

Liberty University School of Divinity

**Refilling the Oilpots:
Developing A Program to Reverse Stagnancy
in African-American Churches**

A Thesis Project Submitted to

The Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry

by

Mancil Carroll III

Lynchburg, Virginia
November 2020

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Liberty University School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Michael P. Sanders
Adjunct Professor
Faculty Mentor

Donald Q. Hicks
Assistant Professor Pastoral Leadership
Reader

Abstract

REFILLING THE OILPOTS: DEVELOPING A PROGRAM TO REDUCE STAGNANCY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCHES

Mancil Carroll
Liberty University School of Divinity, 2020
Mentor: Dr. Michael P. Sanders

Many African American churches in America are experiencing a decline in attendance and participation. The typical church goes through a life-cycle that includes the church's birth, infancy, maturity, stagnation, and death. However, it is possible to create a rebirth process that will restart the life-cycle from the beginning. This thesis develops a strategic plan to initiate church rebirth and build momentum for the congregation. This project's research approach will include interviews with the leaders of a medium-size African American church in Dallas's suburbs. The project will also include survey questionnaires to congregants, former church members, and random subjects selected through social media to determine the church's perceptions and leadership trends. The research will also include a sociological review of the church's dialectic characteristics to ascertain its community involvement. The project will generate value for the ministry by helping church leaders understand how to create momentum to build churches using the tools designed in this study.

Thesis Project Topic Abstract length: 157 words

Keywords: Leadership, Life-cycle, Black Church History, Dialectic

Acknowledgments

First, I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for the gift and the ability to persevere during this journey. I thank Him for the knowledge and understanding, and patience for this undertaking. I want to thank my family for their support, especially my wife, Maxine, for putting up with me coming to bed late and the missed time we had together during this project. Also, I want to thank my pastor, Isiah Joshua, Jr., for his encouragement, his mentorship, and his faith that I could achieve this goal. To my fraternal brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., who always encourage me to move Onward and Upward. And finally, to my parents, who are in the Lord's heavenly bosom. You were not here to see me achieve this goal, but I always knew you were watching, and I believe you are proud of the man of God I have become.

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Abbreviations

HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NUL	National Urban League
AME	African Methodist Episcopal
AMEZ	African Methodist Episcopal Zion
CME	Christian Methodist Episcopal
NBCU	National Baptist Convention USA
NBCA	National Baptist Convention America
PNBC	Progressive National Baptist Convention
COGIC	Church of God In Christ
NBC	National Baptist Convention
AWANA	A Worker Approved Not Ashamed
SHOUT	Shiloh Hands of Unity Team
GAAP	Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
KJV	King James Version
NIV	New International Version
ESV	English Standard Version

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

For many years, the black church was the center of the African-American community through its benevolence and civic involvement. It provided much-needed leadership during the civil rights movement. Civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph Abernathy, Hosea Williams, and Howard Thurman came from the church's pulpits to spread the message of equality through non-violence. The black church grew from the persecution of slavery, segregation, and Jim Crow, and its existence provided a voice in the black community. Even as the church's influence in other ethnic communities waned, the black church remained strong well into the 20th century.

Several events in the black church's history and its community caused many churches to stagnate and decline. The civil rights movement made great strides in bringing equality to the community, but the church's voice went silent as vocal advocates for change became politicians rather than preachers. Because the church no longer had a movement to defend itself, it experienced an identity crisis as it sought to redefine its purpose in the community that once looked to it for help. The religious landscape of many churches then changed with the rise of the megachurch.

The megachurch movement called for charismatic men and women to lead congregations by developing non-religious but attractive programs and services to engage congregants. Also, many churches removed traditional labels that identified their fundamental beliefs. Non-traditional denominations such as nondenominational, interdenominational, and Vineyard churches replaced traditional denominations, such as Baptist, African-Methodist Episcopalian, and Pentecostal. Growing churches began defining a vision and mission to create synergy and

momentum within their congregations. However, some churches were not prepared for paradigm shifts and refused to change from traditionalism and legalism to Spirit-filled and Spirit-led churches.

The community also lost faith in the church because of the lack of leadership in times of crisis, resulting in "ministerial abuse" and scandals that created mistrust. Some issues that alienated the church from the community included the misappropriation of funds, the sexual assault of church members, inappropriate homosexual relationships, marital unfaithfulness, and pedophilia. The violation of fiduciary trust by the church created grave mistrust and led to an exodus of parishioners.

Finally, in times of crisis, the voice of the black church has gone silent. Currently, the disproportionate effects of COVID-19, the novel pandemic that has affected the entire world, are ravaging the black community. The virus affects people of color more negatively than their Anglo counterparts because of the inequity of wealth within black and brown communities. The coronavirus has exposed the horror of the racial divide in America. Once trusted and revered by the community, the black church is now a source of frustration among the people who formerly relied on its strength and comfort during difficult times.

This project examines the relationship between the black church's history and its effect on its culture and leadership development. It also investigates leadership effectiveness in the black church and reviews the elements that cause a church to grow stagnant and decline. The research analyzes the church's characteristics, leadership, and organization and determines the best course of action to create realignment to stimulate efficiencies within the ministry. Finally, the project examines the relationship between the church's life-cycle and the elements that can restart its mission or vision.

Statement of Limitations

Many books and resources address the issues of church decline and actions for church growth. However, there appears to be a disconnect, as many of these resources do not include the African-American community's cultural relevance. Most writings do not consider historical factors that shaped the African-American tradition. Research that does not address the black culture is unable to address problems within the black community. This project focuses on issues and concerns based on African-American culture and traditional practices within the cultural context.

The scope of the project is limited to African-American churches and the cultural factors necessary to stimulate growth. Therefore, the project defines the role denominationalism plays in black church leadership but does not advocate any particular denomination over another. The project also defines leadership styles and the relationship between the church's size and church growth. Still, it does not promote a particular leadership style or indicate that the church's size defines success. Finally, it develops an inclusive strategic plan useful for a black church of any size and denomination.

Theoretical Basis

In Matthew 16, Jesus asks a question of His disciples: "whom do men say that I am?" Many people thought that He was a great prophet or teacher, but not the Messiah. Jesus then asked His disciples the same question, and Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Peter's revelation of Jesus' identity initiated the declaration of the church's struggle against the enemy. Jesus declared to the disciples, "on this rock, I will build My

church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”¹ Throughout history, the church has endured many attacks, including persecution at the hands of Roman emperors, the integration of pagan practices within the church, early Christian martyrs, efforts to destroy the written Bible, and the rise of post-Christian beliefs that challenge the tenets of the faith.

The contemporary church is still under attack from the enemy's strategies and devices. However, the black church faces more significant challenges because of its controversial history due to slavery. Many Africans brought over to America as slaves worshipped other deities and had no knowledge of Christianity. Since slaves were considered property, slave owners were reluctant to convert slaves to Christianity because they were unsure whether blacks had souls or wished to rebel. Additionally, slave owners were afraid that conversion would allow their slaves to become emancipated. Once a slave converted to Christianity, he would become a Christian brother to his slave masters, creating a moral and biblical issue. Later, black congregants faced segregation in majority-white churches because of Jim Crow laws. Many traditions, such as covering the communion table and "watch night service," are still practiced in black churches and originated from their slavery and segregation experiences.

When black churches formed their congregations, their traditions developed from African culture and American oppression. Many black leaders learned leadership through the black church, but leadership incorrectly focused on the pastor's charisma. By concentrating on charisma, churches developed a leadership void when the pastor left or passed away. Pastors did not establish a succession plan, which also created a vacuum in the leadership role.

¹ Matthew 16:18 King James Version. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references in the thesis project will be from the King James Version of the Bible.

Another challenge occurred because some early African-American pastors preached at multiple churches and left the deacons in charge during their absence, creating a leadership conflict. To build momentum, black churches focused on gaining property and constructing buildings, which generated debt. Black churches began relying on the pastor's charisma, the church choir's excellence, and the strength of the church programs to initiate growth. As the dynamic of church growth changed, the black church did not see the relevance of changing and developing a strategy to meet the community's changing needs.

Although challenges and obstacles affect the black church creating stagnation in the ministry, the church can put processes in place to rejuvenate the congregation. The concept of “Refilling the Oil” comes from the widow's account, who cried out to Elisha because her husband was dead and there were no resources in the house. When Elisha instructed her to fill vessels with oil, she responded and restored her family’s finances so she would not lose any of her children.

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.²

² 2 Kings 4:1-7.

Statement of Methodology

The project consists of five chapters that detail the purpose, research process, and strategic plan. The project examines the ethos of current African-American churches and includes a case study of the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. Shiloh is the source of the research surveys and serves as the model for the strategic plan. The thesis project reviews the culture and history of the African American church and examines the problems that have caused a decline in church involvement. After reviewing the results, the researcher develops a strategic plan to reverse declines or stagnation within the church.

Chapter one introduces the paper and presents a proposal for the project. The proposal describes the problem, the purpose of the project, and the project's rationale. The chapter also provides a theological and biblical basis for the paper, a statement of limitation, a statement of methodology, and a review of the research literature. The literature includes primary and secondary sources that support the basis of research and provide strategic solutions.

Chapter two centers on a review of African-American church history to describe the cultural mores that shaped the black church's traditions. The chapter also describes how denominations shaped leadership development and affected church growth. Chapter three explains how leadership styles historically affected the black church and the problems created by ineffective leadership. The chapter also defines the characteristics of the church to outline its sociological image. Finally, this chapter explains church health and describes the effect denominationalism and leadership trends have on the church's health.

Chapter four outlines the strategic plan and the elements involved based on the research methodology and the tools used to determine church health, leadership strength, and church growth. The project also provides recommendations for personal leadership development,

evangelism, organization, discipleship, and implementing a more robust godly vision and mission for the church.

Chapter five presents the research project results, which come from a survey distributed as an invitation to members of non-specific churches via social media. It also briefly describes the effect the survey has on the project. The chapter includes the history and profile of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, the church's needs, and recommended changes to areas of deficiency discovered during the church health evaluation.

Review of Literature

The following references comprise a comprehensive list of resources used for research throughout this paper to validate the thesis argument and provide practical solutions for the stated problem. The literature includes books and articles that help derive the thesis's conclusion. The researcher will add or delete literature and sources as he develops the research project.

Books

Center Church, Timothy Keller: Keller argues that a significant reason for church decline is the lack of a theological vision that centers the church on the Gospel's message. If a church does not make Christ the center of its life, it will deviate from God's original plan for the congregation, which causes the church to operate in a worldly manner rather than a godly one. Keller provides steps to develop a theological vision that the church can use to define its strategic vision. As it pertains to this paper, this book aims to show that a theological vision is necessary for church growth and leadership development.

Black Church in the African-American Experience, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya: Lincoln and Mamiya describe the black church's historical context and its relevance in

the black community. The book also explains the role denominations played in social action, leadership development, and church formation. This book contributes to the paper by providing historical context and cultural relevance regarding the topic.

Advanced Strategic Planning, Aubrey Malphurs: *Advanced Strategic Planning* provides practical steps for designing the vision, mission, and core values of the church. Malphurs also offers tools to analyze the current strategic plan and vision, and mission. This book provides the means for analysis and is the foundation for vision and mission development.

Brand New Theology: The Wal-Martization of T.D. Jakes and the New Black Church, Paula McGee: McGee describes the "New Black Church" popularized by Bishop T.D. Jakes and other black megachurches. She explains that the popularity of the prosperity gospel in the black church creates a disconnect between traditional religion and the black culture by exploiting base needs. This book provides more explanation of black church culture and the megachurch's influence.

The Church Administration Handbook provides a series of articles by various experts in church leadership. The book includes articles on human resources, accounting, church organization, and building maintenance. The handbook contributes procedures for developing process manuals, the church constitution, and bylaws.

Taking Your Church to the Next Level, Gary McIntosh: McIntosh discusses the life-cycle and various size churches' growth patterns. McIntosh describes how the organizational structure of each church size must change to create a greater level of efficiency. The book helps define the growth patterns described in this paper.

Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: The Paradox of Personal Dysfunction, Gary L. McIntosh and Rima D. Samuel: This book describes the leaders' nature and the dark side that can

emerge if leaders do not operate under the unction of the Holy Spirit. It discusses behavior and characteristics to avoid while resetting the church.

A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model, Alton Garrison: This book reminds the readers of the New Testament church's process as it began to grow and multiply. Garrison uses the accounts found in Acts and the Epistles to outline the church's role and focus. The book helps explain how the revitalized church should operate and connect with the Spirit of God.

The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift that Changes Everything, Colin Marshal and Tony Payne: The authors' manuscript argues that the church's infrastructure is essential but ineffective without an actual discipleship plan. The authors identify discipleship as the primary focus of significant growth within the ministry. The book outlines the steps to take to build up discipleship within the church.

Nine Marks of a Healthy Church, Mark Dever: Dever describes a healthy church's characteristics and includes tips to help churches improve their health through surveys and checklists that identify the ministry's strengths and weaknesses.

Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities, Robert M. Franklin: This book discusses the decline of the black church because of the effects of the megachurch ethos. Franklin argues that black churches need to return to the traditional practices that solidified the black community. He also argues against the role of the megachurch and exposes many of its practices as a "financial money-grab."

Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration: The *Leadership* handbook contains articles by scholars in the leadership field that outline various practices useful for

implementing administrative functions. The section by Kenneth Gangel provides an intimate view of leadership and its roles within the church.

Move: What 1,000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth, Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson: *Move* is an intuitive book that details the spiritual stages associated with spiritual growth levels. It also describes paths to strengthen leadership and lead congregants to various stages of growth. *Move* explains how spiritual growth affects church members so they can make a difference in the community.

Community, Brad House: *Community* describes the steps that church leaders can use to develop small community groups. House defines community groups and how they aid in discipleship. Community groups are tools that leaders can use to increase biblical studies, community outreach, and evangelism.

Courageous Leadership, Bill Hybels: Hybels describes strong leadership and its ability to influence people to move out of their comfort zone and become active. This book creates a foundation that demonstrates the necessity of leadership development and lay leader training.

5 Levels of Leadership, John Maxwell: Maxwell describes five levels of leadership that determine how people respond to the leader. Each level has distinct characteristics and challenges that the leader must overcome to achieve success. Maxwell provides steps to assist the leader in growing to his/her potential.

Size Does Matter, R.A. Vernon: Vernon argues that, despite the flaws in some megachurches, every church should strive to grow as large as possible. He uses scripture to affirm his argument, and his work is useful as a rebuttal to the literature against megachurches.

Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans, Albert Raboteau: Raboteau provides an in-depth history of the black church and the rise of the main denominations. He

explains the church's growth from slavery through Emancipation and how it impacted the black culture and community.

Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South, Albert Raboteau:

Raboteau further describes the changes initiated by the black church's growth and development. He details the role and scope of the Invisible Institution of the worship services held in secret and how they impacted the culture.

Articles

"It Takes a Church to Make a Disciple: An Integrative Model of Discipleship for the Local Church," Chris Shirley: Shirley provides the history and development of small church groups and how a church can birth an intense discipleship program. The book demonstrates additional steps to develop a discipleship program and implement a successful strategic plan for growth.

"The Toxic Triangle: Destructive Leaders, Susceptible Followers, and Conducive Environments," Art Padilla, Robert Hogan, and Robert Kaiser: The authors explain the nature of toxic and destructive leadership. They argue that toxic leadership occurs because of selfish and self-serving leaders, followers who are susceptible to such leaders, and an environment conducive to the toxicity. The article defines these specific types of leaders to change the dynamic of struggling churches and build stronger leaders. By defining a toxic leader, the church can correct his bad behavior or make changes to the leadership focus.

"Marks of a Healthy Church," Kenneth Gangel: Gangel describes the physical areas that define a healthy church and emphasizes the local community's perception of the church. The article also focuses on how the congregation views itself. The article is necessary to provide a foundation for a healthy church.

“Religion and Rap Music: An Analysis of Black Church Usage,” Sandra Barnes: The article describes how churches can use rap music for evangelism. Barnes argues that the church does not generally accept Christian rap music. Opponents feel that it has no place in the church. The article addresses both sides of the debate, making it useful because it provides a method of evangelism.

“The Black Church, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Future,” Leonard Gadzekpo: Gadzekpo provides historical data about the black church and its role in the civil rights movement. The actions of the movement created opportunities for the church and the community.

“Black Churches and the Civil War: Theological and Ecclesiastical Significance of the Black Methodist Involvement,” Sandy Martin: Martin describes how the black Methodist church actively engaged the emancipated slaves to fight in the Civil War for the Union army. The article also provides the history of the black Methodist church’s organization.

“Dialectic in Sociology,” Louis Schneider: Schneider presents a sociological view of dialectics, which are opposites that co-exist in organizations. The article describes how the black church’s dialectical opposites created the characteristics of various churches, which define how they interact with society.

“Reaching New People Through Church Planting,” Susan Snook: The article provides insight into church planting and its role in evangelism. Snook describes some of the problems and strategies related to church planting useful for outlining its design.

“Beyond One Man: A General Survey of Black Baptist Church History,” Edward Wheeler: Wheeler provides the black Baptist church's history and various changes. He outlines

the leaders and how internal power struggles contributed to the denomination splitting several times to create four distinct Baptist groups.

Scriptures

Matthew 16:18

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 20:25-28

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

2 Kings 4:1-7

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of

all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

Proverbs 11:14

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors, there is safety.

Psalm 9:9

The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

Psalm 68:31

Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

Matthew 10:34

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Jeremiah 3:15

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Psalm 139:1-3

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

Psalm 139:13-14

For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

John 13:23

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Acts 1:8

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Titus 1:5

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

2 Timothy 3:5

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Ephesians 3:20

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Psalms 22:3

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

1 Peter 5:2-3

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.

Acts 6:3

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

Mark 10:42-45

But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Colossians 1:18

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Deuteronomy 34:9

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.

Proverbs 24:5

A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Acts 2:14

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

Acts 2:41

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 Timothy 3:8-10

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

1 Corinthians 12:28

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I

might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak:
I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the
gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Chapter 2: The Filling of the Oilpot: The Culture and History of the Black Church

Historical Beginnings

The Effect of Slavery on the Black Church

In America, the black church was the mold for developing leaders who shaped the civil rights movement and strengthened black communities through the most challenging times in its history. The black church formed church leaders such as the Rev. Richard Allen, who founded the African Methodist Episcopalian Church; the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., founder of the Civil Rights Movement; and contemporary civil rights leaders such as Rev. Jesse Jackson and Rev. Al Sharpton. However, black slaves did not initially embrace Christianity because it was the religion of the captors. The early slaves perceived the Christian faith as the slave master's tool to control them and remove African culture's heritage and beliefs, forcing them to embrace their captors' religion.³

Slave masters were reluctant to teach African slaves about Christianity because they thought it would create a desire for the slaves to read and introduce creative thinking. However, as Christians, there was an obligation to evangelize the world based on the Great Commission Christ gave the disciples in Matthew 28:19-20. His command to "go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"⁴ included the slaves. Because the slaves were considered property, the slave masters denied the slaves' humanity by stating that blacks did not have a soul and could not receive salvation.⁵ However, they also recognized the benefits of removing all African cultural vestiges to maintain control over the

³ Albert J. Raboteau, *Canann Land: A Religious History of African Americans*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 146, Kindle.

⁴ Matthew 28:19-20.

⁵ Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 220.

slaves. If slaves organized under their former culture, slave masters worried that they would unify, which would "thus enable them to resist or rebel."⁶ The slave masters' motives to maintain control within the slave community by indoctrinating them within the Christian religion had the opposite effect. Instead of becoming more docile, the slaves began to embrace the faith, which started to shape and empower the black community. Many Africans discovered similarities between the revival styles of Christian worship and African religious celebrations.⁷

By attempting to erase African culture and identity from African slaves, the slave masters created the climate that allowed a new community to arise. For example, although white slave owners allowed African slaves to convert to Christianity, many did not want to worship with their slaves. Anthony Pinn has noted that white slave masters made a distinction between the slaves and accounted for the "theo-ritual counter" that occurred because of the attempts to destroy the slaves' integrity. The term theo-ritual "involves celebration of the body and the space it occupies."⁸ The slave masters focused on the difference in the slaves' appearance and deemed them ugly and foreign. They used specific language to portray blacks as "less intelligent and more emotional than whites. They were also more sensual and superstitious, less disciplined, and less orderly."⁹ The slave masters also tamed the "black flesh through violence and intimidation"¹⁰ to maintain control. By creating these distinctions, the slave masters planted the seeds of the Jim Crow era in America. As a result of this rejection from the white church, a new ethos emerged for the black church. Rejection caused the "moods and motivations generated by a

⁶ Abert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 4, Kindle.

⁷ Raboteau, *Canann Land*, 178 Kindle.

⁸ Anthony Pinn, *Understanding and Transforming the Black Church*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010, 74.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.

system of symbols forged by the history of their presence in America."¹¹ The black church's new community took on the responsibility of empowering African-Americans to become more active in their freedom and growth.

The birth of the black church exposed the hypocrisy of slavery and the deception of the slave masters. When the slaves realized that they, just like their white counterparts, were made in the image of God, they recognized that a "call to discipleship was a call to freedom."¹² Many black slaves converted to Christianity because Methodist and Baptist missionaries gave the impression that they had anti-slavery beliefs. Methodists and Baptists were also willing to license black preachers to pastor their people since they could not worship with the white slave owners.¹³ From 1770 to 1820, black Methodist and Baptist churches sprang up throughout the South and changed the religious landscape and the growth of black leadership within the church.¹⁴

As the black church began to grow and become an institutional entity, the anti-slavery movement's mantle shifted from white churches to black churches. The black church began noting the inconsistencies between Christianity and slavery. The church even went so far as to condemn slavery by saying it was "incompatible with Christianity and any nation that permitted the sin of slavery risked divine punishment."¹⁵ Even after slavery, black church leaders decried the harsh treatment of African-Americans throughout this country's history. The growth of the black church inspired many people within the black community to excel at higher levels.

¹¹ Leonard Gadzekpo, "The Black Church, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Future," *The Journal of Religious Thought*, vol. 53/54, no. 2/1 (1997): 100.

¹² Gadzekpo, "The Black Church," 99.

¹³ Raboteau, *Canann Land*, 184 Kindle.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 189, Kindle.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 244, Kindle.

For slaves to excel in the black community, they had to grow in their own experience and learn to interpret these experiences in their own culture. Thus, from this desire to develop into a viable Christian community, the "Invisible Institution" was born in the Antebellum South. Many slaves in the South were allowed to attend white churches because they could not have their own church services. However, many of the slaves did reject the sermons from these churches because of their pro-slavery slant. Former slave Lucretia Alexander described the sermons with disgust, highlighting the words of the white preachers:

The preacher came and... he'd just say, "Serve your masters. Don't steal your master's turkey. Don't steal your master's chickens. Don't steal your master's hawgs. Don't steal your master's meat. Do whatsoever your master tell you to do." Same old thing all the time. My father would have church in the dwelling houses and they had to whisper... Sometime they would have church at his house. That would be when they wanta real meetin' with some real preachin'... They used to sing their songs in a whisper. That was a prayer meeting from house to house...once or twice a week.¹⁶

The slave masters found themselves in a dilemma between their Christian duty to evangelize and their personal feelings toward slavery. One such difficulty was the problem of baptizing converted slaves. English planters in the 1680s did not want to baptize slaves because they were afraid that the act would emancipate them. This fear led to much debate, but by 1706, colonial legislatures passed acts that denied emancipation to baptized African slaves.¹⁷ Slave masters were even afraid that Christianity would change the attitude of slaves by making them "not only proud but ungovernable, and even rebellious."¹⁸ These fears led to white slave masters controlling their slaves by keeping them in the church while white preachers gave pro-slavery messages from the pulpit.

¹⁶ Ibid., 391-398, Kindle.

¹⁷ Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 97-98.

¹⁸ Ibid., 102.

However, some slaves saw the Bible as a map for insurrection. The psalmist wrote, "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble."¹⁹ Many slaves interpreted the scriptures to mean that God was on the side of the oppressed. From this belief, several black leaders led revolts on plantations, including Gabriel Prosser in Richmond, Virginia in 1800, and Denmark Vesey in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1822. In 1831, Nat Turner, a minister in Southhampton County, led an insurrection that lasted four days. After his capture, he described his motivation for leading the rebellion as a mandate from God. He told his captors that he received a revelation from God when he heard a loud noise in the heavens while working in the fields. He then stated, "And by signs in the heavens that it would make known to me when I should commence the great work ... I should arise and prepare myself, and slay my enemies with their own weapons."²⁰ As a result of the rebellion, South Carolina restricted blacks "from gathering 'for the purpose of mental instruction or religious worship' between sunset and sunrise."²¹

The slave masters' attempts to keep blacks from practicing religion in their way caused the slaves to hold church in secret, just as the early church did in ancient Rome. Based on the biblical teachings, the slaves began to equate themselves with the children of Israel during their captivity in Egypt. In the mind of the slave, God was not pleased with the treatment of His people in Egypt and would not tolerate the treatment of Africans in America.²² They also saw biblical scripture as a reference to God's desire to free the slaves and redeem Africa.²³ The

¹⁹ Psalm 9:9.

²⁰ Milton Sernett, *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 89-93.

²¹ Sernett, *African American Religious History*, 89.

²² Raboteau, *Canann Land*, 398-404, Kindle.

²³ James H. Cone, "Black Theology in American Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 (December 1985): 759.

psalmist wrote, "Princes shall come out of Egypt and Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God."²⁴ Their belief in God's deliverance drove the passion in the Negro spirituals, as they equated themselves with the Israelites.²⁵ The spirituals the slaves sang carried hope for them and, eventually, were used as coded messages to guide slaves to conductors of the Underground Railroad. The moving, stirring worship services held in the black churches came from the traditions of their African ancestors, which are now prevalent in the contemporary church.

The Black Church After the Civil War

Although the white slave masters tried to curtail the black church's independent growth, they were unsuccessful, and their failure became evident after the Civil War. The Civil War created a dynamic between North and South based on the belief of "state's rights" with the underlying problem of dealing with slavery. For the first time, slaves could see the possibility of freedom, and the church stood front and center as a beacon of hope within the community. After all, if slaves were free, how would they assimilate into society? Slaves did not own property. They knew no trade other than manual labor or whatever skills their masters allowed them to learn. Despite the hope that freedom would come at the end of the war, the Northern Union army continued to lose battles and skirmishes against Southern Confederate troops.

According to Sandy Martin, many slaves had a low opinion of President Abraham Lincoln because of his reluctance to base the war on abolishing slavery. However, in 1862, President Lincoln drafted the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the Southern slaves on January 1, 1863. The Proclamation opened the door for slaves to join the Union army to fight against the Confederate troops to acquire their freedom. However, the slaves still worried about

²⁴ Psalm 68:31.

²⁵ Raboteau, *Canann Land*, 404, Kindle.

the treatment they would endure while serving alongside white soldiers in combat.²⁶

Because of these fears, the African Methodist Episcopal church assisted with recruiting and training black soldiers to help in the war effort. One such minister was Reverend Henry M. Turner, who assisted in adopting resolutions to define black soldiers' role in the war. The resolutions described black men's reasons to become involved "by their willingness to shed blood for the Union cause" because doing so would "demonstrate that, 'the colored American will deserve the citizenship which he now holds in common with the white man.'"²⁷ Regardless of the Methodist church's assistance, many white soldiers resented the fact that they fought to secure the abolishment of slavery and freedom for black Americans. With the church's assistance, black Americans received their freedom but not the equal rights that classified them as citizens.

After the Civil War, many changes affected African-Americans as they attempted to enter a free society. One of the most significant challenges was the desire to become educated. Because of slavery, most African Americans were illiterate, as their slave masters would not let them learn to read. With slavery's end, African Americans had more significant opportunities to advance their knowledge and develop useful skills in society. Because church life permeated the black community, the first schools that appeared were Sabbath schools. Communities built Sabbath schools to teach more about the Christian faith while educating their students in reading and math. More than 1,000 schools "sprang up across the South during and after the Civil War and in effect are the early forebears of black educational and spiritual self-determination and

²⁶ Sandy D. Martin, "Black Churches and the Civil War: Theological and Ecclesiastical Significance of Black Methodist Involvement, 1861-1865," *Methodist History* 32, no. 3 (April 1994): 175-176.

²⁷ Martin, "Black Churches and the Civil War," 177.

uplift.”²⁸

The black church soon developed an educational system designed to teach a “liberal arts curricula with an emphasis on training teachers and preachers at the close of the Civil War.”²⁹ The major denominations birthed the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) from their efforts to provide a more robust education for African Americans. Many leaders of the emerging black movement came from strong educational backgrounds.

As the necessity for leadership grew within the evolving black community, two men began to move to the forefront with responses on segregation and racism in America: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. Washington believed in economic development for black people and urged the community to be patient and wait for social equality. His belief in the future of blacks' economic growth was so strong that he founded Tuskegee University to help black students learn technical skills. However, DuBois disagreed with Washington's philosophy and thought it was best to protest for civil rights. He felt that black economic development would not occur without legal protection that would allow blacks the right to vote. The two arguments dominated the discussion on race in America during the early 1900s, and the clergy took opposing sides.³⁰ The two opposing sides developed into two different philosophies that shaped the religious drive of the church.

The church grew into distinct genres: a spiritual entity and an institution for social change. Following Washington's philosophy, churches quickly heeded the words of Matthew 20:25-28: “Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it

²⁸ Roland W. Mitchell, “Commentary: The African American Church, Education and Self Determination,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, vol. 79, no. 3, (Summer 2010): 203.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Raboteau, *Canann Land*, 714-721, Kindle.

over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”³¹ Matthew 20 churches focused more on building Christian values rather than on social change. The church was passionate about the Bible and saw humility as the correct approach for black America.

However, the church that followed DuBois's philosophy built a foundation on the belief that its purpose was to fight against the oppressor through social change and uplift the community to make it stronger. The church viewed Jesus as a deliverer of the oppressed and believed His words advocated fighting for freedom. He told the people in one of His sermons, “do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”³² Under this philosophy, many great civil rights leaders emerged and birthed the civil rights movement by protesting against racial injustice. The roots of DuBois’ philosophy would eventually lead to an evolution in black religious theology.

James Cone, who is considered the father of black liberation theology, wrote that DuBois referenced two warring ideals related to the African American’s viewpoint of religion. The “African” standard helped “African Americans to see beyond the white distortions of the Gospel and to discover its true meaning as God’s liberation of the oppressed from bondage.”³³ The “Christian” component allowed African Americans to “reorient their African past so that it would become useful in the struggle to survive.”³⁴ These two elements of thought, the spiritual

³¹ Matthew 20:25-28.

³² Matthew 10:34.

³³ Cone, “Black Theology in American Religion,” 755-756.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 756.

and the social, shaped the church into a unique institution that was distinct from its Anglo counterparts. The church became the central institution in the growth and development of the African American subculture.

The Church During the Civil Rights Movement

The Post-War Growth of the Church

As the black church evolved from the slave church to the Invisible Institution and then to the post-war church, its role and personality took shape. The church grew rapidly and took center stage in the life of the black community. According to Raboteau, the black population of the United States in 1890 totaled approximately 8.3 million. At least one-third of the population were church members, which reflected the rapid growth within 40 years of emancipation.³⁵ As the church began to grow, there were many opportunities to make strides for equality. However, in the 1930s and 1940s, many ministers were undereducated and unprepared to speak against discrimination. They focused their sermons on Christian concepts of salvation in the afterlife and other primary aspects of the Gospel.³⁶ Although these are the church's central beliefs and purpose, many felt that the most significant institution that contributed to the freedom of former slaves should also continue the work of social freedom.

Following Booker T. Washington, many churches adopted the philosophy of patiently waiting for assimilation. His philosophy called for churches to withdraw themselves from the political process and allow the natural course of freedom to come. Because the black church separated itself from the task of social justice, leaders began forming secular organizations to fill the void. According to James Cone, Washington's philosophies ushered in the civil rights

³⁵ Raboteau, *Canann Land*, 726, Kindle.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 971, Kindle.

movement. The church's inaction created an atmosphere for progressive black leadership to flourish.³⁷ However, although the churches would not involve themselves, leadership emerged from clergymen seeking change.

Emerging Organizations

After a deadly race riot in Springfield, Illinois in 1908, W.E.B. Dubois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary Church Terrell, and others founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Their work helped secure the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution, giving blacks legal freedoms, including the right to vote.³⁸ George Edmund Haynes, a black clergyman, founded The National Urban League (NUL) in 1911 and became its first executive director. Seven men, several of whom were clergymen, organized the first black Greek-letter organization, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., on the campus of Cornell University in 1906. Great civil rights leaders such as Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.; Thurgood Marshall; and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were members of the fraternity that championed civil rights. Many other ministers formed other organizations and assisted with efforts to secure the freedoms that society withheld from African Americans. Soon, these ministers established congregations and denominations to help create change through boycotts and their purchase power.³⁹

The Denominational Influence

Attendance in the black church increased steadily in the South, where 90% of the black population lived in 1890. Many rural areas of the South contained "black belt" counties that

³⁷ Cone, "Black Theology in Black Religion," 759.

³⁸ NAACP. *NAACP*, last modified January 1, 2000, accessed October 23, 2020, <https://www.naacp.org/nations-premier-civil-rights-organization>.

³⁹ Raboteau, *Canann Land*, 971-982, Kindle.

consisted of black farmers, sharecroppers, and workers.⁴⁰ The push to evangelize Southern blacks came from the African American church denominations birthed from the exodus from white churches. During and after slavery, black church leaders organized seven main denominations that fueled church growth: the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME); the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ); the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CME); the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc. (NBCU); the National Baptist Convention of America (NBCA); the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC); and the Church of God in Christ (COGIC).⁴¹ The sociology and subculture of the black community developed from churches affiliated with these denominations. According to Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, these denominations are “considered to be the core of the black church and include more than 80% of all black church members.”⁴²

Baptist Churches: Many civil rights leaders came from these denominations to create societal change, end segregation, and protest against voter suppression. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Ralph Abernathy; and Benjamin Mays were founders and pastors of the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC), an active participant in the civil rights movement. They also supported the actions of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, and they opposed the Vietnam War.⁴³ Independent Baptist churches in the North organized the National Baptist Convention (NBC) in 1895 and began to support education and campaigns against segregation and racial violence. Booker T. Washington was a significant influence on the convention, and the NBC quickly adopted many of his programs and provided support for Tuskegee University, the college

⁴⁰ Eric C. Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 427, Kindle.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1880, Kindle.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1877, Kindle.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 901-911, Kindle.

he founded.⁴⁴

Methodist Churches: The first black churches in America came from the Methodist denominations because of their anti-slavery beliefs and their willingness to baptize blacks. During the camp meetings and revivals of the First Great Awakening in 1740, many slaves converted to Christianity through the Methodist Episcopal Church. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, recorded that he baptized “two Negroes, belonging to Mr. Gilbert, a gentleman lately come from Antigua” on November 29, 1758. These two slaves are considered the first Africans converted to the Christian faith.⁴⁵ The church's rapid growth prompted many Methodist churches to accept blacks into their congregations; however, segregation and bigotry persisted.⁴⁶ After the Civil War, three separate denominations formed churches that consisted of black congregants. Richard Allen organized the African Methodist Episcopal Church and served as its first bishop; its churches served as Underground Railroad stations and provided social service to those in need.⁴⁷ The AMEZ churches were known as “The Freedom Church” because of the abolitionists who served at them. Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Frederick Douglass, a licensed AMEZ minister, were all leaders who served the community and advocated social change.⁴⁸

Black Liberation Theology: Gustavo Gutierrez, a Latin American theologian, first devised the term “liberation theology” to explain the religious differences between the rich and the

⁴⁴ Ibid.,799, Kindle.

⁴⁵ Ore L. Spragin, *The History of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (1870-2009) Faithful to the Vision* (Lima, OH: Wyndham Hall Press, 2011), 300, Kindle.

⁴⁶ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 1130-1140, Kindle.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1180, Kindle.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1290, Kindle.

poor. He defined liberation theology as an “application to any group which might consider itself to be socially, economically, or politically oppressed or exploited or otherwise disadvantaged.”⁴⁹ James Cone presented black liberation theology to the black community in the early 1970s, declaring the necessity of taking our freedom if we could not obtain it as the Bible and the US Constitution dictated. He argued that the black church was consumed with an otherworldly, “pie-in-the-sky” belief from white protestant religion. Cones stated, “the idea of heaven was the means by which slaves affirmed their humanity in a world that did not did not recognize them as human beings.”⁵⁰ He concluded by noting that God made blacks in His image, which He loved, and that God would punish the oppressors of His image. In his discourse, Cone challenged the black church to stand up against oppression because the Bible gave them the freedom to fight for change.⁵¹

Many changes in America have occurred because of the black church's strength as the hub of the black community. The church struggled throughout its history, and of course, the community suffered. However, the strong leaders who came from the church were not afraid to take a stand for change. The churches had a vision, which was to see racial equality in America. During the turbulent 60s, racial violence increased at an astounding rate. With the advent of television, news broadcasts displayed the protests and violence by the police and white supremacists, which affected America's consciousness.

The Contemporary Paradigm Shift

When an assassin’s bullet took the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, the black community exploded in riots and looting. Since that fateful day, there have been more incidents

⁴⁹ Paula L. McGee, *Brand New Theology: The Wa-Martization fo T.D. Jakes and the New Black Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 1649, Kindle.

⁵⁰ Cone, “Black Theology in American Religion,” 756-758.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 769.

of rioting when injustice occurs. Within the last few decades, America has seen rioting because of the murders of countless men and women. On May 25, 2020, four officers killed George Floyd by kneeling on his neck and holding his body prostrate to the ground. Passersby recorded his death on cell phones and broadcast the video to the world. There were mass protests across the globe, but looting and violence also occurred. Jon Henry has written that the rioters “demonstrate disdain for individual rights and the American system. By burning and pillaging the property of their fellow citizens, rioters spit on the progress their forbears achieved under far worse circumstances.”⁵² Dr. King, who championed non-violence, often condemned riots; in his speech “The Other America,” he said,

It is impractical for the Negro to even think of mounting a violent revolution in the United States. So I will continue to condemn riots and continue to say to my brothers and sisters that this is not the way. Continue to affirm that there is another way. But at the same time, it is as necessary for me to be as vigorous in condemning the conditions which cause persons to feel that they must engage in riotous activities, as it is for me to condemn riots. I think America must see that riots do not develop out of thin air. Certain conditions continue to exist in our society, which must be condemned as vigorously as we condemn riots. And in the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it that America has failed to hear? It has failed to hear that the plight of the Negro poor has worsened over the last few years. It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met. And it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice, equality, and humanity. So in a real sense, our nation's summers of riots are caused by our nation's winters of delay. And as long as America postpones justice, we stand in the position of having these recurrences of violence and riots over and over again. Social justice and progress are the absolute guarantors of riot prevention.⁵³

A contrast exists between the rioters of 1968 and those of 2020 because of the church's leadership. In the 21st century, leadership has shifted from serving the community to serving the

⁵² Jon Hersey, "George Floyd, Revolutions, and the Path to Justice." *Objective Standard: A Journal of Culture & Politics* 15, no. 3 (2020): 86.

⁵³ Martin Luther King, Jr.. *The Other America Speech Transcript – Martin Luther King Jr.*, accessed Oct 25, 2020, <https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/the-other-america-speech-transcript-martin-luther-king-jr>.

congregation.

The Megachurch and Prosperity Gospel

The church that emerged from the civil rights era was not the same champion of the black community. The rights the activists fought for in the 1960s were realized in the 1980s, to a certain extent. The Jim Crow era was winding down, desegregation was on the rise, President Lyndon B. Johnson passed the Civil Rights Act, and more economic opportunities were made available to the black community. During the 1980s, a third of the black population ascended to the middle class. According to Kevin Philips, “the black middle class was no longer DuBois’s “talented tenth.” Instead, it became the “talented third.”⁵⁴ The media started portraying black America more positively with TV programs such as *The Cosby Show*. With societal perceptions of black America changing, so did the self-perception of the community. Now, the black middle class no longer saw itself as oppressed because its members had achieved the “American Dream.”⁵⁵

After the Civil War, America entered a historical era known as the “Gilded Age,” during which robber barons such as Rockefeller, Carnegie, Duke, and Vanderbilt amassed tremendous amounts of wealth and power. Their success spawned a generation of entrepreneurs who sought to claim similar riches. In the same fashion, a second Gilded Age appeared for African Americans during the 1980s.⁵⁶ Because the church was the institutional center of the black community, a paradigm shift occurred, and it changed the focus and altered the message of the Bible: the prosperity gospel. During the First Gilded Age, Russell H. Conwell, a Baptist Preacher from Philadelphia, constructed America’s first megachurch. Conwell traveled the country and

⁵⁴ McGee, *Brand New Theology*, 1565, Kindle.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1576, Kindle.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1541, Kindle.

preached a gospel of wealth, claiming that the goal of the Christian was to obtain wealth.⁵⁷ With the Second Gilded Age, the megachurch movement exploded, and the message of prosperity came from the pulpits of African American church leaders such as T.D. Jakes, Creflo Dollar, Eddie Long, and Freddie Price.⁵⁸

According to the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, a megachurch is a large protestant church that displays several distinct characteristics. Generally, a megachurch has 2,000 or more members who attend weekly services, an authoritative senior minister with a charismatic personality, diverse social outreach ministries, a small group study system, contemporary worship service, innovative techniques, and complex leadership infrastructure.⁵⁹ The megachurch phenomenon has created several dynamics within the black church that have changed the community's driving force's focus.

The Institutional Change of the Black Church

As previously stated, many blacks lived in the Southern states in areas known as the “Black Belt.” These were counties where a large majority of African Americans lived and worshipped in rural churches. Some pastors supported multiple congregations because of a shortage of ministers due to a lack of training. The rural churches were small, with a minimal budget and at least 20 members. Lay leaders ran the church services and Bible studies during the week, and some had Sunday morning worship services once or twice a month.

Although this appeared to be an unusual arrangement, it inspired dedication in the congregation's clergy and loyal church members.⁶⁰ However, the lack of stable pastoral

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1553, Kindle.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1577, Kindle.

⁵⁹Hartford Seminary. *Megachurches*, last updated Jan 1, 2015, accessed October 25, 2020, <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/megachurches.html>.

⁶⁰ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 1925-1935, Kindle.

leadership generated some animosity with lay leaders, especially the deacons, who took ownership of the congregation. Conflicts often arose against the deacons, church boards, and pastors, as power struggles led to a pastor's removal or even church splits.⁶¹ Despite the infighting, many urban churches adopted the rural church's worship and organizational model as blacks moved from the Southern states to the Northern urban areas. Church worship evolved from the mixture of African tradition and the slaves' limited biblical knowledge to a celebratory and exciting event that reminded them of God's deliverance.

However, during the Second Gilded Age, the megachurches began to draw resources from the smaller churches, and they changed the church's message. There was always a dual identity within the black church: it was the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the provocateur of social justice. As the megachurches grew, though, the message of the prosperity gospel took root. Robert Franklin has stated, "the single greatest threat to the historical legacy and core of the contemporary black church tradition is posed by what is known as the 'prosperity gospel' movement."⁶² The prosperity gospel changed the message that fought oppression by offering salvation from sins and "economic and secular salvation" that promised rewards and financial gain for the faithful.⁶³ However, Sandy Martin has asserted that this belief does not include all black megachurches because many needed funding for their ministries' inflated budgets.⁶⁴ The change from the scope of social change and freedom to "nab it and grab it religion" produced a paradigm shift that feeds the megachurch and eliminates the smaller church.

⁶¹ Ibid., 2090, Kindle.

⁶² Robert M. Franklin, *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 1295, Kindle.

⁶³ McGee, *Brand New Theology*, 926, Kindle.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Kindle.

The Design of the African American Culture

The Growth Crisis

Because of the massive shift in ideology, the black church reached an identity crisis. On the one hand, the traditional church is steeped in traditions that some have labeled archaic and out of touch with the current generation. On the other hand, the contemporary megachurch is popular, but many consider it impersonal and out of touch with the black community's roots. However, even with the shift, the church has steadily declined within the last ten years. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2009, there were approximately 233 million adults in the United States. A sample of the population revealed that 77%, or 178 million adults, identified as Christian. However, in 2019, the U.S. population increased to 256 million adults, but only 65%, or 167 million, identified as Christian.⁶⁵ Regardless of whether the church was rural, urban, or a megachurch, attendance declined and continues to drop. The church must reevaluate the black community's culture to determine how to adjust and remain relevant. With that relevance, the message needs to change to address spiritual and cultural needs.

Traditional Worship in the Black Church

W.E. B. DuBois described the intensity of the worship services that he witnessed when he attended some Southern black churches in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*. He addressed the intense excitement the slaves generated as they praised and glorified God. He stated that three things “characterized the religion of the slave—the Preacher, the Music, and the Frenzy.”⁶⁶ The essence of the slaves' worship was the desire for freedom. The book of Hebrews describes the

⁶⁵ Pew Research Center, *In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace*, last edited October 17, 2019, accessed October 26, 2020, <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace>.

⁶⁶ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Amazon Classics, 1969), 143.

hope: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”⁶⁷ For the slave, freedom was the ultimate reason to hope, and their rejoicing fueled their faith. The liberty the slaves craved was the very one depicted in the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”⁶⁸

According to Lincoln and Mamiya, freedom meant something different to the slaves than the black community in the 21st century. Then, freedom meant emancipation from bondage, the ability to gain employment, the right to education, and the liberty to vote. In the 21st century, freedom means justice for all socially, politically, and economically. Lincoln and Mamiya argue, “freedom has always meant the absence of any restraint which might compromise one’s responsibility to God.”⁶⁹ In the 21st century, many black churches continue to worship God passionately because true freedom is still out of reach. A typical worship service includes enthusiastic shouts and heartfelt emotion. Parishioners will shout and “fall out” under the power of the Holy Ghost. Church members may wave their hands and clap or dance and even run around the church building. The preacher delivers a sermon resulting in a “call and response” from the congregation, a dialogue between the congregants and the minister. Each shout from the preacher receives a verbal acknowledgment such as, “Amen!” or “Preach it!” or “Tell it like it is!”⁷⁰ The exhilaration of the worship service creates a release from weekly burdens and draws the church into the very presence of God. The Bible says that God “inhabits the praises of His

⁶⁷ Hebrews 11:1.

⁶⁸ Constitution.com, *The Declaration of Independence*, last edited July 4, 1776, accessed October 27, 2020, <https://constitution.com/declaration-independence-july-4-1776>.

⁶⁹ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 336, Kindle.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 364, Kindle.

people,”⁷¹ and this biblical declaration continues to minister to the heart of the church, no matter the size of the congregation.

The black church's worship is one of the primary forces behind its rich culture and imaginative talent. Black culture draws heavily from the influence of worship and religious tradition in the “forms of black music, drama, literature, storytelling, and even humor.”⁷² The black church allowed individual talents to flourish when other avenues blocked their progress. Many popular music styles emerged from the church by developing these skills, including blues, jazz, gospel, rhythm and blues, and rap music.⁷³ Without the black church, we would not have Motown, Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, or Michael Jackson.

The Importance of the Denomination

Denominations have played an essential role throughout the history of the black church. Denominations led the anti-slavery movement, established churches across the country, launched Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), and provided leaders to combat civil rights. There are between 50,000 and 65,000 black congregations in America that connect to the three largest denominational families: Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal. There are seven historically black denominations with approximately 18 million adult congregants. Other denominations have also split off from the other organizations, such as the National Missionary Baptist Convention from the National Baptist Convention or the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, a hybrid of the Baptist and Church of God In Christ.⁷⁴

It is necessary to examine the role the historical denominations played in shaping the

⁷¹ Psalm 22:3

⁷² Ibid., 418, Kindle.

⁷³ Franklin, *Crisis in the Village*, 1277, Kindle.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 1274, Kindle.

black community, but more recently, another church group has challenged their primacy. As stated, the black church can trace every facet of black culture to the denominations' existence and growth. The contemporary trend is to remove the denomination's historical significance by declaring the church “nondenominational.” However, within the last decade, attendance at historically denominational churches decreased, and during the same period, nondenominational churches increased. There is a rise in nondenominational churches because the perception of denominations has become increasingly pessimistic. Given their infighting, strict rules in an increasingly liberal society, and the focus on church traditions, in contrast, the nondenominational church's concept became more attractive to worshippers.⁷⁵

Nondenominational churches capitalized further by developing different forms and worship styles that allowed them to market the church and treat worshippers as consumers. Churches developed new church models, such as the “seeker church,” which structured the church in a new format that worshippers would find attractive. The attraction centered around secular models that turned the church into a “for-profit corporation” rather than a place to worship God.⁷⁶ The rise of nondenominational churches also saw pastors in predominantly white churches change their worship services to attract black congregants. The worship services now included shouting, singing, and “whooping” that white churches found offensive in former slave churches. With pastors such as Joel Osteen, Rick Warren, and Steven Furtick adopting the “sound” of the black church, an exodus from the mainline denominations began.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ed Stetzer, *Do Denominations Matter?* last edited September 15, 2011, accessed October 27, 2020, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2011/september/do-denominations-matter.html>.

⁷⁶ McGee, *Brand New Theology*, 462-474, Kindle.

⁷⁷ Eddie Glaude, *The Black Church is Dead*, last edited April 26, 2010, accessed October 27, 2020, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-black-church-is-dead_b_473815.

Black Baptist Denominations

The black church has always been at the forefront of evangelizing the South and leading the fight for civil rights. The black Baptist church emerged as early as 1743 in Rhode Island by slaves who accepted Christianity. Slaves responded readily to Baptists because some of their practices resembled worship rituals from Africa. The Baptist services allowed the slaves to engage in the ecstatic worship they remembered from Africa; “Melville Herskovits asserted that baptism by immersion drew large numbers of slaves to the Baptist faith. He also claimed that this ritual resembled West African rites associated with the worship of the river gods.”⁷⁸

During slavery, the first black Baptist churches were independent because slaves could not enter white denominations or form their own religious groups. Most black churches were pastored by white preachers who preached messages to discourage rebellion and promote slavery. After the uprisings of Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner, black congregations received stronger restrictions, which caused the Invisible Institution to continue to flourish in the South.⁷⁹ Many of the slaves in the South conducted illegal secret church meetings, risking death if the slavemasters discovered them. For the slaves, the fight for their religion was worth it. Edward Wheeler has stated that the worship, led by the preacher, contained field songs and sermons that included hidden messages that only the worshippers could understand.⁸⁰

Many black congregants outnumbered their white counterparts in the early 19th century, but the black members did not receive equal treatment. After the Civil War, the black congregants separated from the white church because they refused to be treated as second-class

⁷⁸ Edward L. Wheeler, "Beyond One Man: A General Survey Black Baptist Church History." *Review & Expositor* 70, no. 3 (1973): 311.

⁷⁹ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 678-709, Kindle.

⁸⁰ Wheeler, "Beyond One Man," 314.

citizens. It was easy for Baptist churches to create congregations independent of the white Baptist denominations. Baptist churches were all autonomous and did not answer to a denominational board, as in the Methodist or Episcopalian churches. Since denominations did not organize the Baptist churches organically, membership within a local church association was voluntary. In contrast to the experience of black Methodists, it was difficult for Baptists to form a national organization to represent black Baptist churches because of their independence.

National Baptist Convention U.S.A, Inc.

However, the churches recognized that they needed to cooperate on a national level and unite black Baptist churches. The Baptist Foreign Mission Convention of the United States of America (1880), the American National Baptist Convention (1886), and the National Baptist Educational Convention of the USA (1893) emerged to represent the numerous churches. In 1895, these three conventions merged their respective bodies into one strong convention: the National Baptist Convention, USA.⁸¹

According to Lincoln and Mamiya, the union came at the right time, as the persecution of African Americans intensified with the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that legalized Jim Crow laws. The new organization was internationally recognized and generated black Baptist growth, increasing the number of ministers from 5,500 to over 17,000 between 1890 and 1906.⁸² However, several times in the denomination's history, internal conflict resulted in the organization splitting into new Baptist groups. First, a group of the original members resented the convention's publishing efforts and withdrew from it to form the Lott Carey Foreign Missionary Convention in 1897.⁸³ Then, in 1905, R.H. Boyd, the publishing board's

⁸¹ Lincoln and Mamiya, *the Black Church in the African American Experience*, 750-759, Kindle.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 769, Kindle.

⁸³ Wheeler, "Beyond One Man," 316.

corresponding secretary, built a publishing house on his personal property with his funds, establishing ownership. In 1915, the Convention attempted to subordinate the publishing house and take control of it, but Boyd and a contingent of members withdrew and formed the National Baptist Convention of America. The convention continued to grow stronger in membership and influence.

However, a major schism occurred within the organization when, in 1952, the board voted that the president could not be eligible for re-election when he had served four consecutive terms. In 1957, though, the incumbent president Dr. Joseph H. Jackson, ran for a fifth term under a loophole in the bylaw. The judicial courts upheld the election, which created tension among the convention. The meeting was so tense that ten ministers, including Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr.; Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and Rev. Ralph Abernathy, were expelled when someone threw a chair.⁸⁴ King led the charge in Alabama during the Montgomery Bus boycott, with many people calling for him to run for president against Joseph. Dr. Joseph disagreed that the convention should become involved with the civil rights movement, as his vision had more conservative goals. However, Rev. Gardner C. Taylor, pastor of the Concord Avenue Church in Brooklyn, and King wanted to see the convention participate more in peaceful protests, such as the boycott. During the 1960 convention, Jackson again ran for president against Taylor, backed by King and his allies. When the election was over, the results were inconclusive, and the board voted to advance Jackson as the president. Taylor and his supporters, including King, splintered from the NBCU and formed the Progressive National Baptist Convention in 1961.⁸⁵

The NBCU is the largest of the black Baptist conventions, with approximately 7.5 million

⁸⁴ Lawrence H. Williams, "The Progressive National Baptist Convention," *Baptist History and Heritage* 40, no. 1 (2005): 25.

⁸⁵ Wheeler, "Beyond One Man," 316-318.

members and an annual budget of \$4.5 million. The average congregation contains 235 members. The membership is nearly one-fourth of the United States' black population and one-third of all Christian churches' black members. There are also 30,000 local churches affiliated with the NBCU in 4,700 associations and 59 state conventions.⁸⁶

National Baptist Convention of America

E.C. Morris was the president of the NBCU in 1915. During his tenure, the corresponding secretary of publishing, R.H. Boyd, had financial and physical control of the publishing house since he purchased it with his money. Morris led the group to subordinate the publishing house, but Boyd's group split from the NBCU, instead. When the split occurred, both parties, "the Boyd faction" and the "Morris faction," claimed the original Convention's name. They agreed to name Boyd's group the National Baptist Convention of America; however, both groups claim to be the parent group.⁸⁷

Boyd started the National Baptist Publishing Board and organized it as a separate entity from the NBCU. Currently, Boyd's family continues to operate it, but another conflict arose concerning the Boyd family's ownership. The family withdrew from the Convention in 1988 and formed another organization known as the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America.⁸⁸ The National Baptist Convention of America has 2.4 million congregants in 7,800 local churches. The average congregation size is 280 members, and the organization has approximately 3,000 clergymen. The NBCA is the "second largest of the three black Baptist denominations and the third largest of all the black denominations."

⁸⁶ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 819, Kindle.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 851-860, Kindle.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 901, Kindle.

Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc

The Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC) is the smallest of the three Baptist conventions and organized after the defection from the National Baptist Convention USA. The new convention was heavily committed to the cause of social justice and civil rights. With civil rights leaders such as Dr. King and Ralph Abernathy, the PNBC promoted a vision to create equality and unity in America. It has worked to train black political leaders, establish economic development within the black community, provide education and job training, and create opportunities to strengthen the black family. The PNBC is the only Baptist convention with a permanent headquarters. With its location in Washington D.C., the convention can keep a finger on the American government's pulse. The PNBC has 1.2 million congregants with an average attendance of 1,000 members and an annual budget of \$1.2 million.

Baptist Polity and Ministry

Baptist polity among black churches is similar across the denominational conventions as compared to their white counterparts. Each convention contains local churches that are members of state conventions and local associations. Each Baptist church is autonomous, which makes membership in any of the organizations voluntary. Each national and state convention holds annual conferences in which congregations select delegates to represent the church. The conventions support various social service projects, including hospitals and community centers.⁸⁹

There are two offices within the Baptist church: the minister and the deacon. A minister is a “licensed preacher” who performs the ordinances of the church. The church appoints the minister after he completes a training process, and an ordination council tests his knowledge.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 953-962, Kindle.

Meanwhile, a pastor is a minister who serves as a church's spiritual leader and has autonomy over the church's leadership.⁹⁰ The Apostle Peter admonished pastors to "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."⁹¹ For many black congregants, the pastor serves many functions, including teacher, counselor, financial advisor, wedding and funeral officiant, and baby dedicant. The pastor also serves as the liaison for the church and community, praying for their spiritual needs and leading the church in service.

Acts 6 describes a conflict within the church concerning the distribution of food between Jewish and Hellenistic widows. Because the disciples were the spiritual leaders of the church, the people brought the dispute to them. The disciples felt their assignment was not to handle the church's physical needs but instead support the spiritual ones. They instructed the people to "pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty."⁹² Thus, the church ordained the first deacons. Deacons are typically laypersons selected by the pastor to enter a study program and ordained by a deacon's council of elected church members.⁹³

The Baptist church has several support functions that maintain the church's administrative procedures. The Board of Trustees handles the church's fiduciary matters and selects the finance committee from the membership and deacons to process finances. The Board also addresses legal issues and contracts for the church. The church also has auxiliary

⁹⁰ Ibid., 991, Kindle.

⁹¹ 1 Peter 5:2-3.

⁹² Acts 6:3.

⁹³ Ibid., 1001, Kindle.

committees that operate the church's ministries, such as the Christian Education department, the Worship ministries, and Youth Church.⁹⁴

Black Methodist Churches

African Methodist Episcopalian (AME)

The black Methodists' experience was quite different from that of Baptists, as the views in the 1790s and 1800s were more resistant to slavery. The first recorded black Methodist church was Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1794, by Richard Allen. Allen, a former slave and ordained minister, was led to organize the church after a discriminatory act against the black congregants in a white Methodist church, St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. As the black parishioners entered, they found their access restricted to the balconies of the church. One black member, Absalom Jones, sat in his usual seat in the front. When the usher asked him to move to the balcony, he acknowledged that he would after the morning prayer. The usher summoned men to lift him from his knees and remove him from the sanctuary. When the prayer ended, Jones and the other black congregants walked out of service.⁹⁵

Richard Allen and Absalom Jones worked together to establish the "Free African Society" in 1787 to address benevolence issues within the black community because they felt abandoned by the white Methodist church. Allen was offered the pastorate at St. Thomas African Episcopal Church in 1794 after the departure from St. George's, but Allen declared that "he could not be anything else but a Methodist" and declined the opportunity. The church offered it to Jones and ordained him as the first black Protestant Episcopal. Allen continued serving at

⁹⁴ Ibid., 1012, Kindle.

⁹⁵ Raboteau, *Canann Land*, 206-212, Kindle.

Bethel as the pastor, and in 1816, five other congregations met with him to collaborate and organize the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The new denomination elected Allen as the first bishop of the black Methodists.⁹⁶

Black Methodists, as their name implied, were methodical in their worship and bold in their belief: they took a position against slavery and even taught that “any nation that permitted the sin of slavery risked divine punishment.”⁹⁷ The AME church was highly involved with abolition and providing social services for the community. Many black Methodist churches, including the Bethel Church, served as “waystations” for the Underground Railroad, assisting fugitive slaves in escaping to Canada and obtaining their freedom. Richard Allen and his wife even hid fugitives in their home and provided food and clothing to them on their journey.⁹⁸ Raboteau has asserted that “the mission of black Christians was to convert the consciences of Americans to adopt the true Christian attitude of repentance to the sin of slavery.”⁹⁹

The black Methodist church was also concerned about education for the black youth to become productive members of society. Many of today’s HBCUs originate in efforts of the black Methodist church, which also maintains them. The first institution of higher learning for African Americans was Wilberforce University, founded in 1856 by Bishop Daniel Payne, an educator from Baltimore. Other colleges formed from the AME included Morris Brown College (1881), Paul Quinn (1881), and Edward Waters (1901).

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ)

Like the AME Church, the AME Zion Church separated from the John Street Methodist

⁹⁶ Ibid., 1160-1170, Kindle.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 244, Kindle.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 251-258, Kindle.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 323, Kindle.

Episcopal Church because of racial discrimination, although 40% of the members were black. The black members withdrew and formed a congregation in 1796 in the African chapel of a cabinet maker, and incorporated it as the African Methodist Episcopal Church of the City of New York in 1801. Although separated from John Street, the church remained under the jurisdiction of the New York Methodist Episcopal Conference. Zion Church and Asbury African Methodist Episcopal Church cooperated, and in 1820, they started their own jurisdiction, separate from the white Methodist conference. Just as the black Baptists had a conflict that resulted in the denomination's split, black Methodists started with hostility that resulted in two organizations. The Zion church felt that the Allen church infringed on its "territorial prerogatives" because it used one of its members to do mission work in New York.¹⁰⁰ In 1820, it officially adopted the name "African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church" to distinguish itself from the Philadelphia church and broke from the general Methodist Episcopal denomination in 1824.¹⁰¹

The AMEZ is the second-largest black Methodist denomination, although its history includes internal fighting and slower growth because of competition from the AME church. AMEZ counts 1.2 million congregants, with over 100,000 in Africa and the Caribbean. The organization contains 2,900 local churches and has an annual budget of over \$4 million. It was the first Methodist church to ordain women as ministers, although they did not operate in positions of power in the bishopric. Like the AME church, the AMEZ church does not have a central headquarters. It is highly active in education by supporting Clinton Junior College, Livingstone College, and Hood Theological Seminary.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 1266, Kindle.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 1276, Kindle.

¹⁰² "200 Years to Freedom: The AME Zion Church Celebrates its Bicentennial," *Ebony*, vol. 52, no. 12 (Oct 1996): 34G.

The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Unlike the other two Methodist organizations, the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church originated in the Southern states after the Civil War. Initially, its name was the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. The church split from the Methodist Episcopal (ME) Church, South, in 1844 to protest segregation and slavery. Because of Jim Crow laws, the break from the ME South was necessary to separate the races. Hunter Farish has noted, “though the Negro was invited to remain in the church, it was expected he would continue in an inferior and subordinate relation.”¹⁰³ No one in the church considered how emancipation would affect the church when the war ended since it now included whites and newly freed slaves. Lucius Henry Holsey, assisted by Bishop George Pierce, “drew up and presented to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at its Quadrennial meeting in New Orleans in April 1866, a petition calling for the organization of its Negro members into a separate church.”¹⁰⁴ The General Conference accepted the proposal, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was born.

After the Civil War, both the AME and AMEZ churches attempted to evangelize the Southern black Methodists. However, many Southerners did not trust the northerners, especially after the constant fighting between the two organizations from the North. Because many former slaves understood the Methodist Church's doctrine but distrusted the Northern churches' motives, the CME quickly multiplied in the South. The church officially came into existence in 1870 at the General Conference of Southern Methodists, and the church board consecrated William Miles and Richard Vanderhorst as the first bishops.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, 1335, Kindle.

¹⁰⁴ Spragin, *The History of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church*, 2877, Kindle.

¹⁰⁵ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 1356-1377, Kindle.

Because the CME church originated in the South, it retained more of the reluctance to the fight for civil rights than the Northern churches, and it was more concerned with international missions. The church grew rapidly in the South, but its growth was slower than its Northern counterparts, and it remained the smallest of the black Methodist churches. As of 1989, the membership included 900,000 congregants in America and 75,000 internationally, and it had 3,000 churches and an average budget of \$3 million. The CME church changed its name to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in 1954, removing “Colored” from its name. The main office of the CME Church is in Memphis, Tennessee, and it is the only black Methodist church with a national headquarters. Like the other black Methodist organizations, the CME church also supports five colleges: Lane College, Paine College, Texas College, Miles College, and Mississippi Industrial College.¹⁰⁶

Black Methodist Church Polity

It is worth mentioning that, although many black Methodists separated from the mainline church, many black congregants remain. As of 1989, 360,000 out of 9.4 million black Methodists stayed in the United Methodist Church. Of the 38,000 churches in the UMC, 2,600 are predominantly black Methodist churches.¹⁰⁷ Because education is vital to the Methodist faith, the United Methodist Church organized twelve HBCUs through its Freedmen’s Aid Society to serve people of color. The denomination still supports these schools and includes Bennett College, Bethune-Cookman College, Clark University, Dillard University, Meharry Medical School, and Gammon Theological Seminary.¹⁰⁸

The black Methodist church differs significantly from its Baptist or Pentecostal

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 1388-1398, Kindle.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 1448, Kindle.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 1418-1428, Kindle.

colleagues because of the hierarchical structure used to justify accountability. The black Methodist denominations consider the bishop the highest office within their centralized authority. The Methodist church organization appoints bishops during the General Conference, and the bishops oversee each episcopal district. The district's bishop appoints elders to preside over the local districts and pastors to lead the local churches, rather than the congregations making the appointment, as in congregational-led churches.¹⁰⁹ The offices within the Methodist church are bishop, minister, and deacon. Bishops appoint elders and pastors, including itinerant preachers who travel to various churches that lack a pastor. The elders of the church select the deacons, who undergo a rigorous training process. The elders formally submit the names for ordination at the annual conference, and the presiding bishop then ordains them.¹¹⁰

The Black Pentecostal Church

The origin of the black Pentecostal church is quite different from that of the Baptists or Methodists because it did not come from a mainline denomination. The roots of Pentecostalism are in the Holiness movement, a moral reformation of congregants who left the Methodist church. These members started new churches that focused on the believer's sanctification, and the churches included white and black congregants. Charles Parham launched a Holiness church in Topeka, Kansas, and it gained momentum in the area. In 1901, after one of his congregants began speaking in tongues, Parham taught that a Pentecostal baptism of speaking in tongues was coming and that speaking in tongues was a spiritual gift that demonstrated true salvation. The restoration of the gift indicated that a vast revival was coming. The revival, or the Latter Rain, would produce a second Pentecost experience and usher in the Second Coming of Christ. The

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 1468, Kindle.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 1508-1518, Kindle.

Pentecostal faith adopted some of his doctrines and led him to be considered a co-founder of the denomination.¹¹¹

William Seymour, a disciple of Parham, relocated to Los Angeles in February 1906 to pastor a Holiness church affiliated with the movement. In April 1906, Seymour and seven other men had a prayer meeting, and during the meeting, “as though hit by a bolt of lightning, they were knocked from their chairs to the floor. The seven men with Seymour began to speak in diverse kinds of tongues magnifying God.”¹¹² People were attracted to the location and began to worship and praise God, as well. The revival grew at such an alarming rate that it was moved outside its original house and soon acquired an industrial building at 312 Azusa Street. The revival attracted black and white seekers and included speaking in tongues and healings, accentuating the services. Seymour prayed tirelessly, and the doors were never closed, extending the revival from 1906-1915.¹¹³

As the people left Azusa Street, the news traveled throughout the world, and the movement began to grow. Lincoln and Mamiya point to the rapid growth as a “reaction to liberal tendencies ... expressed in Darwinism, the ecumenical emphasis, and the Social Gospel movement.”¹¹⁴ However, some liberal expressions also emphasized interracial cooperation, contrary to the message preached by the Pentecostal ministers. The differences between the black and white congregants became evident, resulting in the Pentecostal movement's segregation.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Joe Creech, "Visions of Glory: The Place of the Azusa Street Revival in Pentecostal History," *Church History* vol. 65, no. 3 (Sept 1996): 411.

¹¹² Pentecostal Church of God, "Historical Perspective," in *General Bylaws*, (Bedford, TX: International Missions Center, 2020), 86.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 86-87.

¹¹⁴ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 1633, Kindle.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Kindle.

The Church of God in Christ (COGIC)

Charles H. Mason founded the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). He was born in 1866 and converted to Christianity in Memphis, Tennessee, at a Baptist church. He received his license to preach in 1880 and served faithfully at his church. However, in 1893, he “received his experience of ‘sanctification’ and began to follow the Holiness doctrine. Mason’s church dismissed him in 1895 because his doctrine did not agree with the Baptist faith. Mason started teaching as a traveling evangelist, but his revivals created controversy in Baptist churches; thus, the state association expelled him. Because he was no longer allowed to preach in Baptist churches, he secured a building and starting hosting revivals in Lexington, Tennessee. Mason converted to Holiness and incorporated the name the “Church of God in Christ” in Memphis, Tennessee. In 1907, he attended the Azusa street revival, and he, as well as several of his elders, were “baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, the practice of glossolalia and later urged the church to embrace the doctrine and practice.”¹¹⁶

However, the new doctrine divided the congregation, creating a schism, as most of the church rejected the teachings. Elder C. P. Jones led the faction and formed the Church of Christ (Holiness). The remaining members who accepted the baptism of the Spirit retained the name and property, with Mason as the leader. The COGIC was officially incorporated in November 1907 and became the first official Pentecostal church. White Pentecostal ministers were ordained at the COGIC from 1907-1914 because of the church’s incorporation. While Jim Crow laws were expanding throughout the country, the organization remained an interracial church. Mason was a pacifist and did not agree with the United States' participation in World War I. His beliefs against the war and his influence among black and white parishioners drew FBI interest. In 1914,

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 1653-1663, Kindle.

though, the public pressured the Pentecostals to mandate segregation among their churches. The white ministers Mason had ordained formed the Assemblies of God in 1914, which is now the largest predominantly white Pentecostal organization.¹¹⁷

The COGIC is the largest black Pentecostal organization but the second largest of all of the black Christian churches. As of 1989, there were more than 10,000 local churches with an average of 400 members per congregation. The membership is estimated to have 3.5 million congregants in the United States, Africa, and the Caribbean, and it has an annual budget of \$3.5 million. Located in Memphis, Tennessee, the headquarters has a strong administrative team that facilities publishing, music, and media for the Church.

Black Pentecostal Polity

The black Pentecostal church is unique because of the various denominational influences embedded within its infrastructure. The COGIC church has a better organizational structure than most Pentecostal churches and will be the main focus of church polity. The COGIC church has three branches of governmental oversight: executive, judicial, and legislative. The executive branch includes the Presiding Bishop, the General Board, and the Trustees' Board, and it is responsible for the body's day-to-day operations. The Judicial Board presides over Christian education and the ecclesiastical interpretation of Scripture. It consists of the Board of Bishops, the Judiciary Board, and the Pastors and Elders board. The Legislative Board is responsible for establishing church polity and maintaining the bylaws. The Legislative Board consists of delegates from the local churches to form the General Assembly.¹¹⁸ The COGIC church allows women to participate in many areas of ministry, such as in the roles of trustees and deacons.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 1678-1707, Kindle.

¹¹⁸ Church of God in Christ, *Administration*, last modified Jan 1, 2015, accessed Oct 31, 2020, <http://www.cogic.org/administration-2>.

They can hold any local church position except pastor because the COGIC does not ordain women to the ministry.¹¹⁹

The Black Megachurch

Although it is not a denomination, the megachurch deserves recognition because of its rapid growth and burgeoning influence within the culture. While the attendance at traditional mainline churches and denominations has decreased, it has increased at megachurches. Many megachurches are nondenominational and include influences from “Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal, evangelical, charismatic, sanctified, and fundamentalist” churches.¹²⁰ The megachurch has generated conflicting opinions concerning its negative impact on the black community. As mentioned above, many of the megachurches preach the prosperity gospel, which focuses on America’s culture of narcissism and greed rather than the black culture’s tradition of uplifting the race.

One accusation against megachurches is that they target poor communities to draw resources to fund their ministries. Robert Franklin has bemoaned this point, saying, “one Houston-based minister observed that when the church gets a mortgage, ‘poor people’ become just another church program.”¹²¹ Kirk Franklin, a prominent Gospel artist, criticized megachurch pastor Creflo Dollar when he requested that each of his 200,000 church members donate \$300.00 so he could purchase a \$65 million jet. Franklin noted his displeasure with the prosperity gospel, saying, “If your theology can’t be preached in a third-world country, where a Bentley and a Lear jet probably won’t come to the guy who walked four miles to church for prayer, then your

¹¹⁹ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 1834, Kindle.

¹²⁰ McGee, *Brand New Theology*, 938, Kindle.

¹²¹ Franklin, *Crisis in the Village*, 1302, Kindle.

theology is wrong.”¹²²

Some argue that the prosperity gospel and the megachurch are awakening the black community's financial aptitude by teaching them to “negotiate their racial and financial identities.”¹²³ Some megachurches focus on raising funds to help finance their ministries because of the massive amounts of capital needed to run the church and serve the community.¹²⁴ Milmon Harrison supports prosperity theology and has stressed its importance to the black community:

It offers a sense of personal, individual empowerment to those who have been left out of the mainstream of economic and social life, making it attractive to the poor who don't want to stay poor in America and elsewhere.¹²⁵

Megachurch pastors, such as Bishop TD Jakes of the Potter's House in Dallas, Texas, or Creflo Dollar at World Changers Church in Atlanta, have created a following of ministers who try to duplicate their success. Smaller congregations attempt to emulate their ministries to replicate the excellence portrayed on television and the Internet. Although there are positive aspects of the church that ministers can use, they must be careful not to shift the message away from Christ. If the message changes to emphasize fundraising to expand the ministry, the church may move from a mindset of building disciples through the church to reaching consumers as a corporation. The corporate church may quickly lose its Christian identity by forgetting the words of Jesus:

Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,

¹²² Pamela Harris, “Kirk Franklin Blasts Creflo Dollar For Private Jet Scandal: ‘That’s A Shortage Of Character,” *EEWBZZ*, last updated March 18, 2015, accessed Oct 31, 2020, <https://buzz.eewmagazine.com/eew-magazine-buzz-blog/2015/3/18/kirk-franklin-blasts-creflo-dollar-for-private-jet-scandal-t.html>.

¹²³ McGee, *Brand New Theology*, 1229, Kindle.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1223-1229, Kindle.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1241, Kindle.

and to give his life a ransom for many.¹²⁶

The message of Jesus to be the “servant of all” contrasts with the prosperity message, which focuses on knowing one’s identity in Christ, operating in positive thinking, and having substantial financial prosperity and physical health to claim a divine right only afforded to Christians.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Mark 10:42-44.

¹²⁷ McGee, *Brand New Theology*, 1311, Kindle.

Chapter Three: The Oil in the Pot: The Image of the Black Church

The Strength of the Church Model

The Life-cycle of the Church

An examination of the church's model and structure is necessary to determine current issues that affect its growth. Paul described the relationship of Christ to the church in his letter to the church at Colosse, stating that Christ “is the head of the body, the church,”¹²⁸ which indicates that the church is more than a mere building people attend on a Sunday morning. The church is a living organism with a life-cycle like any other living creature. Ichak Adizes, an organizational sociologist, developed a model to determine an organization’s life-cycle; it features eight stages that mirror human life. Four stages occur during its growth: courtship, infancy, go-go, and adolescence. The other four stages happen during its decline and include aristocracy, early bureaucracy, bureaucracy, and death.¹²⁹ Theologians and sociologists have used this model to determine a life-cycle model for the church.

Four elements revolve around the church's life-cycle: the vision, relationships, ministries, and structures. The church's vision is determined at the beginning of a church plant or project and provides a road map that gives the members of the church direction. Once the leaders cast the vision, new members or partners of the vision are attracted to the church and develop relationships. These relationships generate excitement and bring in more like-minded people to help build the church. The relationships within the church create ministries so that the congregation can achieve the church’s goals and reach the community for Christ. Finally, systems are put in place to govern and administer the church’s infrastructure. As the church

¹²⁸ Colossians 1:18a.

¹²⁹ Gary McIntosh, *Taking Your Church to the Next Level* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 24.

grows, it requires more formalized systems to maintain its various functions.¹³⁰

These elements determine the church's life-cycle and provide a roadmap to restructure as needed. The life-cycle chart "Healthy Growing Churches" uses an adaptation of the bell curve that draws on input from several sociologists (see Figure 1). The diagram reveals seven separate stages in the church's life-cycle: birth, childhood, adolescence, maturity, empty nest, old age, and death. Birth occurs when the leader creates the vision for the church. The church enters into childhood after establishing relationships. The vision is still present in the church's childhood, as it connects those relationships. Once the church begins adding ministries, it has reached adolescence, which continues moving forward with the vision and relationships. The church reaches the life-cycle's zenith when it develops the structure to maintain the vision, relationships, and ministry.¹³¹



Figure 1

¹³⁰ Greg Wiens, "A Season for Everything - Life Cycle of a Church," last updated May 10, 2018, accessed Oct 31, 2020, <https://healthygrowingchurches.com/a-season-for-everything-life-cycle-of-a-church>.

¹³¹ Ibid.

Once the church enters the maturity stage and establishes its structure, it may stagnate if it does not re-examine and modify its vision. The vision is essential in keeping the church in the growth stage. Once the church no longer relies on its vision, it begins to decline and enters the empty nest stage. Because the vision no longer generates excitement, the church becomes frustrated, creating tension in the relationships. People begin leaving the church because of this frustration, and it moves into the old age stage. Finally, the ministries shut down because there are not enough people to participate, leaving only the church's structure as it enters the death stage.¹³²

The Dialectical Model of the Church

Dialectic Dynamic in Sociology

When describing the black church, it is important to note its dialectical identity, which defines its existence and role in the black community. The term “dialectic” comes from the analysis of Max Weber, a German sociologist, who indicated that two opposing ideas contain the same truths.¹³³ Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya have proposed applying it to the black church to ascertain how it functions and operates. Before examining the scope of their research, the sociologists' definition of “dialectic” requires examination. Sociologists identify seven dialectic opposites that create tension for social organizations, especially within the church.

Sociologists identify seven meaning-clusters of dialectics that analyze social change and reveal an organization's character: unanticipated consequences, goal shifts, adaptations that inhibit effective ones, development through conflict, phenomena through contradiction, the contradictory logic of passion, and the dissolution of conflict through the union of opposites.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Louis Schneider, "Dialectic in Sociology," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Aug 1971): 668.

Each dialectic dynamic expresses a polar opposite that affects the sociological aspect. In the black church, every congregation contains elements of the dialectics that define the church's "personality." As previously stated, the church is a living organism with a persona that shapes its worldview and decisions. The dialectic explains why some churches are more inclined towards social justice in the community, while others focus on the congregation's spiritual health.

Unanticipated Consequences. The first dialectic considers unanticipated consequences between the goal and the outcome related to social action. An unintended consequence occurs when a person attempts to produce a positive action with an expected outcome but triggers an adverse action that results in a different outcome. Timothy Hargrave and Andrew van de Ven have stated that a "particular management approach can trigger changes in actors' sensemaking approaches or the expected distribution of systemic power, thereby leading to a change in management approach."¹³⁴

Goal Shifts. Goal shifts are similar to unanticipated consequences because both clusters result in outcomes that differ from the original intent. A goal shift occurs when the method or process the actor uses becomes the outcome. The "means become the ends" as the initial goal shifts and becomes the process, while the process produces the end result.¹³⁵ In other words, method A works with method B to make result C, but with a goal shift, C becomes a method, and A becomes the result.

Adaptations that Inhibit Effective Ones. The next cluster creates a contradiction because it indicates that success results in failure. The premise states that a previous adaptation produced success in a particular area, but a new transformation creates a failure or system

¹³⁴ Timothy Hargrove and Andrew H Van de Ven, "Integrating Dialectical and Paradox Perspectives on Managing Contradictions in Organizations," *Organization Studies* vol. 38, no. 3-4 (2017): 332.

¹³⁵ Schneider, "Dialectic in Sociology," 673.

breakdown.¹³⁶ This paradox often occurs in ministry; for example, a church has success in a program or event the first year, but the next year, changes are made that create the opposite effect. Weber has described a related issue with the Puritans' aversion to wealth, noting, "acquired wealth marks the success of the Puritan work-discipline (with its supposed appreciable religious sources), but then this wealth creates temptations that break down those very original religiously influenced motives and values that could produce it."¹³⁷

Development Through Conflict. Success is subjective because of the various scenarios that lead to the outcome, whether intentional or accidental. When an organization launches a plan, obstacles can hinder the outcome and create stress in the process. The dialectic cluster indicates that the obstacle's conflict results in a successful outcome or the development of the process.¹³⁸ Many failures create learning opportunities that lead to growth. The crisis that seems to cause tension becomes an occasion to learn new skills and implement new strategies.

Phenomena through Contradiction. The "phenomena through contradiction" dialectic is similar to the paradoxes created by adaptations. However, this cluster is different because it refers to a paradox of charisma that ignites social action. The conflict comes because the person must involve themselves in social activity, but the effect becomes diminished and routine.¹³⁹ The dialectic is familiar with protesting within this country, such as the marches that occur after a school shooting or that concern systemic racism.

The Contradictory Logic of Passion. According to Schneider, "contradiction has the emotions or passions as a critical area of application."¹⁴⁰ The passion of a person's beliefs drives

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 674.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 675.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

them to act in any scenario, but sometimes they create conflict for someone else. The Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal wrote about this conflict as it pertained to the dilemma of slavery in his book, *An American Dilemma*, stating, “the Negro people have to carry the burden not only of the white man’s sins but also of their virtues. The virtues of the honest, democratic ... white Americans in the South are great, and the burden upon the Negroes becomes ponderous.”¹⁴¹ The cluster describes the contrast between the sin of slavery and the merits of honest white Americans, which creates a conflict of emotions.

Dissolution of Conflict Through the Union of Opposites. The final cluster dissolves conflict by merging two polar opposites with the same connection. Schneider has illustrated this with an example by pointing out that love and hate are two polar opposites.¹⁴² A person in love continuously thinks of the lover with great passion and emotion. However, if a person suddenly hates that same individual, they still think of the person with the same amount of force it took to love them.

The Dialectical Opposites of the Black Church

The dialectal meaning-clusters sociologists have described critical factors in understanding the personality of the black church. Each church is different and contains a unique character, even if it tries to pattern itself after another ministry. When analyzing a church to determine how to reignite the life-cycle, it is necessary to review the dialectical clusters that affect its character. Lincoln and Mamiya have prepared a dialectical model of the black church. Based on their research, “black churches are institutions that are involved in a constant series of dialectical tensions.”¹⁴³ These tensions may shift depending on the era and the social climate,

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., 676.

¹⁴³ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 475, Kindle.

which may require a change in the polarity. Their study describes six dialectical opposites, which factor in this study.

Priestly and Prophetic Functions. The priestly/prophetic dialectic is a phenomenon through contradiction because the effect of either function can diminish if the church makes ineffective or no changes over time. The church's priestly functions include activities that enrich the church spiritually, including worship and the membership's spiritual enrichment. Social action in the community, such as political activism and social concerns related to those in need, are prophetic functions. Every church has elements of both functions, but at any time, one part may have a more dominant presence in the ministry.¹⁴⁴ A more priestly church focuses on building the congregation and supporting the membership before reaching the community. In contrast, a prophetic church is more likely to voice its opinion on injustice to the community.

Other-worldly and Worldly. An “other-worldly” church has a “pie-in-the-sky” mindset that believes the church should not concern itself with the injustices in the world or earthly rewards from God. This church dynamic promises rewards in heaven for the faithful, and it is usually a characteristic of mainline churches. A church with an “other-worldly” dialectic does not concern itself with politics or the community's social needs. Churches with a worldly function involve themselves with politics and other issues that create opportunities to eliminate injustices.¹⁴⁵ Many churches that preach the black liberation doctrine have a worldly dialectic function. Based on the contradictory logic of passion, the dialectic cluster of these functions creates conflict for each other because both are fervent in their belief. If the other-worldly church is triumphant, then social injustice, such as racism, can remain unchecked. If the worldly church

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 475-486, Kindle.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 486, Kindle.

thrives, it draws attention from the spiritual and instead focuses on earthly matters.

Universalism and Particularism. Universalism and particularism are two dialectic functions in which the adaptation inhibits the effective integration of the church because of racial injustice. Universalism is the Christian message that we are all children of God; therefore, all races should worship together. However, particularism indicates a lack of trust, making black congregants suspicious of white people who attend the church.¹⁴⁶ Because of the history of slavery, some black churches are wary of integrating, especially given recent events. For example, in 2015, Dylann Roof, a white supremacist, came to Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church during Bible study and killed nine black members, including the church's pastor. After the attack, for months, predominantly black churches were highly suspicious of white parishioners who attended.

Communal and Privatistic. The church's communal focus emphasizes the familial orientation, which creates security and love in the congregation. Historically, the black church has always been communal because of the black community's shared challenges. The communal aspect involves the church in the lives of its members and community, including family, politics, education, and careers. The privatistic function removes the influence and focus on the community and places it only on the congregation's corporate needs as they apply to the church.¹⁴⁷ Privatistic churches are more concerned with having as many church members as possible pass through their doors, while communal church members linger after long services. Like universalism and particularism, the church's privatistic adaptation makes it ineffective in developing a relationship with the assembly. Many megachurches have a privatistic dialectic

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 496-507, Kindle.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 507, Kindle.

because the church size makes it impossible for a megachurch pastor or the congregation to establish familial relationships with all members. Instead, the megachurch develops programs, such as small group ministries, to address the challenge.

Charismatic and Bureaucratic. This dialectic concerns the black church's organizational function and creates a goal shift within the ministry. The church's intended administrative goal is to function effectively so that the pastor and the leaders do not have to work hard to operate the ministry. The charismatic pole of the spectrum relies on the pastor and church leaders' character and personality, while the organizational pole focuses on the church's administration.¹⁴⁸ A church with a charismatic leader pushes the pastor to the front to operate the administrative function.

Resistance and Accommodation. Finally, the last dialectic is resistance and accommodation, which have unanticipated consequences. Churches with a resistant pull affirm the church's black culture and use elements of black culture, for example, an Ankh cross rather than the conventional Christian cross. An accommodating church appropriates the “norms, values, and expectations of white society.”¹⁴⁹ Churches that are accommodating use symbols that reflect white Christianity, such as pictures of the European Jesus.

The Strength of Leadership

Historical Leadership Development Within the Black Church

The black church would not exist without black church leaders. From Richard Allen to Charles Mason to Martin Luther King, Jr. to Dr. Tony Evans, black leaders have demonstrated excellence in ministry and the strength to persevere in challenging times. Further, the men and

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 528-539, Kindle.

women who planted, pastored, and nurtured churches had many challenges, including a lack of resources and education. Despite these obstacles, they were able to learn and lead the people of God. Jeremiah prophesies to the Israelites, stating, “I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”¹⁵⁰ The gift of God to the black church is leadership.

However, pastors faced many challenges, as Terrell Carter has explained: “Education was not readily available to African Americans who were kept in bondage in slavery—regardless how much they might have wanted to learn.”¹⁵¹ After slavery ended, white institutions of higher learning were not available to African Americans because of the Jim Crow laws. Because formal education was not available, the leaders continued a practice passed down from African tradition: storytelling. In Africa, the elders taught the youth by telling them stories, recreating events in their past, and sharing the facets of the culture.¹⁵²

The practice of storytelling shaped the black church’s culture and community, just as it did in Africa. It brought the community closer and created the familial atmosphere found in the communal dialectic. It also built loyalty within the church so that leaders who trained there stayed to support the church's mission.¹⁵³ Members and leaders took ownership of the church using possessive words to describe it, such as “my church” rather than “the church.” Storytelling shaped the pastor's persona as he molded his sermon to educate the congregation through the story. Often, black ministers did not pursue formal education because the congregants were more concerned with connecting through the sermon. A minister is called by his declaration that he

¹⁵⁰ Jeremiah 3:15.

¹⁵¹ Terrell Carter, *The Lord Gave Me This: Understanding Historic Leadership Development Practices of the Black Church to Prepare Tomorrow's Leaders* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), 8.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 10.

“heard from the Lord,” not through education. Terrell Carter asserts this fact stating, “the question for the black preacher, historically, has not been where they graduated from or what seminary they were connected to, or even what fraternity; the question is ‘can they tell the story?’”¹⁵⁴

Life-cycle Leadership Profile

As discussed above, every church has a life-cycle that facilitates its birth, growth, maturity, and decline. It is critical to note that the stages of the life-cycle move into the next with each new growth element. Effective leadership styles are necessary to maintain the church during the growth cycle. Gary McIntosh has suggested five leadership styles that a leader must possess or develop to initiate a life-cycle or move it along the bell curve. First, the leader must be a catalytic person who can “bring something into being that did not formerly exist.”¹⁵⁵ A catalyzer is responsible for birthing the church. It must do three things to create the birthing process: first, communicate the vision and motivate people to implement it effectively. Second, convey it clearly to allow listeners to understand and move forward, listen to ideas. Finally, create value to generate passion and ownership for the vision. By allowing others to participate, the vision becomes the church’s vision and not his vision. The catalyzer’s actions help develop relationships as the church moves from birth to childhood.

As the church enters the adolescence stage, the leader must shift to an organizational leadership style that connects people in the ministry. By connecting people, the organizer can provide the tools to build ministries within the church. The organizer must be able to multitask to overcome challenges and spark creativity in those around him. Additionally, the organizer must

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵⁵ McIntosh, *Taking Your Church to the Next Level*, 89.

seek other leaders who are also organizers to help build the church and continue the momentum to propel it to maturity.¹⁵⁶ Once the church enters the maturity stage, the leader must become or find an operator. The operator creates stability within the congregation by implementing the infrastructure and systems to operate effectively. The operator is someone who cares “about doing things correctly rather than doing correct things.”¹⁵⁷ The operator improves systems and puts people in the right positions to maintain those systems.

The church's next stages require a leader who can face a declining church's challenges and restart the life-cycle. McIntosh has stated that a pastor in the operator's role who does not create a shift will continue while the church is in decline but will eventually leave because “there is nothing left to operate.”¹⁵⁸ The church needs a reorganizer during the empty nest stage to reignite the church’s vision. The reorganizer must work with the church's established members while bringing new ones to advance the vision. The new members restart the life-cycle under the maturity stage. The reorganizer must have great charisma to work with everyone without offending anyone and have the ability to attract new church members.¹⁵⁹ When a church enters old age or death, the leader needs to be a highly skilled reorganizer who can create a rebirth from the ashes of the old church. That reorganizer must possess skills similar to those of the catalyzer and the reorganizer.¹⁶⁰ By understanding the church’s life-cycle stage and the type of leader who can maintain and operate it, it is possible to evaluate a church's needs, whether stagnant or declining.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 91-92.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 92.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 93.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 94.

Leadership Characteristics

One of the greatest gifts God provided to leadership were the men and women He called to serve. Because He made each leader unique, each displays different personalities and leadership styles that reflect His glory and handiwork. Further, God is fully aware of the person's character and destiny and the potential to succeed or the ability to fail. In all of his knowledge of an individual, God still chooses to use humanity not only to accomplish His will but to lead His people. The psalmist writes, "You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made."¹⁶¹

God chooses to use imperfect people as leaders to keep them humble and develop them according to their personalities and experiences. Each leader has a style that reflects his character and draws from his experiences. Leaders need to build and maintain a healthy leadership style that reveals how he deals with his teammates and those affected by his leadership. A church leader with a healthy leadership style directs the church with success despite his flaws. However, church leaders who lead from their deficiencies create havoc within the ministry and those under their authority.

Lead by Example

Leaders should always model good character and behavior because others are always watching and evaluating their actions. Paul writes to the church in Corinth, "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ."¹⁶² Good character operates in truth and is transparent. The

¹⁶¹ Psalm 139:1-3, 13-14a (NIV).

¹⁶² 1 Corinthians 11:1.

leader needs to display Christlike qualities in front of others. A leader who is not transparent and who attempts to conceal and deceive loses his followers' credibility. According to Wilson and Hoffman, "the level of our credibility will be in direct proportion to the quality of our modeling. When we attempt to portray ourselves as something we're not or as practicing something that we're actually not practicing, we're no longer modeling but acting."¹⁶³ A person who leads by example must keep his promises and obligations. The people who follow him scrutinize every action, which affects his reputation.

Lead With Vision

God calls leaders to guide people in the direction necessary for the church through their vision. Visionary leaders are a powerful weapon because they can see pathways before them that do not yet exist. According to Bill Hybels, "visionary leaders shamelessly appeal to anybody and everybody to get on board with their vision."¹⁶⁴ A real vision burns within a leader, and it consumes him to move forward in the expectation God sets. These leaders will "cast their vision clearly enough, and often enough, it will become reality."¹⁶⁵ However, visionary leaders must be careful not to force a vision too quickly. The leader must implement it one step at a time and clearly communicate the purpose with his teammates. Sometimes, a visionary might get ahead of himself and outrun those he leads, creating frustration for the church. If the vision moves too slowly or is not clear, it will stagnate and die as people forget its purpose.¹⁶⁶

Lead Through Collaboration

Leaders cannot lead themselves; they must have teammates to work with to complete the

¹⁶³ Michale Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A ShepherdCare Guide for Pastors, Ministers, and Other Caregivers* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007), 230-231.

¹⁶⁴ Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 141.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Wilson and Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 232-233.

goals of the ministry. A collaborative leader works together with members of the congregation to help them accomplish their goals. Collaborative leaders lead by example, as they are willing to demonstrate that they are not too proud to work alongside their teammates.¹⁶⁷ Leaders who choose to be aloof and supervise rather than work do not display the humility of Christ. Leaders who work in concert with church members also value the team's input to gather a mixture of unique ideas. True team leaders realize that the team's success depends on everyone working together to achieve a common goal. In other words, leadership shares power, and the results “deliver the leader from excessive individualism, extreme isolation, and self-centered empire-building.”¹⁶⁸

Lead Through Leadership Development

Leaders are supposed to mentor others to continue a succession plan after their assignment is complete. The Bible describes the mentorship Moses provided to Joshua as he led the children of Israel out of Egypt. When Moses prepared to die, he spoke to the people to warn them against turning from God (Deuteronomy 31-34), and then he climbed Mount Nebo to die. The Bible declares, “Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites obeyed him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.”¹⁶⁹ Leaders must seek out hidden talent and people they can invest in so that the ministry's leadership does not end. Servant leaders are not afraid to “give their ministry away” so that others can grow and develop their potential.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 233.

¹⁶⁸ Kenneth Gangel, "The Meaning of Leadership," in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, edited by James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 182.

¹⁶⁹ Deuteronomy 34:9.

¹⁷⁰ Wilson and Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 234.

Lead Through Relationship

Leaders develop relationships with those around them to learn to trust each other and build harmony. When a leader is interested in his teammates, he creates a bond that allows him to mentor and holds them accountable. The Bible notes the relationship that Jesus had with His disciples: they traveled together, ate together, slept in the open fields, and ministered together. The disciples had first-hand knowledge of Jesus' nature and disposition. The Gospel of John records Jesus calling him the "disciple whom he loved" (John 13:23, 19:26; 20:2, 21:7, 21:20) five times. A leader's relationship with his teammates is significant because it also allows the leader to provide correction and direction.

Toxic Leadership

The leader's role within the church is highly controversial, as many churches frequently face a battle over control. However, a lack of biblical leadership has created a void within the church, as narcissistic and compulsive leaders have emerged. Compulsive leaders "feel the need to be in complete control of their organization in every minute detail."¹⁷¹ Narcissistic leaders are more concerned with their image and how the ministry affects their public image, so their concern focuses on the leader rather than on moving God's people towards alignment with divine mandates.¹⁷² These leadership forms create an atmosphere that leads the people to build institutions and buildings rather than focus on God.

Leadership problems develop within the church due to toxic leadership, which results from a dangerous triangle that includes destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and an environment that invites harmful elements. Destructive leaders form compulsive and narcissistic

¹⁷¹ Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D Rima, Sr., *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: The Paradox of Personal Dysfunction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 89.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 98-99.

views that breed an “ideology of hate.”¹⁷³ Gullible followers either conform to the intimidation of dangerous leaders or collude in their toxic behavior. Finally, if an environment is unstable or if the cultural values have eroded, the leader operates effectively through fear and intimidation.¹⁷⁴ These destructive, toxic leaders do not imitate the biblical leadership model and confuse the proper biblical standard of leadership.

The Biblical Standard of Leadership

The necessity of building leaders to develop disciples and other leaders and affect change in our communities is a fundamental concept throughout the Bible and church history. Thus, when a church operates under the biblical leadership model, it becomes healthier. The servant-leader is the biblical standard of leadership, and he builds and strengthens his teammates and community. Jesus tells His disciples,

ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great one's exercise authority upon them. But so, shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.¹⁷⁵

Leaders are called to lead by example and must exemplify godly standards. In both 1 Timothy and Titus, the Apostle Paul provides a guideline for leaders within the church. The church examines leaders to see if they uphold integrity standards with their marriages, households, and relationships with people. Leaders must live up to a moral standard of self-control in their daily lives and their emotions.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Art Padilla, Robert Hogan, and Robert Kaiser, “The Toxic Triangle: Destructive Leaders, Susceptible Followers, and Conducive Environments,” *The Leadership Quarterly* vol 18 (2007): 180-182.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 182-185.

¹⁷⁵ Mark 10:42-44.

¹⁷⁶ Philip H. Towner, “Regarding Qualifications of Overseers and Deacons,” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co.,

The Strength of a Healthy Church

A healthy church is essential to the complete development of the believer, the transformation of society, and the building of the Kingdom of God. However, there are conflicting views concerning the definition of a healthy church. Dr. R. A. Vernon, the pastor of The Word Church in Cleveland, Ohio, describes the biblical necessity of a large megachurch because of the abundance of available resources to help the community. Throughout his book *Size Does Matter*, he indicates that megachurches are successful because God has allowed them to grow numerically. He also uses Peter's Pentecost sermon and the addition of 3,000 souls to the church (Acts 2:14-42) as an example of biblical church growth.¹⁷⁷

Theologians disagree with Vernon's view on numerical church growth to measure success and health in a church. Jesus Christ gave several instructions to the disciples that set the mission and the standard for the world:

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.¹⁷⁸

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.¹⁷⁹

These two commands from Jesus help define the divine view of a healthy church. A healthy church is one that (1) makes disciples, (2) develops the spiritual growth of the believer, (3) develops leaders, and (4) spreads the Gospel message through evangelism or church planting.

2006), 239-245.

¹⁷⁷ R. A. Vernon *Size Does Matter: Moving Your Ministry from Micro to Mega* (Cleveland, OH: Victory Media & Publishing Company, 2011), 27-32.

¹⁷⁸ Matthew 28:19-20 NIV.

¹⁷⁹ Acts 1:8

Churches that exhibit these characteristics create change in their communities and impact the kingdom of God. Therefore, we can define a healthy church as one that develops leaders to make disciples through spiritual growth, so they are empowered to make more disciples and spread the Gospel throughout the world.

Discipleship

Jesus' call to "make disciples" creates a challenge for the contemporary church because it does not view discipleship in the same manner as the early church. In the modern church, discipleship is a program or ministry that can be eliminated or expanded, depending on the activity level. However, discipleship is a lifestyle that each believer must embrace to grow closer to God. True discipleship develops in stages in a believer's life. The believer must practice walking in his faith daily and create lifestyle encounters with Christ to build the relationship. These encounters occur by listening for God's voice and continuously reading the Scriptures to obtain an understanding of God's mind.¹⁸⁰ The Twelve developed into the church's leaders and apostles because of their encounters with Christ through the Gospels. With Jesus, meanwhile, they witnessed the power of prayer as He performed healing miracles, stopped the wind and the waves with a word, raised Lazarus from the dead, and finally, raised Himself from the grave after three days.

The commission to make disciples was not solely for the Twelve; it is also for the entire church. The church's primary purpose should always be to make disciples who are obedient and unafraid to represent our Savior. Healthy churches continually develop a process, not a program, that makes disciples and teaches them how to replicate their experience.

¹⁸⁰ Alton Garrison, *A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model* (Springfield, MO: Influence Resources, 2015), 175-179.

The ongoing process of discipleship occurs when a person can adequately mentor a new or immature believer to become a productive member of the church and a strong force within the Kingdom of God. After the mentee grows in his relationship with Christ, he can mentor someone else and reciprocate his mentor's process. The discipleship process is not a program or a class, but rather a lifelong growth process. Every mentor should have a mentor, and eventually, every mentee should have someone learning and growing from him. Many churches focus on church members, but a healthy church focuses on making disciples.

Baptism

The Greek word for baptism, *baptisma*, means to “immerse fully,” which is the physical process of baptism. The believer is taken and immersed in water to represent the burial and resurrection of Jesus.¹⁸¹ Baptized believers identify themselves with Jesus physically, but there must be a spiritual baptism that causes a change in the believer. This spiritual baptism creates a “hunger and a thirst for righteousness” (Matthew 4) that draws the believer closer to God in the relationship with and knowledge of the word of God.

Spiritual baptism is represented by the believer's spiritual growth, which draws him closer to God in his relationship and makes him receptive to God's will. The believer increases his spiritual strength by increasing his wisdom through constant interaction with people wiser than him.¹⁸² The writer of Proverbs states that the believer must “walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.”¹⁸³ When a believer continually works with believers who are more intelligent than he, he begins to learn and follow in the footsteps of men

¹⁸¹ G.W. Bromiley, “Baptism” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 129-130.

¹⁸² Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 212.

¹⁸³ Proverbs 24:5 (NIV).

and women who have a strong relationship with Christ. This interaction is conducive to discipleship.

Spiritual growth is the evidence of a robust discipleship process, and movement is necessary for the believer to operate in the Kingdom mandate. Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson have described the different stages of growth as the spiritual continuum. This continuum consists of four separate stages: exploring Christ, growing in Christ, close to Christ, and Christ-centered.¹⁸⁴ Three movements propel the believer along the spiritual continuum. First, the believer gains an initial understanding of the Christian faith, which moves him from exploring Christ to growing in Christ. The believer then becomes more active in his spiritual practices and experiences, which leads him to a more intimate relationship with Christ as he grows closer to Him. Finally, the believer shifts from self-awareness to Christ-centeredness as he redefines his personal identity.¹⁸⁵ As the believer progresses in his spiritual growth, he begins to operate under God's plan and moves towards a leadership role.

Obedience

A person learns to obey the commands of Christ through leadership development. The church must remember that the commissions and mandates that Christ gave were to leaders to reproduce other leaders. The disciples (later apostles) took the teachings of Christ to expand the church's ministry through leadership development, which is evident in the Apostle Paul's discipleship of Timothy and Titus. For example, Paul told Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city,

¹⁸⁴ Greg L. Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, *Move: What 1000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 108-110.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 109-115.

as I had appointed thee.”¹⁸⁶ In other words, Paul appointed Titus and instructed him to develop and ordain elders to continue the work of leadership within the church.

Leadership development is necessary for a healthy church to grow and sustain God's momentum to operate in His will. As a church grows and functions, it is essential to continue expanding the organizational base by incorporating more leaders to work and drive the vision. Gary McIntosh has stated, “as a church grows and ages, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep it healthy and vibrant.”¹⁸⁷ As stated earlier, when a church ages, it enters a life-cycle that brings it closer to stagnation and decline. By continually developing improvements through long-term excellence, the church can remain healthy through effective leadership.¹⁸⁸

Evangelism and Church Planting

The final mark of a healthy church is the process of evangelism and church planting. When Jesus ascended into heaven as described in Acts 1, He gave His disciples instructions to go into “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and all the earth” as His witnesses of the Gospel message. Many churches have replaced church programs with evangelism because it is much easier to have a program than explaining the Gospel to nonbelievers. The word “Gospel” in Greek is *euangelion* and means “good news.” The good news of the Gospel contrasts with the bad news that all people are sinners and estranged from God. Paul writes, “for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”¹⁸⁹ The good news is that Christ came to provide the salvation necessary to cleanse the individual from his sins and reconcile him back to God through His sacrifice on the cross (John 3:16). Now, because salvation is available, it has

¹⁸⁶ Titus 1:5.

¹⁸⁷ Gary McIntosh, *Taking Your Church to the Next Level: What Got You Here Won't Get You There* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 16-17.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 18.

¹⁸⁹ Romans 6:23.

the power to transform lives and provide peace in every situation.

Many churches do not discuss or teach the Gospel because they do not have a theological vision that focuses on the Kingdom of God or the Gospel message. A theological vision is necessary to define how the church responds to the Gospel and how it centers the church around Christ. A theological vision also creates balance to ensure the church does not use the Gospel to promote legalism or irreligion within the congregation.¹⁹⁰ The need for a Christ-centered, Gospel-balanced church is critical to evangelism as a tool to continue replicating the church that Christ has ordained. Some theologians consider evangelism one of the main characteristics of a healthy church, along with empowering leadership, inspiring worship, passionate spirituality, and small holistic groups.¹⁹¹ Churches that are willing to evangelize and replicate themselves through church planting demonstrate obedience to the command of Christ to go forth, and they exhibit a faith that Christ will use them to “build His church.”

Nurturing Growth Within the Church

A healthy church exhibits characteristics that demonstrate its connection to the agenda of Christ. A church can become healthy by re-evaluating leadership to ensure that the leaders connect to its theological vision. The theological vision focuses on the connection between the Gospel and the local church. A healthy church creates an atmosphere that nurtures a discipleship process and spiritual growth.

One of the key factors within any church is the role leadership plays in furthering the agenda. As stated previously, toxic leaders are more focused on their agenda and develop a more

¹⁹⁰ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced Gospel Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 21-23.

¹⁹¹ Kenneth O. Gangel, “Marks of a Healthy Church,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (October-December 2001), 474-475.

robust infrastructure to have the “appearance of godliness while denying its power.”¹⁹² Toxic leaders tend to create beautiful edifices and then boasting about how they could do so and the plans they used to build them. A toxic leader's vision focuses on larger buildings, programs in excellence, property, land, and purchasing transportation.

Strong leaders are committed to taking the church to the next level in spiritual growth by building the people up spiritually through discipleship. People who met Jesus had significant changes in their lives. Some refused to follow Him because they could not understand the assignment. Others did not heed his call because he would not provide physical and material comforts. However, some forsook all things and left their jobs and families to follow Jesus. A disciple must be willing to sacrifice everything to gain Christ and grow closer to Him. A disciple cannot succeed without a leader willing to sacrifice his own time and resources to see the student grow.

The term “disciple” refers to a student in the Greco-Roman world, but it changed after the church's birth. As the church began to grow, the term began to refer to a follower of Jesus. According to Chris Shirley, a disciple's qualifications were belief in Jesus as the Messiah, identifying with Him through water baptism, and obedience to His teaching and accepting Him as Lord.¹⁹³ Thus, when Christ commanded the Twelve to “make disciples,” He commissioned them to make more followers of Jesus.

Leaders of healthy churches must take the necessary steps to allow for the nurturing and growth of disciples. Leaders must direct their focus to three areas to strengthen disciples and enable them to grow. First, they must develop an intimate setting through small groups, which

¹⁹² 2 Timothy 3:5 (ESV).

¹⁹³ Chris Shirley, "It Takes a Church to Make a Disciple: An Integrative Model of Discipleship for the Local Church," *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, vol 50, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 209.

can create engagement and allow the disciples to ask difficult questions without being judged or criticized.¹⁹⁴ Second, the disciples learn biblical teaching through the vehicle of the small group. These activities expose students to Christlike behavior.¹⁹⁵ Third, the disciple must engage in community involvement to cultivate his spiritual formation through evangelism and community service that shows Christ's love.¹⁹⁶ The leaders develop and initiate the activities and then replicate them through the disciples, who will eventually serve as leaders.

335. ¹⁹⁴ Bill Wilson, "What Does a Healthy Church Look Like?" *Review and Expositor*, vol. 113, no. 3 (2016):

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Chapter Four: Smoothing Out the Rough Spots: Strategic Plan

Outline of the Strategic Plan

As previously stated, every church goes through a life-cycle that can lead to death if not reversed. Churches that become stagnant and decline usually enter the “empty nest” life-cycle because the vision no longer motivates the church; the leadership focuses on the present rather than the future. When a church enters the “empty nest” life-cycle, it must review its current state and restart it to keep it from declining into “old age” and death. A strategic plan is necessary to initiate the steps to stimulate the church’s vision and life-cycle rebirth. There are six focal points to build the recommended strategic plan.

- 1) Analyze the church’s strengths and weaknesses based on the church’s health and the Refill survey results.
- 2) Review the dialectic opposites of the church to leverage them based on the community and congregation.
- 3) Revisit the validity of the vision and implement a new one to build momentum.
- 4) Determine if the leadership and church structure need to realign the church’s goals with the vision.
- 5) Reevaluate the church's ministries and programs, keep the effective ones, eliminate ineffective programs, and fill voids with new options.
- 6) The church must define its role in the community and determine a level of social and political interaction.

In developing the new plan, the author is aware of various other authors' methods to restart the church life-cycle. These methods do not align with the black church's dynamic and culture because of the history and evolution of slavery and racism. The methods used by

churches such as Saddleback and Willow Creek do not work in the black church because its ethos creates a unique identity that distinguishes it from other ethnicities (see Appendix C: Black Consciousness). Eugene Blair has written, “the African American church has the added central task of discipling black folks so they can understand their lives as Africans and Americans and what these realities mean in the context of their church, community, and world.”¹⁹⁷ Based on the distinctive differences related to the church, the following strategic plan is a starting point to re-engage the black church's life-cycle.

Strategic Planning Team

Before implementing the plan, the church must first assemble a strategic planning team led by a leader with a reorganizing leadership style, possibly the pastor. The team must include the senior pastor, key deacons and ministers, lay leaders, and people of influence within the church. These are the church's key leaders, those who can forge ahead and make the ministry's necessary changes.¹⁹⁸ Creating a strategic plan must be a team effort, as the Bible says in the book of Proverbs: “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.”¹⁹⁹ The team must implement several tactics to determine success.

The team must decide when and how often they will meet to determine strategic planning status. Each meeting should include a brainstorming session to farm new ideas for the ministry. The team should also incorporate a feedback session to determine if the strategies are effective. The team must meet as often as possible to facilitate effective communication between itself and the church. Communication is crucial to make sure everyone is informed, to eliminate

¹⁹⁷ Eugene Blair, "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying: Planning, Guiding, and Sustaining Spiritual Formation in the African American Congregation for Church Growth," in *Growing the African American Church*, edited by Carlyle Fielding Stewart, 111-134 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 115.

¹⁹⁸ Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 58-59.

¹⁹⁹ Proverbs 11:14.

misunderstanding, and to discredit rumors. The communication methods need to be practical and straightforward because some members may not connect well with technology.

The team must determine the tools and methods they will use to assess the congregation's perceptions. Survey tools are well suited to obtain answers from the members; however, there are some challenges in procuring responses. For example, many members will not complete the surveys for various reasons, so the population sample may be too low to provide an accurate assessment. Additionally, many surveyors choose a neutral selection that may skew the answers. Another tool the strategic team may employ is interviews that ask open-ended questions about the member's experiences with the church. Again, some issues can skew these results because some respondents fear that their answers may become known to the congregation.

Finally, the team must understand the expectations and the direction needed to move the church to rebirth.²⁰⁰ The team must utilize methods that will allow it to measure the success of its efforts or any steps to correct inconsistency in the process. One useful measure is the SMaC recipe Jim Collins outlines in his book, *Great by Choice*. A SMaC approach means that the process is specific, methodical, and consistent. Collins states, "the SMaC recipe is the operating code for turning strategic concepts into reality."²⁰¹ The team can plan steps in the recipe that stimulate strategic objectives. The plan must specifically outline the method to move the church into a position where it can change. The efforts must be consistent with the vision of the church and the objectives of the team.

Analyze Strengths and Weaknesses

Every church has strengths and weaknesses that create positive and negative synergy

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 60-66.

²⁰¹ Jim Collins and Morten Hansen, *Great By Choice* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2011), 128-129.

within the ministry. When a church begins the rebirth process, it needs to review these areas to determine if there are flaws to maximize its operations. The church can also leverage its strengths to motivate the congregation in a positive direction. The best method to determine the church's strengths and weaknesses is to interview a sample of the congregation to determine how they feel about important areas within the church. Their answers can highlight the specific changes needed to create the proper strategic plan for the ministry.

The analysis requires the church to be honest with the interviewers or the survey so the team can determine the actual strengths and weaknesses. Without honesty, acquiring the information may cause the group to miss out on crucial growth areas. The SMaC recipe helps facilitate truthful answers if the interviewers follow consistent methods of asking open-ended and follow-up questions. The survey should also ask questions two or three times in different formats to determine truthful answers. Once the team receives all the answers, the group can review and record the strengths and weaknesses with a concerted effort.

Dialectical Analysis

The dialectical analysis determines how the church interacts with the church community and its relationship to the black community. The research will show if changes need to be made to the community's characteristics and role and its contribution to the church's growth. The strategy to determine the dialectical analysis includes interviewing church leaders and church members to determine their feelings about the church. It may also involve speaking to people in the community to learn how they perceive the church.

The team can use dialectic analysis as a barometer that measures how the church interacts with the community and how it handles social justice. The black church's culture developed from its dialectic; many black churches are prophetic, communal, particularistic, and charismatic

because of this history. The dialectic demonstrates the church's personality, but when combined with the church's strengths and weaknesses, a portrait of the church emerges. For example, a church may display defects in its outreach, and the dialectic may demonstrate that the church is priestly and privatistic. A follow-up interview may identify those with a passion for outreach by understanding these deficient areas.

Church Vision

The church's vision is one of the ministry's essential tools because it serves as the roadmap for the church's direction. However, very few churches engage in vision planning unless it involves a capital project. Malphurs has argued that the planning process should include a review of the church's core values, and from this, the church can develop its mission and vision.²⁰² The author disagrees because, in the black church, the primary values come from the senior pastor's personality. The pastor has a significant influence in the church, and if his values focus on the community work, the church will become a community church. If the pastor's passion is education and teaching, the church will focus on teaching. Because the values come from the pastor, the vision should also come from the pastor. Many biblical leaders received a vision from God and communicated the objectives to the people. Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah, and Solomon all received a vision from God and used it to motivate God's people to action. Although the strategy team works with the pastor to rebirth the church, he is the person who must drive the vision with the team's input. For example, the team can help the pastor identify the values they see in him, giving him the fuel to pray for his passionate ideals.

The process for developing and implementing a vision statement must begin with prayer.

²⁰² Aubry Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2005), 96-97.

The strategic team leader must ensure that the team covers each step of the vision planning process in prayer. Malphurs has called this type of praying “envisioning prayer” and stated that, with it, “God will open their [the team’s] eyes to His word and its application to the people in the world.”²⁰³ This exercise aims to determine a vision that will sustain the church longer than a building plan. Visionary praying is one of the team’s powerful tools, but the pastor must lead it and direct the team. The prayer must ask God to give the pastor revelation so he can lead appropriately.

Malphurs has also challenged the strategy team to “think big” and not allow reality to create hesitation in the vision. He writes, “make no small plans, for they have not the power to stir the souls of men.”²⁰⁴ The Apostle Paul says to the Ephesian church that God is “able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”²⁰⁵ The pastor must believe that God is in the vision, and since He is, He will provide the resources and the opportunity to complete it. The pastor must also have the assurance that he is the person God chose to lead the vision, and he must believe that it is suitable for the people because it will empower them and allow them to grow closer to God and one another.²⁰⁶

The pastor and the team must ask some questions in the vision planning sessions. All of the items need to be open-ended, and no answer should be considered far-fetched or off-limits. The pastor and his team should keep an open mind to make changes quickly if needed.

The pastor and team must consider many questions. What opportunities will bring the church closer to God? How can we achieve these goals and allow the power of the Holy Spirit to

²⁰³ Ibid., 155.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 156.

²⁰⁵ Ephesians 3:20.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 153-154.

operate? What prayer strategies can we implement so that the church can connect with God? What ministry opportunities can the church use to reach the community? Are there opportunities for social justice? What are the immediate needs of the community that the church can address? What resources does the church need to accomplish its goals in the community? Who will help the church achieve its goals? Are there any skills that the people need to move the church towards its vision? What changes need to take place with the people or resources to accomplish the church's goals? What objectives can the church complete at the present moment to move the vision?²⁰⁷

Another component of the vision is the connection and impact of the mission statement. Just as the vision determines long-term goals for the church, the mission represents the ministry's short-term goals for that year. In many churches, the mission is related to the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20. Malphurs has identified four guidelines to develop the mission of the church. First, the mission needs to determine the church's purpose as it connects to the Great Commission. Second, the church must create a mission statement that is understandable and easy for the leadership to communicate to the church. Third, the mission statement must be broad enough to cover the ministry's annual goals but clear enough for everyone to understand the objectives. Finally, the mission statement must be concise enough to fit on a t-shirt and bold enough to create momentum.²⁰⁸ Once the church has a satisfactory mission to build on, the team can develop a strong vision.

The vision is the church's portrait, and it creates a link between the past, present, and future. The vision must remind the congregation of past successes, reinforce current goals, and

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 39-40.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 131-136.

set future objectives. The connection between the vision and the mission draws the congregation into the work of the vision. When the visionary leader defines the vision, it has to be greater than what he can see. Every visionary leader in the Bible faced impossible odds to achieve the goal God set for them. It seemed impossible for Moses to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian captivity and lead them to the Promised Land. Joseph faced insurmountable odds while transforming from a slave in Potipher's house to a ruler on the throne in Egypt. Nehemiah, a eunuch, overcame physical challenges that disqualified him from leadership to direct the exiled nation to rebuild Jerusalem's walls while surrounded by their enemies. The Apostle Paul summarizes this in Ephesians 3:20 in his doxology: "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us."²⁰⁹

Re-evaluate Leadership and the Organizational Structure

Leadership Evaluation

Leadership is an essential part of the strategic planning process because leaders can implement the vision and motivate others to follow it and succeed. There are several factors to consider regarding leadership: strengthening effective leadership, removing ineffective leaders, and managing a leadership development program. The team needs to evaluate every ministry leader by interviewing them and reviewing their accomplishments. The team should conduct the interview as if the leader were applying for his current position. Each interview provides valuable information for the strategic team and causes the leader to think about his leadership strategy. The interview should include open-ended questions to engage the leader effectively and generate possible follow-up questions.

²⁰⁹ Ephesians 3:20.

Some possible questions include the following: `What do is one of your more significant accomplishments in ministry, and why do you feel that it made a difference? What was one of your most significant challenges, and how did you overcome any obstacles? What did you learn from the challenging opportunity? How did you handle disruptive teammates who needed counseling? Describe your prayer life and how it contributes to your role in ministry. If you could make any changes to your ministry, what changes would you recommend? What resources would you need for your changes, and how would they bring excellence to your ministry? Do you have a ministry strategy, and if so, what are the objectives? If not, why do you not have a plan? How would your ministry teammates describe your leadership style? How would others outside of your ministry describe your leadership style? How would you describe your leadership? What leadership style do you respond to that motivates you to do your best?

After the team reviews the interview questions and the ministry and leader's actions, they need to decide whether the leadership style is effective. Ineffective leaders who show potential require retraining and mentoring to develop them into stronger leaders. The team must consider replacing a leader who does not have potential or the passion for the assignment with someone who can take the ministry to the next level. The strategy team should create a leadership scale to determine the type of leader based on the interview responses and feedback from others in the church.

John Maxwell has argued that five specific leadership levels define how people respond to a particular leader. People react to the first-level leader's position or title because he is an "entry-level" leader. The leader does not have the skills or abilities of the position yet and seeks control by rules or bylaws. The team may not operate in excellence at this level; instead, it does

“just enough.”²¹⁰ The leader moves to the second level of leadership because of relationships with his teammates. The teammates learn to trust the leader and follow him because they like him. The leader can motivate the team because he expresses the value he finds in them as individuals.²¹¹

The third level of leadership stems from the leader gaining a reputation for “getting things done” and producing results. People follow the leader because he motivates them to achieve their goals and operates in excellence. The team perceived the leader as a problem solver, which builds credibility within the team and the organization.²¹² Fourth-level leaders can mentor and empower others to become the best version of themselves. Level-four leaders invest in others and use everything they achieved in the first three levels to build those relationships to teach others. These leaders are not satisfied with completing the objectives; they want to ensure that they create a sustainable model to carry on the vision for the future. The final level is the most difficult to reach; it is the leadership pinnacle, and few achieve this goal. This leadership level has a tremendous influence on others, and many consult such leaders for their wisdom when facing challenging matters. Fifth-level mentors and teaches fourth-level leaders. Maxwell describes the characteristics of the fifth-level leader as follows: “they create opportunities that other leaders don’t. They create legacy in what they do. People follow them for who they are and what they represent.”²¹³

Leadership Development

The team should observe and mentor individuals who display leadership ability by

²¹⁰ John Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership* (New York, NY: Center Street, 2011), 7.

²¹¹ Ibid., 8.

²¹² Ibid., 8-9.

²¹³ Ibid., 9-10.

implementing a leadership development program. The program should be consistent with the values and vision of the church. Candidates are chosen based on the character of the individual. Paul wrote to his student, Timothy, “in the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.”²¹⁴

According to Bill Hybels, the candidate must exhibit those biblical characteristics as well as five natural abilities. The candidate must have the ability to influence others, which is a natural trait in any leader. As the Scripture stays, he must have an excellent reputation that does not damage his credibility or that of the church. The candidate must also have “people skills” that allow him to sympathize and empathize with others. The candidate needs to have the passion and desire to handle uncomfortable tasks and assignments. Finally, the candidate must have intelligence and the ability to think “outside of the box.”²¹⁵

Three aspects of a leadership candidate must work in tandem for a leader to develop as a well-rounded individual with a servant’s heart. Eric Keiger and Kevin Peck discuss the “Development Convergence” in their book *Designed to Lead*. Candidates must develop their knowledge to grow and learn leadership dynamics as well as biblical principles. They also need to lean on their experiences, which provide opportunities to grow and gain understanding through holistic activity. Finally, the candidate needs coaches and mentors to provide support, prayer, and counseling to grow toward their goals (see figure 2).²¹⁶

²¹⁴ 1 Timothy 3:8-10.

²¹⁵ Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 127-130.

²¹⁶ Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2016), 162-164.

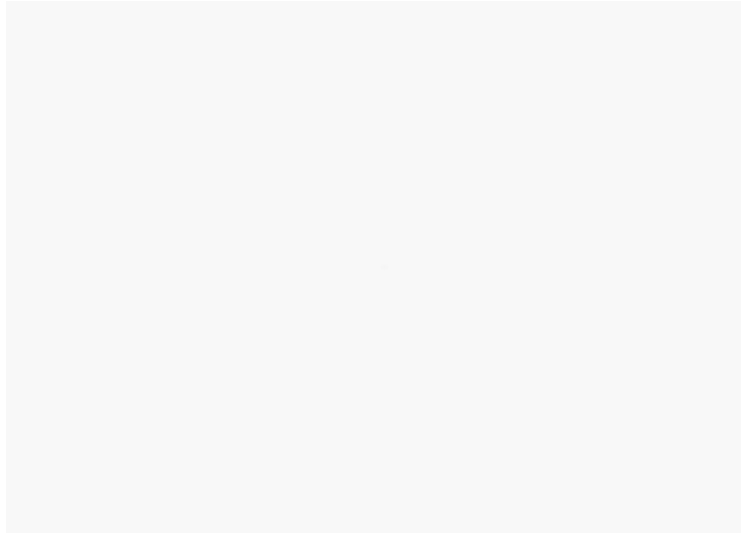


Figure 2

The three convergent points work in tandem; none can work alone because doing so would create deficiencies in the leader. Knowledge alone can create arrogant leaders who have no tolerance or patience for those seeking knowledge. A candidate who focuses on experiences alone may become bitter because of negative experiences in his life. Without the other convergent points, the candidate will not learn from these experiences and will build mistrust. Coaching alone causes the coach to do all the work, while the candidate grows stagnant and listless.²¹⁷

Although the church may undertake efforts and create programs to develop leaders, God does the heavy lifting. Every great leader in the Bible had an encounter with God, who empowered him to serve Him and accomplish His goals. *In The Making of a Leader*, Robert Clinton, indicates that every leader has a timeline that God uses to move them in leadership. The timeline has development phases that identify where they are in God's leadership training program. Phase I occurs at birth, and Clinton calls it "Sovereign Foundations." This phase

²¹⁷ Ibid.

happens through life's fundamental factors: a person's family, where he grows up, and past and present events that lay a foundation for him. Clinton asserts that this is sovereign because the person cannot control these factors, and the foundation determines the scope of their leadership.²¹⁸

The second phase occurs when the leader seeks to develop a personal relationship with God and engages in prayer and intimacy to "hear God's voice." The "Inner-Life Growth" phase involves the first steps in ministry and the first tests of the leader's faith. God uses this opportunity to allow the leader to discover his potential and develop his character. According to Clinton, "these early tests are crucial experiences that God uses to prepare the leader for the next steps in leadership."²¹⁹

The leader's ministry matures in Phase III as he identifies his spiritual gifts and learns to use them effectively. This phase also allows the leader to build relationships and understand the role and purpose of the church. Phase III corresponds with Maxwell's second leadership level; people follow the leader because of their relationships and the trust they build with him. These first three stages do not demonstrate the ministry's effectiveness because this is the shaping period; God works in the leader, not through the leader.²²⁰

Phase IV of the development process is the "Life Maturing" stage, where the leader knows his spiritual gift and uses it to fulfill God's will. He understands his role in ministry and can push forward in excellence. His understanding of God also grows, and his spiritual foundation is grounded. He has a more intimate relationship with God that builds on his

²¹⁸ Robert J. Clinton, *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 36-37.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

devotion, faith, and knowledge. Just like the pinnacle level of leadership, it is rare for someone to reach the fifth phase, “convergence.” The leader uses the best of his gifts and only operates in areas that maximize them. Clinton argues that leaders often do not reach convergence because their lack of personal development may hinder them, or such a leader may serve in a ministry that does not allow him to reach his potential.²²¹ Each of these phases represents areas of development that God uses in conjunction with mentoring from strong church leaders.

Administrative Functions

Gary McIntosh has discussed a common problem within the context of the black church. As churches grow larger, McIntosh argues that their organizational structure needs to change to meet the congregation's needs. He states, “if a church is to grow, the pastor must begin delegating ministry to other leaders in the church.”²²² However, because of the nature of the church’s birth from slavery, most pastors of black churches retain leadership and create stagnation in the church. This form of leadership also creates a co-dependency for the congregation. Many black churches view the pastor as a patriarchal figure responsible for the worship services, marriages, and funerals, and who is also a counselor, healer, and the prophetic voice of God.

The black church must evaluate its organizational structure and determine if it is sufficient for the congregational size. McIntosh recommends organizational changes when churches reach certain growth milestones. For every 150 people in the church, the ministry should have another minister and two additional staff members. The church must also mobilize laypersons and expand ministries to empower the leadership. The church should hire an

²²¹ Ibid., 38-39.

²²² McIntosh, *Taking Your Church to the Next Level*, 141-142.

executive pastor with an administrative gift when the church reaches 500 congregants. If the membership outgrows the facilities, the church should start a second service (and perhaps even a third service) before considering a building program. The team holds the leaders accountable for the ministry's goals by simplifying the organizational structure.²²³

The church must have solid administrative functions to process the back office and operate the organizational structure proficiently. If a church is outdated and works with a chaotic office, it will not accomplish its goals. The Bible lists administration as one of the spiritual gifts in Paul's letter to the Corinthian church: "And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues."²²⁴ Church administration is necessary because it also reveals how the church organizes the church's leadership structure. For example, some churches have a hierarchal system similar to corporate America, where the pastor serves as the "CEO," and other ministers and deacons are management. Other churches use a council model, where every member serves on a board and has an equal vote. Powers has noted the use of program leaders who operate on a central council, while the pastor and ministers act as advisors.

Ministry Programs

Every church has ministries that allow the congregants to participate in the church, create opportunities to grow and develop as Christians, and engage one another to establish relationships. For this study, ministries are teams of volunteers that work together for a common goal. The ministry could be as simple as a hospitality ministry that greets visitors as they enter the church or as complex as the music ministry with multiple choirs and musicians. Teams are

²²³ Ibid., 140-145.

²²⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:28.

collaborative efforts that include everyone involved, and the team must deal with each person's different personalities.

Ministries help the church reach the short-term goals of the mission and the long-term objectives of the vision. They also facilitate relationships among the congregants and allow for opportunities for spiritual growth. In his *Church Administration Handbook*, Bruce Powers notes that most protestant churches in American have six primary ministries.²²⁵ “Bible Teaching” is the foundation teachers use to teach the Bible and engage in biblical studies with the church members. It also teaches evangelism and orients new members, so they assimilate into the church’s body. “Discipleship Training” is often overlooked in the church, but it helps build spiritual growth among the congregants. Discipleship training equips leaders to perform the church's work, and it teaches the membership to develop spiritual disciplines. The “Music Ministry” sets the tone for worship, as it engages the church through singing and musical instruments. The music ministry also teaches music education and provides music for other ministry needs.²²⁶

The “Brotherhood Ministry” is a mission ministry that provides outreach to the community and biblical training for the church's men. The ministry also engages in personal ministry and social activities to develop relationships among godly men. The “Women’s Mission” also engages the community; however, the church’s women lead this ministry. The women’s mission most often engages young ladies or other disenfranchised women and children in the community. Both ministries often promote fundraising efforts to fund their community projects. Finally, the “Pastoral Ministries” include the senior pastor and the church’s ministers.

²²⁵ Bruce Powers, “Church Organization,” in *Church Administration Handbook*, edited by Bruce Powers, 21-55 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 22.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

Together, they are responsible for teaching biblically-based classes and preaching during Sunday morning worship services. The pastoral staff may also engage in spiritual counseling and perform weddings and funerals.²²⁷

Team Building

Robert Dale has argued that there are four steps in a successful team-building process. First, the team shares each teammate's personal history, as this connects each person's personality. The second step is the affirmation process, where the teammates recognize each other's skills and abilities, allowing the team to function at their highest capacity. Third, the team must collaborate to set goals for the ministry. Just as the church implements the vision, the ministry must develop goals aligned with the church's plans. The final step is a celebration; the team rejoices over its successes and shares feedback to improve.²²⁸

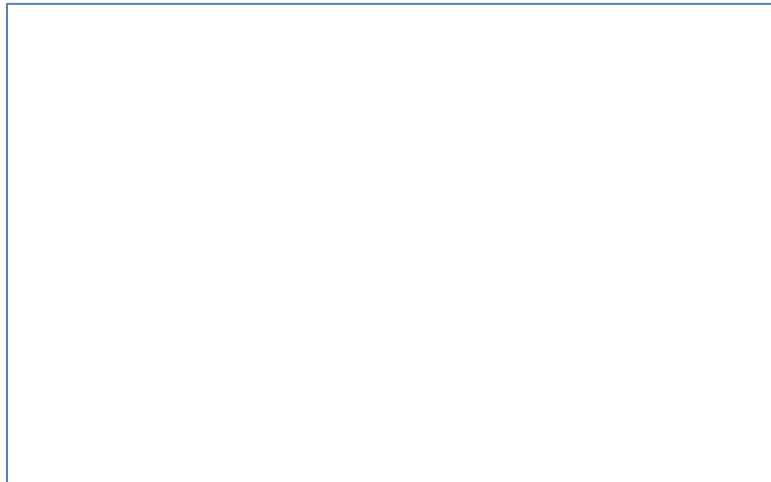


Figure 3

Just as the strategy team evaluates leaders, it must also review the ministries' effectiveness to determine if they should continue or dissolve. The strategy team should conduct

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Robert D. Dale, "Working With People," in *Church Administration Handbook*, edited by Bruce P. Powers, 57-69 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 61-62.

interviews with the team leaders as well as some of the teammates. According to Robert Dale, the church should use five critical elements to evaluate its ministry programs. First, the ministry must measure the performance of the ministry against the purpose of its vision. This measurement determines whether the ministry's goals were successful during the evaluating period. The measurement must ask some of the following questions below paragraph to determine how effective the ministry is. The assessment should also include two forms of measurable data to quantify the results of the evaluation. The information must be objective and provide raw data, such as statistics or attendance sheets, and subjective data, such as surveys and interviews. The evaluation should include a broad range of church members with different demographics and interests to reach a significant sample population. Additionally, planners must employ many people in gathering evaluations to ensure that enough people can capture the necessary information. Finally, Dale has argued that evaluation should be continuous and ongoing; the ministry should conduct assessments at least twice a year.²²⁹

Questions for such a survey include the following: Name some of the successful events or activities performed by the ministry. Did you receive feedback from participants or workers, and if so, what were the results? If not, what prevented you from acquiring it? What were some of the challenges you encountered at the events or during the activities? What were the learning points of the ministry from either the successes or failures? Were you able to keep teammates engaged in the ministry and its activities? Were you able to keep the events or activities fresh so that participants were not bored? What changes would you make to the ministry? What resources do you need so that it can operate in excellence? Are volunteers attracted to your ministry? What

²²⁹ Robert D. Dale, "Managing Christian Churches and Not-For-Profit Organizations," in *Church Administration Handbook*, edited by Bruce Powers, 3-19 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 11-12.

methods do you use to attract volunteers to your ministry? What do you do to keep volunteers engaged with challenging projects?

After reviewing the questions, the strategy team will have a much clearer picture of the ministry and its team's efficiency. Like the church, the ministry also has a life-cycle that can end in death if there is no mission to fulfill. Ministries should always have a mission as opposed to a vision, like the church. If the ministry does not develop a compelling mission, team members can become frustrated, thus reducing support. Many team members are volunteers, and if the leader is still at level one, the ministry can easily dissolve.

Evangelism

Evangelism is the lifeblood of the church because of the Great Commission that Jesus gave His disciples in Matthew 28:19: “go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” This command is the church's motivation to spread the Lord's work, and without it, the church cannot grow. The black church's previous evangelistic methods included going door-to-door in the neighborhood, street preaching, and flyers. However, with technological advances, these methods are now archaic and do not have the same impact. Millennials and Gen-Z are less personal, are driven by social media, and communicate through text messages. The church must re-evaluate the way it evangelizes and changes the motives behind its strategy. Churches developed programs of evangelism to increase membership rather than reach souls. The purpose is evident because, usually, evangelism programs target current Christians rather than non-believers. Many church members are not new Christians but rather displaced ones from other churches.²³⁰

²³⁰ Keller, *Center Church*, 253.

The church must become missional in its attempts to reach the world with the Gospel. A missional church is evangelistic because it is the “work of God’s Spirit” to reconcile man and God.²³¹ Missional work is also intentional because the Christian should expect it to occur at any moment, making him alert to any opportunity to share the Gospel. Missional work is also cultural because the believer must understand the community he aims to reach. The Apostle wrote about the challenge of understanding the people he shared the Gospel with by “becoming all things to all people.”²³²

A missional church should be responsive to the will of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. The church should not design programs to attract people to the church's events as a form of evangelism. In fact, the church should redefine its missions to reflect the Gospel and examine how evangelism within its ministry draws individuals to God.²³³ One study has demonstrated that contemporary Christian music (CCM) plays a role in evangelizing young people by using the genre of music that appeals to them. In the black community, rap music is the dominant genre among the younger generation, but many older members view it as the devil’s music. However, the popularity of Gospel rappers such as Lecrae, KB, and NF has increased in secular venues, creating opportunities to spread the Gospel.

There are three perspectives on how the church views CCM. The separational view perceives it as a tool for ministry to reach secular audiences and non-Christians. The separationalists interpret the message from the evangelistic viewpoint and welcome the chance to use the music accordingly. The integrational perspective views CCM as “a wholesome

²³¹ Ibid., 254.

²³² 1 Corinthians 9:23.

²³³ Ibid., 257-258.

alternative to pop music.” Even if the lyrics do not mention Jesus, integrationalists believe CCM reaches the audience based on the “universal appeal of its lyrics.” Therefore, the music does not need to mention Him by name because the listener will understand the Christian meaning organically. The final perspective comes from the transformationalists, who view CCM as an art form that can create freedom and bring salvation through the lyrics' transformative message.²³⁴ When the church focuses on the audience's different viewpoints, it can create a missional philosophy for evangelism using effective, unconventional methods that target non-believers.

Church planting is another form of evangelism; however, it is absent from the black church because it requires the pastor and leaders to give up some control to release resources and people to another church. However, launching a new church as a catalyst for evangelism can create momentum and excitement within the ministry. The momentum pushes leaders to plan strategically for the new plant. It also generates activity among the congregation, for example, among volunteers for the mother church and the new church plant. The shared resources of leadership and supplies do not place a drain on the new plant; there may be a temporary drain on the mother church's resources, but once the new church plant becomes financially viable, the mother church can replenish the funds and members. The church must view the new church plant as an investment that will yield a return to the kingdom of God.

Many black churches are not willing to engage in church planting, and thus there is a lack of viable church planters in the African-American community. A church planter must be a visionary leader who is passionate about evangelism and willing to sacrifice his comfort. The church planter Tom Bracket has told Susan Brown Snook that “a planter must also be

²³⁴ Sandra L. Barnes, "Religion and Rap Music: An Analysis of Black Church Usage," *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 49, no. 3 (March 2008): 322-323.

enthusiastic about the gospel and able to articulate ‘a compelling understanding of the gospel in local language and gather people around a compelling vision.’”²³⁵ A church planter is an evangelist who is not afraid to engage in the difficult work of planting a church and leading the team to accomplish ministry goals. The church planting process is similar to the strategic planning team, as it concerns creating the new church's mission and vision. The planting team must also spend significant time praying to stay in God’s will and listening for divine instructions.

Discipleship

The best way to strengthen the church is by mentoring through discipleship. Many black churches do not have an active discipleship program but may hold events or seminars once or twice a year. Leaders should weave discipleship into the church's DNA, resulting in a steady supply of leaders to direct ministries. A strong discipleship program that focuses on personal ministry and spiritual disciplines creates a crucial synergy for the church to grow spiritually. An effective plan focuses on several mind-shifts that transform church members.

For the discipleship program, the church must shift from building the ministries and thinking about empowering the people. Annually, many churches examine the ministries’ effectiveness by reviewing their budget and participation for the year. However, few churches study the congregations’ spiritual growth. Because the focus is on the infrastructure rather than the people, evangelism becomes another program or ministry. The church can incorporate evangelism training to teach the congregation how to share its faith. The program can also focus on biblical principles to build the members’ confidence, eliminating the fear of sharing the

²³⁵ Susan B. Snook, "Reaching New People through Church Planting," *Anglican Theological Review*, (2010): 114.

Gospel.²³⁶

The purpose of discipleship should be to grow people and train new workers. Sometimes, the church exploits volunteers for their labor and financial resources, leading to frustration and burnout. Volunteer workers are sometimes placed in a position without training and given instructions to accomplish an assignment, but they have no training for the task. Workers should have training that explains the purpose of the task, the steps to succeed, and the biblical principle surrounding it. Linking each assignment's foundation to a biblical principle can initiate spiritual growth and create value in the worker. Marshall and Payne have argued that the church should consider each volunteer a "gift for the ministry." The approach to building the ministry should not consider how to fill the gaps when there is a vacancy but rather how an individual's gifts fit into the church. When the church understands people's spiritual gifts, they can train accordingly and prepare them for future ministry.²³⁷

Another way to spark discipleship in the church is through the application of community groups. Community groups are small groups of members that meet consistently for biblical study, community engagement, and group mentorship. Brad House has identified several methods of reaching people with the gospel: preaching to a congregation, teaching to a Bible study group, and one-on-one mentoring. He has stated that mentorship and Bible study classes are useful methods to disciple but are insufficient. Preaching on Sunday should attract people to the church to hear the Gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ and connect the congregation via small groups.²³⁸ The combination of the Sunday morning service and the community groups

²³⁶ Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine* (Sydney: Matthias Media, 2009), 17-19.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 18-21.

²³⁸ Brad House, *Community: Taking Your Small Group Off Life Support* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 52-54.

creates a transformational process and discipleship for the group as the people minister together.



Figure 4

Chapter Five: Refilling the Oil: Case Study

Profile of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church

The dynamics behind the black church's roles shifted in the community because people lost faith in its mission. With the increase in technology and information, the Gospel's power to attract diminished, and society became more materialistic. Eddie Glaude Jr. has attributed the "death of the black church" to its complicated nature, the increased diversity of the black community, and the "routinization of black prophetic witness."²³⁹ The following is a case study for Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, a predominantly African American church. The church is a pillar in Plano, Texas, and its past includes great victories and numbing defeats. The author examines Shiloh's history, structure, life-cycle, and dialectical opposites to paint a portrait of the congregation to recommend a strategy to strengthen the church.

The History of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church

Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church is the oldest predominantly Baptist church in Plano, Texas. Shiloh resides and serves in the Douglass Community, the oldest minority community located within Plano. A coalition of families led by Rev. Sutton E. Griggs, Rev. K. Keen, and Rev. John Coleman were the organizers of the Mount Zion Colored Baptist Church in November 1884. Rev. Coleman was the church's first pastor and developed a vision that inspired the community's families. Under his leadership, the church constructed its first building in 1908 on land donated to the church by Joseph Clapper, a member of the congregation. The same year, the church members voted to rename the church Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church.

After Rev. Coleman's tenure, six pastors led the congregation within a 10-year period:

²³⁹ Glaude, "The Black Church is Dead," 2010.

Rev. G. Hartman, Rev. G.B. Williams, Rev. E. Williams, Rev. L. Adair, Rev. M. Winston, and Rev. A.L. Russell. In 1918, the congregation constructed a new church building during the tenure of Pastor A.L. Russell. Rev. M. Menorgan served as the next pastor, and the church experienced substantial attendance growth. Shiloh earned a reputation for supporting the Douglass community and emphasizing spiritual growth and education. Pastor Menorgan retired in 1922, and the church elected Rev. L.H. Harper as the new pastor.

In 1952, the church approved plans to renovate the building to accommodate more church growth. The builders completed the renovations in 1964, and the church became a mainstay in the area. Pastor Harper was a strong leader with a fiery voice who encouraged the church members to serve God wholeheartedly. He retired in 1966 and turned the church over to the leadership of Rev. C. S. Trimble. Pastor Trimble led the church and served as Second Vice-Moderator of the Galilee Griggs Association for 15 years. He also served as First Vice-Moderator for five years and Moderator from 1993 to 1994 until he passed away.

Pastor Trimble held the church together by strong teaching; however, his other leadership duties with the association and his failing health allowed the deacons to assume more power within the church. Pastor Joshua opened three schools within the McKinney school district and was an associate minister who faithfully served Pastor Trimble. As Trimble felt his body grow weaker, he asked Joshua to “take care of the church until he regained his strength, and could return to the ministry.” However, Pastor Trimble never returned, and the deacons agreed to retain Pastor Joshua on an interim basis.²⁴⁰

After his death, the church called Rev. Joshua to lead the congregation in September 1995. Pastor Joshua was a visionary leader who directed the church to build a new worship

²⁴⁰ Pastor Isiah Joshua, Jr., “Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church,” interview by Mancil Carroll, Nov. 2019.

center across the street from the old church building. The church raised funds to start the project and broke ground in 1999. In June 2001, the church held its first service in the new worship center. Pastor Joshua then led the church to pay the promissory note early so the church would be debt-free. The congregation paid the note in 2011, and the church strengthened its financial resources.²⁴¹

Shiloh continued to reach out to the community and provide resources to those in need during Pastor Joshua's tenure. The church established a food pantry for the hungry and partnered with the Douglass Community Center to provide clothes and school supplies to impoverished children. Pastor Joshua, a former educator, emphasized the importance of the church's youth completing a college education and challenged every ministry in the church to raise scholarship funds for each year's college seniors. The church also launched a prison ministry and ministered to incarcerated men. The church's vision under Pastor Joshua was "Shiloh...where Community Becomes Family," and its actions exhibited this mission.

Successes and Challenges in the Life-cycle

As explained earlier, every church goes through a life-cycle, and Shiloh is no exception. After reviewing the history, it is clear that Shiloh experienced several restarts in its past, usually after the church's construction or remodeling. The most recent rebirth of the church occurred after Pastor Joshua's selection as the new leader. Based on the life-cycle chart, the church was in the "empty nest" stage when he started as pastor. The church had several active ministries with declining participation and few volunteers. Also, several critical families left, and the church had a rigid infrastructure led by an oligarchy of families.²⁴²

²⁴¹ "Our History," Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, accessed Nov 6, 2020, <https://www.smbcplano.org/our-history>.

²⁴² Joshua, "Shiloh," 2019.

Pastor Joshua took on the role of reorganizer, a leader who could work with the current members and attract new members to the congregation. He started with small successes that built confidence with the church's deacons and leaders. He also had the advantage of familiarity because he was a member of the church and, early on, developed trust among the congregation.²⁴³ To reignite the church, the pastor must introduce a new vision to excite the congregation, attract new members, and create momentum. However, for Shiloh, the vision always accompanied a building project. Pastor Joshua announced a project to purchase the land across the street from the church building and construct a large, multi-million dollar worship center.

The undertaking generated excitement and apprehension that a small congregation of 200 members could accomplish the task. However, announcing the project and revealing the church's plans attracted other church members. When the construction workers erected the first beams, the church swelled to 500 members. Joshua further created momentum by encouraging the church members to write their favorite scripture on the wood frame. The church covered the entire skeleton with Scripture, and even the children participated.²⁴⁴ Joshua's actions reignited the church and pushed the life-cycle back to the adolescence stage. It did not revert to the maturity stage because the leaders needed to revise the church's infrastructure to accommodate the growth.

As the excitement over the building started to decline, and the members settled into "church routine," Joshua needed to spark the flame with a new vision. In 2006, he approached the deacons and leaders with a proposition to make the church debt-free. He announced that "he

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

had a dream, and the Lord spoke to him and said the church building would be completely paid off in five years.” The deacons informed him that it was impossible because the current monthly payment was around \$35,000 per month. Joshua told them, “If God says we can do it, I believe Him.”²⁴⁵ Joshua brought the new vision before the congregation and reignited the excitement within them. Instead of paying off the church in five years, they paid the mortgage in four and a half years.²⁴⁶

Shiloh quickly moved into the maturity stage as the church's structure changed to accommodate the ministry's cash flow. Solid financial practices and transparency generated trust among the members, and the trustees kept impeccable records. The church's leadership structure started with the senior pastor and assistant to the pastor. A deacon led each ministry except the music ministry and Sunday school. The Minister of Music led the choirs, musicians, and praise dancers, and a superintendent directed the Sunday school department. The pastor appointed the church trustees, and the church confirmed the appointment allowing them to handle the finances, church assets, and legal matters.

Review of Systems and Structure

The following information came from several sources, including questions from the pastor, the deacons, ministers, church leaders, and personal observation.²⁴⁷ The current campus includes the main worship center, the chapel/youth building, and a small annex. The church, still

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ At the time of this research, the COVID-19 pandemic spread which caused governmental agencies to shut down most places of public gatherings, including churches and worship centers. Because of the pandemic, the author could not proceed with the evaluations and team formation, instead relied on the interviews with key members of the church. The leadership agreed to begin the process after the pandemic ended. However, because of COVID, significant changes to various aspects of the church occurred such as evangelism due to the need for technology.

located in the Douglas Community, owns the land surrounding the church, a 12-passenger church van, and two 15-passenger church buses. The church currently has no debt and owns all of the buildings on the property, and as a result of the proper management of the funds, the savings account has substantial resources.

Although the church's financial health is excellent, the church has experienced a significant membership decline in the last few years. When asked about membership numbers, the deacons explained that, although they maintain the numbers of new people that join the church, they do not keep track of the attrition of those who leave the church. The following chart provides a visual assessment of the current church membership for the last five years.

Year	Adults	Children	Total
2015	1,800	200	2,000
2016	1,500	150	1,650
2017	1,250	150	1,400
2018	1,000	75	1,075
2019	850	40	890

There is speculation about the factors contributing to the decline in church membership. First, the congregation remains traditionally and inwardly focused on maintaining the ministry. The focus of the church is ensuring that all ministries function. Second, the older leaders and members do not allow change, stifling youthful growth within the ministry. Third, the church does not have a current vision or mission because the original concept focused on building the church. Once the building project was complete and paid for, there were “no more worlds to conquer;” thus, leadership never implemented a new vision to build momentum and create new ideas. Finally, a new, more progressive church launched ten years ago within the Plano area. A

substantial number of members, especially younger members or families with smaller children, left to attend this church.

Church Leadership

Senior Pastor

Isiah Joshua is the Senior Pastor and the leader of the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. He became the pastor in 1995 and is instrumental in its overall direction. Pastor Joshua, described as a man “that loves his members,” is known to assist those in need “from his pocket.” Pastor Joshua has a reputation for having the heart of all of the church members, and even when others wrong or disrespect him, he still cares for and demonstrates love for them.

Ministerial Staff

The ministerial staff consists of paid, and volunteer lay ministers. The paid staff includes the Assistant Pastor, the Youth Pastor, the Outreach Pastor, the Minister of Music, and the Pastor of Christian Education. Also, eight volunteer lay-ministers serve in various capacities as needed. The paid staff are in multiple ministries within the church. However, they have a limited influence over the ministries, which stifles the ministry's spiritual development and its leaders.

Deacon Board

The deacon’s ministry includes 22 deacons led by the chairman of the deacon board. A deacon is assigned to provide leadership and serve as the figurehead for the ministries. Deacons also serve as trustees of the church’s assets and finances. Unlike some churches, where the deacons and the pastor have a volatile relationship, Shiloh’s deacons work in strong partnership with Pastor Joshua.

Church Structure

The organizational structure of the church is not strategic and does not allow for

accountability in some areas. Some ministries are independent of the primary organizational structure to enable older leaders to remain autonomous in their decision making. This structure appears to allow the older members to stay in positions of power so that they don't "rock the boat." For example, the church has a youth pastor, but he does not report to Christian Education, as this position does in other churches.

- The youth pastor reports directly to the senior pastor. The youth pastor teaches only middle school and teenagers on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays.
- The children's director is in charge of younger children but does not report to the youth pastor; she reports to the Senior Pastor.
- Neither of these leaders is involved in Sunday school education for the children. The teachers for these classes report to the Sunday school superintendent, who reports to Christian Education.
- Neither leader is involved in AWANA ministries (an educational ministry for children ages 3 to 18); they report to the AWANA commanders, who report to Christian Education.
- Neither youth ministry leader is involved in Vacation Bible School (VBS); two VBS leaders report to the Senior Pastor.

The lack of structure in the children and youth ministries is why many families left Shiloh to attend other churches.

Church Ministries

Each ministry at Shiloh has a program to enhance the life and spiritual development of the church body. Each ministry has elections every two years to determine the leadership team for the next two years. The elections allow others to become leaders within the ministry, but it

does not allow for healthy leadership development. Instead, it creates the possibility of cliques who choose leaders for selfish desires.

Performing Arts

The Performing Arts ministry is under the leadership of the Minister of Music. The ministry includes all of the choirs, including the Men of Praise Choir, the Women of Purpose Choir, the Praise and Worship Team, the Children and Youth Choirs, and the Combined Choir. It also includes the Praise Dance Team, the Mime Ministry, the Steppers for Christ Step Team, and the Unseen Hands Puppet Ministry.

Christian Education

The Pastor of Christian Education is the facilitator for all of the Educational ministries at the church. The Christian Education department includes the Sunday School department, AWANA ministries, VBS, the Singles Ministry, the Young Adult Ministry, and the Shiloh Bible Institute.

Youth Ministries

The Youth Ministries include the Children's Church and the Youth Church and are under the Youth Pastor and his staff's direction. The Children's and Youth Churches have worship services on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays. The Youth Ministry has an additional Bible study course on the first and second Mondays of each month. The ministry also sponsors volunteer opportunities, runs a summer Bible camp, and takes the youth on biennial mission trips.

Hospitality Ministries

The Hospitality Ministry does not have an overall leader who directs the ministry groups in this category. It includes the following ministries: the Shiloh Hands Of Unity Team (SHOUT), the Ushers, Youth Ushers, Cup Ministry, Health and Wellness Ministry, and the Office Team.

The SHOUT includes the greeters and those who serve at the doors and information desk. Each ministry has a set of ministry leaders that provides direction to the group.

Technical Ministries

The technical ministries are responsible for the audio-visual ministry, the church website, and communication. One of the deacons is accountable for this group of ministries.

Grounds and Bus Ministry

The church deacons are responsible for all areas of the campus and grounds. The deacons are responsible for the maintenance, landscaping, and upgrades to the building. They are also responsible for maintaining transportation and ensuring that members have rides to church and events as needed.

Congregation

The congregation is an older one, with an average age of approximately 60 years. Most of the ministers and deacons are older than 65, and many of the church leaders are between 50 and 60 years old. Many of the older members can remember the former pastor 25 years ago, and when the church's main building was "across the street" in the chapel. These members are involved in leadership but not the actual work of the church.

Survey Results

The author of this paper distributed a survey via social media platforms to determine the church's character and dialectical opposites compared to other ministries. The study, located at www.tinyurl.com/refilltheoil, contained 20 questions about the members' perceptions of black churches. The survey, limited to African American church members, seeks to understand their opinions about the church's ministries. Eighty percent of the respondents attended Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, with the other 20 percent from various churches in the Dallas

metroplex and Chicago.

Church Membership

Fifty percent of the respondents had attended their church for three to five years, and 30 percent had attended for more than five years. The remaining 20 percent were members of their churches for fewer than three years. Forty percent were either ministers, deacons, or elders, while 55 percent were leaders in a church ministry. Church members who had attended longer than five years tended to serve in a church leadership position of minister, deacon, or elder. The results indicate a correlation between longevity and leadership within the church, which points to the ministry's life-cycle maturity level.²⁴⁸

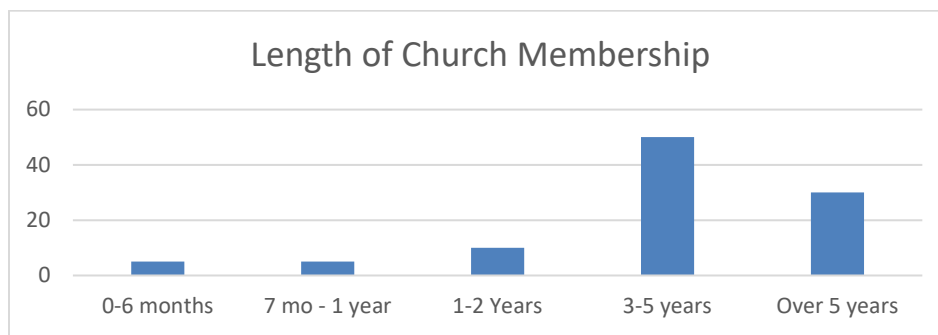


Figure 5

Mission and Vision

A vision is essential for the church because it provides long-term direction and gives the congregation an idea of its purpose. Malphurs has defined a vision as “a clear, challenging picture of the future of the ministry, as you believe that it can and must be.”²⁴⁹ A visionary leader always communicates a vision that leads the people in the right direction. As explained previously, Shiloh's building projects fueled the church's vision; however, once these were

²⁴⁸ Mancil Carroll, "Refill the Oil Survey." Refill the Oil. Accessed Nov 7, 2020, www.tinyurl.com/Refilltheoil.

²⁴⁹ (Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 151.

complete, the dream ended, and the people moved into stagnation. The survey reveals that 70% of the respondents did not know or understand their church's vision. Of this population, 90% attend Shiloh. The results indicate that the people of Shiloh do not connect with the purpose of the church's existence.

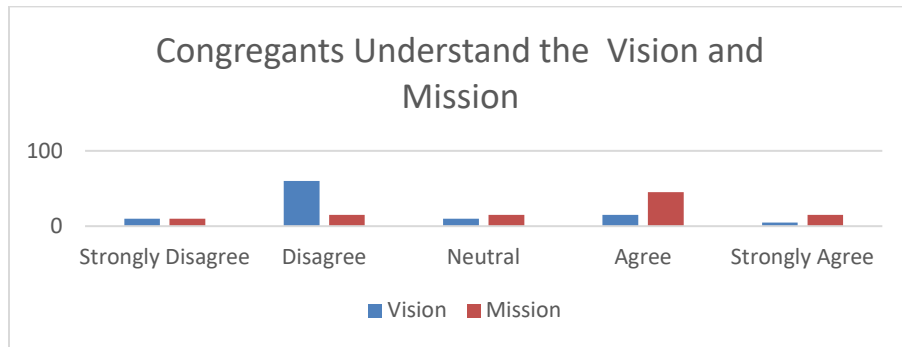


Figure 6

In contrast, a mission is a short-term goal for a specific assignment relevant to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). Often, missions are confused with the vision of the church. Malphurs has defined the mission as “a broad, brief, biblical statement of what the ministry is supposed to be doing.”²⁵⁰ The survey reveals that 60 percent of those who took the survey understood the mission because leaders effectively communicated it to the church.²⁵¹

Discipleship

The next series of questions signify how crucial discipleship is to the church's ministry. Older churches do not view discipleship as an organic part of the ministry but rather as a program. When asked about discipleship, several respondents thought this meant ministry groups. After it was defined as a program to mentor Christians in the faith personally, the results changed. The survey demonstrates that Shiloh does not have an active program for disciples.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.,126.

²⁵¹ Carroll, “Refill the Oil,” 2020.

Sixty-five percent of the respondents indicated that their church did not have an active discipleship program. Twenty percent believed their church’s ministry developed disciples, and 25% believed that small groups disciplined the congregants or that the church held a periodic event.²⁵²

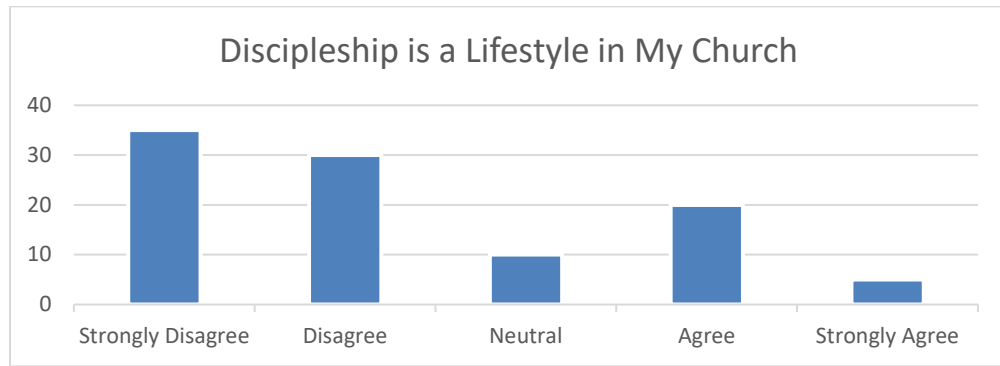


Figure 7

Leadership

Effective leadership is essential in any organization, and this is especially true for churches and their internal ministries. Respondents from Shiloh demonstrated great trust in its leaders and their ability to function in the church. They strongly agreed or agreed that the more effective leadership traits included transparency in leadership (90%), strong financial decisions (85%), servant leadership (85%), and leading by example (70%). The weakest traits were a concern for the future (60%), trust in the membership to serve (45%), and communicating the vision (15%).²⁵³

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

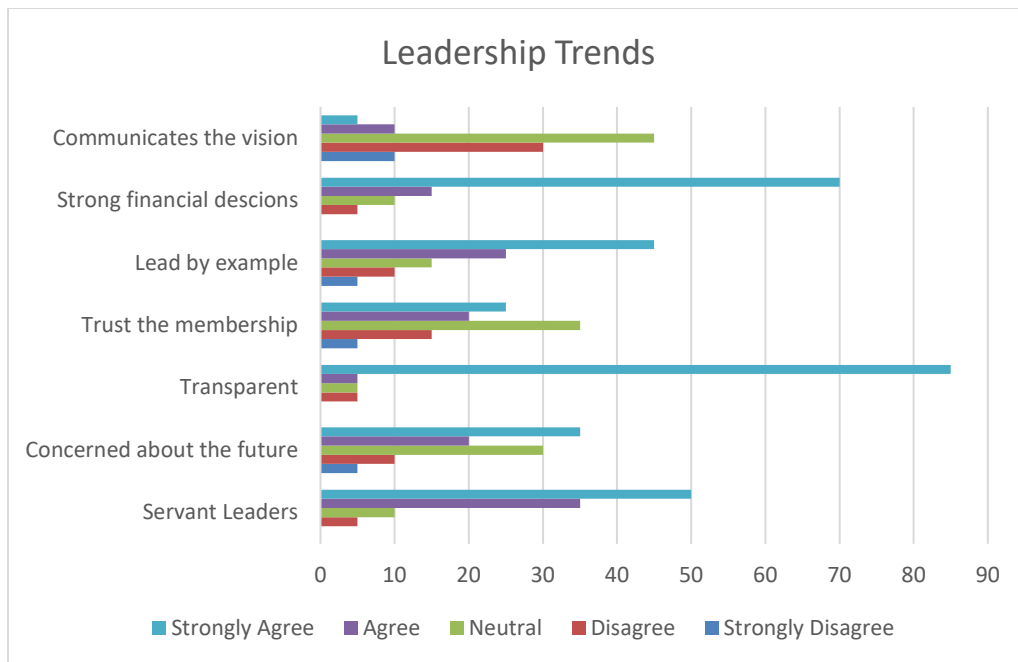


Figure 8

Evangelism

Evangelism is defined as the efforts and methods to reach the local, regional, and global community for Christ. The survey asked questions about evangelism and church planting opportunities to discover church members' actions in the process. Half of the respondents indicated that their church evangelizes by going door-to-door in the community, and 15 percent of respondents either performed servant evangelism or participated in church planting. Most churches that engage in church planting efforts were progressive rather than traditional churches. Although the respondents from traditional churches have not been involved in church planting, there was a little apprehension about doing so in the future. Congregants from Shiloh also confirmed a small amount of social activism or community outreach.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

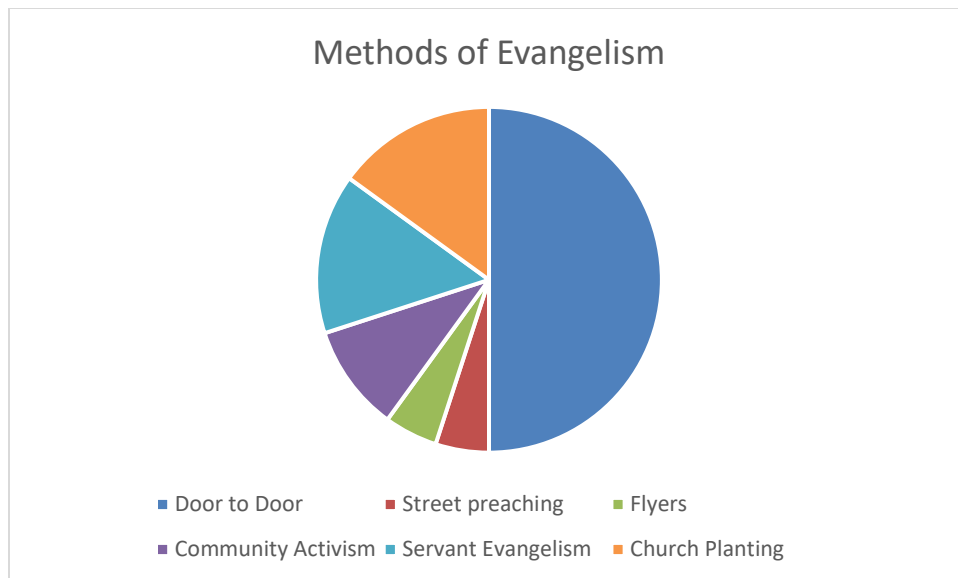


Figure 9

Final Survey Results

Based on the results and focusing on Shiloh members' answers, the church is a traditional Baptist church with strong leadership, but it lacks a functioning vision. Shiloh has various programs and ministries, but based on some of the write-in opinions, it also has strained relationships, repetitive programs and events, and few volunteers to support the ministries. The church engages in archaic forms of evangelism and does not participate in community involvement unless it benefits the church. Some expressed that they feel church leadership does not hear their voice. Therefore, their opinion does not matter because “leadership will just do what it wants.” However, the church’s strong approval of its leaders, the weak aspects of the ministry, and lack of vision are indicators that Shiloh is in the empty nest life-cycle.

Dialectical Opposites

Every church has a different personality and style because of its experiences and traditions. As described above, the black church has different historical factors that create unique worship styles, leadership trends, and the experiences of churches of different ethnicities. The

racist climate identified Shiloh as a “colored” church upon its inception. However, unlike other Southern black Baptist churches, Shiloh did not engage in civil rights activism or other social services. Shiloh was more concerned with the members of its congregation and the families in the community. Eventually, many of the Douglass community's black families moved out, and more Hispanic families took up residence. This population shift caused Shiloh to involve itself less in the community, as it did not reflect the church's culture. Most members who attend Shiloh are middle-class African American families with a median income of \$80,000. Over 60% of the church members have a college degree and work in either professional or educational fields. Because Pastor Joshua is a former educator, he tends to attract other educators to the church; 15% of the congregation are teachers, principals, assistant principals, or counselors.²⁵⁵ Shiloh's character and traditions demonstrate its dialectical opposites, outlined below, and help paint a complete portrait of the church.

Priestly and Prophetic Functions

- Priestly functions: focused on building the church and supporting the congregation through spiritual growth.
- Prophetic: focused on supporting the community through activism and fighting injustice.



Shiloh does not focus on the community but instead on building the church and supporting its church members. The church’s activities center around church growth, even with events that invite the community to participate. Certain activities, such as the food pantry, provide food and clothing to the community but are often used as an opportunity to invite people

²⁵⁵ Joshua, “Shiloh,” 2019.

to the church.

Other-Worldly and Worldly

- Other-worldly: “pie-in-the-sky” mindset that focuses on heavenly rewards. The church does not involve itself in politics or social activism.
- Worldly: focuses on rewards now through social equality and justice. The church is active in politics and social action.



Shiloh has an other-worldly mindset that points to the promises of God and rewards in heaven; however, it also focuses on political activism. Because most of the adult members of Shiloh are professionals with a college education, many belong to the black fraternities and sororities known as the Divine Nine. These fraternities are highly active in political and social action in the fight for equality in society, which drives some of the church's social initiatives.

Universalism and Particularism

- Universalism: since we are all children of God, the church should integrate.
- Particularism: since racism still exists, the church should remain segregated.



Shiloh is predominantly African American; however, Anglo and Hispanic families also attend the church. At least 10% of the church includes other races, and the church attempts to engage them.²⁵⁶ The church wishes to integrate, but the country's underlying history of racism makes it challenging to build trust. However, Shiloh is the largest church in the area, so many other races attend the church at least once.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

Communal and Privatistic

- Communal focus: emphasizes a familial atmosphere in the church and attempts to build trust in the community.
- Privatistic: emphasizes a more corporate atmosphere and focuses on the church's function rather than the community's relationship.



Shiloh has a highly communal dialectic; it builds a family atmosphere and creates a loving environment. Pastor Joshua sets the tone by providing an example and making himself available to family members. It is unusual for a pastor of a church the size of Shiloh to give his cell phone number to every member and invite them to call.²⁵⁷ Because the church has a stronger communal dialectic, it has many informal processes to create intimacy.

Charismatic and Bureaucratic

- Charismatic: relies on the strength of the pastor’s charisma.
- Bureaucratic: relies on the strength of the church’s administrative functions.



Pastor Joshua is a highly charismatic leader who regularly provides direction to the church for the current mission. However, he also empowers the leaders around him and gladly shares authority. The church has an efficient administrative process through its trustees and finance committee. However, the leadership needs to overcome some organizational shortcomings to allow the church to operate at its highest level.

Resistance and Accommodation

- Resistance: affirms the black church’s embrace of black culture and traditions.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

- Accommodation: accepts white culture, symbols, and norms.



Shiloh has an equal mixture of black and white culture that creates the traditions in the church. The ministry does not have white Christian symbols but does include some worship styles from white culture. Shiloh has also eliminated some black church traditions, such as covering the communion table and having a watch night service on New Year’s Eve, as these are supposedly rituals from slavery.²⁵⁸

Results of the Dialectical Analysis

Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church has a dialectic profile that defines the ministry as a haven for the congregation members. The priestly profile of Shiloh indicates that it cares for church members more often than the community surrounding the church and that it is less likely to become involved with politics. The communal dialectic also confirms the preference for church members because of the familial atmosphere the congregation and pastor create. However, the church involves itself with social action because of the number of members connected to organizations focused on activism. The church's other-worldly mindset focuses on rewards in heaven because of its spiritual beliefs. Shiloh does not resist integration, but its dialectic towards particularism is evidence of its mistrust of other races. The church relies on its pastor's charisma to provide direction but utilizes the church bureaucracy efficiently. Finally, the church is willing to embrace some of the mores of white culture and, at the same time, retain black traditions that tend to align different races rather than separate them.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

Case Evaluation: Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church

Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church is a 136-year-old congregation that has experienced several life-cycles. This study analyzes the evaluations based on the author's observations and interactions, who serves as the Minister of Christian Education, a staff minister position at Shiloh. The case study makes the following assumptions concerning the evaluation:

- The evaluation recommends a leadership team to implement the strategic plan. In the case study, the author did not assemble a leadership team as part of the research. The author conducted the evaluation and research results based on personal observation, interviews, and surveys.
- The author received permission for the case study from the senior pastor and the church's deacons, who have agreed to implement the steps and processes after the study.

Strengths

Pastoral Leadership

Shiloh has a solid base to rebuild the ministry and restart the life-cycle. The church pastor has an excellent reputation for reaching people with empathy and love and making everyone feel that they can overcome obstacles before them. Because Pastor Joshua was a high school principal, he has an innate ability to determine what congregants need to exemplify their best persona. He can draw out people's capabilities, even when they cannot see them, and help them use those life skills to improve their lives. Pastor Joshua is a capable leader who inspires others to follow and be their best for the ministry. One area in which he created collaborative synergy is the deacon's ministry. In many churches, conflict exists between the deacons and the pastor, but at Shiloh, the pastor works with the deacons to ensure they can accomplish its overall mission.

Resources and Assets

Shiloh has a solid finance committee and trustee team that handles the church's finances responsibly. The church is debt-free, having paid the multi-million dollar promissory note in 2011. The finance committee has processes to account for generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and create transparency for the congregation and leaders. The savings account has ample cash and is quite liquid. Shiloh's campus includes the following buildings, land, and assets:

- **Worship Center:** the main sanctuary, which seats 1,200 with the balcony and includes four church offices, a fellowship hall with an industrial kitchen, eight classrooms, a state-of-the-art sound system located in the sound booth, and a baptismal area.
- **Chapel:** formerly, the church sanctuary, but currently, the youth church; it includes a kitchen, one classroom, one office, and the sound booth. The sanctuary has an open space area that converts into two additional classrooms.
- **Annex:** the former funeral home converted into classroom space; it includes four classrooms, a large storage room, and a kitchen. The food pantry uses the storage room to house food and clothing.
- **Parking:** the church has a parking lot adjacent to the main sanctuary and next to the chapel and annex. Additionally, the church purchased a building and land across the street from the worship center. The church demolished the building to create more parking. The church also owns a small parcel of land one block from the annex.
- The church owns two 15-passenger church vans and one 12-passenger church bus, and all of the vehicles are debt-free.

Church Membership

Shiloh has a loyal membership, as evidenced by the length of time congregants remain at the church. Loyalty is beneficial because the church can benefit from the older members' wisdom and lean on them for direction. Church members can participate in many ministry opportunities to serve the mission of the church. The church's membership roster boasts over 1,500 members, but the organizational and leadership structure creates a small-church atmosphere. The small-church feel increases the family environment, which allows the church members to work intimately with one another. Further, because so many members are professionals in the secular world, activities and events are performed at a high standard.

Leadership

Shiloh has strong leaders with the ability to provide clear direction and hold ministries accountable. The church has ministry elections every two years to elect new leadership over its various organizations. There are also committee positions selected by the pastor and confirmed by the membership, including the finance team, trustees, and deacons. The pastor and a hiring committee hire new staff members. The hiring committee consists of deacons and trustees, interviews candidates, and makes recommendations to the pastor for his final decision. Each appointed or hired person is accountable to the pastor and deacons through annual reviews. The deacon selected to oversee the ministry holds the ministry leaders responsible.

Weaknesses

Lack of Vision

One of the most deficient areas that perhaps creates the majority of the problems is the lack of a vision and mission. Solomon wrote in the book of Proverbs, "without a vision, the

people perish.”²⁵⁹ Shiloh appears to be declining and possibly entering the early stages of death. In the church life-cycle, a dying church has lost its sense of vision and mission; volunteers are unavailable to assist with the programs, frustration and low morale are evident, and attendance drops. Programs that used to work are no longer useful, and ministries dissolve because of the lack of participation. However, in such cases, leaders are unwilling to make the necessary changes because of the limited control concentrated in a small number of leaders' hands.²⁶⁰

The absence of a strong vision has created problems for Shiloh. In the church's prime, it grew quickly because its vision was to build a much larger worship center. Once the builders completed the worship center, the next vision was to pay the mortgage early. After doing so, though, they did not create a new vision. The church needed a new vision that would provide direction for the future. Without that vision, there was no goal line for the church to strive to cross. Instead, Shiloh relied on missions each year that included short-term goals but no long-term objective.

Co-Dependent Leadership Style

Although Pastor Joshua has a warm relationship with the church members, his personality also provides the potential for toxicity in his leadership. Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel Rima have defined the dark side of several leadership styles, and Pastor Joshua displays the characteristics of the “co-dependent leader.” McIntosh describes this leader as a “person who fails to deal with inappropriate behavior within the church” and lacks a “willingness to take responsibility for others' inappropriate attitudes and actions.” The co-dependent leader attempts to make everyone happy and becomes “overtaken by the urgent needs of others while giving

²⁵⁹ Proverbs 29:18a.

²⁶⁰ McIntosh, *Taking Your Church to the Next Level*, 75-78.

little attention to the overall direction of the church as a whole.”²⁶¹ Just as long-time members are loyal to the church, Pastor Joshua is faithful to those members. Some of them or their parents were responsible for his selection as the church pastor when Pastor Trimble passed away. Therefore, his actions tend to defer more to older members than attending to the church's overall needs.

Unwillingness to Adopt New Ideas

One of Shiloh's more significant problems is its unwillingness to try new ideas to attract or retain younger church members. Because the older church members have led for a long time, they are reluctant to permit more youthful people to lead and help them adapt. Shiloh has lost many young adults to the more progressive church because they feel Shiloh does not hear them.

Unorganized Ministry Structure

The ministry structure at Shiloh creates confusion because it lacks cohesiveness and structure. Deacons are assigned oversight of each ministry and are responsible for supplies and support. The leadership of each ministry provides direction and should connect it to the church's vision. The members of the ministry fulfill the work. The organizational structure does not allow accountability because older members can lead as they choose without answering to anyone.

For example, in most churches, the Christian Education department is responsible for teaching ministries at the church. However, at Shiloh, the youth ministries do not report to the Christian Education department. The youth pastor reports directly to the senior pastor and is responsible for teaching only middle school and teenagers on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays. The children's director is in charge of younger children and reports to the Senior Pastor, not the

²⁶¹ McIntosh and Samuel, *Overcoming The Dark Side of Leadership*, 122-123.

youth pastor. Neither the youth pastor nor the children's director is involved in Sunday school education for the children. The Sunday school teachers report to the Sunday school superintendent, who reports to Christian Education. However, the superintendent makes decisions for the Sunday school ministry without input from the Christian Education director. Neither the youth pastor nor the children's director is involved in AWANA ministries (an educational ministry for children ages 3 to 18). They report to the AWANA commanders, who in turn report to Christian Education. None of the youth ministry leaders are involved in VBS, and the VBS leaders report to the Senior pastor. The lack of organizational structure exists with other ministries in the church, which creates confusion.

Dialectic Analysis

The dialectic profile of Shiloh revealed the areas of focus for the church; these define how it views itself and its role in the community. Shiloh, while considering itself a community-oriented church, does little to engage the neighborhood around it, does not participate in social action, and is more comfortable interacting with the congregation. The leadership can use community engagement as an area of the church's vision to create the needed momentum to stimulate spiritual church growth. The rise in social justice in this country with the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery demonstrates that community outreach is significant to millennials and Gen-Z. The church must leverage the opportunity to reach this demographic by strengthening its outreach ministry to incorporate social action.

Overall Analysis and Recommendation

Based on the analysis of the church through interviews and a research survey, the study currently shows Shiloh in the "empty nest" life-cycle. The research shows several factors that contribute to its stagnation and possible decline. First, the older members of the church resist

change and input from younger congregants. This behavior causes the younger adults to feel they have no voice, and therefore, they are reluctant to receive instruction from the crowd that is “out of touch.” Second, a more progressive church with a younger mindset opened ten years ago, about 15 miles from Shiloh. The new church is adjacent to a highway that provides excellent visibility for its worship center, and it has resources to reach others in the area. The new church also has a solid community outreach mission and vibrant children’s and youth ministries, and it has launched three church plants to evangelize the area. Third, Shiloh does not participate in the community, nor does it evangelize, because there is no motivation to reach others. It does not leverage technology to reach newer and younger members, and it does not develop leaders. Finally, Shiloh does not have a vision to excite the congregation and provide direction; many members feel the church “just exists.”

The church is also deficient in its evangelism and discipleship programs, preventing spiritual growth among the members. The church does not have an intentional process for evangelism in which the members engage in actively expressing the Gospel to non-believers. The current evangelism programs center on archaic methods such as going door-to-door in the community and hosting occasional block parties. Shiloh does not have a plan for discipling members, and church members miss out on developing a deeper relationship with Christ and mentoring one another for accountability.

The planning team needs to focus on several primary areas that will allow the church to restart its life-cycle, create synergy, and motivate the congregation to operate in excellence. The following changes must occur:

1. The congregation must create a discipleship program the incorporates leadership development, evangelism, and biblical knowledge. The program's format must include

community groups to grow spiritually and hold each other accountable. The groups will also engage in community outreach and other programs that allow them to express Christ's love.

2. The church must organize a peer council that includes leaders from the older and younger populations. The group should build on a philosophy that states, "No Voice Unheard." The peer council will meet bi-monthly to brainstorm ideas and express feedback and concerns.
3. The church needs an intentional evangelism program that includes the various community groups within the church. The program will emphasize training on "how to share your faith" and Gospel basics.
4. The church will restructure the children's and youth ministries to generate more excitement for this generation. Technology and social media can enhance this ministry's ability to reach the church's youth and the community. The leadership should include some preteens and teenagers to gain an understanding of their needs.
5. The church needs to initiate a Social Action and Community Outreach team to minister to the community and engage in social action. The ministry must have a young adult (aged 20-30) as one of the team leaders. Currently, millennials and Gen-Z are at the forefront of leading the charge for social action.
6. Shiloh must leverage its technology and actively recruit young people who can assist with various ministry areas. There is resistance from older members in the technology arena that the leadership must address.
7. Finally, the pastor needs to develop and communicate a new vision to the church, including long-term goals designed to motivate the congregation and restart its life-cycle.

Conclusion

The culture of the black church has a complicated history. Unlike Anglo churches, black slaves became Christians because of the promise of freedom or because their masters forced them to join the church to erase their African identity. However, the slaves learned to accept Christianity because the worship style was similar to African traditions. The black church multiplied because of the denominational influence of black Methodists, Baptists, and Pentecostals. Their leaders played a significant role in securing emancipation from slavery and overturning Jim Crow laws. However, as churches entered the 20th century, many blacks' economic status changed, and the cultural message shifted from social change to economic wealth. Megachurches grew in popularity, and many black congregants left traditional churches to join them.

However, even though members left the denominational churches for larger ones, some traditional churches remained effective. Many churches experience a life-cycle that enters into maturity, grows stagnant, and declines unless they can create a rebirth of the cycle. By reviewing the church's sociological character, the researcher determined how the church views itself and the community. The researcher also determined the church's health by interviewing and presenting surveys to the congregation. The church needs to assemble a strategic planning team to examine these church elements and compare them to the vision and mission. The team can analyze the findings and implement recommendations to produce the necessary changes to restart the life-cycle. However, every effort the church makes to generate excellence must align with God's will; therefore, the leadership and the church must saturate these areas of deficiency with prayer. The strategic plan, outlined below, is a calculated blueprint that analyzes the qualitative research results and implements process changes necessary to stimulate the life cycle.

Strategic Plan

Create the Strategic Planning Team

The strategic planning team is the driving force that administers the qualitative study, reviews the collected data, and facilitates the changes. The team consists of leaders that will contribute to the success of the program. The pastor of the church, key deacons and ministers, lay leaders within the church, and other influential congregants serve as the team. The pastor is the leader of the strategic team and provides the direction for each step.

The team will research with various members of the church and compile the results. After gathering these results, the team will evaluate and brainstorm the processes to recommend an action plan for the church. The team will schedule a congregational meeting to communicate the results and feedback to the church and receive additional feedback. Once the team has shared the plan with the church, the leaders will implement the changes. The team will also schedule other meetings with the congregation to keep the lines of communication open.

Analyze Strengths and Weaknesses

The strategic team will survey to determine the congregants' perceptions of the church's leaders, functions, ministries, and organizational structure. The survey will also help outline the strengths and weaknesses of the church's operations. When the team reviews the information, they can determine the lifecycle of the church. The lifecycle provides the clues necessary to determine if the church is vibrant or stagnant. The combination of the perceptions, strengths, weaknesses, and lifecycle provides the church profile's skeleton. The church profile identifies primary functions and the church's organizational structure, including leadership, outreach, evangelism, and ministries.

Analyze the Dialectic Opposites

The dialectic opposites determine how the church interacts with the community related to social action and outreach. These opposites also describe cultural views prevalent in the church, such as integrating the church with other ethnicities or how it views social justice. These opposites reveal more information about the church's strengths and weaknesses, and the team should enter the results in the church profile. The team gathers the data by conducting interviews with various church members. The strategic team selects the members from a population of each ministry, leadership group, and community members. The team performs the interviews by asking questions about their views on the church's spiritual beliefs, community involvement, and justice reform.

Analyze the Church Vision

The team must evaluate the church's current mission and vision to determine if it represents the church's direction. The Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20 directs the local church's short term mission. The team needs to evaluate the goals and objectives for the upcoming year and create tasks. The team must define specific mission objectives that create synergy and momentum for the year. After describing the goals, the team makes a concise format for the mission, usually in a one-sentence mission statement. The mission statement should be brief and easy to remember to communicate to the church. Finally, the team must remember to connect the mission statement to the church's vision

The church's vision is the long-term objective it would like to define its purpose. The vision does not represent goals that will be completed quickly but rather over several years. The vision must define the church's purpose and connect every ministry and mission needs to it. The vision's objectives are not easily obtainable but relate to the church's character. The team can use

the church's profile to connect the purpose of the church to the personality of the ministry. The vision must be visible and frequently communicated to the church by the leadership, especially the pastor. Every few years, the strategic planning team should re-evaluate the vision to ensure that it is still relevant to the congregation and current environment.

Evaluate Leadership and Organizational Structure

The planning team evaluates leadership by conducting interviews with the ministry teammates and leaders. The evaluation determines the leadership level, strengths and weaknesses, and training needs. The team must also evaluate the leadership development program and make changes that empower current leaders and motivate new leaders. The development plan is a comprehensive program that involves strong leaders mentoring trainees. By mentoring new trainees, the leaders will learn to lead by example and correct problem areas that the new leaders exhibit.

The planning team must also evaluate the church's organizational structure by examining the infrastructure and reviewing the efficiencies of the church's ministries. The infrastructure consists of the administrative and financial functions of the church. The team must review the constitution and bylaws, job descriptions, and other human resources areas for needed updates and confirm they support the church's vision. An audit of the financial records and practices should occur periodically, and the resource documents for the finance team need to be reviewed and updated.

The ministry leaders must conduct a self-evaluation on their ministries to determine their effectiveness in meeting goals. Once the leader completes the evaluation, the planning team conducts interviews with the leaders and ministry teams. The team compares the self-evaluation with the notes from the interview to identify strengths and weaknesses to make process changes

as needed. Some changes may include dismantling the ministry if it is no longer useful.

By creating the strategic planning team, the black church designs an effective way to review itself rather than relying on material from other churches without black cultural relevance. The group can adjust the strategy for the size of the church and the organizational structure. The focus of the plan should rely on the church's overall vision as it relates to the profile. Once the team identifies the profile and develops a strong vision, they can connect the church's other factors to vision, which creates synergy and builds momentum in the ministry. These actions will effectively restart the church's life-cycle.

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IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 2, 2020

Mancil Carroll III

IRB Exemption 3942.110220: Refilling the Oilpots: Developing A Program to Reverse Stagnancy in African American Churches

Dear Mancil Carroll III,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

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Appendix A: Refill the Oilpots Survey

Refill the Oilpots Survey

Basic Information

2. Please select your age range.

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65+

3. Please select your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

4. Please answer the following question: Are you African American?

- Yes
- No

5. What church do you attend on a regular basis?

- Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church - Plano
- One Community Church
- Pleasant Zion Missionary Baptist Church
- Jubilee Community Church
- I do not attend church.
-

6. How long have you been a member of this church?

- 0 - 6 months
- 7 months - 1 year
- 1 - 2 years
- 3 - 5 years
- More than 5 years

7. Please check all that apply concerning your church worship style.

- Our church has a traditional worship service
- Our church has a contemporary worship service
- Our congregation is an older congregation
- Our worship service is almost like a concert

8. What size is your church?

- 10-50 members
- 51-250 members
- 251-500 members
- 500+ members

9. Do you serve in a church leadership position (i.e. Minister, Deacon, Elder, etc.).

- Yes
- No

10. Do you serve in a ministry leadership position (i.e. President of choir, Chair of Usher board, etc.).

- Yes
- No

11. How familiar are you with your church's mission (Choose all that apply)?.

A mission is defined as actions the church is taking to complete a short-term plan as defined by the Great Commission.

- I know the actions the church is taking to fulfill the mission and my role in fulfilling it.
- I can quote the mission statement verbatim and tell you what it means
- I know the church has a mission but I do not know my role.
- Our church does not have a mission or I don't know it.
- Our church does not have a mission statement or I don't know it.

12. How familiar are you with your church's vision?.

- The vision of our church is the driving force for ministry here.
- I can state the vision clearly.
- I understand my purpose within the scope of the vision.
- I do not understand how I fit into the vision of our church.
- Our church has a vision statement.
- I do not understand or know the vision of our church.
- The ministries of our church are not driven by a clear vision.

13. In Matthew 28:19 - 20, Jesus told the disciples to "go and make disciples." What does your church do to make disciples (check all that apply).

- Our church does not have an active program to develop disciples.
- Our church has a ministry dedicated to making disciples.
- Our church has a periodic (semi-annual, annual, etc.) event to teach on discipleship.
- Our church uses small group ministries to make disciples.
-

14. Discipleship is treated as a lifestyle in my church (True or False).

- True
- False

15. Small group ministries are very important within our church (True or False).

- True
- False

16. Describe the type of evangelism activities within your church.

- Door-to-door Evangelism
- Street Preaching
- Passing Out Flyers
- Community Activism
- Servant Evangelism
- Church Planting
-

17. Please answer the following questions about leadership at your church.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The leaders at my church are servant leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The leaders at my church are concerned about the future of the church.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The leaders are transparent and open about decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The leaders at our church trust the membership to do the work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The leaders at our church lead by example.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The leaders at our church make strong financial decisions that benefit the church.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The leaders at our church are very clear on the direction of the vision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Our church is very active in the community. Single choice.

- True
- False

19. Describe some of the community projects your church is involved in within your community.

20. When it comes to planting churches as an evangelistic strategy.

- Has planted one or more daughter churches
- Has a vision to plant additional churches
- Actively trains ministers and leaders to plant churches
- Provides funding for missionary church plants
- Does not have an active vision for church planting
- Has never planted a church

21. Church Planting.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
It is important for a church to engage in planting other churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Planting a new church means we will lose members of this church.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planting a new church is an exciting opportunity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planting new churches is a biblical mandate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. What types of activities would you participate in if they were available in this church?.

23. What do you like least about your church?.

24. What do you like most about your church?.

25. In your opinion, what changes would most improve your church?.

26. How likely is it that you would recommend this church to a friend or colleague?.



Appendix B: Chronology of Black Church History and Culture

CANAAN LAND: A RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF AFRICA...

CHRONOLOGY

1441

Portuguese crusaders capture Africans off the coast of Mauritania, beginning the Atlantic slave trade

1496

Ruler of the Kongo converts to Roman Catholicism; his son, Nzinga Mbemba, establishes Christianity as the religion of the court

1502

African slaves brought to Hispaniola; they are the first to arrive in the Western Hemisphere

1518

Prince Henrique, the son of Nzinga Mbemba of the Kongo, is appointed a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church; he is consecrated in 1521

1619

About twenty blacks arrive in Jamestown, Virginia

1664

Maryland legislature passes act denying that baptism entitles slaves to their freedom

1740

George Whitefield, an English revivalist, tours the American colonies and reports on large numbers of slaves

attending his revival sermons

1788

Andrew Bryan organizes First African Church of Savannah

1794

St. Thomas African Episcopal Church and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church formed in Philadelphia

1816

African Methodist Episcopal Church formed in Philadelphia

1821

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church established in New York City

1822

Denmark Vesey and members of the African Methodist Church lead a slave conspiracy in Charleston, South Carolina

1829

The Oblate Sisters of Providence, the first community of African-American sisters, is approved in Baltimore

1830

First National Negro Convention meets in Philadelphia with Bishop Richard Allen as president; Allen dies within the year

1831

Nat Turner, a slave preacher, organizes the largest slave revolt in the United States in Southampton County, Virginia

1842

The Holy Family Sisters, a religious community of black women, is organized in New Orleans, Louisiana

1854

James Augustine Healy, the first African American to become a Roman Catholic priest, is ordained in Paris

1870

Colored Methodist Episcopal Church is organized (today it is called the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church)

The Reverend Hiram R. Revels, a black minister, is elected to the U.S. Senate; he is the first African-American senator

1889

The first of five Congresses of Colored Catholics meets; organized by Daniel A. Rudd, a black Catholic journalist

1894

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church ordains Julia A. J. Foote as a deacon

1895

The National Baptist Convention of the USA is formed

1900

The National Women's Convention founded as an

auxiliary to the National Baptist Convention

1903

W.E.B. Du Bois publishes *Souls of Black Folk*, a classic meditation on African-American religion and culture

1906

The Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles leads to the development of a worldwide Pentecostal movement

1914

Marcus Garvey organizes the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League

1920

St. Augustine's Seminary is founded in Mississippi to train African Americans for the priesthood

1930

Wallace D. Fard organizes the Nation of Islam movement in Detroit

1933

The National Fraternal Council of Negro Churches is organized to facilitate cooperation among denominations

1955

The Montgomery bus boycott leads to a successful mass protest movement in Alabama

1957

Formation of Southern Christian Leadership Conference,

with Martin Luther King, Jr., as president

1963

March on Washington, highlighted by King's "I Have a Dream" speech

1965

Malcolm X assassinated at Audubon Ballroom in New York City

1968

Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee

1975

Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam, dies and is succeeded by his son, Wallace D. Muhammad

1981

Howard Thurman, preacher, poet, mystic, and ecumenist, dies

1987

National Black Catholic Congress meets for the first time in ninety years

1996

The Million Man March, a mass rally of black men to raise issues of family and community responsibility, is held in Washington, D.C.

2000

Vashti Murphy McKenzie elected a bishop of the African

Methodist Episcopal Church; she is the first woman
bishop of a major black denomination

Information retrieved from Albert J. Raboteau's book, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans*.

Raboteau, Albert J. *Canann Land: A Religious History of African Americans*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Appendix C: Black Consciousness Profile

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Percentages</i>		<i>Eta Coefficient</i>	
1. Ministry				
Q. Do you think your ministry is essentially different because you are in a black denomination?	Yes	54.8	Age	*0.20907
	No	45.2	Education	*0.26720
			Denomination	*0.13807
2. Mission				
Q. Does the black church have a different mission from the white church?	Yes	36.6	Age	*0.16714
	No	63.4	Education	*0.16074
			Denomination	*0.15293
3. Church-related black colleges				
Q. Does your church support church-related black colleges?	Yes	86.1	Age	*0.09409
	No	13.9	Education	*0.18489
			Denomination	*0.37562
4. Children				
Q. Are the children in your church taught about the distinctiveness of the black church?	Yes	71.6	Age	*0.10719
	No	28.4	Education	*0.13531
			Denomination	*0.23048

5. Sunday school literature				
Q. Is it important to have black figures in your Sunday school literature?	Yes	68.0	Age	*0.06411
	No	32.0	Education	*0.20603
			Denomination	*0.20179
6. Sermons				
Q. Do your sermons reflect any of the changes in black consciousness (black pride, black is beautiful, black power, etc.) since the civil rights movement?	Yes	64.3	Age	*0.19868
	No	35.7	Education	*0.24684
			Denomination	*0.20535
7. Black liberation theology (1,531 urban clergy only)				
Q. Have you been influenced by any of the authors and thinkers of black liberation theology (e.g., James Cone, Gayraud Wilmore, De Otis Roberts, Major Jones, William Jones, etc.)?	Yes	34.9	Age	*0.24320
	No	65.1	Education	*0.23976
			Denomination	*0.29419

The Black Consciousness Profile was a survey conducted among the clergy of urban and rural churches to determine if churches were affected by the black consciousness movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

According to Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mayimba, Methodists responded more favorably to the profile, while Baptists were evenly divided, and Pentecostals responded negatively to black consciousness.

The profile is from Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mayimba's book, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*.

Lincoln, C. Eric, and Lawrence H. Mamiya. *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990.