showing the portion of the movie *Roots* (Margulies, 1997), where Kunta Kinte speaks with a slave from another plantation, whose original African name was Botang Boriaka, but had been changed to Pompey by his owners. In their conversation Botang describes the African-American slave, saying,

I feel sorry for these blacks that’s born here. They don’t know who they is. They from Africa and yet they ain’t. They from the white folk’s land and they ain’t. It seem to me like there’s a whole tribe of strange new peoples that is lost.

Kunta Kinte responds, “They got no remembrance of the old ways, to help them, to tell them who they are.”

Jim Crow and the post-slavery racist practices of America were briefly examined, and it was then illustrated that African-Americans believe that racism still strongly exist in America today. This reality was discussed in Amber’s (2013) *Time Magazine* article entitled “The Talk: How parents raising black boys try to keep their sons safe.” In this article she discussed the “talk” African-American parents have with their sons about interacting with White police officers, who will automatically assume they are criminals, to ensure they don’t do anything that may cause them to be hurt or killed. I also showed a segment from the MSNBC news program *Morning Joe* (Licht, 2013) in which Black shoppers at Barneys of New York were routinely stopped by police and asked how were they able to afford such expensive items.

This and previous discussions regarding African-Americans' history and experiences in America were used as a historical reference to begin discussing Robinson's (1997) research which concludes that the historical experience of African-Americans has contributed to the manifestation of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms within the African-American community. Brooks et al. (1997) summarizes this phenomenon by stating,

When we acknowledge racism as a psychological event capable of generating a traumatic impact, we are able to understand and better view the debilitating effects of such a phenomena upon the psychological development and functioning of the Afro-American person [family]. (p. 16)

Robinson's (1997) four fundamental points linking racism and traumatic stress were discussed:

1. "Racism is a real and poignant conceptual barrier for many people of African American origins" (p. 16).
2. "Racism, by the degree to which it blocks and diminishes resources and results in levels of traumatic stress, can meet the criterion of psychosocial stressor" (p. 16).
3. "Racism, as a psychosocial traumatic stressor, can be understood as severely psychologically noxious when conditions exist and there is a severe depletion of resources that results in a number of coping behaviors that may be quite maladaptive in nature" (p. 17).
4. "Racism, societal and systemic level, results in a higher risk of people of color failing to successfully achieve the necessary development task transitions to achieve social prestige and access to avenues of psychological self-esteem" (p. 17).

Participants were informed that while racism, and its varied historical manifestations, has been a factor in shaping the current African-American family dynamics, it is important to remember that not everyone from any cultural or ethnic group is affected or responds to traumatic stress in the same way. The four points used to illustrate this principle were:

1. Not all African-American families were affected in the same way by slavery, Jim Crow, and institutionalized racism.
2. Not all African-American families manifest signs of dysfunction and unhealthy family communication.
3. The typical ways African-American families handle stress are not all unhealthy.
4. Not all African-American families suffer from symptoms of prolonged undiagnosed and untreated post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

For the next 10 minutes participants discussed, as a group, the following two questions: “What are some ways traumatic stress can manifest itself within family interaction and communication?” “What are some maladaptive coping strategies that are evident in the African-American family?”

It was explained that while slavery, Jim Crow, and institutionalized racism are not the only factors that have shaped African-American family dynamics, the four leading sources on the historical and current condition of the African-American family have all pointed to these factors as significantly major contributors (Acs et al., 2013; Du Bois, 1908; Frazier, 1939; Moynihan, 1965). Statistical data was shared from Chapter 3 of this

paper, illustrating why leading researchers have described the socioeconomic condition of the African-American family as troubled.

Participants then discussed, as a group, the question, “Why do you believe that African-American families, following slavery and through Jim Crow, appeared to have been stronger than the African-American families of today?”

This segment of the seminar concluded by recapping the most pertinent points:

1. The African-American family has survived for years despite the realities of slavery and racism.
2. Not all African-American families exhibit symptoms or suffer from prolonged exposure to traumatic stress.
3. However, generations of undiagnosed and untreated traumatic stress in the African-American community have left a very deleterious effect on the Black family.
4. Moreover, it is within this historical and socioeconomic context of the African-American experience in America that the modern African-American family is shaped, functions, and communicates.

Segment 2: Positive Communication in a Negative World. This segment of the seminar began at 1:30 PM. This segment of the seminar was dedicated to explaining what constitutes healthy family communication as revealed in bible and social science literature contributing to the understanding of healthy family communication (see Chapters 2 and 3 of this paper). This segment was designed to emphasize the concept that healthy family communication develops when families understand what constitute healthy communication, make a decision to attempt to implement these principles in their

family communication, and actually practice these principles when communicating with each other.

Before the instructional portion of this segment began, registered participants each pulled a four-digit number from a small basket. The participants were instructed to use this four-digit number on the upper right corner of all the surveys and inventories they would receive during the seminar, as well as to place M (male) or F (female). This was done to protect the privacy of the participants, and to encourage them to be as honest as possible without fearing any sort of reprisal or embarrassment. The “Pre-Seminar Sermon Series Evaluation Form” (see Appendix E) was then handed out, as well as the “Primary Communication Inventory” and “Couple Communication Scale” (see Appendix E).

This segment began with a reiteration of the ABCs of healthy communication: Always Be Communicating and Always Be Conscientious. It was stated that all family communication contributes to creation and perpetuation of the family’s communication climate. The biblical mandate is to create a positive communication climate, as opposed to a negative communication climate. The four biblical objectives of creating a positive communication climate are: (a) to be truthful (b) to eliminate fights and quarrels (c) to build each other up, and (d) to bring healing, forgiveness and reconciliation. Thus every time we communicate with our families we are either creating a positive communication climate that seeks to produce nurture, or a negative communication climate that seeks to produce control.

The next portion of this segment gave an overview of what constitutes positive family communication, as revealed in current literature regarding system’s theory,

theories of family function and communication, research on positive (healthy) communication within families, and the writings of Ellen White relating to healthy communication within families. These leading theories and approaches were summarized in what was coined the “21 Irrefutable Laws of Positive Family Communication.”

Seven individuals and couple participants were given three of the 21 laws, two weeks prior to the seminar, and asked to summarize what these laws meant within their family, and to share any personal experiences that might illustrate how these principles apply to everyday family communication. Participants were encouraged to complete an exercise in their booklet that ask them to rate the areas of strengths and areas of growth relative to these 21 laws (see Appendix D for a detailed explanation of each law). The 21 irrefutable laws are:

1. The Law of Discussion
2. The Law of Freedom of Expression
3. The Law of Focus
4. The Law of Clarity
5. The Law of the Big Picture
6. The Law of Directness
7. The Law of Listening
8. The Law of Understanding
9. The Law of Revelation
10. The Law of Personalization
11. The Law of Responsibility
12. The Law of Empathy

13. The Law of Flexibility
14. The Law of Compromise
15. The Law of Candidness
16. The Law of Cease and Desist
17. The Law of Initiation
18. The Law of Reconciliation
19. The Law of Problem Solving
20. The Law of Compliance
21. The Law of Making Peace

After covering the 21 irrefutable laws of communication, the second part of the principle of the ABCs, Always Be Conscientious, was discussed. This was referred to as the thinking climate. It was explained that when we begin to think about our family communication we have to answer three basic questions: (a) Why am I saying what I'm saying? Is it to produce nurture or control? (b) What am I trying to say? and (c) How am saying what I'm trying to say?

The fill-in-the-blank sheet in the workbook aided this discussion (see Appendix D). We began by exploring the question, How am I saying what I am trying to say? Vangelisti's (2004) identification of the four types of conflict strategies was presented. It was explained that these four types of conflict strategies varied along two continua employed by families: directness versus indirectness and cooperation versus competition. Each of these communication strategies were defined and explained. It was taught that in order to understand how we are communicating we need to ask ourselves: How am I

saying what I'm trying to say? The answer comes from one of these four reflexive questions:

1. Is my communication direct and cooperative? This is practicing positive communication.
2. Is my communication direct and hostile? This is communication that produces fighting.
3. Is my communication indirect and cooperative? This is communication that practices avoidance.
4. Is my communication indirect and hostile? This is passive-aggressive communication.

The importance of being transparent with our family regarding our feelings was then discussed. Our communication becomes more positive when we understand our feelings and practice articulating them to our family. The workbook contained a list of feeling words for participants to become familiar with and to increase their feelings vocabulary (see Appendix I).

This segment of the seminar concluded discussing the types of issues that arise in family conflict (see Appendix D). Participants were reminded of what constitutes positive communication by summarizing this segment in three points:

1. The purpose of healthy family communication is to create a positive communication climate.
2. Positive family communication climate is created during regular family communication, when families communicate with each other on a regular basis, but is

not created when families wait until times of family conflict to communicate with each other.

3. To create a positive family communication climate you must decide to create a positive family communication climate.

Segment 3: That's Just how we Talk. This segment of the seminar began at 3:30 PM. This segment of the seminar explored the distinctive characteristics and style unique to African-American communication. It taught techniques for incorporating positive communication practices, derived from current family communication research, with the positive aspects of African-American family communication, as identified in current literature (see Chapter 3 of this paper), within the ethnic cultural communication style of African-Americans.

This segment of the seminar spent more time engaging group discussion. This was the final segment of the seminar, but also this was the segment where the participants would begin to develop the link between positive communication and the ethnic cultural style of African-American communication. By engaging the participants and encouraging them to discover how all the information ties together participants were able to move from didactic teaching to interactive teaching, fostering greater internalization.

This segment began by reiterating the ABCs of healthy communication: Always Be Communicating, and Always Be Conscientious. The difference between content and style in relation to family communication was shared. Content is what we say; the principles articulated in the second segment of the seminar. Style is how we say the things we say. Style is a vehicle for communication, which is different among racial and ethnic cultures. The African-American communication style is different from the

European-American communication style, or Asian-American, etc. African-American expression or communication style is a product of our African heritage, history and culture. This segment of the seminar explored the African-American communication style, and examined how we can develop positive family communication utilizing the uniqueness and strengths of this style.

Next, it was explained that the African-American communication style is not dysfunctional. One may argue that too often the content and delivery methods are dysfunctional in African-American family communication. Thus, healthy African-American family communication occurs when we utilize the strengths of our communication style, while being conscientious about what we say.

The four African-American communication strengths, as revealed in current literature, were shared: creativity, assertiveness, body language, and expressiveness. African-Americans place a high value on strong communication skills (see Chapter 3 of this paper), as demonstrated in rapping, preaching, and other oratory demonstrations. We defined and explored each of the four communication strengths and concluded with a group discussion around four questions:

1. How can creativity in African-American communication help us practice the 21 irrefutable laws of healthy family communication?
2. How can assertiveness in African-American communication help us practice the 21 irrefutable laws of healthy family communication?
3. How can body language in African-American communication help us practice the 21 irrefutable laws of healthy family communication?

4. How can expressiveness in African-American communication help us practice the 21 irrefutable laws of healthy family communication?

The four family strengths identified among African-American families, as discussed in Chapter 3 of this paper: spirituality, egalitarian democracy, optimism, and family happiness, were shared. We defined and explored each of the four communication strengths and concluded with a group discussion around four questions:

1. How can spirituality in African-American families help us practice the principles of healthy family communication?

2. How can egalitarian democracy in African-American families help us practice the principles of healthy family communication?

3. How can optimism in African-American families help us practice the principles of healthy family communication?

4. How can family happiness in African-American families help us practice the principles of healthy family communication?

Based on the previous discussions, participants were asked to identify some potential pitfalls to African-American communication—areas where perceived communication or family strengths could be a hindrance. The participants identified six potential pitfalls:

1. African-American communication is very expressive, but may cross over from assertiveness (i.e., clearly stating one's wants, needs and opinions) to aggressiveness (i.e., violating another's beliefs, needs, rights, and preferences), and often overly express anger.

2. African-American communication is very expressive, with much talking about problem solving, but may be slow to actually implement the solutions discussed and to follow-through with conflict resolution strategies.

3. African-American families may be spiritually oriented, but may over-spiritualize issues and not deal with deep family problems.

4. African-Americans may be experienced/proficient in decoding body language and nonverbal behavior, but may have a tendency to make assumptions and engage in mind-reading.

5. African-Americans are likely to focus on problem-solving, but may not engage in enough self-disclosure and transparency.

6. African-Americans families are more optimistic than other ethnic groups, and place a high value on expressing positivity and resiliency, but may not perform assessments of family problems and deficiencies.

The seminar concluded discussing parent-child communication, addressing the positive attributes of African-American child rearing, emphasizing the importance of modeling healthy family communication with our children, and spending more time engaging in communication with our children. The seminar was summarized by stating the ultimate goal of family communication is to create a positive family communication climate; the goal of African-American families should be to be intentional about creating a positive family communication climate; and African-American families should embrace the strengths of their communication style and use those strengths to produce positive family communication.

At the conclusion of the seminar, participants were asked to fill out the Seasoned With Grace Seminar Evaluation Form (see Appendix E), which were anonymously filled-out and returned the same day. Participants were sent home with the “Primary Communication Inventory” and “Couple Communication Scale” (see Appendix E), and asked to return them no earlier than November 16, 2013 and no later than November 30, 2013. The results of the surveys and inventories will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This completes the account of the research methodology and implementation. This chapter detailed the specifics of the Seasoned With Grace Family Enrichment Communication Seminar, as presented at the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Baton Rouge, LA. It traced my flow of thought from inception to culmination of the research project as it was influenced by the biblical material displayed in the theological reflection as well as by the literature exhibited in the literature review. It fulfilled its design by first giving an overview of the ministry context. It then took the reader through the mindset, expectations and thoughts that helped to shape the research methodology. Lastly, this chapter gave a detailed narrative carrying the reader through the six-week sermon series, and the one-day Seasoned With Grace Family Enrichment Communication Seminar, so that the sermons and seminar can be replicated in other churches.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES AND EVALUATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Seasoned With Grace Family Enrichment Communication Seminar (SWG). The perceived effectiveness of the six-week sermon series, in teaching the biblical principles of healthy family communication, was measured using Pre-Seminar Sermon Series Evaluation Form. The perceived effectiveness of SWG, in teaching healthy family communication skills, was measured using the Seasoned With Grace Family Enrichment Communication Seminar Evaluation Form.

The effectiveness of SWG intervention was measured using the 25-question assessment inventory Primary Communication Inventory, and the 14-question assessment inventory Family Communication Scale. The 39 questions were each individually analyzed to determine any statistically significant changes from participants' pre and post-seminar responses. Statistical analyses were performed by Dana R. Hunter, Ph.D., LMSW, Senior Research Associate- Office of Social Service Research and Development at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA.

The effectiveness of SWG intervention was furthered measured by organizing the 39 questions of the two assessment inventories into six categories, referred to as the six

areas of healthy family communication: communication frequency, communication intimacy and openness, communication connectedness, communication conflict, communication avoidance, and communication satisfaction (see Chapters 3 and 4).

Lastly, the effectiveness of SWG intervention was measured by analyzing the 11 questions on the two assessment inventories that specifically measure the respondents' personal use of positive communication techniques when communicating with family members, referred to as "personal communication indicators" (see explanation below).

The chapter is outlined in this way:

1. Introduction
2. Evaluation of Pre-seminar Sermon Series
3. Analysis of Pre-seminar Sermon Series Survey Results
4. Evaluation of Seasoned With Grace Family Communication Seminar
5. Analysis of Seasoned With Grace Seminar Survey Results
6. Description of Family Communication Assessment Instruments
7. Description of Analysis Process for Pre and Post-Seminar Inventories'

Results

8. Description of Post-Seminar Assessment Inventories Results
 - a. Description of the Six Areas of Communication
9. Description of the Personal Communication Indicators
10. Description of Personal Communication Indicators Results
11. Conclusion

Evaluation of Pre-seminar Sermon Series

SWG placed a strong emphasis on the biblical principles of positive family communication. The one-day, three-part SWG seminar design necessitated presentation of the biblical principles of family communication prior to the actual seminar (see Chapter 2 for details). Thus a six-part sermon series was developed, which explored various aspects of these biblical principles (see Chapter 4 for further details). At the beginning of session 2 of SWG a survey, evaluating the perceived effectiveness of the six-part sermon series (see Appendix E) was administered. Of the 79 participants who registered for SWG 52 completed the Pre-seminar Sermons Evaluation.

Question 1 asked, “On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not effective and 5 is very effective, where would you rate the past six-week sermon series on family communication?” Of the 52 respondents 2 responded with a 3, indicating the sermon series was somewhat effective; 9 responded with a 4, indicating the sermon series was effective; and 41 responded with a 5, indicating the sermon series was very effective.

Question 2 asked, “Which sermon was MOST informative in giving you the tools or techniques to enrich your family communication skills?” Of the 52 respondents 4 responded “Seasoned With Grace: Form Dictates Function;” 6 responded “Seasoned With Grace: If My People Pray;” 9 responded “Seasoned With Grace: Tearing Down and Building Up;” 14 responded “Seasoned With Grace: Pillow Talk;” 4 responded “Seasoned With Grace: Nurturing True Honor;” 11 responded “Seasoned With Grace;” 1 responded “Seasoned With Grace: Pillow Talk/Tearing Down and Building Up;” 2 responded “All” or “Everything;” and 1 gave no response.

Question 3 asked, “Which sermon was LEAST informative in giving you the tools or techniques to enrich your family communication skills?” Of the 52 respondents 2 responded “Seasoned With Grace: Form Dictates Function;” 4 responded “Seasoned With Grace: If My People Pray;” 3 responded “Seasoned With Grace: Tearing Down and Building Up;” 8 responded “Seasoned With Grace: Pillow Talk;” 3 responded “Seasoned With Grace: Nurturing True Honor;” 2 responded “Seasoned With Grace;” 7 responded “Everything” or “I enjoyed them all;” and 23 responded N/A or gave no response.

Question 5 asked, “On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not effective and 5 is very effective, where would you rate the communication/preaching skills of the presenter?” Of the 52 respondents 11 responded with a 4, indicating the communication/preaching skills of the presenter was effective; and 41 responded with a 5, indicating the communication/preaching skills of the presenter was very effective.

Questions 4, 6, 7, and 8 were “yes” or “no” response questions. Question 4 asked, “Were the sermon presented in a clear and practical way?” Of the 52 respondents 52 answered “yes,” and no one answered “no.” Question 6 asked, “Did the presenters share new and well-researched information that was valuable to you?” Of the 52 respondents 52 answered “yes,” and no one answered “no.” Question 7 asked, “Did the presenters prepared and well informed?” Of the 52 respondents 52 answered “yes,” and no one answered “no.” Question 8 asked, “Would you recommend these sermons to family or friends?” Of the 52 respondents 52 answered “yes,” and no one answered “no.”

The responses for Questions 9, 10, as well as the suggestions for improvement are listed in Tables 1-3.

Analysis of Pre-seminar Sermon Series Survey Results

Four categories formed the basis of the 10 questions of the survey: (a) the effectiveness of the sermons, (b) the effectiveness of the presenter, (c) new and most valuable information participants learned, and (d) suggestions for improvement.

Table 1

Pre-seminar Sermons Evaluation Form Question 9, "What Did you Learn, as a Result of Hearing These Sermons That you did not Know Before?"

Number of Respondents	Responses
15	How to better communicate with their family and/or friends
12	How to apply better communication skills
9	Either left the space blank, responded N/A, their response was illegible, or what they attempted to say was so incoherent it did not constitute a response I could report
6	Gained a better understanding of African-American communication
3	The biblical/spiritual aspects of healthy communication
1	God is in control of everything
1	If a woman makes a pledge to say no, God voids the pledge
1	If my marriage is strong then my family will be strong. As head of the household I must be more Christ-like
1	People cannot read each other's minds
1	Nothing or no one should delay communication
1	If the marriage is destroyed everything else is destroyed
1	Gained an understanding of the different interior/exterior impacts of communication

The first category, Questions 1, 4, and 8, analyzed the effectiveness of the sermons. The majority of responses from the participants indicated that they thought the sermon series was very effective, with 41 of 52 respondents indicated the sermon series was very effective. All the respondents indicated the sermons presented were clear and practical, and that they would recommend the sermon series to family or friends.

The second category, Questions 5, 6, and 7, analyzed the effectiveness of the presenter. The majority of responses from the participants indicated that they thought the presenter was effective, with 41 of the 52 respondents indicated the presenter was very effective, and the remaining 11 saying he was effective. All 52 respondents thought the presenter was well informed and shared well-researched information that was valuable.

The third category, Questions 2, 3, and 9, ascertained new and most valuable information participants had learned. This category revealed a cross-section of responses. The sermon that was considered the most effective was “Seasoned With Grace: Pillow Talk,” by 16 of 52 of the respondents. The majority of respondents, 31 of 52, did not

Table 2

Pre-seminar Sermons Evaluation Form Question 10, "Was There a Topic/Issue you Would Like to Have Engaged in for a Longer Period of Time?"

Number of Respondents	Responses
18	Either left the space blank, responded N/A, their response was illegible, or what they attempted to say was so incoherent it did not constitute a response I could report.
16	To learn more about "Pillow Talk" sermon or husband-wife communication.
5	To learn more about "Nurturing True Honor" sermon or parent-child communication.
2	To learn more about ways to improve communication skills.
2	To learn more about "If my people pray" sermon.
2	To learn more about "Seasoned With Grace" sermon.
1	To learn more about "Tearing Down and Building Up" sermon.
1	To learn more about "Form Dictates Function" sermon.
1	To learn more about the statistics of our cultural background.
1	To learn more about the communication in the family.
1	To learn more about dressing.
1	To learn more about the role of a submissive woman.
1	To learn more about if women have to obey husbands, what is the man's role?

indicate any particular sermon as least effective. However, 8 chose “Seasoned With Grace: Pillow Talk,” and 8 chose “Seasoned With Grace.” The most valuable information, 27 of the 52 respondents indicated they learned, was how to communicate better with their family or friends.

The final category, Question 10 and the suggestion request, ascertained suggestions for improvement. The largest percentage of any response, 30.7%, indicated participants would like to have the sermons engage more into the area of husband-wife communication. The largest percentage of responses, 75%, either gave no suggestions or simply complimented the presenter. There was no clear consensus on any of the other suggestion.

Table 3

Pre-seminar Sermons Evaluation Form Suggestion Request, "In the Space Provided Below and/or on the Back, Please Tell us What Suggestions you may Have to Improve This Sermon Series"

Number of Respondents	Responses
32	Either left the space blank, responded "none," their response was illegible, or what they attempted to say was so incoherent it did not constitute a response I could report
7	Did not give suggestions, but complimented me or the seminar; saying such things as, the seminar was excellent, or the presenter did a great job, etc.
3	The sermons needed more time (should have lasted longer than six weeks)
2	I should invite other churches and community residents
1	Give more handouts on background information on subjects presented
1	Would like to see more of the youth involved
1	Present more topics on the family
1	Have another seminar on the family
1	As information is given list references for books, literature as well as scriptures from the sermons/lessons for us to go back and reflect upon
1	The Sundays following the sermon have a two-hour workshop to reinforce the main points of sermon
1	In the future make videos available
1	Use more plain talk based on group presented to and to use more examples

Evaluation of Seasoned With Grace Family Communication Seminar

Upon the completion of Session 3 of SWG a survey, evaluating the perceived effectiveness of the seminar (see Appendix E) was administered. Of the 79 participants who registered for SWG 49 completed the Seasoned With Grace Family Communication Seminar Evaluation Form.

Question 1 asked, “On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not effective and 5 is very effective, where would you rate this seminar?” Of the 49 respondents 15 responded with a 4, indicating the seminar was effective; and 34 responded with a 5, indicating the seminar was very effective.

Question 2 asked, “Which presentation was MOST informative in giving you the tools or techniques to enrich your family’s communication skills?” Of the 49 respondents 3 responded “Session 1;” 23 responded “Session 2;” 5 responded “Session 3;” 7 participants did not respond; and 12 responded “all.”

Question 3 asked, “Which presentation was LEAST informative in giving the tools or techniques to enrich family’s communication skills?” Of the 49 respondents 3 responded “session one;” 3 responded “session two;” 5 responded “session three;” and 38 participants did not respond.

Question 5 asked, “On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not effective and 5 is very effective, how would you rate the communication skills of the presenter?” Of the 49 respondents 1 responded with a 3, indicating the communication skills of the presenter was somewhat effective; and 8 responded with a 4, indicating the communication/skills

of the presenter was effective; and 40 responded with a 5, indicating the communication skills of the presenter was very effective.

Questions 4, 6, and 7 were yes or no response questions. Question 4 asked, “Was the material presented in a clear and practical way?” Of the 49 respondents 49 answered “yes,” and no one answered “no.” Question 6 asked, “Did the presenters use a variety of techniques to convey the information that was valuable to you?” Of the 49 respondents 49 answered “yes,” and no one answered “no.” Question 7 asked, “Would you recommend this enrichment program to family and/or friends?” Of the 49 respondents 49 answered “yes,” and no one answered “no.”

The responses for Questions 8, 9, as well as the suggestions for improvement are listed in the Tables 4-7.

Analysis of Seasoned With Grace Seminar Survey Results

Four categories formed the basis of the nine questions of the survey: (a) the effectiveness of the seminar, (b) the effectiveness of the presenter, (c) new and most valuable information participants learned, and (d) suggestions for improvement.

The first category, Questions 1, 4, and 7, analyzed the effectiveness of the seminar. The majority of responses from the participants indicated that they thought the seminar was very effective. Thirty-four of 49 respondents, 69%, indicated the sermon series was very effective, and the other 15 said it was effective. All the respondents indicated the materials presented were clear and practical, and that they would recommend the sermon series to family or friends.

The second category, Questions 5 and 6, analyzed the effectiveness of the presenter. The majority of responses from the participants indicated that they thought the presenter was effective. Forty of the 49 respondents, 81%, indicated the presenter was very effective. All 49 respondents thought the presenter used a variety of techniques to convey the information, and that the information that was valuable.

The third category, Questions 2, 3, and 8, ascertained new and most valuable information participants had learned. This category revealed a cross-section of responses. The session that was considered the most informative was Session 2, “Positive Communication in a Negative World,” by 23 of 49 of the respondents (47%). The next highest percentage, 22%, indicated all the sessions were equally effective. The majority of respondents, 38 of 49 did not indicate any session as the least informative.

Table 4

Seasoned With Grace Seminar Evaluation Form Question 8, “What did you Learn, as a Result of Attending This Enrichment Weekend That you did not Know Before?”

Number of Respondents	Responses
16	How to communicate with their family more effectively
12	How to communicate more effectively
6	Either left the space blank, responded N/A, their response was illegible, or what they attempted to say was so incoherent it did not constitute a response I could report
6	Learned more about the unique aspects of the African-American communication style

Table 4 *Continued*

4	Learned more about the effects of slavery on the African-American family
3	Learned more about conflict resolution skills
2	Gained a better understanding of the concept of thinking climate

Table 5

Seasoned With Grace Seminar Evaluation Form Question 9, "Was There a Topic/Issue you Would Have Liked the Presenter to Engage More in-Depth?"

Number of Respondents	Responses
18	Either left the space blank, responded N/A, their response was illegible, or what they attempted to say was so incoherent it did not constitute a response I could report
11	Spend more time addressing parent-child communication
7	Spend more time addressing the history and/or the effects of slavery/racism on the African-American family
5	Spend more time addressing African-American communication style
3	Spend more time addressing positive family communication
2	Spend more time addressing conflict resolution
1	Spend more time addressing spirituality
1	Spend more time addressing marriage, with woman (wife) obeying man (husband)
1	Spend more time addressing homelessness

Table 6

Seasoned With Grace Seminar Evaluation Form Suggestion Request, "In the Space Provided Below and/or on the Back, Please Tell us What Suggestions you may Have to Improve the Seminar"

Number of Respondents	Responses
30	Either left the space blank, responded "none," their response was illegible, or what they attempted to say was so incoherent it did not constitute a response I could report
8	Did not give suggestions, but complimented me or the seminar; saying such things as, the seminar was excellent, or the presenter did a great job, etc.
3	The seminar needed more time
2	There should be more time should be allowed for feedback and discussion
1	There should be more handouts on subjects should be presented
1	There should be more scriptures to help
1	There should be more breaks during the seminar
1	There was too much sitting. Have two parts on one Sabbath and another on another Sabbath
1	Information should be given in the order in which it appears on the handouts or tell them where to find the information when I start to discuss it

Sixteen of the 49 respondents indicated they learned how to communicate better with their family or friends, and 12 of the 49 respondents said learning better communication skills.

The final category, Question 9 and the suggestion request, ascertained suggestions for improvement. The largest percentage of any responses, 22%, of the participants indicated they would like to have spent more time on the subject of parent-child communication. The next largest percentage of any responses, 14%, indicated participants would like to have spent more time on the subject of the history and/or effects of slavery/racism on the African-American family. The largest percentage of responses, 77%, either gave no suggestions or simply complimented the presenter. There was no clear consensus on any of the other suggestions.

Description of Family Communication Assessment Instruments

Instruments were needed that measure the impact of SWG seminar on improving participants' family communication skills. The difficulty encountered identifying instruments that measures African-American family communication was the absence of any clinical instruments with requisite validity and reliability norms, which measured family communication skills, and was specifically designed for African-American families. There are several clinical instruments that measured couple communication skills, but none that specifically measured family communication.

Two instruments, which were designed to measure couple communication, were identified as instruments where certain words could be modified and adapted to measure family communication without affecting the reliability and validity of the instrument.. These instruments are Life Innovation Couple Communication Scale (CC) (Olson & Larson, 2008), and Primary Communication Inventory (PCI) (Narvan, 1967) (see Appendix E).

The Prepare/Enrich Three Couple Scales is a 3-question instrument designed to measure couple satisfaction, communication and conflict resolution. The validity and reliability of the instrument has been verified through a national study of 50,000 couples, with an alpha reliability of 0.89. Of the 30 questions that comprise the inventory, 14 questions related to communication were chosen to use as part of the assessment tool (Olson & Larson, 2008).

Fisher and Corcoran's (1994) PCI is a 25-question instrument designed to assess marital communication. The PCI assesses the individual's perception of his or her own communication ability, and the partner's perception of the individual's communication abilities.

The PCI has excellent concurrent validity, correlating strongly and significantly with the Locke-Wallace Marriage Relationship Inventory. The PCI also has excellent known-groups validity, distinguishing in several studies between distressed and nondistressed couples and couples seeking marital therapy and nonclinic couples. The PCI also has been found to be sensitive to changes due to therapeutic intervention. (Fisher & Corcoran, 1994, pp. 167-168)

Description of Analysis Process for Pre and Post-Seminar Inventories' Results

The assessment inventories were administered prior to session 2 of SWG and 15-30 days post-SWG (see Chapter 4). Participants' scores were calculated and analyzed in three ways. Firstly, all 39 questions of the assessment inventory were analyzed to determine statistically significant changes from participants' pre and post-seminar responses. Secondly, the assessment inventory was analyzed based on six areas of communication. This will be discussed later in this chapter. Thirdly, the 11 personal communication indicators were assessed. This will also be discussed later in this chapter. In order to accurately score, calculate, and analyze the assessment inventories, negatively

worded questions/statements were reverse-scored. These were as follows: PCI Questions 2, 8, 15, 17 and 24; and CC Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 14.

Tables and Analysis of Pre and Post-Seminar Inventories Results

Table 7 gives the results of each of the 39 individual questions of the assessment inventory. Each question was individually analyzed to determine any statistically significant changes from participants' pre and post-seminar responses following the Seasoned With Grace family communication seminar intervention.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviation for Primary Communication Inventory

Variables	Baseline		Exit		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1. How often do you and your family talk over pleasant things that happen during the day?	3.72	0.944	4.03	0.769	0.057*
2. How often do you and your family talk over unpleasant things that happen during the day?	2.21	0.780	2.03	0.918	0.134
3. Do you and your family talk about things you disagree about or have difficulties over?	3.15	0.939	3.59	1.003	0.012**
4. Do you and your family talk about things in which you are both interested?	3.84	1.081	3.96	0.983	0.262

Table 7. *Continued.*

Variables	Baseline		Exit		<i>p</i> -value
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	
5. Does your family adjust what they say and how they say it to the way you seem to feel at the moment?	2.72	1.097	2.96	0.951	0.136
6. When you start to ask questions, does your family know what it is before you ask it?	2.39	0.826	2.66	0.186	0.076*
7. Do you know the feelings of your family from their facial and body gestures?	4.15	0.833	4.00	0.803	0.244
8. Do you and your family avoid certain subjects in conversation?	2.96	1.131	3.93	1.058	0.042**
9. Does your family explain or express themselves to you through a glance or gesture?	3.18	1.073	3.25	1.367	0.272
10. Do you and your family discuss things together before making important decisions?	3.51	1.253	3.81	1.237	0.099*
11. Can your family tell what kind of day you have had without asking?	3.27	1.329	3.28	1.170	0.449
12. Your family wants to visit some close friends or relatives. You don't enjoy their company or particularly approve. Would you tell them this?	3.63	1.365	3.46	1.294	0.173
13. Does your family discuss matters of sex with each other?	2.78	1.363	3.18	1.261	0.067*
14. Do you and your family use words which have a special meaning not understood by outsiders?	2.39	1.116	2.51	1.277	0.309

Table 7 *Continued.*

15. How often do family members sulk or pout?	3.30	0.951	3.40	0.983	0.292
16. Can you and your family discuss your most sacred beliefs without feelings of restraint or embarrassment?	3.69	1.131	3.968	1.175	0.181
17. Do you avoid telling your family things that put you in a bad light?	3.36	0.962	3.78	1.050	0.004**
18. You and your family are visiting with friends. Something is said by the friends which cause you to glance at each other. Would you understand each other?	4.218	0.750	4.00	0.870	0.092*
19. How often can you tell as much from your family's tone of voice as from what they actually say?	3.625	1.148	4.10	1.375	0.005**
20. How often do you and your family talk to each other about personal problems?	3.96	1.121	3.90	1.325	0.190
21. Do you feel that in most matters your family knows what you are trying to say?	3.87	0.902	3.80	1.371	0.356
22. Would you rather talk about intimate matters with your family than with some other person?	3.78	1.554	3.51	1.615	0.308
23. Do you understand the meaning of your family member's facial expressions?	4.21	1.155	4.00	1.318	0.064*

Table 7. *Continued.*

Variables	Baseline		Exit		<i>p</i> -value
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	
24. If you and your family are visiting friends or relatives and one of you starts to say something, does anyone take over the conversation without the feeling of interrupting?	2.96	1.317	3.06	1.430	0.454
25. In general, have you and your family members talk most things over together?	3.62	1.148	3.80	1.325	0.189

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .001$

Description of Post-Seminar Assessment Inventories Results

PCI post-seminar assessment inventory results demonstrated an increase in individual question scores following intervention in 12 responses; Questions 4, 5, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 22, 24, and 25; and CC Questions 2 and 3. While the trajectory of responses demonstrated a positive increase, the increase was not statistically significant at p -value $< .10$. PCI post-seminar assessment inventory demonstrated a decrease in individual question scores following intervention in 12 responses; Questions 2, 7, 12, 20, and 21; and CC Questions 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 14. While the trajectory of responses demonstrated a decrease, the decrease was not statistically significant at p -value $< .10$.

PCI post-seminar assessment inventory demonstrated a statistically significant increase, at p -value $< .10$, in individual question scores following intervention in 8

responses; Questions 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 13, 17, and 19. PCI post-seminar assessment inventory demonstrated a statistically significant decrease, at p-value <.10, in individual question scores following intervention in 7 responses; Questions 8 and 23; and CC Questions 1, 6, 7, 11, and 12.

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviation for Family Communication Scale

Variables	Baseline		Exit		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1. I am concerned about the quality of our communication.	2.25	1.157	2.51	1.386	0.038**
2. I can express my true feelings to my partner.	3.84	1.375	4.00	1.622	0.163
3. When we are having a problem, my partner often refuses to talk about it.	3.22	1.489	3.31	1.568	0.257
4. My partner sometimes makes comments that put me down.	3.32	1.604	3.24	1.603	0.500
5. I wish my partner were more willing to share his/her feelings with me.	3.32	1.536	2.72	1.599	0.104
6. Sometimes it is hard for me to ask my partner for what I want.	3.87	1.577	3.03	1.630	.0003***
7. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my partner tells me.	4.03	1.494	3.67	1.798	0.010**
8. My partner is a very good listener.	3.61	1.344	3.48	1.579	0.290

Table 8 *Continued*

9. My partner often doesn't understand how I feel.	3.32	1.473	2.93	1.458	0.115
10. I am very satisfied with how my partner and I talk with each other.	3.25	1.297	3.50	1.704	0.211
11. It is difficult for me to share negative feelings with my partner.	3.64	1.450	3.172	1.536	0.071*
12. When we discuss problems, my partner understands my opinions and ideas.	3.51	1.310	3.17	1.550	0.052*
13. Even during disagreements, I can share my feelings and ideas with my partner.	3.73	1.539	3.50	1.530	0.351
14. To avoid hurting my partner's feelings during an argument, I tend to say nothing.	3.00	1.586	2.72	1.599	0.147

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .001$

Description of the six Areas of Communication

Further evaluation of SWG's impact was achieved by analysis of the assessment inventories results based on six areas of communication identified in current scholarly literature (see Chapter 3), and discussed during the seminar (see Chapter 4). The six areas are communication frequency, Questions 1, 2, 4, 10, 25 of the PCI; communication intimacy and openness, Questions 13, 16, 20, 22 of the PCI, and 2, 5, 7, 11, 13 of the CC; communication connectedness, Questions 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 18, 19, 21, 23 of the PCI, and

questions 9, 12 of the CC; communication conflict, Questions 15, 24 of the PCI and 4 of the CC; communication avoidance Questions 3, 8, 12, 17 of the PCI and 3, 6, 14 of the CC; and communication satisfaction, Questions 1, 8, 10 of the CC.

Communication frequency refers to how often family members communicate with each about their personal life and everyday matters. Communication intimacy refers to the level at which family members are comfortable with being transparent and open with each other, especially regarding sensitive and/or embarrassing matters. Communication connectedness refers to the level at which family members are able to understand each other's nonverbal communication, and are able to sense and/or anticipate what other family members may be thinking. Communication conflict refers to behaviors family members engage in that create conflict or hostility. Communication avoidance refers to the extent at which family members avoid discussing subjects and matters with each other. Communication satisfaction refers to the level at which respondents are satisfied with the state of their family's communication.

Tables and Analysis of Six Areas of Communication

A paired sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the response of participants in the area of communication frequency before participation in a SWG and after (see Table 9). The mean score for the respondents ($n=33$) before the intervention was 16.8 ($SD=2.51$). The mean score for the respondents after the intervention was administered was 17.1 ($SD=3.27$). There was a slight increase in the average score following the intervention. The trajectory of the average mean score may suggest a slight change due to

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviation for Communication Frequency Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed) <i>p</i> -value
Pair 1	Frequency Pretest	16.82	2.518	-0.634	0.53
	Frequency Posttest	17.12	3.276		

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .001$

implementation of the intervention. However, the difference in the means between the pre and posttest was not statistically significant at the $p < .10$ alpha level ($t = -0.634$, $p = 0.53$). Therefore, we can conclude that there is not a statistically significant difference in the area of communication frequency among respondents before and after the intervention.

A paired sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the response of participants in the area of communication intimacy before participation in a SWG and after. There was a statistically significant difference in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M = 30.85$, $SD = 7.88$) and after the intervention ($M = 28.42$, $SD = 10.08$) at the $p < .10$ alpha. The difference indicated a decrease in pre- and post-intervention average mean scores

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviation for Communication Intimacy Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed) <i>p</i> -value
Pair 1	Intimacy Pretest	30.85	7.882	1.829	0.077*
	Intimacy Posttest	28.42	10.081		

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .001$ level; $t(32)=1.82$, $p=0.07$

for respondents. Therefore, we can conclude that in the area of communication intimacy the intervention did not produce any positive increase in scores.

A paired sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the response of participants in the area of communication connectedness before participation in a SWG and after (see Table 11). There was not a statistically significant difference in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=39.21$, $SD=6.89$) and after the intervention ($M=38.00$, $SD=10.04$) at the $p < .10$ alpha level; $t(32)=0.85$, $p=0.40$. The trajectory of the average

Table 11

Means and Standard Deviation for Communication Connectedness Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed) <i>p</i> -value
Pair 1	Connectedness Pretest	39.21	6.891	.850	0.402
	Connectedness Posttest	38.00	10.041		

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .001$

mean score indicates a decrease in communication intimacy among respondents upon implementation of the intervention. Therefore, we can conclude that in the area of communication intimacy the intervention did not produce any positive increase in scores.

A paired sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the response of participants in the area of communication conflict before participation in a SWG and after (see Table 12). There was not a statistically significant difference in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=9.30$, $SD=2.40$) and after the intervention ($M=8.94$, $SD=2.77$) at the $p < .10$ alpha level; $t(32)=0.76$, $p=0.45$. The trajectory of the average mean score indicates a decrease in positive communication conflict among respondents upon implementation of the intervention. Therefore, we can conclude that in the area of communication conflict the intervention did not produce any positive increase in scores.

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviation for Communication Conflict Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed) <i>p</i> -value
Pair 1	Conflict Pretest	9.30	2.404	.763	0.451
	Conflict Posttest	8.94	2.772		

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .001$

A paired sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the response of participants in the area of communication avoidance before participation in a SWG and after (see Table 13). There was not a statistically significant difference in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=21.85$, $SD=4.66$) and after the intervention ($M=21.88$, $SD=5.61$) at the $p < .10$ alpha level; $t(32)=-0.035$, $p=0.972$. Therefore, we can conclude that in the area of communication avoidance the intervention did not produce statistically significant increase in scores. However, the trajectory of the average mean score may suggest the slight change may be due to implementation of the intervention.

Table 13

Means and Standard Deviation for Communication Avoidance Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed) <i>p</i> -value
Pair 1	Avoidance Pretest	21.85	4.665	-.035	0.972
	Avoidance Posttest	21.88	5.617		

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .001$

A paired sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the response of participants in the area of communication satisfaction before participation in a SWG and after (see Table 14). There was not a statistically significant difference in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=8.21, SD=2.47$) and after the intervention ($M=8.44, SD=3.70$)

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviation for Communication Satisfaction Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed) <i>p</i> -value
Pair 1 Satisfaction Pretest	2.472	8.21		
Satisfaction Posttest	3.708	8.24	-.048	0.962

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .001$

at the $p < .10$ alpha level; $t(32) = -0.048, p = 0.962$. Therefore, we can conclude that in the area of communication satisfaction the intervention did not produce statistically significant increase in scores. However, the trajectory of the average mean score may suggest a slight change may be due to implementation of the intervention.

Description of the Personal Communication Indicators

In order to further determine the impact of SWG seminar, on improving participants' family communication skills, the assessment inventories were analyzed based on the 11 questions that explored the respondents' personal use of positive communication techniques when communicating with family members (referred to as personal indicators). The majority of questions in the assessment inventories explored the communication dynamics of the entire family, regardless of the respondents' use of positive communication. However, the questions identified in this analysis are personal indicators that specifically determine the respondents' skill, ability, and/or willingness, to employ positive family communication techniques. The personal indicators are PCI Questions 7, 12, 17, 19, 22, and 23, and CC Questions 2, 6, 11, 13, and 14.

Tables and Analysis of Personal Communication Indicators

An analysis of the results indicates that of the majority of differences of pre and post-intervention responses, 8 out of 11, show a decrease in scores. Of the 8 scores that showed a decrease, 6 were not statistically significant. PCI Question 7 revealed a slight decrease before the intervention ($M=4.15$, $SD=0.833$) and after the intervention ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.803$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p=0.244$; PCI Question 12 revealed a slight decrease before the intervention ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.365$) and after the intervention ($M=3.46$, $SD=1.294$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p=0.173$; PCI Question 22 revealed a slight decrease in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=3.78$, $SD=1.554$) and after the intervention ($M=3.51$, $SD=1.615$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p = 0.308$; PCI Question 23

revealed a slight decrease in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=4.21$, $SD=1.155$) and after the intervention ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.318$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p=0.064$; CC Question 13 revealed a slight decrease in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=3.73$, $SD=1.539$) and after the intervention ($M=3.50$, $SD=1.530$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p=0.351$; and CC Question 14 revealed a slight decrease in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=3.00$, $SD=1.586$) and after the intervention ($M=2.72$, $SD=1.599$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p=0.147$ (see Table 15).

Of the 8 scores that showed a decrease, 2 were statistically significant at p -value $<.10$. CC Question 6 revealed a statistically significant decrease in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=3.87$, $SD=1.577$) and after the intervention ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.63$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p=0.0003$; and CC Question 11 revealed a statistically significant decrease in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=3.64$, $SD=1.450$) and after the intervention ($M=3.172$, $SD=1.536$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p = 0.071$.

Of the 11 scores, 3 resulted in an increase and all the increases were statistically significant at p -value $<.10$. PCI Question 17 revealed a statistically significant increase in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=3.36$, $SD=0.962$) and after the intervention ($M=3.78$, $SD=1.050$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p = 0.004$; PCI Question 19 revealed a statistically significant increase in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=3.625$, $SD=1.148$) and after the intervention ($M=4.10$, $SD=1.375$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p = 0.005$; and CC Question 2 revealed a statistically significant increase in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=3.84$, $SD=1.375$) and after the intervention ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.622$) at the p -value $<.10$, $p=0.038$.

Table 15

Means and Standard Deviation for Personal Communication Indicators

Variables	Baseline		Exit		<i>p</i> -value
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	
PCI 7: Do you know the feelings of your family from their facial and body gestures?	4.15	0.833	4.00	0.803	0.244
PCI 12: Your family wants to visit some close friends or relatives. You don't enjoy their company or particularly approve. Would you tell them this?	3.63	1.365	3.46	1.294	0.173
PCI 17: Do you avoid telling your family things that put you in a bad light?	3.36	0.962	3.78	1.050	0.004**
PCI 19: How often can you tell as much from your family's tone of voice as from what they actually say?	3.625	1.148	4.10	1.375	0.005***
PCI 22: Would you rather talk about intimate matters with your family than with some other person?	3.78	1.554	3.51	1.615	0.308
PCI 23: Do you understand the meaning of your family members' facial expressions?	4.21	1.155	4.00	1.318	0.064*
CC 2: I can express my true feelings to my partner.	3.84	1.375	4.00	1.622	0.038**
CC 6: Sometimes it is hard for me to ask my partner for what I want.	3.87	1.577	3.03	1.63	0.0003***

Table 15 *Continued*

CC 11: It is difficult for me to share negative feelings with my partner.	3.64	1.450	3.172	1.536	0.071*
CC 13: Even during disagreements, I can share my feelings and ideas with my partner.	3.73	1.539	3.50	1.530	0.351
CC 14: To avoid hurting my partner's feelings during an argument, I tend to say nothing.	3.00	1.586	2.72	1.599	0.147

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .001$

Conclusion

The impetus for conducting such research was to effect a positive change in the family communication skills of the families of Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Baton Rouge, LA. Survey results indicate participants benefited from the six-week sermon series and viewed the seminar as beneficial to their understanding of positive family communication. Analysis of the pre- and post-SWG intervention indicate a slight increase of respondents reporting positive family communication between pre and post-seminar assessment inventories. Of the 39 results 20 showed an increase, with 7 being statistically significant. Of the 39 results 19 showed a decrease, with 6 being statistically significant.

Improvements were made in the area of communication frequency. A major theme of SWG was ABC (always be communicating). Participants were taught the importance of families practicing communication as much as possible.

Of the 5 questions on the assessment inventory that examined communication frequency (PCI: 1, 2, 4, 10, 25), 4 showed an increase in pre and post-intervention scores, with PCI Question 1, “How often do you and your family talk over pleasant things that happen during the day?” and PCI Question 10, “Do you and your family discuss things together before making important decisions?” showing statistically significant increases at $p < .10$ (see Table 9).

Improvement were made in participants’ scores assessing communication avoidance, as indicated by PCI Question 3, “Do you and your family talk about things you disagree about or have difficulties over?” and PCI Question 8, “Do you and your family avoid certain subjects in conversation?” Both of these scores indicated a statistically significant increase in the scores for respondents before the intervention and after the intervention at $p\text{-value} < .10$ (see Table 13).

Improvements were also made in the participants’ concern regarding the quality of their family’s communication, as indicated by CC Question 1, “I am concerned about the quality of our communication.” CC Question 1 revealed a statistically significant increase in the scores for respondents before the intervention ($M=2.25$, $SD=1.157$) and after the intervention ($M=2.51$, $SD=1.386$) at $p\text{-value} < .10$, $p=0.038$.

Evaluating program impact 15 days after the final component of the intervention demonstrates effectiveness beyond the intervention timeframe. How the attitudinal changes and skills acquisition demonstrated in this project are maintained or deteriorate

over time would require longitudinal studies (e.g., follow up at 3-month, six-month, one-year, and multiple-years).

The impact of the SWG seminar was enough to motivate all the participants to indicate they would recommend the seminar to family and friends, and to consider the seminar either effective or very effective. The results of the research were significant enough to make a meaningful contribution to the ongoing conversation about African-American families and strategies to improve these families and their communication skills.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The task of this project was to develop and implement a family communication enrichment seminar that takes into account the ethnic cultural dynamics of the African-American communication style, and teaches healthy communication skills among African-American families of the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Further research and interventions are needed to improve family communication among African-Americans. Yet an intervention and research analysis like this one, when combined with Scriptural study and recent literature, can add to the on-going discussion regarding the use of the church as a vehicle to improve families, and more specifically family communication.

This chapter summarizes the four phases of this DMin project: Theological Reflection, Literature Review, Intervention, and Data Evaluation. After the summary recommendations for future research will be provided, some suggestions for pastors who desire to improve communication among the families of their churches, and an overview of my life journey and how this project has help my maturation as a pastor and husband.

Summary

Chapter 2 gave a theological reflection and was meant to orient this study as a spiritual endeavor. I surveyed the biblical teachings regarding healthy communication as revealed in the various divisions of the Bible, namely the Torah, the Nevi'im, the Ketuvim, the Gospels, and the Epistles. I then explored the biblical mandate for families, husbands and wives, and parents and children, to employ healthy communication techniques.

Chapter 3, the Literature Review, sought to review relevant literature that contributes to the subject of African-American family communication. Most of the literature represented recent scholarship. I organized the literature into four categories: First, current literature regarding theories of family function and communication. Second, research on positive (healthy) communication within families, with a section focusing on the writings of Ellen White relating to healthy communication within families. Third, scholarly works on the dynamics of the African-American family and the African-American family structure. Fourth, literature discussing communication techniques and the African-American family.

Chapter 4 provided a description of the research project intervention developed and executed at the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The information presented was built on the Theological Reflection and Literature Review of Chapters 2 and 3. I presented a descriptive narrative recounting the events that took place during the intervention, specifically the six-week sermon series, and the Seasoned With Grace Family Communication Seminar. The narrative of Chapter 4 was meant to

guide the reader through the modes, methods and mindsets that helped to frame the research project and intervention from start to finish.

Finally, Chapter 5 assessed the data and offered the results and outcomes of the evaluation process of the research project and intervention. I analyzed the responses to the survey instruments that measured the effectiveness of the six-week sermon series and SWG. I also analyzed and measured the increase and/or decrease in positive communication skills of participants who attended SWG through the pre and post-intervention assessment inventories. The chapter was organized into six sections: introduction, evaluation of surveys, description of assessment instruments (inventories), description of analysis process for pre and post-seminar inventories' results, tables and analysis of pre- and post-seminar inventories' results, and conclusion.

Recommendations

There are several factors that may have affected the outcomes of the pre and post-intervention assessment survey that future researchers should take into consideration: sample size, duration of study, missing data, assessment inventories, and self-reported data.

Sample Size. There were 33 participants who, both attended SWG, and completed the pre and post-seminar assessment inventories. A small sample size of less than 100 is at higher risk for Type 1 or Type 2 Error. Type 1 or Type 2 Error may also have been present due to lack of replication of the intervention. Replication with larger sample size

and multiple interventions may minimize/reduce the probability of Type 1 and Type 2 statistical error.

Duration of Study. Participants who attended SWG were asked to complete post-intervention assessment inventories no earlier than 15 days and no later than 30 days, allowing for a maximum of 30 days from intervention to reporting. The limited duration between pre and post-intervention assessment inventories could have affected the results. Future researchers should allow a longer period of time between assessments to allow participants a greater opportunity to internalize the information presented during pre-sermon series and seminar.

Missing Data. Several respondents did not answer all the questions on the assessment inventories. There were 33 respondents who filled out pre and post-intervention assessment inventories, comprised of 39 questions per inventory (78 total), resulting in 2,574 possible responses. There were 136 (5%) missing responses, approximately. Future researchers may consider addressing this challenge in one of two ways: (a) administer the inventories verbally rather than handing them out for self-reporting, and/or (b) having trained surveyors administer inventories.

Another area of missing data is the lack of information regarding how many complete families attended seminar versus individuals from families. Participation in the seminar was anonymous, with participants being assigned random 4-digit PINs. Thus we do not know how many family members of the respondents attended the seminar. Twenty-eight of the 39 questions examined both respondents' and family members' use of positive communication. Only 11 questions were personal communication indicators.

Future researchers may benefit from having all family members of a household attend seminar and complete pre and post-intervention assessments.

Assessment inventories. As discussed in Chapter 5, this researcher was unable to identify any family communication assessment inventories, or any that were designed for African-Americans. This researcher chose to modify two existing inventories that were designed to assess couple's communication, changing the word "spouse" to "family."

Future researchers should consider designing their own inventory to assess family communication and that are culturally sensitive to African-American families.

Self-reported Data. The criteria for participating in SWG was the participants had to be 18 years or older, be African-American or have individual(s) in household who identifies as African-American, and have attended Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church at least once during the six-week pre-seminar sermon series.

Because the eligibility criteria did not control for education level, lack of comprehension of instruction may have influenced the intervention results. Future research may control for education and/or use professional survey mechanics to increase comprehension and compliance with the pre- and post-assessments.

Another limitation to self-reported data, that may have affected the outcomes of this research, is social desirability (SD) bias. Participants may have responded based on social desirability bias. Social desirability may have confounded or obscured the results of this research. Future researchers using questionnaires should consider the impact of SD bias on the validity of their results and consider using an SD scale when they develop the instrument to minimize items that encourage SDR (social desirability responses), or

when administering questionnaires and conducting interviews to detect and control for SD bias during data analysis (Van De Mortel, 2008, p. 46).

As reported in Chapter 3 of this paper, additional study of African-American family communication is very much needed. Because the time and scope of this paper was very limited, future researchers may consider the following areas when seeking to research African-American family communication. This list is in no way exhaustive, but rather serves as a starting point for dialogue and future research on African-American family communication.

First, additional research is needed that examines African-American family communication during times of conflict and develops specific strategies to assist in the conflict resolution process. Next, additional research is needed that examines the African-American family communication over a longer duration of time, taking into the consideration the various stages of family life, and how African-American family communication is affected during these various stages. Also, additional research is needed that explores the long-term benefits (spanning a period of a year or more) of a family communication seminar on the use of positive family communication skills among African-American families. Lastly, future research is needed that examines the benefits of couple communication seminar versus family communication seminar, and the correlation between improved couple's communication and whether it translates to an overall improvement in communication skills for the entire family.

Discussion

This section is a discussion with suggestions for pastors ministering to African-American congregations, who are seeking to enhance family life in their congregations through improving family communication skills. I recognize the challenges that accompany pastoring. There are many subject matters that are relevant to the health of the local congregation; stewardship, fundamental doctrines, end-time prophecy, youth ministry, community service/outreach, evangelism, and family life to name a few. These suggestions have to be tailored to the specific realities of your local congregation.

Family communication needs to be an ongoing subject. Because of scope and time limits, I had to conduct the seminar and analysis in a short period of time. I suggest pastors use the materials presented in this paper and make it a part of the regular church routine, such as is done with health, stewardship and other personal and family growth subjects, rather than presenting over a straight six-week period and one Sabbath seminar. By consistently introducing the subject over a longer period of time, the congregants have an opportunity to internalize the subject matter, which may translate into improvements in family communication skills.

Family communication is one aspect of family life. Pastors are responsible for every aspect of their church's families' wellbeing. I would suggest pastors seek to address as many aspects of family life as possible; finances, sex, child rearing, employment, etc. I contend that the more stable a family is in the general areas of family life the more stability will manifest itself in the specific areas of family life, such as communication, etc.

Lastly, the pastor's own family life can have a profound impact on the families of the church. I strongly suggest pastors and their families seek ways to improve the quality of their own families. Pastors who improve the quality of their own family life will be able to internalize the materials they present, and serve as a reference point and example for families in their congregations.

My Personal Journey

I was drawn to the subject of family communication because I come from a typical dysfunctional family. I was born and raised in the poorer Southeast region of Washington, DC. We were inconsistent Seventh-day Adventist Christians. My father was an absentee father who did not provide the physical, financial, or emotional support and nurture that a young man needs during his formative years and maturation. My mother had five children, four of whom have different fathers. My oldest brother died from AIDS in 1986, and my second oldest brother was murdered on July 22, 1993. Our home was at best unstable and at worst chaotic, interspersed with seasons of abuse.

When I sought to establish my own family, at the age of 21, I married a young lady whose family or origin was very similar to my own. We brought our learned dysfunction into our marriage, and in 2000, after 3 years of marriage, we divorced. As a result I spent nearly seven years as a single father. In 2000 the Southwest Region Conference sent me to Andrews University Seminary. While at the seminary I met and married my wife, Denise. Although maturity, and receiving an MDiv with emphasis in pastoral counseling under Dr. Swanson at Andrews, had given me some tools to be a better husband and father, I also realized I still had much growing to do.

I knew that there was much about family that I needed to know, so when Andrews University offered a Doctorate of Ministry in Family Ministry I knew this was the right direction for me to take. However, upon entering the program I discovered the subject of family is vast, and I became overwhelmed trying to identify what particular aspect of family I wanted to research. Around the time I was attempting to narrow my research interest I invited Dr. Zephon Lister, a clinical psychologist, to present a family enrichment seminar at my church. During this seminar Dr. Lister taught that one reason family communication is so important is because it allows us to become truly intimate with our family members. It provides us with the power to reveal our true self. He taught that utilizing positive family communication is not so much for the benefit of our family members as it is for our personal edification. He summarized this thought with the statement, "I make myself known so that I might be known." This statement led me to begin thinking about how well I communicate with my family. I began to think about how frequently I communicate and how transparent I am when I communicate. The seminar and that statement opened my eyes to how important family communication is to me, and inspired me to pursue this subject matter in my project document.

This project has been very challenging for me. Beyond the academic challenges, I have had to come to grips with my lack of utilizing positive communication with my own family, and to wrestle with the question, "What communication climate am I creating in my home and what values am I transmitting to my children?" Moreover, I have had to wrestle with my lack of knowledge in this area, and the communication habits I have developed over the years. However, this project has helped me to be more conscientious

about my own communication, and to teach my children the importance of utilizing positive communication to create a more positive home environment.

I intend to continue teaching positive family communication within my local congregation or ministry context, through sermons, workshops and additional seminars. Furthermore, I intend to modify this family communication seminar, building upon what I have learned, and developing a seminar I can conduct in different churches. It is my desire to help other families gain the tools necessary to create positive communication climates in their homes, and ultimately to experience the joy of knowing and be known by their immediate family and the extended family of God.

APPENDIX A

SEASONED WITH GRACE FAMILY COMMUNICATION
SEMINAR ADVERTISEMENTS

SEASONED WITH GRACE

—FAMILY COMMUNICATION SEMINAR—

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2013



11:00 AM – Session 1

“The African American Family Yesterday & Today”

- Why is the African American family the way it is today?
- A historical journey through the formation of the African American family.
- Learn who we were, who we are, and who we must be.



1:30 PM – Session 2

“Positive Communication In A Negative World”

- What does the Bible teach about healthy family communication?
- Principles and techniques that will help your family communicate more effectively.
- Learn the “21 Irrefutable Laws of Positive Family Communication.”



3:30 PM – Session 3

“That’s Just How We Talk”

- Learn the role culture plays in the way your family communicates.
- How can the communication style of African Americans help your family communicate better?
- Learn to implement positive communication principles within your family’s ethnic culture.



4555 Fairfields Ave.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
(225) 356-9187
www.bereanbatonrouge.com



APPENDIX B
SIX-WEEK PRE-SEMINAR SERMON SERIES
DOCUMENTS

— **SEASONED WITH GRACE** —
“**FORM DICTATES FUNCTION**”

1. **Genesis 1:26-28** “...And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and **MULTIPLY**, and **REPLENISH** the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”
2. The biblical model for the family **STRUCTURE** was given to us in the Garden of Eden.
3. The original biblical model for family structure was **HUSBAND** (male) and **WIFE** (female) to be the foundation for the family structure.
4. **Genesis 2:18-25** “...And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man **LEAVE** his father and his mother, and shall **CLEAVE** unto his wife: and they shall be **ONE** flesh.”
5. The biblical model for families is that the father and mother **ESTABLISH** the family unit and the children **REPRODUCE** the family unit.
6. If the family unit is corrupt then whatever it **REPRODUCES** becomes corrupted.
7. This is why Satan did not wait to attack Adam and Eve’s children; he attacked the **ORIGINAL FAMILY** structure.
8. **Genesis 3:1-13**
9. Once Satan had corrupted the original family structure it became easier to affect and manipulate the **REPRODUCTION** of that family structure.
10. **Genesis 4:1-24**; once the original family was corrupted the **OFFSPRING** became corrupted, and the offspring of the offspring became corrupted. Thus each generation would **REPRODUCE** the structure and dysfunction of the previous generation.
11. **Genesis 5**
12. **Genesis 6:1-6**; once the family structure was corrupted, even when individuals from a **HEALTHY** family structure married with those from **DYSFUNCTIONAL** family structures, the result was **CHAOS**.
13. The family is the **FOUNDATION** of any community, because the family **PERPETUATES** the community.
14. Destroy the **MARRIAGE**- Destroy the **FAMILY**- destroy the **COMMUNITY**.
15. Most of the socioeconomic problems afflicting the African American community are a direct result of the affects of **SLAVERY**, **JIM CROW**, and institutionalized **RACISM** on the African American family.

THE FATHER AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY

16. Within the family the father of the home is the **LAWGIVER**.
17. Adventist Home p. 212 “The father represents the divine **LAWGIVER** in his family. He is a laborer together with God, carrying out the gracious designs of God and establishing in his children upright principles, enabling them to form pure and virtuous characters, because he has preoccupied the soul with that which will enable his children to render obedience not only to their earthly parent but also to their heavenly Father. The father must not betray his sacred trust. He must not, on any point, yield up his parental authority.”
18. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt **TEACH** them diligently unto thy **CHILDREN**, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”
19. Once you remove the father from the home you create an environment susceptible to **LAWLESSNESS**.
20. One of the reasons there is so much crime and imprisonment in the African American community is because the **LAWGIVER** has been removed from the home.

RESTORING THE FAMILY STRUCTURE

21. **Matthew 19:1-9**; Jesus demonstrated that the husband and wife relationship is **SACRED** and **PERMANENT**.
22. Restore the **MARRIAGE**- Restore the **FAMILY**- Restore the **COMMUNITY**.
23. **Ephesians 5:22 – 6:4**; One of the major reasons Paul addresses the husband/wife and parent/child relationship in Ephesians was to help **RESTORE** the family structure.
24. God called you to help restore your **FAMILY** so your family could restore this **COMMUNITY**.
25. Jesus’ only agenda is what’s best for His people.

— SEASONED WITH GRACE —
“FORM DICTATES FUNCTION”

1. **Genesis 1:26-28** “...And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and _____, and _____ the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”
2. The biblical model for the family _____ was given to us in the Garden of Eden.
3. The original biblical model for family structure was _____ (male) and _____ (female) to be the foundation for the family structure.
4. **Genesis 2:18-25** “...And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man _____ his father and his mother, and shall _____ unto his wife: and they shall be _____ flesh.”
5. The biblical model for families is that the father and mother _____ the family unit and the children _____ the family unit.
6. If the family unit is corrupt then whatever it _____ becomes corrupted.
7. This is why Satan did not wait to attack Adam and Eve’s children; he attacked the _____ structure.
8. **Genesis 3:1-13**
9. Once Satan had corrupted the original family structure it became easier to affect and manipulate the _____ of that family structure.
10. **Genesis 4:1-24**; once the original family was corrupted the _____ became corrupted, and the offspring of the offspring became corrupted. Thus each generation would _____ the structure and dysfunction of the previous generation.
11. **Genesis 5**
12. **Genesis 6:1-6**; once the family structure was corrupted, even when individuals from a _____ family structure married with those from _____ family structures, the result was _____.
13. The family is the _____ of any community, because the family _____ the community.

14. Destroy the _____ - Destroy the _____ -
destroy the _____.
15. Most of the socioeconomic problems afflicting the African American community are a direct result of the affects of _____, _____, and institutionalized _____ on the African American family.

THE FATHER AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY

16. Within the family the father of the home is the _____.
17. Adventist Home p. 212 “The father represents the divine _____ in his family. He is a laborer together with God, carrying out the gracious designs of God and establishing in his children upright principles, enabling them to form pure and virtuous characters, because he has preoccupied the soul with that which will enable his children to render obedience not only to their earthly parent but also to their heavenly Father. The father must not betray his sacred trust. He must not, on any point, yield up his parental authority.”
18. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt _____ them diligently unto thy _____, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”
19. Once you remove the father from the home you create an environment susceptible to _____.
20. One of the reasons there is so much crime and imprisonment in the African American community is because the _____ has been removed from the home.

RESTORING THE FAMILY STRUCTURE

21. **Matthew 19:1-9;** Jesus demonstrated that the husband and wife relationship is _____ and _____.
22. Restore the _____ - Restore the _____ -
Restore the _____.
23. **Ephesians 5:22 – 6:4;** One of the major reasons Paul addresses the husband/wife and parent/child relationship in Ephesians was to help _____ the family structure.
24. God called you to help restore your _____ so your family could restore this _____.
25. Jesus’ only agenda is what’s best for His people.

— SEASONED WITH GRACE —
“IF MY PEOPLE PRAY”

1. Destroy the **MARRIAGE** – Destroy the **FAMILY** – Destroy the **COMMUNITY**.

II Chronicles 5:11 – 7:16

2. God COMMUNICATES.
3. There are over **23,000** verses and **170** prayers in the Old Testament.
4. Hebrews 1:1-2 “God, who at various times and in various ways **SPOKE** in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days SPOKEN to us by His Son...”
5. Through **PRAYER** and His **WORD** God demonstrates healthy communication.
6. Healthy communication **EXPRESSES, EXPECTS, and EMPOWERS**.
7. First, God’s communication EXPRESSES.
8. Throughout the Old Testament God expressed His **PLANS, NEEDS and DESIRES**.
9. **Exodus 20:1-17**
10. Throughout the Old Testament Israel was **ENCOURAGED** to **EXPRESS** their plans, needs and desires.
11. God’s communication **EXPRESSES**; in the Old Testament God expressed His **FRUSTRATIONS and DISAPPOINTMENTS**.
12. Throughout the Old Testament Israel was **ENCOURAGED** to **EXPRESS** their frustration and disappointment.
13. God’s principle of TWO-WAY conversation is also known as RECIPROCAL communication.
14. Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, and let us reason **TOGETHER**, says the LORD...”
15. God talks **DIRECTLY** to His people not to others **ABOUT** His people.
16. Family relationships that encourage everyone to engage in frequent, free, and spontaneous communications have healthy **CONVERSATION ORIENTATION**.
17. Next, God’s communication shares CLEAR EXPECTATIONS.
18. **NOTE:** God expected the Israelites to go and possess the land of Canaan and establish themselves as a great nation (Deuteronomy 1). God expected Israel to keep His commandments and to teach them to their children (Deuteronomy 6). God expected Israel to be His witness to other nations (Deuteronomy 28 and Isaiah 56:3-7).

19. Not only did God **COMMUNICATION** His expectation, but He also shared what could be expected of Him.
20. **Deuteronomy 28:2-13**
21. God also allows His people to share what they **EXPECT** from Him.
22. **Genesis 28:10-22**
23. Honest communication about what is expected and what to expect is called **COVENANT**.
24. **NOTE:** The only One who can read our minds doesn't play mindreading games.
25. Finally, God's communication **EMPOWERS**.
26. Empowering is speaking words to family members that will **ENCOURAGE** them to reach their full potential.
27. Throughout the Old Testament God affirmed Israel as the **PRAISE** of the earth (Isaiah 62:6-7), Israel is **GREAT** (I Chronicles 17:21-24), Israel is the **APPLE** of God's eye (Zechariah 2:8), Israel is a holy, **SPECIAL** people chosen by God (Deuteronomy 7:6 and I Chronicles 16:13), and Israel will be **JOYFUL** and glad (Isaiah 51:3).
28. Through **PRAYER** God teaches His people how to express, expect, and empower.
29. We learn how to communicate with our **FAMILY** by learning how to communicate with **GOD**.
30. Restore the **MARRIAGE** – Restore the **FAMILY** – Restore the **COMMUNITY**.
31. II Chronicles 7:14 “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and **PRAY**, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I **HEAR** from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will **HEAL** their land.”

— SEASONED WITH GRACE —
“IF MY PEOPLE PRAY”

1. Destroy the _____ – Destroy the _____
– Destroy the _____.

II Chronicles 5:11 – 7:16

2. God _____.
3. There are over _____ verses and _____ prayers in the Old Testament.
4. Hebrews 1:1-2 “God, who at various times and in various ways _____ in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days _____ to us by His Son...”
5. Through _____ and His _____ God demonstrates healthy communication.
6. Healthy communication _____, _____, and _____.
7. **First, God’s communication** _____.
8. Throughout the Old Testament God expressed His _____, _____ and _____.
9. **Exodus 20:1-17**
10. Throughout the Old Testament Israel was _____ to _____ their plans, needs and desires.
11. God’s communication _____; in the Old Testament God expressed His _____ and _____.
12. Throughout the Old Testament Israel was _____ to _____ their frustration and disappointment.
13. God’s principle of _____ - _____ conversation is also known as _____ communication.
14. Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, and let us reason _____, says the LORD...”
15. God talks _____ to His people not to others _____ His people.
16. Family relationships that encourage everyone to engage in frequent, free, and spontaneous communications have healthy _____.

17. Next, God's communication shares _____
_____.
18. **NOTE:** God expected the Israelites to go and possess the land of Canaan and establish themselves as a great nation (Deuteronomy 1). God expected Israel to keep His commandments and to teach them to their children (Deuteronomy 6). God expected Israel to be His witness to other nations (Deuteronomy 28 and Isaiah 56:3-7).
19. Not only did God _____ His expectation, but He also shared what could be expected of Him.
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23. Honest communication about what is expected and what to expect is called _____.
24. **NOTE:** The only One who can read our minds doesn't play mindreading games.
25. **Finally, God's communication** _____.
26. Empowering is speaking words to family members that will _____ them to reach their full potential.
27. Throughout the Old Testament God affirmed Israel as the _____ of the earth (Isaiah 62:6-7), Israel is _____ (I Chronicles 17:21-24), Israel is the _____ of God's eye (Zechariah 2:8), Israel is a holy, _____ people chosen by God (Deuteronomy 7:6 and I Chronicles 16:13), and Israel will be _____ and glad (Isaiah 51:3).
28. Through _____ God teaches His people how to express, expect, and empower.
29. We learn how to communicate with our _____ by learning how to communicate with _____.
30. Restore the _____ – Restore the _____
– Restore the _____.
31. II Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and _____, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I _____ from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will _____ their land."

— SEASONED WITH GRACE —

“TEARING DOWN AND BUILDING UP”

1. Destroy the **MARRIAGE** – Destroy the **FAMILY** – Destroy the **COMMUNITY**.

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

2. The purpose of family communication is to **BUILD** up each other.
3. One of the roles of the **MAN** in the family is to **DEMONSTRATE** healthy family **COMMUNICATION**.
4. The Epistles of the New Testament seek to translate the life and teachings of **JESUS** into everyday Christian **LIVING**.
5. A survey of the New Testament Epistles reveals **SEVEN** fundamental principles regarding healthy family communication.

SEVEN TRUTHS ABOUT HEALTHY FAMILY COMMUNICATION

I. Healthy family communication **CONTROLS** the tongue.

6. James 1:26 NKJV “If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his **TONGUE** but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.”
7. James 3:2-10
8. God calls men to **THINK** before we **TALK**.
9. Controlling our tongues rids our communication of **WRATH** and filthiness.
10. James 1:19-21 “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to **SPEAK**, slow to **ANGER**; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

II. Healthy family communication seeks to eliminate **FIGHTS** and **QUARRELS**

11. II Timothy 2:23-24 “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be **GENTLE** unto all men, apt to teach, **PATIENT**...”
12. Paul says a true child of God is someone who avoids **ARGUING**.

13. Philippians 2:14-15 NIV “Do everything without **COMPLAINING** or **ARGUING**, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault...”

III. Healthy family communication always speaks the TRUTH.

14. Ephesians 4:25 “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man **TRUTH** with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.”

IV. Healthy family communication CONFESSES faults and mistakes.

15. James 5:16 “**CONFESS** your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
16. Alcoholics Anonymous- **ADMITTED** to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs, except when to do so would injure them or others.

V. Healthy family communication does not speak EVIL about others.

17. James 4:11 & Titus 3:2

VI. Healthy family communication FORGIVES and does not retaliate.

18. Romans 12:17-18; Ephesians 4:31-32 & I Peter 3:8-11

VII. Healthy family communication does not hold GRUDGES.

19. Colossians 3:13 “Forbearing one another, and **FORGIVING** one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”
20. Ephesians 4:26-27 “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your **WRATH**: Neither give place to the devil.”

JESUS CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

21. Jesus was the perfect **EXAMPLE** of healthy family communication.
22. Mathew 11:28-30 NKJV “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and **LEARN** from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.””
23. Restore the **MARRIAGE** – Restore the **FAMILY** – Restore the **COMMUNITY**.

— SEASONED WITH GRACE —

“TEARING DOWN AND BUILDING UP”

1. Destroy the _____ – Destroy the _____
– Destroy the _____.

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

2. The purpose of family communication is to _____ up each other.
3. One of the roles of the _____ in the family is to _____ healthy family _____.
4. The Epistles of the New Testament seek to translate the life and teachings of _____ into everyday Christian _____.
5. A survey of the New Testament Epistles reveals _____ fundamental principles regarding healthy family communication.

SEVEN TRUTHS ABOUT HEALTHY FAMILY COMMUNICATION

I. Healthy family communication _____ the tongue.

6. James 1:26 NKJV “If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his _____ but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.”
7. James 3:2-10
8. God calls men to _____ before we _____.
9. Controlling our tongues rids our communication of _____ and filthiness.
10. James 1:19-21 “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to _____, slow to _____; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

II. Healthy family communication seeks to eliminate _____ and _____

11. II Timothy 2:23-24 “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be _____ unto all men, apt to teach, _____ ...”

12. Paul says a true child of God is someone who avoids _____.

13. Philippians 2:14-15 NIV "Do everything without _____ or _____, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault..."

III. Healthy family communication always speaks the _____.

14. Ephesians 4:25 "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man _____ with his neighbor: for we are members one of another."

IV. Healthy family communication _____ faults and mistakes.

15. James 5:16 "_____ your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

16. Alcoholics Anonymous-_____ to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs, except when to do so would injure them or others.

V. Healthy family communication does not speak _____ about others.

17. James 4:11 & Titus 3:2

VI. Healthy family communication _____ and does not retaliate.

18. Romans 12:17-18; Ephesians 4:31-32 & I Peter 3:8-11

VII. Healthy family communication does not hold _____.

19. Colossians 3:13 "Forbearing one another, and _____ one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

20. Ephesians 4:26-27 "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your _____: Neither give place to the devil."

JESUS CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

21. Jesus was the perfect _____ of healthy family communication.

22. Mathew 11:28-30 NKJV "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and _____ from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

23. Restore the _____ – Restore the _____
– Restore the _____.

— **SEASONED WITH GRACE** —
“**PILLOW TALK**”

1. Destroy the MARRIAGE – Destroy the FAMILY – Destroy the COMMUNITY.
2. Practicing basic healthy COMMUNICATION skills equal healthy marriage COMMUNICATION.
3. However, the principles, specific to marital relationship, are revealed through four New Testament scriptures:
 - i. I CORINTHIANS 7:3
 - ii. COLOSSIANS 3:18-19
 - iii. EPHESIANS 5:22-33
 - iv. I PETER 3:1-10

I CORINTHIANS 7:3 – HOW DEEP IS YOUR LOVE?

4. I Corinthians 7:3 “Let the husband render unto the wife due BENEVOLENCE: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.”
5. The first instructions we have from Paul regarding marital communication occur when he is discussing the SEXUAL relationship.
6. The term benevolence comes from the Greek word (ἐκούνοια), which means GOODWILL, FAVOR, and KINDNESS.
7. Paul teaches spouses that their most INTIMATE communication should be kind and with goodwill.

COLOSSIANS 3:18-19 – HOLY COMMUNICATION

8. Colossians 3:18-19 NIV “Wives, SUBMIT to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, LOVE your wives, and do not be HARSH with them”
9. The wife’s communication should convey SUBMISSION.
10. The husband’s communication should convey LOVE.

EPHESIANS 5:22-24 – WIVES RESPECT YOUR HUSBANDS

11. “Wives, **SUBMIT** yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is **SUBJECT** unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”
12. Paul teaches that the wife’s interaction with the husband should communicate **RESPECT**.
13. This respect is shown in what Paul refers to as (‘ (\$)***,) (upo’tasso) **SUBMISSION**.
14. Colossians 3:18 “Wives, **SUBMIT** to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”
15. The question every wife must ask is, “does my communication show my husband that he is **LORD** of his house?”
16. I Peter 3:1 “Likewise, ye wives, be in **SUBJECTION** to your own husbands...”

Numbers 30:3-15 NIV – The Man Is The Head of the House

17. (Verses 3-5) “When a young woman still living in her father’s house makes a vow to the LORD or obligates herself by a pledge and her father hears about her vow or pledge but says nothing to her, then all her vows and every pledge by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her father forbids her when he hears about it, none of her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand; the LORD will release her because her father has forbidden her.
18. (Verse 6-8) “If she marries after she makes a vow or after her lips utter a rash promise by which she obligates herself and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her, then her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her husband forbids her when he hears about it, he nullifies the vow that obligates her or the rash promise by which she obligates herself, and the LORD will release her.
19. (Verse 9) “Any vow or obligation taken by a widow or divorced woman will be binding on her.
20. (Verses 10-15) “If a woman living with her husband makes a **VOW** or obligates herself by a pledge under oath and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her and does not forbid her, then all her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her husband nullifies them when he hears about them, then none of the vows or pledges that came from her lips will stand. Her husband has nullified them, and the LORD will **RELEASE** her. Her husband may **CONFIRM** or **NULLIFY** any vow she makes or any sworn pledge to deny herself. But if her husband says nothing to her about it from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or the pledges binding on her. He confirms them by saying nothing to her when he hears about them. If, however, he nullifies them some time after he hears about them, then he is responsible for her guilt.”
21. Ephesians 5:33 “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she **REVERENCE** her husband.”

22. **NOTE:** Remember when God gave this command to the Israelites it was when they came out of **SLAVERY**.
23. **NOTE:** Because the Black man experiences the majority of the socioeconomic pains of the African American community, it is important that he knows he's **RESPECTED** in his home.
24. **NOTE:** It is important that black men marry women who don't have **DADDY** issues or hang-ups about men, so they are more likely to find a wife who can **RESPECT** them.

Ephesians 5:25-33 – HUSBANDS LOVE YOUR WIFE

25. "Husbands, **LOVE** your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to **LOVE** their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but **NOURISHES** and **CHERISHES** it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."
26. First Paul says that husbands should not be **HARSH** with their wives. Now Paul goes further and says, "**LOVE** your wife like you love **YOURSELF**."
27. The husband's **WORDS** and **DEEDS** should convey **LOVE** towards his wife.
28. A husband cannot demand or expect **RESPECT** from his wife until he demonstrates the **LOVE** of Jesus towards her.
29. Ephesians 5:33 "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so **LOVE** his wife even as **HIMSELF**..."
30. **NOTE:** It is important that black women marry men who know **JESUS** for themselves, so He will know how to **LOVE** her like Jesus loves the Church.
31. Because the woman has to submit to the man whether he acts like Jesus or not, it is a lot easier to submit to a man who knows the **LOVE** of Christ.

I PETER 3:1-10 – RECIPROCAL COMMUNICATION

32. (Verse 1-6) "Likewise, ye wives, be in **SUBJECTION** to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not

corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara **OBEYED** Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

33. (Verse 7) “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving **HONOR** unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”
34. Peter teaches that healthy communication is a **MUTUAL** responsibility.
35. Healthy communication is where there is **RECIPROCAL** communication.
36. Ephesians 5:21 “Submitting yourselves **ONE** to **ANOTHER** in the fear of God.”
37. I Peter 3:8-10 “Finally, all of you, have **UNITY** of spirit, **SYMPATHY**, **LOVE** for one another, a **TENDER HEART**, and a **HUMBLE** mind. Do not repay **EVIL** for evil or **ABUSE** for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a **BLESSING**. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.”

38. When all else fails, communicate like **JESUS**.

39. Restore the **MARRIAGE** – Restore the **FAMILY** – Restore the **COMMUNITY**.

— SEASONED WITH GRACE —
“PILLOW TALK”

1. Destroy the _____ – Destroy the _____
– Destroy the _____.
2. Practicing basic healthy _____ skills equal healthy marriage _____.
3. However, the principles, specific to marital relationship, are revealed through four New Testament scriptures:
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
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4. I Corinthians 7:3 “Let the husband render unto the wife due _____ :
and likewise also the wife unto the husband.”
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6. The term benevolence comes from the Greek word (ἐκείνη), which means _____, _____, and _____.
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11. “Wives, _____ yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is _____ unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”
12. Paul teaches that the wife’s interaction with the husband should communicate _____.
13. This respect is shown in what Paul refers to as (‘ (\$)***,) (upo’tasso) _____.
14. Colossians 3:18 “Wives, _____ to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”
15. The question every wife must ask is, “does my communication show my husband that he is _____ of his house?”
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18. (Verse 6-8) “If she marries after she makes a vow or after her lips utter a rash promise by which she obligates herself and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her, then her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her husband forbids her when he hears about it, he nullifies the vow that obligates her or the rash promise by which she obligates herself, and the LORD will release her.
19. (Verse 9) “Any vow or obligation taken by a widow or divorced woman will be binding on her.
20. (Verses 10-15) “If a woman living with her husband makes a _____ or obligates herself by a pledge under oath and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her and does not forbid her, then all her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her husband nullifies them when he hears about them, then none of the vows or pledges that came from her lips will stand. Her husband has nullified them, and the LORD will _____ her. Her husband may _____ or _____ any vow she makes or any sworn pledge to deny herself. But if her husband says nothing to her about it from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or the pledges binding on her. He confirms them by saying nothing to her when he hears about them. If, however, he nullifies them some time after he hears about them, then he is responsible for her guilt.”
21. Ephesians 5:33 “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she _____ her husband.”

22. **NOTE:** Remember when God gave this command to the Israelites it was when they came out of _____.
23. **NOTE:** Because the Black man experiences the majority of the socioeconomic pains of the African American community, it is important that he knows he's _____ in his home.
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26. First Paul says that husbands should not be _____ with their wives. Now Paul goes further and says, "_____ your wife like you love _____."
27. The husband's _____ and _____ should convey _____ towards his wife.
28. A Christian husband should not demand or expect _____ from his wife until he demonstrates the _____ of Jesus towards her.
29. Ephesians 5:33 "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so _____ his wife even as _____ ..."
30. **NOTE:** It is important that black women marry men who know _____ for themselves, so He will know how to _____ her like Jesus loves the Church.
31. Because the woman has to submit to the man whether he acts like Jesus or not, it is a lot easier to submit to a man who knows the _____ of Christ.

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32. (Verse 1-6) “Likewise, ye wives, be in _____ to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara _____ Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.
33. (Verse 7) “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving _____ unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”
34. Peter teaches that healthy communication is a _____ responsibility.
35. Healthy communication is where there is _____ communication.
36. Ephesians 5:21 “Submitting yourselves _____ to _____ in the fear of God.”
37. I Peter 3:8-10 “ Finally, all of you, have _____ of spirit, _____, _____ for one another, a _____, and a _____ mind. Do not repay _____ for evil or _____ for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a _____. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.”
38. When all else fails, communicate like _____.
39. Restore the _____ – Restore the _____
– Restore the _____.

— **SEASONED WITH GRACE** —
“**NURTURING TRUE HONOR**”

1. Destroy the **MARRIAGE** – Destroy the **FAMILY** – Destroy the **COMMUNITY**.
2. The communication between parents and children is hierarchal; the parent is the **LEADER** and the child is the **SUBORDINATE**.

HONOR YOUR PARENTS

3. Exodus 20:12 “**HONOR** thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the **LORD** thy God giveth thee.”
4. Colossians 3:20-21 “Children, **OBEY** your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”
5. Ephesians 6:1-3 “Children, **OBEY** your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ‘**HONOR** thy father and mother;’ (which is the first commandment with promise); That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”
6. Respect towards parents was so important God pronounced **DEATH** on anyone who dishonored their parents.
7. Exodus 21:17 “And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to **DEATH**.”
8. Leviticus 20:9 “For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to **DEATH**: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.”
9. Deuteronomy 27:16, “**CURSED** is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt. And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’”
10. When children communicate with their parents it should express **RESPECT**.
11. When musty respect our parents even when they are not **RESPECTABLE**.

LOVE YOUR CHILDREN

12. Jesus’ communication with His Father shows us **THREE** principles of healthy **PARENT-CHILD** communication.
13. Ephesians 6:4 “And, ye fathers, **PROVOKE** not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the **NURTURE** and **ADMONITION** of the Lord.”
14. First, parent’s communication with their children should not **PROVOKE**.
15. Colossians 3:21 “Fathers, do not **PROVOKE** your children, lest they become discouraged.”

16. Provoke comes from the Greek word (παροργίζω) (*parorgizō*), which means **TO MAKE ANGRY**.
17. Parents who want to be respected must **DEMONSTRATE** to their children how to be **RESPECTFUL**.
18. Second, parent's communication with their children should **NURTURE**.
19. Research has shown that secure **ADULTS** are developed from secure **CHILDREN** whose parents responded to their **NEEDS**.
20. The communication between Jesus and the Father demonstrated a **CONFIDENCE** on the part of Jesus that He would always be heard.
21. Research has shown that parents who express unconditional **LOVE** and **ACCEPTANCE** for their children tend to have children who develop a secure sense of who they are, producing healthy **SELF-ESTEEM**.
22. Nurture comes from the word (παιδεία) (*paideia*), which means to **DISCIPLINE**, to **INSTRUCT**, and to **TRAIN**.
23. Proverbs 22:6 "**TRAIN** up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it."
24. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt **TEACH** them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."
25. Third, parent's communication with their children should **ADMONISH**.
26. Admonition comes from the Greek word (νουθεσία) (*nouthesia*), which refers to **ENCOURAGEMENT-BASED** communication, which leads to correct behavior.
27. Admonitions **APPEAL** to the conscience, will, and reasoning faculties. It means taking the time to teach the child to be a **THINKER**.
28. There are **FOUR** recorded occasions in the Gospels where the Father audibly communicated with the Jesus: (Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22 & John 12:20-30).
29. Each time the Father is recorded speaking to Jesus He was offering words of **ENCOURAGEMENT** and **AFFIRMATION**, a form of **EMPOWERING**.
30. Restore the **MARRIAGE** – Restore the **FAMILY** – Restore the **COMMUNITY**.

— SEASONED WITH GRACE —
“NURTURING TRUE HONOR”

1. Destroy the _____ – Destroy the _____ –
Destroy the _____.
2. The communication between parents and children is hierarchal; the parent is the _____ and the child is the _____.

HONOR YOUR PARENTS

3. Exodus 20:12 “_____ thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”
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6. Respect towards parents was so important God pronounced _____ on anyone who dishonored their parents.
7. Exodus 21:17 “And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to _____.”
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10. When children communicate with their parents it should express _____.
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LOVE YOUR CHILDREN

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13. Ephesians 6:4 “And, ye fathers, _____ not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the _____ and _____ of the Lord.”
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16. Provoke comes from the Greek word (παροργίζω) (*parorgizō*), which means _____.
17. Parents who want to be respected must _____ to their children how to be _____.
18. Second, parent’s communication with their children should _____.
19. Research has shown that secure _____ are developed from secure _____ whose parents responded to their _____.
20. **NOTE:** The communication between Jesus and the Father demonstrated a _____ on the part of Jesus that He would always be heard.
21. Research has shown that parents who express unconditional _____ and _____ for their children tend to have children who develop a secure sense of who they are, producing healthy _____.
22. Nurture comes from the word (παιδεία) (*paideia*), which means to _____, to _____, and to _____.
23. Proverbs 22:6 “_____ up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it.”
24. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt _____ them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”
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29. Each time the Father is recorded speaking to Jesus He was offering words of _____ and _____, a form of _____.
30. Restore the _____ – Restore the _____ –
Restore the _____.

— SEASONED WITH GRACE —

Destroy the **MARRIAGE** – Destroy the **FAMILY** – Destroy the **COMMUNITY**.

✍ Colossians 4:2-6 “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your **SPEECH** be always with **GRACE**, seasoned with **SALT**, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

THE BEATITUDES AND THE ESSENCE OF WHO WE ARE

Matthew 5:1 – 16

1. The Beatitudes is about the **ESSENCE** of who we are.
2. Matthew 5:13 “Ye are the **SALT** of the **EARTH**: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”
3. In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus says we are **SALT** and **LIGHT**.
4. In Colossians 4:6 Paul says our **SPEECH** should be seasoned with **SALT**.
5. Paul teaches that our **SPEECH** is an **INDICATOR** of who we are.
6. The way we **COMMUNICATE** is an indicator of who we **ARE**.

✍ **James 3:8-12**

7. We can't have **UNHOLY** speech and claim to be **HOLY**.

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Romans 12:9-21; Colossians 3:8-17 & Ephesians 4:23-32

8. To The only way to **CHANGE** the way we speak is to be filled with the **GRACE** of Jesus Christ.
9. Colossians 4:6 “Let your **SPEECH** be always with **GRACE**, seasoned with **SALT**, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”
10. The **EVIDENCE** of Christ in our lives will be manifested through our **SPEECH** demonstrating the **THREE** aspects of **GRACE**.

11. First, Grace is **FORGIVING** and Being **FORGIVEN**.

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

12. Second, Grace is the **EMPOWER** to **LIVE** victoriously.

✍ James 4:6-7 “But he gives more **GRACE**. Wherefore he saith, God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. **RESIST** the **DEVIL**, and he will flee from you.”

13. Grace-filled communication is willing to **REBUKE** and **ADMONISH** those who are straying from God’s plans.

✍ Proverbs 27:5-6 “**OPEN REBUKE** is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

14. Third, Grace is **INSPIRATION** to reach your full potential.

✍ I Corinthians 15:10 NIV “But by the **GRACE** of God I am what I am, and his **GRACE** to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the **GRACE** of God that was with me.”

✍ I Corinthians 3:10 “By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.”

15. Healthy family communication takes place when we are **INTENTIONAL** about exhibiting the **GRACE** of Jesus Christ.

16. To communicate the **GRACE** of Jesus we must be filled with the **GRACE** and **SPIRIT** of Jesus.

17. Restore the **MARRIAGE** – Restore the **FAMILY** – Restore the **COMMUNITY**.

With Jesus in the family happy, happy home.

With His Spirit in the family happy, happy home.

With His love in the family happy, happy home.

With His Grace in the family happy, happy home.

With Jesus in the family happy, happy home.

— SEASONED WITH GRACE —

Destroy the _____ – Destroy the _____ – Destroy the _____.

✍ Colossians 4:2-6 “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your _____ be always with _____, seasoned with _____, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

THE BEATITUDES AND THE ESSENCE OF WHO WE ARE

Matthew 5:1 – 16

1. The Beatitudes is about the _____ of who we are.
2. Matthew 5:13 “Ye are the _____ of the _____: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”
3. In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus says we are _____ and _____.
4. In Colossians 4:6 Paul says our _____ should be seasoned with _____.
5. Paul teaches that our _____ is an _____ or who we are.
6. The way we _____ is an indicator of who we _____.

✍ James 3:8-12

7. We can't have _____ speech and claim to be _____.

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Romans 12:9-21; Colossians 3:8-17 & Ephesians 4:23-32

8. The only way to _____ the way we speak is to be filled with the _____ of Jesus Christ.

9. Colossians 4:6 "Let your _____ be always with _____, seasoned with _____, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
10. The _____ of Christ in our lives will be manifested through our _____ demonstrating the _____ aspects of _____.
11. First, Grace is _____ and Being _____.
- ✍ Ephesians 1:7 "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
12. Second, Grace is the _____ to _____ victoriously.
- ✍ James 4:6-7 "But he gives more _____. Wherefore he saith, God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. _____ the _____, and he will flee from you."
13. Grace-filled communication is willing to _____ and _____ those who are straying from God's plans.
- ✍ Proverbs 27:5-6 "_____ is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."
14. Third, Grace is _____ to reach your full potential.
- ✍ I Corinthians 15:10 NIV "But by the _____ of God I am what I am, and his _____ to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the _____ of God that was with me."
- ✍ I Corinthians 3:10 "By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care."
15. Healthy family communication takes place when we are _____ about exhibiting the _____ of Jesus Christ.
16. To communicate the _____ of Jesus we must be filled with the _____ and _____ of Jesus.
17. Restore the _____ – Restore the _____ –
Restore the _____.

APPENDIX C

SEASONED WITH GRACE FAMILY COMMUNICATION
SEMINAR PRESENTER'S DOCUMENTS

SEASONED WITH GRACE
 FAMILY COMMUNICATION SEMINAR
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2013

11:00 AM – Session 1
 "The African American Family Yesterday & Today"

1:30 PM – Session 2
 "Positive Communication In A Negative World"

3:30 PM – Session 3
 "That's Just How We Talk"




SEASONED WITH GRACE
 FAMILY COMMUNICATION SEMINAR
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2013

11:00 AM – Session 1
 "The African American Family Yesterday & Today"




Pillars of Positive Communication



Always
 Communicate with family as often as possible.

Be
 conscientious about what, why, and how you are communicating.

Always
 Be

Communicating **Conscientious**

Effects of Slavery
 J. P. Cozart, 1991

the most stabilizing aspects of the African culture were destroyed. Families and kinsmen were often separated. The African kinship system, economic system, government system, work, recreation, and religious systems were not permitted. Far from home, easily identified, socially disorganized, and despised throughout the populace, it was fairly easy to force the black African into a subservient, powerless position of forced dependency, exploitation, rejection, and/or abuse relative to an all-powerful white master and in a degraded position relative to the entire white population (p. 593)."



Effects of Slavery
 Dr. Donald W. Robinson

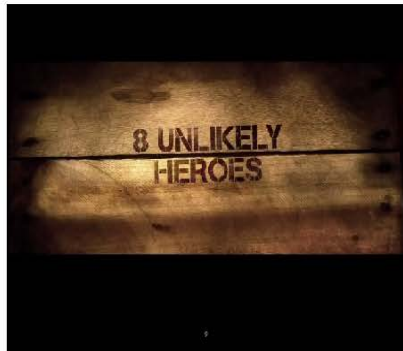
Slavery was, in effect, consistent with what we now know as ritual abuse. It was in fact rituals that maintained and perpetuated the system of what Morris (1993) called "a pure system of human domination." He described slavery as "a complex piece of social machinery that was designed to produce maximum exploitation of black slaves while simultaneously controlling every aspect of their behavior." The control of the slaves' minds, bodies, and souls was seen as important in the devaluation of this cheap and seemingly inexhaustible source of labor.

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The Debt, p.74

“No nation can enslave a race of people for hundreds of years, set them free bedraggled and penniless, pit them, without assistance in a hostile environment, against privileged victimizers, and then reasonably expect the gap between the heirs of the groups to narrow. Lines begun parallel and left alone can never touch.”



Effects of Slavery

The Monuments Men

“If you destroy an entire generation of people’s culture it’s as if they never existed. That’s what Hitler wants, and that’s the one thing we can’t allow.”



The Black Family



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African American Family MYTHS

1. All African American families were basically affected in the same way by slavery, Jim Crow, and institutionalized racism.
2. All African American families manifest signs of dysfunction and unhealthy family communication.
3. The ways African American family handle stress are typically unhealthy.
4. All African American families suffer from symptoms of prolonged undiagnosed and untreated posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

13

PTSD and the Black Family



PTSD and the Black Family

- ✓ Racism is a real and poignant conceptual barrier for many people of African American origins.
- ✓ Racism, by the degree to which it blocks and diminishes resources and results in levels of traumatic stress, can meet the criterion of psychosocial stressor.

14

PTSD and the Black Family

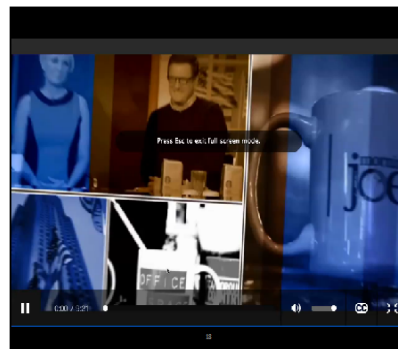
- ✓ “When we acknowledge racism as a psychological event capable of generating a traumatic impact, we are able to understand and better view the debilitating effects of such a phenomena upon the psychological development and functioning of the Afro-American person [family]”

15

PTSD and the Black Family

- ✓ Racism, as a psychosocial traumatic stressor, can be understood as severely psychologically noxious when conditions exist and there is a severe depletion of resources that results in a number of coping behaviors that may be quite maladaptive in nature.
- ✓ Racism, societal and systemic level, results in a higher risk of people of color failing to successfully achieve the necessary development task transitions to achieve social prestige and access to avenues of psychological self-esteem.

17



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PTSD and the Black Family

- ◆ It is the inability to appropriately esteem oneself and the seeming inability to have a significant impact on one's circumstances and environment that sets the stage for the development of maladaptive coping strategies.

19

PTSD and the Black Family

- ◆ When a person or family feels that they have little control over their circumstances around their lives they develop intense stress.
- ◆ When this stress is left undiagnosed, untreated, and healthy coping skills are not taught, dysfunction ensues.

20

PTSD and the Black Family

- ◆ When this stress is left undiagnosed, untreated, and healthy coping skills are not taught for multiple generations, the result is generational family dysfunction.

21

PTSD, Anger & the Black Family



22

PTSD and the Black Family

- ✓ Anger is often a weapon for the person(s) suffering PTSD, used as protection against painful feelings, memories, and thoughts.
- ✓ Anger can function as a barrier and further isolate them, as family members often pull away either physically or emotionally.

23

PTSD and the Black Family

- ✓ Anger is often a weapon for the person(s) suffering PTSD, used as protection against painful feelings, memories, and thoughts.
- ✓ Anger can function as a barrier and further isolate them, as family members often pull away either physically or emotionally.

24

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GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some ways ANGER can manifest itself within family interaction and communication?

25

PTSD and the Black Family

- Families of individuals suffering PTSD are more likely to have parenting problems and poorer family adjustment, and children are more likely to acquire maladaptive coping strategies, and are more apt to have behavioral problems.
- Family members of person(s) suffering PTSD may live in an atmosphere of constant chaos, which is damaging to the mental health and development of all family members.

26

GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some maladaptive coping strategies that are evident in the African American family?
 - Beating children out of anger rather than spanking out of discipline.
 - Male glorification of incarceration and prison life.
 - Acceptance and celebration of unwed pregnancy.
 - Self hatred (hating our own race).
 - Unexplained Anger

27

PTSD and the Black Family -RECAP-

- The African American family has survived for years despite the realities of racism.
- Not all African American families exhibit the symptoms or suffer from prolonged PTSD.
- However, generations of undiagnosed and untreated PTSD in the African American community has left a very deleterious effect on the Black family.

28

The African American Family



The African American Family

- "The Negro American Family" (W.E.B Du Bois, 1908).
- "The Negro Family in the United States" (E. Franklin Frazier, 1939).
- "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action" (Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, 1965).
- "The Moynihan Report Revisited" (Acs, Braswell, Sorensen, & Turner of the Urban Institute, 2013).

29

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The African American Family

- ◆ Fifty-three percent of black children live with their mothers but not their fathers.
- ◆ Fifty-four percent of black households are headed by single women.
- ◆ Seventy-three percent of all African-American children are born to unmarried mothers.
- ◆ Twenty-five percent of black women are married and live with their spouses.

31

The African American Family

- ◆ 40 percent of black children live in poverty compared with about thirteen percent of white children.
- ◆ One in six black men have spent time in prison, compared with one in thirty-three white men.
- ◆ African American men are six percent of the US population, but make up over fifty percent of the prison population

32

GROUP DISCUSSION

- ◆ Why do African American families following slavery and through Jim Crow appeared to have been stronger than the African American families of today?

33

The African American Family

- ◆ African-American families display about 70 various structural formations, versus about 40 among white families.
- ◆ Black children are twice as likely to live with grandparents or relatives than any other ethnic group.
- ◆ Thirteen percent of African American children live in grandparent-headed households.
- ◆ Compared to European Americans, African Americans are more likely to enact the principle of substitution, which is older childless persons treat their child age relatives as their own children.
- ◆ Eight percent of African-American children live in households that does not include either birth parent.

The African American Family

- ◆ One in six black men have spent time in prison, compared with one in thirty-three white men.
- ◆ African American men are six percent of the US population, but make up over fifty percent of the prison population.
- ◆ The remarkably high rate of incarceration of black men has a deleterious, destabilizing effect on the black families, perpetuating poverty and obstructing mobility

35

The African American Family

- ◆ The decline in black marriage rates, unwed childbirth, and the overall family structure of the African-American contribute to staggering poverty rates among African-Americans.
- ◆ The above statistics demonstrate that the African-American family is unique, and are less like to have a traditional family structure than other racial/ethnic groups in America.

36

The African American Family

It is within this historical and socioeconomic context that the modern African-American family is shaped, functions, and **COMMUNICATES**.

37

SEASONED WITH GRACE

FAMILY COMMUNICATION SEMINAR

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2013

1:30 PM – Session 2

"Positive Communication In A Negative World"



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Pillars of Positive Communication



Communication Climate

Every time we communicate with our families we are creating a **COMMUNICATION CLIMATE**.

1. Positive Communication Climate = Nurture
2. Negative Communication Climate = Control

40

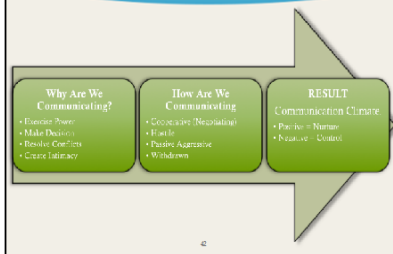
Communication Climate

The four biblical objectives for creating a positive communication climate are:

1. To be truthful
2. To eliminate fights and quarrels
3. To build each other up
4. To bring healing, forgiveness and reconciliation

41

Communication Climate



42

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Communication Climate

1. The purpose of family communication is to create a POSITIVE communication climate.
2. Positive communication climates are created during regular family communication NOT during conflict.
3. To create a positive family communication climate you must DECIDE to create a positive family communication climate.

43

Pillars of Positive Communication



21 Irrefutable Laws of Healthy Family Communication

43

1. Law of Discussion

- ✍ Positive family communication occurs when open discussion is promoted, both during and apart from conflict.

46

2. Law of Freedom of Expression

- ✍ Positive family communication occurs when family members are encouraged to freely express their opinions, both during and apart from times of conflict.

47

3. Law of Focus

- ✍ Positive family communication occurs when family members stay on topic during times of conflict.

48

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4. Law of Clarity

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members are clear about what they want, need, and expect.

49

5. Law of Big Picture

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members make appeals to each other to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of positive family communication.

50

6. Law of Directness

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members speak directly to the appropriate family members and not to others inside and outside the family about family members.

51

7. Law of Listening

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members listen attentively to each other.

52

8. Law of Understanding

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members attempt to identify with other family members feelings and truly understand each others points of view.

53

9. Law of Revelation

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members engage in honest self-disclosure (sharing honest feelings about oneself and the relationship).

54

10. Law of Personalization

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members speak for themselves regarding feelings, emotions, wants and desires instead of attempting to speak for others.

55

11. Law of Responsibility

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members are willing to accept responsibility for their words and actions, and the effects these may have caused.

56

12. Law of Empathy

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members seek to show support, understanding and acceptance of family members even during times of disagreements.

57

13. Law of Flexibility

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members express a willingness to change behaviors or to show flexibility.

58

14. Law of Compromise

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to compromise.

59

15. Law of Candidness

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members openly and honestly express their true feelings about a problem.

60

16. Law of Cease and Desist

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to stop or decrease some negative behavior(s).

61

17. Law of Initiation

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to start or increase some positive behavior(s).

62

18. Law of Reconciliation

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to work towards reconciliation.

63

19. Law of Problem Solving

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to work toward solving problems. Problem solving involves family members offering specific or nonspecific solutions.

64

20. Law of Compliance

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to honor, respect and fulfill other family members' request.

65

21. Law of Making Peace

- ◆ Positive family communication occurs when family members offer conciliatory remarks, or statements that show support, understanding, acceptance, and a willingness to consider mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts.

66



Family Communication and Conflict Resolution

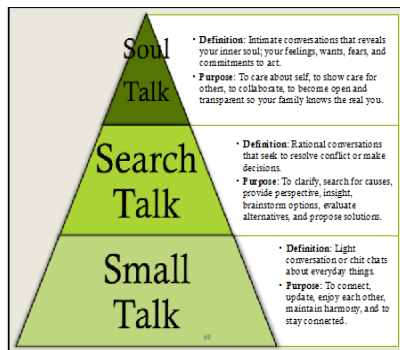


Pillars of Positive Communication

Always Be Communicating

Be conscientious about what, why, and how you are communicating.

Always Be Conscientious



Thinking Climate

1. **WHY** am I saying what I'm saying? Is it to Nurture or Control?
2. **WHAT** am I trying to say?
3. **HOW** am saying what I'm trying to say?

Thinking Climate

1. **WHY** am I saying what I'm saying? Is it to Nurture or Control?
 - ✓ Am I trying to **foster a nurturing** relationship?
 - ✓ Am I trying to **convince** the other person to do what I say?
 - ✓ Am I trying to **win an argument**?
 - ✓ Am I trying to **prove** that I'm better, **smarter**, or **superior**.


Thinking Climate

2. **WHAT** am I trying to say?
 - ✓ What **information** am I trying to **share**?
 - ✓ What am I trying to **reveal** about myself?
 - ✓ What **need, desire, concerns**, or **fear** am I trying to share?
 - ✓ What **behaviors** in the other person am I trying to **change**?

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Emotions & Feelings

Words that EXPRESS how I feel.




6 Basic Feelings...

- ✓ Happiness
- ✓ Sadness
- ✓ Anger
- ✓ Fear
- ✓ Disgust
- ✓ Surprise



Emotions & Feelings


MATCHING EXERCISE



Thinking Climate

3. HOW am saying what I'm trying to say?

- ✓ Is my communication Direct and Cooperative? (Positive)
- ✓ Is my communication Direct and Hostile? (Fighting)
- ✓ Is my communication Indirect and Cooperative? (Avoidance)
- ✓ Is my communication Indirect and Hostile? (Passive-aggressive)



TYPES OF ISSUES

Family Communication & Conflict Resolution



Guidelines for Healthy Conflict Resolution



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Pillars of Positive Communication



Communication Climate

1. The purpose of family communication is to create a **POSITIVE** communication climate.
2. Positive communication climates are created during regular family communication **NOT** during conflict.
3. To create a positive family communication climate you must **DECIDE** to create a positive family communication climate.

SEASONED WITH GRACE
— FAMILY COMMUNICATION SEMINAR —
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2013
3:30 PM – Session 3
“That’s Just How We Talk”

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Content -vs- Style

- ✓ **CONTENT** is what you say.
- ✓ **STYLE** is how you say it.



Content -vs- Style

- ✔ **CONTENT** is what you say.
- ✔ **STYLE** is how you say it.

25

Content -vs- Style

- ✔ African Americans have a very unique communication style.
- ✔ African American expression or communication style is a product of our African heritage, history and culture.

26

Content -vs- Style

- ✔ The African American communication style is not dysfunctional.
- ✔ The **CONTENT** and **DELIVERY** methods are what's often dysfunctional in the African American family communication.

27

Content -vs- Style

- ✔ Healthy African American family communication occurs when we utilize the strengths of our communication style, while being **CONSCIENTIOUS** about what we say.

28

Pillars of Positive Communication



AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNICATION



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Creativity

- ◆ **Indirection:** subtly making a point through asides and stories.
- ◆ **Inventiveness:** creating a new direction for a message, often characterized by saying such things as, "But you can also see it this way too," etc.
- ◆ **Playfully toned behavior:** non-serious, non-threatening verbal exchange often used to diffuse tension in a conversation.

Expressiveness

- ◆ African-Americans are more expressive than many other ethnic groups.
- ◆ African-American families employ a highly expressive style of communication in conflict management and resolution, that includes frequent interruptions and intense movements.

Expressiveness

- ◆ African-Americans employ different communication styles than European Americans such as, openness, directness, self-confidence, verbal expressiveness, and accelerated speech during conflict management, which European American may view as offensive.
- ◆ Yet, generally speaking, African-American still do not view family conflicts as particularly angry or intense (Smetana, et al., 2003).

Assertiveness

- ◆ African-Americans communication style is often described as more assertive than European Americans.
- ◆ This assertiveness is often demonstrated through loud speech, rapid speech, direct eye contact (staring), and frequent hand gestures and body motions.

Body Language

- ◆ African-Americans generally pay more attention to body language.
- ◆ African-Americans are more accurate than European Americans in decoding nonverbal behavior (body language).
- ◆ African Americans are especially accurate in judging facial expressions.

Content -vs- Style

- ◆ Healthy African American family communication occurs when we utilize the strengths of our communication style, while being CONSCIENTIOUS about what we say.

AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY STRENGTHS



Egalitarian Democracy

- ✓ African-American couples tend to be more egalitarian than European American couples.
- ✓ African-Americans men are more apt to work as a team to solve problems.
- ✓ African American men emphasize conflict resolution strategies that required all participants to be responsible.

Egalitarian Democracy

- ✓ African-American couples tend to be more egalitarian than European American couples.
- ✓ African Americans are more likely to use active conversational improvement strategies versus passive strategies
- ✓ African-Americans view *problem solving* as appropriate behavior in conflict management.
- ✗ Problem solving is where one person brings up a problem and others help by offering a solution or enabling a solution to emerge.

Family Happiness

- ✓ According to recent research, family happiness among African-Americans is predicated on four major factors:
 1. Spiritual compatibility
 2. Perceived support from family members
 3. Frequency of destructive/negative conflict
 4. Reciprocity of affection

Optimism

- ✓ African-Americans are more optimistic than other ethnic groups.
- ✓ African-American communication places a high value on expressing positivity and resiliency.
- ✓ One aspect of optimism is African-American families often use humor to confront hardship.

Spirituality

- ✓ African-American are more likely than European Americans to associate marriage with spirituality, religiosity with marital happiness, and to use spirituality to maintain the relationship.

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Content -vs- Style

- ◆ Healthy African American family communication occurs when we utilize our family strengths, while being CONSCIENTIOUS about what we say.

103

Content -vs- Style

- ◆ African Americans have a very unique communication style.
- ◆ African American communication style has both positive and negative aspects.
- ◆ African American families must utilize positive communication techniques within our cultural style of expression.

104

GROUP DISCUSSION

- ◆ What aspects of the African American communication style can help to contribute to positive family communication?
- ◆ What aspects of the African American communication style contributes negatively to family communication?

105

Pitfalls To African American Communication

- ◆ Very expressive, but can have the tendency to overly express anger.
- ◆ Often focused on talking about the problem (Expressive), but often slow to actually implement change.

106

Pitfalls To African American Communication

- ◆ Very expressive, with much talking about problem solving, but slow to actually implement the solutions discussed and to follow-through with conflict resolution strategies.

107

Pitfalls To African American Communication

- ◆ Very spiritual, but can over spiritualize and not deal with the deep family problems.
- ◆ Very proficient at decoding body language and nonverbal behavior, but have tendency to make assumptions and mind-reading.

108

Pitfalls To African American Communication

- ✔ Often focused on problem solving, but not enough on self disclosing and being transparent.
- ✔ Very optimistic, and not always able to perform a real assessment of family problems and deficiencies.

109

Content -vs- Style

- ✔ **CONTENT** is what you say.
- ✔ **STYLE** is how you say it.

110

Pillars of Positive Communication



Parent-Child Communication

- ✔ Effective African-American parents exhibited the following characteristics:
 - ✔ Strong limit setting.
 - ✔ Child-focused love.
 - ✔ High expectations.
 - ✔ Consistent open communication.
 - ✔ Positive racial and male identity communication.
 - ✔ Active use of church and community resources.

112

Parent-Child Communication

- ✔ Effective African-American parents exhibited the following characteristics:
 - ✔ Highly contextual, person-centered (authoritarian) communication strategies, which included "the look," referring to a parent's ability to address a child's behavior with facial expressions.
 - ✔ Being strict but remaining warm and caring.

113

Content -vs- Style

- ✔ **CONTENT** is what you say.
- ✔ **STYLE** is how you say it.

114

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INTENTIONAL

1. The purpose of family communication is to create a **POSITIVE** communication climate.
2. African American families should be **INTENTIONAL** about creating a positive family communication climate.
3. African American families do not need to change the **HOW** they communicate as much as **WHAT** they communicate.

119

Pillars of Positive Communication

120

SEASONED WITH GRACE
 FAMILY COMMUNICATION SEMINAR
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2013

11:00 AM – Session 1
 "The African American Family Yesterday & Today"

1:30 PM – Session 2
 "Positive Communication In A Negative World"

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 "That's Just How We Talk"



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APPENDIX D

SEASONED WITH GRACE FAMILY COMMUNICATION
SEMINAR DOCUMENTS

SEASONED WITH GRACE

—FAMILY COMMUNICATION SEMINAR—

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2013



11:00 AM – Session 1

“The African American Family Yesterday & Today”

- Why is the African American family the way it is today?
- A historical journey through the formation of the African American family.
- Learn who we were, who we are, and who we must be.



1:30 PM – Session 2

“Positive Communication In A Negative World”

- What does the Bible teach about healthy family communication?
- Principles and techniques that will help your family communicate more effectively.
- Learn the “21 Irrefutable Laws of Positive Family Communication.”



3:30 PM – Session 3

“That’s Just How We Talk”

- Learn the role culture plays in the way your family communicates.
- How can the communication style of African Americans help your family communicate better?
- Learn to implement positive communication principles within your family’s ethnic culture.



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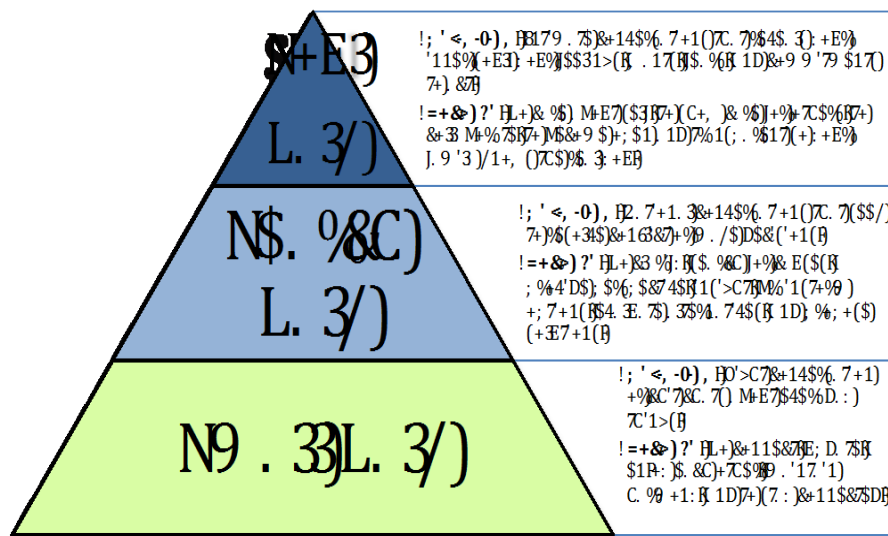


21 Irrefutable Laws of Positive Family Communication

Instructions: Next to each law place an **S** if you believe the law is an area of **STRENGTH** for your family, or a **G** if you believe the law is an area of **GROWTH**.

1. _____ **The Law of Discussion:** Positive family occurs when open discussion is promoted, both during and apart from conflict.
2. _____ **The Law of Freedom of Expression:** Positive family communication occurs when family members are encouraged to freely express their opinions, both during and apart from times of conflict.
3. _____ **The Law of Focus:** Positive family communication occurs when family members stay on topic during times of conflict.
4. _____ **The Law of Clarity:** Positive family communication occurs when family members are clear about what they want, need, and expect.
5. _____ **The Law of the Big Picture:** Positive family communication occurs when family members make appeals to each other to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of positive family communication.
6. _____ **The Law of Directness:** Positive family communication occurs when family members speak directly to the appropriate family members and not to others inside and outside the family about family members.
7. _____ **The Law of Listening:** Positive family communication occurs when family members listen attentively to each other.
8. _____ **The Law of Understanding:** Positive family communication occurs when family members attempt to identify with other family members feelings and truly understand each others points of view.
9. _____ **The Law of Revelation:** Positive family communication occurs when family members engage in honest self-disclosure (sharing honest feelings about oneself and the relationship).
10. _____ **The Law of Personalization:** Positive family communication occurs when family members speak for themselves regarding feelings, emotions, wants and desires instead of attempting to speak for others.
11. _____ **The Law of Responsibility:** Positive family communication occurs when family members are willing to accept responsibility for their words and actions, and the effects these may have caused.
12. _____ **The Law of Empathy:** Positive family communication occurs when family members seek to show support, understanding and acceptance of family members even during times of disagreements.

13. _____ **The Law of Flexibility:** Positive family communication occurs when family members express a willingness to change behaviors or to show flexibility.
14. _____ **The Law of Compromise:** Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to compromise.
15. _____ **The Law of Candidness:** Positive family communication occurs when family members openly and honestly express their true feelings about a problem.
16. _____ **The Law of Cease and Desist:** Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to stop or decrease some negative behavior(s).
17. _____ **The Law of Initiation:** Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to start or increase some positive behavior(s).
18. _____ **The Law of Reconciliation:** Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to work towards reconciliation.
19. _____ **The Law of Problem Solving:** Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to work toward solving problems. Problems solving involves family members offering specific or nonspecific solutions.
20. _____ **The Law of Compliance:** Positive family communication occurs when family members express willingness to honor, respect and fulfill other family members' request.
21. _____ **The law of Making Peace:** Positive family communication occurs when family members offer conciliatory remarks, or statements that show support, understanding, acceptance, and a willingness to consider mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts.



LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

Six Basic Human Feelings and Emotions

+ Happiness

+ Sadness

+ Anger

+ Fear

+ Disgust

+ Surprise

Instructions: Go through the various emotions listed below and match them to the 6 Basic Feeling and Emotions.

Note: Words in *italics* are thought words that are commonly expressed as emotions.

Amazed	Delighted	Frightened	Peaceful
Annoyed	Disappointed	Frustrated	Pleased
Anxious	Discouraged	Glad	Proud
Ashamed	Eager	Guilty	Relieved
Calm	Elated	Hurt	Resentful
Cautious	Embarrassed	Irritated	Satisfied
Comfortable	Enthusiastic	Jealous	Scared
Contended	Excited	Joyful	Uneasy
<i>Betrayed</i>	<i>Conspicuous</i>	<i>Inadequate</i>	<i>Pressured</i>
<i>Challenged</i>	<i>Deceitful</i>	<i>Intimidated</i>	<i>Rejected</i>
<i>Cheated</i>	<i>Defeated</i>	<i>Incompetent</i>	<i>Respected</i>
<i>Childish</i>	<i>Dominated</i>	<i>Insulted</i>	<i>Rewarded</i>
<i>Competent</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Persecuted</i>	<i>Slighted</i>
<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Thwarted</i>	<i>Unappreciated</i>	<i>Tempted</i>

THINKING CLIMATE

WHY am I saying what I'm saying? Is it to Nurture or Control?

1. Am I trying to _____ a _____ relationship?
2. Am I trying to _____ the other person to do what I say?
3. Am I trying to _____ an _____?
4. Am I trying to _____ that I'm better, _____, or _____.

WHAT am I trying to say?

1. What _____ am I trying to _____?
2. What am I trying to _____ about myself?
3. What _____, _____, _____, or _____ am I trying to share?
4. What _____ in the other person am I trying to _____?

HOW am saying what I'm trying to say?

1. Is my communication _____ and _____?
(_____)
2. Is my communication _____ and _____?
(_____)
3. Is my communication _____ and _____?
(_____)
4. Is my communication _____ and _____?
(_____)

Aspects of African American Communication Styles

Creativity

- ◆ **Indirection:** subtly making a point through asides and stories.
- ◆ **Inventiveness:** creating a new direction for a message, often characterized by saying such things as, "But you can also see it this way too," etc.
- ◆ **Playfully toned behavior:** non-serious, non-threatening verbal exchange often used to diffuse tension in a conversation.

Spirituality

- ◆ African-Americans are more likely than European Americans to associate marriage with spirituality, religiosity with marital happiness, and to use spirituality to maintain the relationship.

Body Language

- ◆ African-Americans pay attention to body language.
- ◆ African-Americans are more accurate than European Americans in decoding nonverbal behavior.
- ◆ African Americans are especially accurate in judging facial expressions.

Egalitarian Democracy

- ◆ African-American couples tend to be more egalitarian than European American couples.
- ◆ African-Americans men are more apt to work as a team to solve problems.
- ◆ African American men emphasize conflict resolution strategies that required all participants to be responsible.

Egalitarian Democracy

- ◆ African-American couples tend to be more egalitarian than European American couples.
- ◆ African Americans are more likely to use active conversational improvement strategies versus passive strategies
- ◆ African-Americans view *problem solving* as appropriate behavior in conflict management.
 - ✦ Problem solving is where one person brings up a problem and others help by offering a solution or enabling a solution to emerge.

Optimism

- ◆ African-Americans are more optimistic than other ethnic groups.
- ◆ African-American communication places a high value on expressing positivity and resiliency.
- ◆ One aspect of optimism is African-American families often use humor to confront hardship.

Expressiveness

- ◆ African-Americans are more expressive than many other ethnic groups.
- ◆ African-American families employ a highly expressive style of communication in conflict management and resolution, that includes frequent interruptions and intense movements.

Expressiveness

- ◆ African-Americans employ different communication styles than European Americans such as, openness, directness, self-confidence, verbal expressiveness, and accelerated speech during conflict management, which European American may view as offensive.
- ◆ Yet, generally speaking, African-American still do not view family conflicts as particularly angry or intense (Smetana, et al., 2003).

Family Happiness

◆ According to recent research, family happiness among African-Americans is predicated on four major factors:

1. Spiritual compatibility
2. Perceived support from family members
3. Frequency of destructive/negative conflict
4. Reciprocity of affection

How does Creativity connect with the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Healthy Family Communication?

How does SPIRITUALITY connect with the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Healthy Family Communication?

How does BODY LANGUAGE connect with the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Healthy Family Communication?

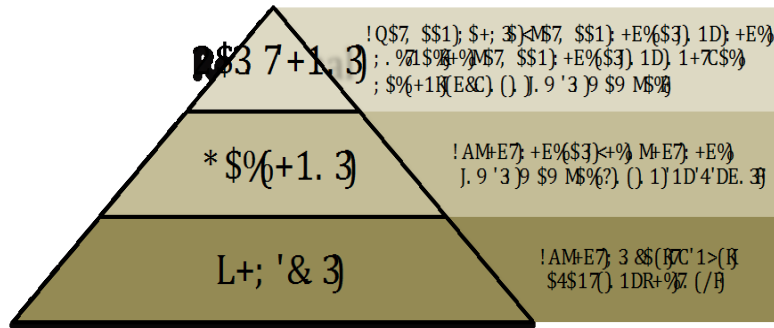
How does EGALITARIAN DEMOCRACY connect with the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Healthy Family Communication?

How does OPTIMISM connect with the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Healthy Family Communication?

How does EXPRESSIVENESS connect with the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Healthy Family Communication?

How does FAMILY HAPPINESS connect with the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Healthy Family Communication?

TYPES OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION ISSUES



TOPICAL

Children	Food	Relatives	Parenting	Roles	Time
Clothes	Friends	In-Laws	Parents	Shopping	Transportation
Credit Cards	Gambling	Internet	Pets	Sports	Travel
Drugs	Holidays	Leisure	Politics	Stepfamily	Vacation
Alcohol	Housework	Recreation	Pornography	Television	Yard work
Ex-spouse	Housing	Money	Projects	Tobacco	

PERSONAL

Appearance	Exercise	Goals	Job/Work	Responsibility	Stress
Attitude	Energy	Grief	Habits	Risky Behav.	Success
Career	Failure	Health	Values	Confidence	Faith
Religion	Identity	Integrity	Productivity	Self-Discipl.	Voluntarism
Education	Recognition	Weight			

RELATIONAL

Acceptance	Competition	Forgiveness	Power	Satisfaction	Violence
Affection	Conflict	Fun	Control	Separation	Abuse
Boundaries	Decision-making	Infidelity	Respect	Support	Celebration
Intimacy	Sexuality	Time Togeth.	Sacrifice	Communication	Equality
Loyalty	Safety	Trust			

FAMILY COMMUNICATION EXERCISE

This Is Me

1. The most important quality I want you to know about me is...
2. If you were to write a one-paragraph biography about me this is what I would want it to say (try to keep it to one clear and short paragraph)...
3. My four greatest needs are (these may be needs your spouse can't fulfill)...
4. My biggest struggle(s) are...
5. The weakest area of my life is...
6. I feel insecure about...
7. I need you help in this area(s) of my life...
8. My goals for the future are...
9. My dream(s)/fantasy(ies) is(are)...
10. The way I handle stressful times in our marriage is...

My Family Is Special To Me¹

1. The first time I realized that I love you was ...
2. I wanted to be with you because ...
3. I am impressed with you because ...
4. The reason I am glad we are family is because ...
5. At the birth of our first child I felt ... (*for married couples*)
6. Highlights of our life together thus far have been ...
7. Pleasant memories I have of you are ...
8. Things I like best about you are ...

¹ Brent A. Barlow Brent A. Barlow, "The Highs and Lows of Marriage," *Ensign*, Oct. 1983, 43

Something To Talk About

1. What are two or three things of the things your parents do that provoke you to anger?
Ephesians 6:1-4

2. What do your parents do for you or with you that bring you the greatest joy? (*Note: You can't say shopping or buying you stuff*)

3. What are two or three things YOU do that brings confusion or tension into your family?

4. If or when you have children what are two or three things your parents do to or with you that you DEFINITELY plan to do with your children?

5. If or when you have children what are some of the things your parents do to or with you that you NEVER plan to do with you children?

6. What is the one thing your parent(s) did that hurt your feelings the most?

7. List three small things you can do to make you home a happier, Christian home?

NOTES

Definitive Works On The Black Family

“The Negro American Family” (W.E.B Du Bois, 1908). Website:
<http://www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/digital/dubois/dubois13.pdf>

“The Negro Family in the United States” (E. Franklin Frazier, 1939). Website:
<http://ia600202.us.archive.org/22/items/negrofamlyinthe031737mbp/negrofamlyinthe031737mbp.pdf>

“The Negro Family: The Case for National Action” (Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, 1965).
 Website: <http://www.dol.gov/dol/aboutdol/history/webid-meynihan.htm>

“The Moynihan Report Revisited” (Acs, Braswell, Sorensen, & Turner of the Urban Institute, 2013). Website: <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412839-The-Moynihan-Report-Revisited.pdf>

Pillars of Positive Communication



FAMILY CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Method of Healthy Conflict Resolution:

There are five basic steps in any conflict resolution process that must be followed of resolution is to ever be accomplished. These five steps are:¹

1. The family becomes aware of the situation and defines it as a problem.
2. The family decides to try and solve the problem.
3. The family searches for relevant and effective ways to solve the problem.
4. The family tries the solution and then evaluates it for its effectiveness.
5. The family accepts the solution or returns to the second stage of deciding whether or not to solve the problem.

“The Total Marriage” gives a wonderful seven-step approach to conflict resolution that has been outlines using the acronyms from the word CONFLICT.²

C	O	N	F	L	I	C	T
Choose the best time and place.	One problem at a time.	No-no’s to remember.	Find all possible solutions.	List the most likely solutions.	Implement the decision.	Choose the most acceptable solution	Tell it in love.

Choose the best time and place: Allow each family member an opportunity to collect their thought and/or cool off, a time should be selected, that is not too far in the future, to deal with the problem.

¹ Balswick Judith and Jack, *The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), pp. 298-299.

² Brown, Jeffery & Pattiejean, *The Total Marriage*. (Autumn House Publishing, Grantham, England: 1999), pp. 79-83.

One problem at a time: Do not hash out all of your issues every time you come together to resolve problems. Be careful not to rehash all the hurts and issues you've had in your relationship, rather take one issue and prayerfully work through it.

No-no's to remember: Every family should have ground rules that they agree to adhere to in disputes and conflict resolution sessions.

Find all possible solutions: Brainstorm all possible solutions, no matter how far fetch they may seem. You may even be surprised to find that the most plausible solution is the one you first thought was too outlandish.

List the most likely solutions: "Make an intelligent choice now. Evaluate each solution. Share together how you feel about the consequences of each solution. Use I-statements which focus on personal feelings, rather than you-statements which can sound accusing."

Implement the decision: Try not to win the argument but win the relationship. Decide together what you will do, where, and when.

Consider how successful it's going: After you implemented a decision be willing to discuss how well the decision is going for all parties. Learn to negotiate, and remember there are no winners just family.

Tell it in love: "Say it straight, but say it right. The Bible says, 'Speak the truth in love.' State your feelings openly and respectfully. Keep your voice down. As much as you can, stay calm. You can learn to stay reasonable. *Choose not to argue.*"

Defend Your Family: You should defend your family. This principle is especially important to conflict resolution. Most importantly, protect your family from yourself. Protect your family from your cruel words, your narrow minded opinions, your withdrawing from discussion and conflict resolution, and your stubbornness; protect your family from you.

Helpful Suggestions For Family Conflict Resolution

Suggestions for the Speaker:

1. Be brief.
2. Be specific.
3. No insults, blaming, or accusation.
4. No labeling your spouse (i.e. “you are a messy person”)
5. No absolutes (i.e. “you always, never, etc...)
6. State things in a positive way.
7. Do not try to read your mates intentions.
8. When the conversation becomes too intense restate your intentions. “The reason I mentioned this is because...” I’m not trying to start an argument, I was just hoping...”

Suggestions for the Listener:

1. Listen attentively.
2. Give feedback signals indicating that you are listening.
3. Try to understand the big picture of what your family member is saying.
4. To make sure you understand the big picture say things like, “What I understand you to mean is...,” or “It sounds to me that your saying...”
5. Try not to be defensive or counterattack.
6. If necessary clarify reasons for your actions, but don’t make excuses.
7. Try not to analyze or assume the other person’s motives.
8. Try to find points of agreement even more than disagreement, and say something like, “I believe we both agree that...”
9. Apologize when you have injured someone.
10. When you don’t understand what is being said ask questions such as, “I didn’t understand what you meant when you said...”

APPENDIX E

SURVEYS AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT
INVENTORIES

PIN# _____

Pre-Seminar Sermon Series Evaluation Form

Please answer the following questions as accurately, and as candidly as possible, as this process will help to improve the seminar.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not effective and 5 is very effective, where would you rate the past six-week sermon series on family communication?
1 2 3 4 5

2. Which sermon was MOST informative in giving you the tools or techniques to enrich your family communication skills?

3. Which sermon was LEAST informative in giving the tools or techniques to enrich your family communication skills?

4. Were the sermon presented in a clear and practical way?
Yes No

5. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not effective and 5 is very effective, where would you rate the communication/preaching skills of the presenter?
1 2 3 4 5

6. Did the presenters share new and well-researched information that was valuable to you?
Yes No

7. Did the presenters prepared and well informed?
Yes No

8. Would you recommend these sermons to family or friends?
Yes No

9. What did you learn, as a result of hearing these sermons that you did not know before?

10. Was there a topic/issue you would liked to have engaged in for a longer period of time?

In the space provided below and/or on the back, please tell us what suggestions you may have to improve this sermon series?

PIN# _____

Seasoned With Grace
Family Communication Enrichment Seminar Evaluation Form

Please answer the following questions as accurately, and as candidly as possible, as this process will help to improve the seminar.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not effective and 5 is very effective, where would you rate this seminar?
1 2 3 4 5

2. Which presentation was MOST informative in giving you the tools or techniques to enrich your family's communication skills?

3. Which presentation was LEAST informative in giving the tools or techniques to enrich family's communication skills?

4. Was the material presented in a clear and practical way?
Yes No

5. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not effective and 5 is very effective, how would you rate the communication skills of the presenters?
1 2 3 4 5

6. Did the presenters use a variety of techniques to convey the information that was valuable to you?
Yes No

7. Would you recommend this enrichment program to family and/or friends?
Yes No

8. What did you learn, as a result of attending this enrichment weekend that you did not know before?

9. Was there a topic/issue you would have liked the presenter to engage in more in-depth?

In the space provided below and/or on the back, please tell us what suggestions you may have to improve the sermon series?

PIN# _____

Primary Communication Inventory (PCI)

Copyright © 2004, John Wiley and Sons

Purpose: This instrument is designed to determine family members perception of the frequency and effectiveness of their family's use of healthy communication skills.

Definition: The term "family" in this inventory refers to people who you consider family, and live with or are in such close contact as to speak on a nearly daily basis.

Instructions: Below is a list of items on communication between you and your family. Using the scale described here, fill in the blank space next to each item with the number which best represents the extent to which you and your family behave in the specified way.

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------|-------|--------|------------|----------|---------------|
| | Never | Seldom | Occasional | Frequent | Very Frequent |
| _____ 1. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 2. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 3. | | | | | |
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| _____ 4. | | | | | |
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| _____ 14. | | | | | |
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| _____ 15. | | | | | |
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| _____ 16. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 17. | | | | | |

- _____ 18. You and your family are visiting with friends. Something is said by the friends which cause you to glance at each other. Would you understand each other?
- _____ 19. How often can you tell as much from your family's tone of voice as from what they actually say?
- _____ 20. How often do you and your family talk to each other about personal problems?
- _____ 21. Do you feel that in most matters your family knows what you are trying to say?
- _____ 22. Would you rather talk about intimate matters with your family than with some other person?
- _____ 23. Do you understand the meaning of your family members facial expressions?
- _____ 24. If you and your family are visiting friends or relatives and one of you starts to say something, does anyone take over the conversation without the feeling of interrupting?
- _____ 25. In general, have you and your family members talk most things over together?

Family Communications Scale

Life Innovations, Inc. © 2010

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

- _____ 1. I am concerned about the quality of our communication.
- _____ 2. I can express my true feelings to my partner.
- _____ 3. When we are having a problem, my partner often refuses to talk about it.
- _____ 4. My partner sometimes makes comments that put me down.
- _____ 5. I wish my partner were more willing to share his/her feelings with me.
- _____ 6. Sometimes it is hard for me to ask my partner for what I want.
- _____ 7. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my partner tells me.
- _____ 8. My partner is a very good listener.
- _____ 9. My partner often doesn't understand how I feel.
- _____ 10. I am very satisfied with how my partner and I talk with each other.
- _____ 11. It is difficult for me to share negative feelings with my partner.
- _____ 12. When we discuss problems, my partner understands my opinions and ideas.
- _____ 13. Even during disagreements, I can share my feelings and ideas with my partner.
- _____ 14. To avoid hurting my partner's feelings during an argument, I tend to say nothing.

APPENDIX F

PERMISSION DOCUMENTS

PREPARE ENRICH

Life Innovations, Inc. • www.prepare-enrich.com

July 30, 2013

Robert L. Davis
Berean SDA Church
1801 Double Oaks Rd
Charlotte, NC 28206-2301

Permission to Use Three Couple Scales: Communication, Conflict Resolution & Satisfaction

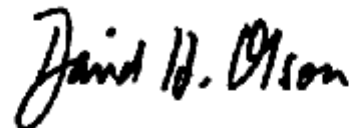
Dear Mr. Davis,

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In exchange for providing this permission, we would appreciate a copy of any papers, theses or reports that you complete using the Three Couple Scales. This will help us to stay abreast of the most recent developments and research regarding this scale. We thank you for your cooperation in this effort.

In closing, I hope you find the Three Couple Scales of value in your work with couples and families. I would appreciate hearing from you as you make use of this inventory.

Sincerely,



David H. Olson, Ph.D.

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