ABSTRACT

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN CLERGY:

DEVELOPING MODEL MINISTRIES FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN

IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

by

Maxine LaRue Wallace Thomas

While statistics indicate that women face worldwide attacks, African-American women face these and others due both to gender and race discrimination. Some other challenges African-American women face include demoralizing stereotypes, America's myths, exploitation and dehumanization, health disparities, poverty, violence against women, depression, and education. Women also need spiritual empowerment that will impact their everyday living, and they need to be encouraged in the many roles they have, including being wives, mothers, widows, and single persons and caring for aged parents. These are only a few of the challenges and needs that women have.

The problem is that churches do not have enough models of effective ministry that meet the needs of women living in the United States in the twenty-first century. The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, which is the oldest black denomination in the United States, has responded to the needs of men and women by providing dignity and hope, defending the disadvantaged and oppressed, preaching salvation and deliverance, promoting health education and wellness, promoting spiritual empowerment, promoting power through prayer, providing women's ministry events, and addressing social needs.

However, women clergy have a unique opportunity to address needs of women by establishing and developing models for providing them relevant ministry. They are the ideal persons to develop such ministries because they share some of the same lived experiences and are able to see them in a spiritual light. Even though they have faced age-old discrimination due to some who do not accept women as having been called by God to preach, still, women clergy have made a significant impact in the life of the church and especially in the lives of other women. Some areas where their impact is evidenced is in their preaching to save souls, encouraging women in ministry, serving as leadership role models, and providing ministry for laywomen.

Consequently, in order to establish more effective ministries that meet the needs of women in the twenty-first century, women clergy in this study engaged in a three-step process: (1) training clergy to identify the needs of the women in their setting, (2) devising a framework to engage developing effective ministries, and (3) coaching the clergy as they developed these ministries. Subsequently, seven women clergy from the AME Church attended and participated in a one-day seminar called African-American Women Clergy Training and Empowerment Seminar (AAWCTES) and, afterward, developed a ministry to meet the needs of women unique to their particular setting. A self-made qualitative instrument—a preseminar survey and postseminar survey, were used to measure the changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in the women clergy. The data analysis revealed that women clergy's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior regarding ministry for women changed significantly after participating in the AAWCTES and developing a ministry for women. Another qualitative instrument, the evaluation of the AAWCTES measured the effectiveness of the seminar. The data revealed that the

seminar was effective in preparing the women clergy to develop a ministry and also increased their level of confidence. A coaching call to each woman clergy during the process helped answer any questions she had. The participants in this study were inspired as well as trained to develop more ministries to meet the needs of black women. In addition, their level of commitment to helping and supporting other black women increased.

Conclusively, African-American women clergy are the ideal persons to develop effective ministries for African-American women in the twenty-first century. Their experiences, in addition to their spiritual insight and understanding, have prepared them to minister with understanding, compassion, and sensitivity to the needs of women.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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by

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With much appreciation and love to my wonderful husband of twenty-five years, Rev. Troy. I. Thomas, for providing your love, encouragement, and support each step of the way. I appreciate and love you always. Lastly, I dedicate this project study to my beautiful and brilliant daughters, Tricia, Traci, and Trina. I celebrate your gifts and talents, and I encourage you always to pursue the highest ideals that you can attain. I love you always, my shining stars.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Introduction

The African-American woman in American culture in the twenty-first century continues to bear the brunt of racism, sexism, and numerous stereotypes with negative connotations, as she is also expected by others as well as herself to survive against all odds and circumstances. Still, she is the cheerleader for the African-American man, the nurturer of future generations of her race, and the bridge whom numerous others have walked across to reach their optimum goals and dreams. Those who misunderstand her mystique, misinterpret her assignment, misjudge her value and worth, and mistake her strengths conclude that she is unaffected by the weight of her burdens and incognizant of her personal needs for affirmation, restoration, and inner healing. African-American women have needs as related to health, education, employment, poverty, racism, sexism, finances, parenting, marriage, sexual identity, and more. The lack of effective ministries that meet the needs of African-American women living in the United States in the twenty-first century is a problem that must be addressed.

Worldwide, women suffer the most due to malnutrition and lack of education and other resources. Women make up 70 percent of 1.3 billion people worldwide living in poverty (Cunningham and Hamilton 17). Arguably, women in the United States face many obstacles and challenges that are a reflection of how women are viewed and treated worldwide. In the United States, women still earn 74 percent of the salary that men earn for the same jobs. Violence against women in the United States is horrific as statistics reveal that more than 800,000 women will be beaten by their boyfriends in a year's time,

and out of that number, 1,000 will not survive (18). They face gender-based double standards in how they are perceived in the workplace and community, as well as double standards of expectations in the same. A significant number of women and girls are sexually abused and victimized in other ways. African-American women have all these issues, and, problems of racial discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes depict them as sexually promiscuous. They face unrealistic burdens and expectations heaped upon them by others as well as by themselves. Because of the significant issues and concerns that African-American women of the twenty-first century face, they need more effective ministries. Women need ministries that will address the health disparities they encounter; work place inequality; educational needs; violence against women; economic disenfranchisement; oppression because of race, gender, and class; development of healthy relationships; discovery of their unique talents and abilities; nurture of their spirits; and, spiritual empowerment. Women clergy in the twenty-first century have a marvelous opportunity as healing agents for other women. The three steps in the process of developing these types of ministries are (1) training clergy to identify the needs of the women in their setting, (2) devising a framework to engage developing effective ministries, and (3) coaching the clergy as they develop these ministries.

Training Clergy to Identify the Needs of the Women in Their Settings

Evaluating the needs of women aids the process of developing effective women's ministries. These needs coincide with psychologist Abraham Maslow's basic hierarchial needs—physiology, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization-- but are not limited to this list ("Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy"). Other needs specific women are to detach from tradition, to establish boundaries to avoid burnout, to become more visible in

nontraditional fields, to become efficient role models for other women, to maintain

Christian values in the midst of unethical values and principles, and to find financial

security, to name a few. These needs should be considered when developing effective

ministries.

One challenge is the misunderstanding of women's ministry. A second challenge

is a lack of women clergy who are trained and also inspired to invest time, energy, and

creativity into developing ministries for women. A third is women struggling with

internal and external conflicts. A lack of knowledge perpetuates the first challenge and

can be remedied as women clergy gain a full understanding and appreciation of women's

ministries and teach others the meaning and significance of the same. The second

challenge is remedied in at least two ways: As women clergy are developed in their own

personal love relationship with Jesus and, in turn, see themselves as unique and having

something unique to offer in the community of faith and in the world, particularly as

related to other women. A second stage of the remedy is women clergy engaging in

strategic planning in developing effective ministry models for women. The third

challenge is remedied as women identify the barriers and stereotypes that define them

and reestablish personal identity and self-value.

Devising a Framework to Engage Developing Effective Ministries

Women clergy in this research were professionally trained to develop ministries

unique to their particular settings to meet the needs of women. Both theory and practicum

were used.

Women clergy must be cognizant of and sensitive to issues and concerns of

women and recognize the challenges that would disallow them to address their needs.

They must be intentional in developing practical ministries that are framed to nurture, facilitate, and support women in relation to the challenges they face. Creativity, ingenuity, sensitivity, and practicality are necessary components in developing these essential ministries.

Coaching of Clergy and Follow-Up

After clergy are trained to develop ministries that will meet the needs of women, they must be coached during the process of developing ministries that are unique to their particular area. Coaching includes listening to their thoughts and attitudes and offering advice as well as support in the development process. This support may include helping them identify specific resources, community partnerships, and practical means of developing a ministry. Theory must become practical for women to be helped.

Purpose

The purpose of the research was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of those who participated in a one-day, African-American women clergy training and empowerment seminar (AAWCTES) focused on the women clergy's ability to minister to the needs of women in the twenty-first century and then developed ministries to women unique to their particular settings.

Research Questions

African-American women clergy in the twenty-first century are the ideal catalysts to develop effective women's ministries to address the issues, concerns, and needs of African-American women. They are ideal because they can very well relate to those challenges, needs, and concerns and are able to draw upon their spiritual knowledge and wisdom as well as their cultural experiences in developing ministries for African-

American women. Further, many of the wounds in women's lives are the result of relationships with men; therefore, these women would be more open to exposing their wounds and baring their souls to other women. The power of women serving women is unlimited. The following research questions provided the focus for this study.

Research Question # 1

What are the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of African-American women clergy of the twenty-first century as related to ministry that meets the needs of African-American women prior to and then after participating in the AAWCTES?

Research Question #2

What aspects of the ministry development process contributed most to the changes in knowledge, attitudes, and/or behavior in the seminar participants?

Research Question # 3

What other factors may have contributed to knowledge, attitudes, and/or behavior in the participants?

Definition of Terms

The twenty-first century African-American woman has many needs, concerns, and issues. If African-American women clergy are to develop ministry models that aptly address these concerns, definitions of key terms and ideas are paramount in the process of moving forward. The following terms are relevant to this research.

Twenty-First Century

The current time period began on 1 January 2001 and is defined by dramatic paradigm shifts in learning and by technological advancement. The twenty-first century yields a continual change in attitudes and behaviors as related to values, codes of ethics,

and racial attitudes. This time period is more than chronology and includes a shift in US society, for example, the election of a black president.

African-American Women

African American women are American women of "African and especially of black African descent" ("African-American"). In this study, black and African-American refer to the same minority group in America. In addition, whenever the term *women* is used, it is understood to mean African-American women.

African-American Women's Ministries

African-American women have issues and concerns that are especially unique to them. These issues and concerns stem from challenges they face due to perceptions of and unfair stereotypes assigned to them, violence, health disparities, racism, sexism, poverty, American myths, and education. African-American women's ministries support, nurture, inspire, and empower women. These ministries provide opportunities for women to fellowship with other women and share their hurts and disappointments as well as celebrate their joys and successes. In addition, they provide opportunities for personal healing—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

African-American Women Clergy

African-American women clergy are both ordained and not ordained women who operate as ministerial officials and/or assistants in the Christian church. The term *clergywomen*, in this paper, is understood to mean the same. In addition, whenever the term women clergy is used, it is understood to mean African-American women clergy.

Ministry Intervention

Women clergy are agents and channels of change for women in the twenty-first century. As women themselves, they are familiar through personal experience with the issues and concerns of other women. Women clergy experience the joys and pains of other women as they identify with the successes and achievement as well as with the pain and suffering of other women. As clergy, they also have spiritual knowledge and understanding that allow them to place these concerns and issues in a spiritual context. Women clergy are, therefore, equipped with the basic tools needed to begin a thoughtful consideration of developing effective women's ministries that will meet the needs of the many categories of women in African-American churches and their communities.

Consequently, seven women clergy in the state of Kentucky of varying ages and marital status, attended a one-day African-American women clergy training and empowerment seminar held at a church in central Kentucky. The first step of this research was to invite the women clergy for the AAWCTES via e-mail or phone call to attend and participate. The second step was to have each woman complete an African-American women clergy preseminar survey. The purpose of this qualitative instrument was to reveal the women clergy's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry that meets the needs of women prior to attending AAWCTES and developing a ministry for women unique to their setting. Attending and participating in the AAWCTES was the third step. The AAWCTES featured lectures, group discussions, and a practicum that allowed the attendees to receive knowledge about the challenges women face and to be trained in how to develop ministries that meet their needs. Further,

AAWCTES provided an opportunity for personal renewal and healing for the women clergy.

The fourth step was to have each of the seven women clergy complete an evaluation of the one-day seminar before leaving. The fifth step involved calling each clergy one to two weeks after the seminar to answer any questions or concerns she had while working on developing a ministry for women.

In the sixth step, each woman developed a ministry model within eight weeks of attending the AAWCTES. For the seventh step, each woman clergy responded weekly to questions in a ministry developing journal. At step eight, clergy completed the African-American women clergy postseminar survey one to two weeks after the ministry event. The ninth step had each clergy receive a phone interview one to two weeks after completion of the ministry event to discover the impact of participating in the AAWCTES and then developing a ministry for women unique to each setting.

Context

The needs, concerns, and issues that women in the twenty-first century face are not limited to any particular geographical area to any particular group, but in many ways all women are affected in the same way. The context of my research in its broadest terms is twofold. It is a consideration of the challenges that women face worldwide as well as those that the woman next door faces. When women clergy view suffering of women from a worldwide perspective, they are better able to be sensitized to the conditions and plight of women in a general sense. The treatment of women in places such as India and Russia is different from the treatment of women in America. Still, American women suffer similar harshness.

The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church has a structured system for women clergy of the denomination that allows an opportunity for worship, collaboration, and personal growth: Women in Ministry is an international organization serving the continental United States, Africa, India, the Caribbean, and Europe. It operates within each of the twenty episcopal districts that define the AME Church and is comprised of more than 3,350 women in ministry. The AME Church currently has three women bishops, and a number of women clergy have been appointed to historically male-dominated pulpits. Still, some men and women, both lay and clergy, are not accepting of women as preachers, and especially not as pastors or presiding elders. Though the denomination was birthed out of a quest for fairness and equality for African-Americans, some people within the AME Church continue to hold on to patriarchal and sexist attitudes. Consequently, women clergy need great support and encouragement as they continue to provide service and ministry in not only a hostile world but, oftentimes, a hostile church.

The research to prepare women clergy to develop effective women's ministries for the twenty-first century involved a group of women in ministry from the Kentucky Conference of the Thirteenth Episcopal District of the AME Church, comprising a cross-section of twenty-seven women in ministry, including ordained and nonordained preachers, pastors, evangelists, and exhorters. They wrestle with the issues and concerns of all women today but especially those unique to African-American women. They thoughtfully objectified their mission in developing creative and innovative ministries.

Methodology

The purpose of this research was to measure change in the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of women clergy as related to ministry that meets the needs of women in the twenty-first century before and after they attended and participated in a one-day AAWCTES and developed a ministry that meets the needs of women. The study used a qualitative research design. This particular design was chosen as it lends itself well to the type of instruments needed to discover the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior both before and after the women clergy attended and participated in a one-day AAWCTES and developed a ministry model to meet the needs women. The instruments also showed the women clergy's assessment of which aspects of the seminar were most effective in the changes seen and what other factors that may have contributed to the changes in the participants.

The research included seven women clergy completing an African-American women clergy preseminar survey to measure their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry to meet the needs of women before they attended and participated in the African-American Women Clergy Training and Empowerment Seminar and developed a ministry to meet the needs of women. These seven women clergy attended the one-day AAWCTES and received more knowledge about the needs and challenges women face, assessed their attitudes and behavior toward the need for ministry for women and the role that women clergy can play in meeting these needs, and were trained to develop effective women's ministry models. After participating in the AAWCTES, before leaving, they completed an evaluation of the seminar. One to two weeks after the seminar they received a follow-up coaching call as related to their plan in developing a

ministry for women unique to their setting. They responded to questions in a ministry

development journal each week during the process of developing a ministry. They each

developed a ministry model for women within eight weeks after the seminar. Each

woman clergy completed an African-American women clergy postseminar survey after

presenting her ministry, or at least after the model was completed and e-mailed to me.

They each were interviewed and shared their experience of the process. The methodology

included opportunities of worship, witness, and work.

Participants

The participants in this research project were seven women clergy of the

Kentucky Conference of the Thirteenth Episcopal District of the AME Church of varying

marital status, and ages. They developed and implemented a women's ministry event or

activity within eight weeks of the AAWCTES. The participants in this research project

responded to an invitation via phone or e-mail to attend and participate in the

AAWCTES.

Instrumentation

A qualitative instrument, the African-American women clergy preseminar survey,

measured the prior knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of women clergy as related to

ministry that meets the needs of women before they attended the AAWCTES and

developed a ministry that meets the needs of women. A second qualitative instrument, an

African-American women clergy postseminar survey was used to measure the prior

knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of African-American women clergy as related to

ministry to meet the needs of women after they attended the AAWCTES and developed a

ministry. A qualitative instrument, the evaluation of AAWCTES, determined the

effectiveness of the one-day seminar and of other aspects of the ministry development process. A qualitative instrument, a coaching call, was used to learn the needs and concerns of the participants as they developed a ministry for women. A qualitative instrument, an Interview was used to learn further changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of participants.

Variables

The independent variable in this project is the AAWCTES. The dependent variables are changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior and the development of the new women's ministries and activities and events.

Data Collection

Seven women clergy were invited via e-mail or phone calls to attend a one-day AAWCTES to be trained on how to develop a ministry that meets the needs of women. They each completed an African-American women clergy preseminar survey to measure their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior pertaining to such ministry prior to attending and participating in the AAWCTES and developing their own personal ministry. A field notebook was used to gather information as I observed the attitudes and behavior of the women clergy during the seminar. They each completed an evaluation of AAWCTES before leaving the seminar. Each woman clergy received a coaching call so that I would know individual needs or concerns as each one developed a ministry for women. They responded to questions in a ministry development journal once a week throughout the process of developing a ministry. They developed ministries within eight weeks after attending the AAWCTES. They completed postseminar surveys to measure their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors after attending the AAWCTES and developing

ministries. Each clergy was interviewed to understand further changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

Data Analysis

The research used a qualitative design, which allowed the women clergy to measure the changes in their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry that meets the needs of women both prior to and after attending and participating in AAWCTES and developing such a ministry. It also measured the effectiveness of the research as related to the AAWCTES and other factors, such as the coaching call, an interview, evaluation of the AAWCTES, information gathered from the ministry development journal; the field notebook, development of a ministry, the help and support of others, and the availability of resources while developing a ministry. The data analysis was narrative and reflected inner and core feelings and attitudes that helped provide a bridge for beginning to formulate practical ministries to address the needs of women. The data obtained was helpful and provided a frame of reference for future discussions on this topic.

Generalizability

Women clergy are the ideal persons to be prepared to develop ministries that will address women's special needs, concerns, and issues. The research applies to all women due to the many commonalities in the stories of all women but focuses primarily and specifically on the needs of African-American women. The focal delimitation factor is women clergy setting boundaries around those to whom they minister. While ideal candidates to minister to the needs and concerns of women, women clergy are called to minister to the needs and concerns of both women and men and to persons of varying

races, cultures, and creeds. A factor of limitation is women clergy forgetting that they, too, need to receive ministry. In establishing women's ministries, they must allow themselves to find a place of healing and refuge as well. This research calls attention to the many needs of women and focuses on systems that continue to oppress women in both subtle and obvious ways. This study is important because it will allow women to receive the nurturing support they need, as well as direct them into self-discovery and self-improvement.

Theological Foundation

Women in Ministry, a set and structured organization within the African Methodist Episcopal Church presents an opportunity for women clergy to be affirmed in their calling to the preaching ministry and challenged in their unique and special calling in kingdom building and to form a sisterhood of support and accountability. Subsequently, women clergy have a marvelous opportunity to be healing agents for other women.

Still, female leadership in the church remains a question of controversy in many denominations and spectrums of personal belief. For some, the impetus for controversy stems from their interpretation of the familiar passage found in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16: "But I would have you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ" (NRSV). Galatians 3:28 says, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." A look at the Apostle Paul's contention in the Corinthian passage infers that Paul is not a proponent of women being in leadership in the church. Some question whether he has changed his mind and become

egalitarian between Corinthians and Galatians. Biblical scholarship in some schools of

theology contend that the meanings of key words in the original writings have changed

over a period of time, thereby making deciphering its intended meaning a more dubious

task (Cunningham and Hamilton 162).

Both the Old and New Testaments include men and women in public ministry.

Jesus also promoted equality between men and women as he broke gender, cultural, and

racial barriers to speak to the woman at the well. His message was quite clear as he

released the first heralds, the women, with the message of resurrection.

Society continually reminds women of age-old mind-sets regarding women,

whether African-American or of another race or ethnicity or whether in ministry and/or

other venues of leadership. These reminders show the special need for ministry for

women. Women clergy should be in the forefront as proponents for ministries for women

because they know best the story of their struggles, challenges, and successes.

Biblical foundational insights for training women clergy to develop women's

ministries include the story of the woman at the well found in John 4:1-29.

Inclusiveness is a part of the framework of this biblical example and is a strong principle

in the framework for building effective women's ministries. Jesus did not avoid the

mixed race of people who were despised by the Jews, but he included them in his path of

travel. In verse 9, the woman at the well makes inquiry of Jesus' actions, which crosses

several boundaries. She was a woman, she was of a mixed and despised race, and she was

of a different social class. Just as this woman was curious about Jesus' willingness to

cross these boundaries, others will have questions and concerns as women clergy prepare

to build effective ministry models that suit the needs of women who are diverse because

of the specificity of their experience yet bonded in sisterhood by the nature of their collective experiences.

Jesus uncovered the questionable areas in the woman's life. As he listened, he knew the right questions to ask to expose the true need. As women clergy listen to the stories of women, they are able to discern what their real needs are and will know what kinds of ministries to develop.

In verse 28, the woman left her water pot. For the purpose of this study, the water pot symbolizes tradition and conservatism. She went her way into the city. I view the city as a place of diversity, acculturation, and liberality. Her message was for those who once held her in silence and was one that would bring liberation, peace, and hope to all. Women clergy must meet the challenge of embracing women with a message of inclusivity, healing, and hope.

Overview

Women clergy are moving to the forefront in setting the pace for developing women's ministries that address the needs and concerns of women in the twenty-first century. Chapter 2 contains detailed research of the problem. Chapter 3 addresses the methodology in solving the problem. Chapter 4 analyzes the data, and Chapter 5 provides a detailed discussion of significant findings.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

Introduction

Women living in America in the twenty-first century face many obstacles and

challenges that are either left unaddressed or receive very little attention. The problem is

that churches and community organizations do not have enough models of effective

ministry that meet the needs of women living in the United States in the twenty-first

century. Notwithstanding, statistics reveal the success of women in this country as

indicated by changes in education, work, and business ownership:

> **414,472**—number of businesses owned by black women
> *Source: National Women's Business Council*
> **1,203**—number of doctoral degrees earned by black women in 2007 (up almost 50 percent from 10 years earlier)
> *Source: National Opinion Research Center*
> **26**—number of black women who have served in the U.S. House of Representatives—including 14 currently in office
> *Source: Congressional Research Service Report for Congress*
> **1**–number of black women who have served in the Senate (Carol Moseley Braun, Democrat of Illinois, 1993 to 1999)
> *Source: Congressional Research Service Report for Congress*
> **2,193**—number of black women employed as professors at degree-granting institutions
> *Source: National Center for Education Statistics*
> **15,139**—number of black female physicians in the country
> *Source: American Medical Association*
> **345**—number of black women law partners in the country (just over one half of one percent of the total)
> *Source: National Association for Law Placement*
> African-American women are a major force in the Obama administration: The New Face of D.C. Power. But will their success help other, less visible black women break down doors in the workplace? Don't miss Teresa Wiltz's special report, An Obama Effect for Black Women? (Webber)

Women are making contributions through their professional service as employees in diverse professions, and are largely contributing to building the economic structure of society and impacting and influencing the culture of everyday American society.

Notwithstanding, many women who have succeeded in numerous areas in their lives and know the satisfaction and reward of personal and professional success can still relate to the brokenness of personal suffering, loss, and tragedy. Therefore, churches and communities need effective ministries for all women in the twenty-first century that will meet a variety of needs and address the numerous concerns and issues that women face today.

Some needs of women in general include the need for spiritual empowerment that will impact their everyday living and the need to be encouraged in the many roles they have, including being a wife, mother, widow, single person, or caregiver for aged parents. Their needs include spiritual issues, education in areas such as finances, solutions to health issues and concerns, and needs for protection from violence, among many others too countless to name. African-American women in the twenty-first century are not only affected by the general needs and concerns of all women, but also those related to cultural factors—impact of racism, sexism, and classism, and perceptions of African-American women that do not adequately and legitimately reflect their value and worth.

While ministry is necessary in a general sense, it is also vitally necessary in a gender-specific as well as a racial and cultural specific sense. Women clergy have a unique opportunity to address needs of women by establishing and developing models for providing relevant ministry. Women clergy are the ideal catalysts to develop effective women's ministries to address their issues, concerns, and needs. They are ideal because

they can very well relate to those challenges, needs, and concerns and are able to draw upon their spiritual knowledge and wisdom in developing ministries for women. Consequently, the purpose of the research was to plan ministry models to meet the needs of women in the twenty-first century with the AAWCTES participants from Kentucky through a one-day seminar and a follow-up coaching call interview on developing models for ministry over a period of eight weeks.

Theological Framework

Biblical studies reveal the conflict and contention regarding how women were treated in a culture of patriarchy and male dominance. Women were seen as the weaker vessel and as inferior to their male counterpart who gained strength through created order and as the progenitor of the faith. Still, women are a vital part of creation and biblical and theological study reveals the value God has placed on women.

Creation Theology

The book of Genesis outlines the biblical account of the creation. God created male and female of the same essence and called them Adam:

> This name seems to connect man אדם 'ādām with the soil from which he was taken ארמה 'ădāmâh (Genesis 2:7). It is evidently a generic or collective term, denoting the species. God, as the maker, names the race, and thereby marks its character and purpose. (Barnes Gen 5:2)

Man and woman collectively are the species that God created and God alone marks their character and purpose.

The functionality and role of man and woman is complementary as God created them as equals. Consequently, the man is not greater than the woman, nor is the woman less than the man: "By giving them both one name, he notes the inseparable conjunction of man and wife" (Gen. 5:2). Their functionality was different yet their essence was

equal. The presumption of male superiority is in large part based upon order creation. The creation of the man, Adam, first, and then the woman, Eve, for order creation theologians makes the woman's role subservient to the male. Subsequently, the Bible reveals two separate accounts of creation as relayed in Genesis 1 and again in chapter 2. Adam appears first and then Eve next as related to the creation of humankind in chapter 1.

In Genesis 1 and 2, order creation presents a case for some theologians for determining the God-assigned roles and functionality of his human creations called male and female: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve—the apostle, in this verse, and the following, gives reasons why a woman should occupy a subordinate situation, and not usurp authority" (Barnes 1 Timothy 2:13). Their conclusion is that women are subordinate to men and, therefore, subservient to men because in the order of creation of humankind, God created the man Adam first and the woman Eve second.

John Gill does not claim order creation as the instigator for men's superiority over women since Adam was created first and then Eve. He claims women's subordination to men is due to Eve being formed out of Adam, for his use, service, help, and comfort. Eve's subservient role did not diminish her importance as a procreator with Adam, as God commanded them both to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 1:28). The dichotomy of the function and purpose of women breeds an expansive array of considerations and challenges, and begs further explanation of why God created man and woman, what response to God and to woman man should have according to God compared to all of creation, and what response to God and to man woman should have according to God as related to all of creation.

Research shows while attitudes toward women tend to fluctuate from time to time and geographically, society has a common thread of thought that women are inferior to men. Still, women throughout the ages and in varying geographic regions have defied all odds and made significant achievements and accomplishments. Women's strength is revealed in ways that matter—stamina, endurance, and overall survival. While women today have many advantages that women in the past did not have, cultural pressure remains a causal factor in many women still reaching their highest potential.

Old Testament Redemption for Women

While people in Western and Eastern cultures have different perceptions as well as treatment of women, God is consistent in his regard for and respect of women. Both Old and New Testament Scripture show evidence of God's great love, compassion, and concern for women who have been oppressed and cast aside regardless of the poor and substandard treatment of women in pagan societies as well as in the Roman Empire during biblical times:

> Women in pagan societies during biblical times were often treated with little more dignity than animals. Some of the best-known Greek philosophers—considered the brightest minds of their era—taught that women are inferior creatures by nature. (MacArthur)

The devaluation of women encouraged the acceptance of their mistreatment as the norm as it encouraged demeaning stereotypes that rendered women as property of men and useless separate from their identity with either their fathers or husbands.

The physical structure and design of women's bodies was thus reduced to a template for sexual display and gratification in temple worship in which the natural function and intent for their creation as sexual beings were cheapened, prostituting them as receptacles for debasement and sacrilegious whoredom.

Still, the Bible reflects respect and honor for women that reveal how God saw and treated women in biblical times and how God sees and treats women today:

> From cover to cover, the Bible exalts women. In fact, it often seems to go out of the way to pay homage to them, to ennoble their roles in society and family, to acknowledge the importance of their influence, and to exalt the virtues of women who were particularly godly examples. (MacArthur)

The Bible records two separate accounts in the Old Testament book of Genesis of how a bondswoman woman named Hagar met the Angel of the Lord as she wandered through a desert feeling hopeless. The angel—who is God himself appearing in angelic form—provided the hope and help that Hagar needed both times. In the second encounter, the Angel of the Lord also helped Hagar's son, Ishmael.

In Genesis 16, Hagar ran away from Abraham and Sarah's household because of Sarah's cruel mistreatment. The impetus of such treatment was ignited by Sarah's jealousy over the fact that Hagar had been able to conceive a child with Abraham but Sarah (then known as Sarai) had not. Ironically, Sarai told Abraham to sleep with Hagar (their enslaved maid) rather than trust God to provide the son he had promised they would conceive.

Genesis 16:7-10 describes what happened when Hagar first met the Angel of the Lord. The angel of God was not oblivious to Hagar's stress and concerns. He made his presence known by calling out to her and inquiring about her plight. In turn, Hagar responded to the angel, as she recognized his care and concern for her as she faced the harsh realities of life. The angel then made a promise of increase to Hagar. God is constantly reaching out to those who are despised and rejected as he reminds them that they are not alone and that they too are candidates for hope and redemption.

Marie Chapian comments that the way the encounter began shows how much God cared about Hagar, even though other people did not view her as important. She elaborates on God's care for Hagar as she says, "Naturally, the Lord already knew where she was heading,... but the Lord, in His exceptional kindness, acknowledged that her feelings were important, that she wasn't just chattel. He listened to what she had to say" (430). The story of compassion shows that God does not discriminate against people. Chapian says, "Hagar was not of the tribe of Abraham, God's chosen. But God was with her. He was with her to help her and to give her an opportunity to help her power of choice" (435). God showed great mercy to, and consideration of Hagar. God shows the same care for all people—regardless of race, gender, class, or social status. God's blessings are not limited to a particular group of people or generation. Rather, his blessings are for all people in all times and in all places. Both Hagar and her son were recipients of God's mercy and kindness.

Hagar responded to the angel, acknowledging the concern God showed for her. Genesis 16:13 records Hagar's response to the Angel of the Lord's message: "She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: 'You are the God who sees me,' for she said, 'I have now seen the One who sees me.'" Thus, Hagar acknowledged that God saw her, understood and sympathized with her plight, and responded with compassion.

In his book, Billy Graham writes, "God promised that seed of Ishmael would multiply, and that his destiny would be great on the Earth as he now undertook the restless pilgrimage that was to characterize his descendants" (1199). Even though Hagar was despised and rejected by Sarah, she was comforted and protected by God. She was

shown the kind of compassion needed to heal the wounds and assaults of careless slander, and undeserved insult, and rebuke.

The second time that Hagar met the Angel of the Lord was years after Ishmael's birth. Sarah saw Ishmael and her own son Isaac playing together and was afraid that Ishmael would one day want to share in Isaac's inheritance, so she commanded Hagar and Ishmael to leave. Hagar and Ishmael wandered through the desert until they ran out of water. Hagar, unable to watch her son die, set Ishmael down under a bush and turned away (Gen. 21:15). God heard the lad's cries and not only provided water from a well for him but also told Hagar he would make Ishmael a great nation (21:17-20). Hagar's story is an incredible narrative of a compassionate God who crossed significant racial, gender, and class barriers to show redemptive mercy to a woman deemed insignificant by society who was broken by her circumstances but not banished from God's loving care and mercy.

New Testament Grace for Women

The story of the widow of Nain found in the New Testament gospel of Luke 7:11-15 is one of compassion and grace. It unfolds as Jesus went into a city called Nain and was greeted by a death procession. The widow's only son had died, and all of her hopes and dreams with him. Scripture says, "And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, weep not" (v. 13). Jesus was proactive in the face of death. Scripture also says, "He came and touched the bier; and they that bare him stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise' (v. 15). The young man who was dead now lived. God restored life to the young man, and in so doing, hope to the widow of Nain.

The compassion of Jesus in healing this widow's son is explicated by Gill. He says, "[W]herefore, as Christ showed his power in raising the dead man, he discovered great humanity, kindness, and tenderness, in delivering him alive to his mother" (v. 15). The story of the widow of Nain is one among many stories in the New Testament where Jesus treated women with kindness, compassion, dignity, and respect, as was not customary in the culture of his day. God is still concerned today about women who have experienced severe losses and are left feeling hopeless and in great despair. He still extends compassion as he restores life, mends broken hearts, and heals wounds that are too deep for any crowd to heal.

Women's Ministry in the Bible

Both the Old and the New Testaments include men and women in public ministry. The Talmud says that forty-eight prophets and seven prophetesses prophesied to Israel. These prophetesses were Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Hulda, and Esther. Paul recognized Rebekah as well an Old Testament prophetess. Despite the presence of these women's ministries, the Talmud said a woman reading the Torah in public brought shame to the synagogue (Cunningham and Hamilton 179). God has always included women in his plan for redemption for humankind. Still, women have traditionally been and continue to be, scorned and criticized for bearing the news of redemption in fulfilling the call they believe God has placed on their lives.

Jesus showed compassion to many nameless women in the Bible whose lives are significant examples of what God thinks about women. Mark 5:25-34 tells the story of a nameless woman who was sick with an issue of blood for twelve years, had gone to many doctors, but was still no better. She heard about Jesus, approached Jesus in a crowd, and

touched his cloak. She believed if she just touched his clothes she would be healed (v.

28). When she did so, her bleeding stopped immediately, and she felt in her body that she

was freed from her suffering (v. 29). Jesus realized power had gone from him and turned

around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" (v. 30). He acknowledged

the nameless woman and requested her identity in the midst of those others who perhaps

saw her as just another woman with needs and troubles that would remain unhealed. God

is concerned about women, and when no one else can or will help them, he acknowledges

their faith and heals their troubles. Another nameless woman's story is found in John 8:1-

11 when Jesus forgave a woman caught in adultery. While others felt justified in

condemning and stoning her, Jesus wrote on the ground twice and after reading what he

had written the second time, they changed their minds:

> Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.
> Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard
> began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was
> left, with the woman still standing there. (vv. 7-9)

In a culture that was unfriendly to women, Jesus took a stand for a woman. None of the

woman's accusers condemned her, nor did Jesus. Instead, he forgave her sin (v. 11). God

always searches for those whom society labels as inferior and weak, and God honors

them with dignity and strength.

Black Women in the Bible

Male domination as reflected in Greco-Roman culture is also evident in the Bible.

Caine Hope Felder addresses the many issues surrounding the predominance of

subjugation of women in the Bible:

> As Phyllis A. Bird recently reminds us, one needs only to scan the
> genealogies of the Old Testament (e.g., Gen. 5, 10; Num. 16, 26; 1 Chron.
> 1, 2) in order to see that "the biblical world is a man's world, for the

genealogies are fundamentally lists of males, in which women do not normally appear. (48)

Society has a proliferation of male dominance with regard to women in general. However, a distinct difference is evident in the plight of the black female in the Bible even in comparison to that of white women. Cain Hope Felder addresses the preferential treatment of white women as compared to black women when studies have been done regarding the roles and status of women in the Bible:

> For this reason, it is necessary to study some of the lines along which the biblical witness provides images and themes for the uplift, liberation and divinely-inspired leadership not just of "women" in general, but that of Black women in particular. (47-48)

Anglo-Saxon or Jewish women benefit most from the study of women's roles and status in the Bible while Black women find very little benefit or uplift from the same studies. Such studies leave a void in black women and are troubling to those who look for a biblical witness that is liberating for black women.

While studies reveal evidence of unfair treatment of all women, black women have faced more incidences of discrimination, not only because of their gender but also because of their race. Therefore, researchers trace the line and episodes of unfair and unequal treatment of all women, and of black women in particular, in seeking solutions that will yield liberation and empowerment for all women, including black women.

Challenges Faced by African-American Women Today

Just as in Jesus' day, women are still treated with disregard, disrespect, and dishonor in many parts of the world, including in America. Women are seen as sex objects and are exploited in television commercials where their bodies are used in a sexual way to sell clothes and other products. MacArthur says, "Pornography turns

women into objects and victims of dirty, cowardly Peeping Toms who leer at them with greedy eyes. Throughout the world, women are traded like animals for sexual slavery" (MacArthur). Women are viewed in ways that are belittling and betray who they really are.

These examples of modern-day attitudes and treatment of women continue to insult the intelligence, real value, and God-ordained purpose of women. They become blatant and conspicuous reminders that women are still treated by some as inferior and base and are regarded with significant disrespect and dishonor.

Worldwide Attack against Women

All over the world, women are under attack. According to Loren Cunningham and David Joel Hamilton, these attacks are due to Satan's vengeance against women. They say, "Ever since the Garden of Eden when God told Satan that the seed of the woman would bruise his head, the devil has been ferociously attacking women all over the world" (18). The attacks against women come in the many forms of assault and violence, and degradation. These attacks may be subtle, or blatant, but each reveals the need to address the challenges and concerns unique to women.

Statistical evidence of the attack against women in countries with little Christian heritage is horrific and eats at the fabric of moral consciousness and perceived human decency. In 2000 World Vision projected in staggering statistics regarding challenges women face worldwide:

- 450 million women are physically impaired due to childhood malnutrition. In many societies, girls and their mothers eat only after the men and boys are fed.
- Women make up half of the world's population but own just 1 percent of its wealth. Seventy percent of the 1.3 billion living in poverty are women.

- A girl is twice as likely to not be educated as a boy.
- Two million girls, mostly in Africa and the Middle East, are mutilated through female circumcision to diminish their sexual desire. Little girls who survive the procedure grow up to face painful sex, possible infertility, and a great chance of dying during childbirth. (Cunningham and Hamilton 18)

Women and girls face many challenges and circumstance. Due to poverty, lack of education, and mutilating violence against women, they are unable to thrive to their fullest potential. These worldwide attacks against women affect how women are viewed by others and how women view themselves.

Demoralizing stereotypes. While slavery in America ended in 1863 at the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, still blatant as well as obscure reminders of the negative stereotypes that were assigned to women continue. Authors Charisse Jones and Kumea Shorter-Gooden capsulize the breadth of a continued cycle of misidentification of the black woman in America that far exceeds the end of slavery and the birthing of emancipation.

Subsequently, Jones and Shorter-Gooden initiated the African American Women's Voices Project and recorded the experiences of 333 survey respondents and 71 interviewees as related to black women in America and pervasive race and gender myths (5-6). They say, "In response to the relentless oppression, black women in our country have had to perfect what we call *shifting,* a sort of subterfuge that African-Americans have long practiced to ensure their survival in our society" (6). Thus, women change their behavior, attitudes, or tone in accordance with the company they are in (7).

Conclusively, women are still reeling from unfair and derogatory assumptions that have been made about them:

> While most people of color, and African Americans in particular, are perceived through distorted lens, Black women are routinely defined by a specific set of grotesque caricatures that are reductive, inaccurate and unfair. Bell hooks of the City College of New York enumerates these "gender racist stereotypes" that include the emasculating Sapphire, the desexualized Mammy, and the scheming temptress Jezebel. Sapphire is harsh, loud, uncouth, usually making the other characters seem more professional, more charming, more polished by contrast. (Jones and Shorter-Gooden 3)

Black women bear the brunt of many unfair stigmas that suggest that they are inadequate, uncouth, and indestructible. These assumptions and insinuations about their character are unfair and untrue. Further, these unfair images generate the sentiment that these women can endure whatever circumstances and pressures are placed on them. They perpetuate the thought that black women are tough and do not need the same level of protection and support as other women.

The demoralizing myths about women are images that tend to haunt them as they internalize a disturbing sense of their self-identity and self-worth that is undermined by racist stereotypes and judgments based on the color of their skin. Some women even project negativism onto those who look like themselves in order to deal with their own pain and rejection. Jones and Shorter-Gooden say, "Ultimately, we hurt others because of our own pain. Perhaps this explains, in part, why those who were victimized by the same rejection in regard to racism and skin color would themselves reject and hurt innocent children" (39-40). Victims of biased and unfair stereotypes experience hurt that they sometimes inflict upon innocent others.

Women have been told a lie that they do not fit the image of having physical beauty and that their overall personhood is inadequate and insufficient. Due to age-old

systems that are rebirthed through white racism as well as self-hatred, they are haunted

by paradigmatic negative images of being African-American women.

Inferiority. Black women often work harder to prove that they are just as

adequate as other people in various realms of society. Jones and Shorter-Gooden say,

"Many African American women find that they must routinely struggle to disprove this

untruth, often going to greater lengths simply to demonstrate that they are intelligent,

competent, trustworthy, and reliable as their non-Black friends, associates and

coworkers" (11). Women are often burdened by the pressure of having to try harder in

order to gain the same respect and acclaim as others in society. These strenuous efforts

cause unfair pressure and results in them compromising their health by overworking in

order to overcompensate.

Unshakable myth. Black women are unshakable. Somehow they are physically

and emotionally impervious to life's most challenging events and circumstances.

Accordingly, this stereotype, as indicated by the study, results in women having trouble

expressing and accepting their own disappointments and vulnerabilities.

Unfeminine myth. Due to being deemed strong, invulnerable, and unshakable,

black women are stereotyped as unfeminine. The study suggests they try to conform to

ideals concerning femininity. Jones and Shorter-Gooden say, "To avoid being labeled

overbearing, or too assertive, a Black woman may suppress her opinions and her voice.

She may mute her personality" (11). Women face the unfair pressure of being tempted to

conform to certain characters and display certain personality traits in order to be seen as

feminine. Consequently, their self-identity is diminished and they may not be able to

engage self-expression, which leads to the development of feelings of inadequacy and self-esteem issues.

Prone to criminal behavior myth. Black women are especially prone to criminal behavior: "Numerous women speak of experiences in which sales people, police officers, security guards, and even colleagues at work falsely perceive them as dishonest and untrustworthy, as law-breaking crooks who must be watched at every moment" (Jones and Shorter-Gooden 11). Women face the harsh reality of being thought of as deviant and untrustworthy. Resultantly, they may not have feelings of inadequacy, but also feelings of resentment and hostility.

Sexually promiscuous and irresponsible myth. Fifth, that black women are sexually promiscuous and irresponsible. According to Jones and Shorter-Gooden, the truth contradicts these myths as research indicates that black women's sexual practices are typically more conservative than those of white women:

> *In Stolen Women: Reclaiming Our Sexuality, Taking Back Our Lives,* Gail
> E. Wyatt describes the findings of her in-depth research with two
> representative samples of women in Los Angeles County. She found that
> while Black women were slightly more likely than White women to have
> an extramarital affair, White women tended to have more sexual
> relationships during adolescence, were more likely to initiate sex with
> their partner, were more likely to engage in cunnilingus, fellatio, and anal
> sex, and were more likely to engage sex with more than one person at a
> time. (31)

Misconceptions and stereotypes about black women's sexuality are unfounded, and a lie has been told about who black women are. This vociferous lie continues to perpetuate the controlling image of Jezebel, and renders black women as inadequate, inferior, and oversexed as compared to other women.

Due to the mythological perceptions of the African-American woman, she is gravely misunderstood and finds herself in a constant struggle to defend herself while fighting to rise above the insidious insults and unwarranted assaults on her personhood as well as her spirituality. While others are expected to succumb to the pressures of life and are excused from their episodes of faltering faith, the African-American woman is often ridiculed and chastised when she breaks under pressure and shows her candid humanness. Elaine M. Flake parallels the misunderstanding of Job's wife with the misunderstanding of these women. Flake says, "She is an ignored and overlooked woman. Few have viewed 'Mrs. Job' as an individual, a co-sufferer with her husband. Few have acknowledged her pain and despair" (22). In defense of the moral character and spiritual conduct of *Mrs. Job*, Flake considers the mental anguish and trauma she received as resulting from the heavenly wager designated for her husband: "Imagine what it must have been like for Mrs. Job—her earthly possessions gone, her children dead, and her husband pitifully sick. How much more could a woman take?" (23). Women have taken the weight of their burdens as well as that of the African-American man.

Women, while deemed strong and unbreakable, have at times crumbled under the pressure. Job's wife questioned her husband for persisting in his integrity and told him to curse God and die. Flake says, "It should be no surprise that in all of her pain and brokenness, Mrs. Job experienced moments in which her faith faltered" (24). Women are under pressure to live up to society's expectations as well as their own, to be strong when faced with the harshest conditions and circumstances, and not to break under the pressure. These expectations are unrealistic, and even as Mrs. Job cracked under the pressure, other women have and will, too: "We cannot afford to judge Mrs. Job too

quickly. For, if we look closely, we will see in this woman much of ourselves" (25).

Women must face the reality of weaknesses within themselves as well as in other women.

Exploitation and Dehumanization

Women have historically been exploited in numerous ways, including sexually.

Resultantly, they have been stripped of the dignity of having authority over their own

body. Marla F. Frederick says, "[T]hey were simply instruments guaranteeing the growth

of the slave labor force. They were breeders—animals, whose monetary value could be

precisely calculated in terms of their ability to multiply their numbers" (Frederick 187).

This treatment and set of circumstances have led to many of the unfair stereotypes about

women today and the misconception that they are invulnerable and invincible. African-

American women face double biases. Thus, the demands and pressure of women are

incalculable as they gain specificity in two broad arenas of discrimination and bias.

Health Disparities

The 2010 Black Women's Agenda, shows life expectancy for a black woman in

1970 was 68.3 years. Now, her life expectancy is 77 years, and projections suggest by

2041, she will be in the majority of women (Jeffries et al. 218-24). Even so, black women

have a higher risk of disease, disability, and early mortality than other minority groups.

Amanda Johnson cites diseases that greatly affect black women:

> Heart disease is a number one killer of both men and women. However, it
> is more prevalent in [B]lack women than [W]hite women. Black women
> also have a greater risk of death from heart disease than women of other
> races. Stroke is the third leading cause of death for [b]lack women, with
> cancer being the second. (76)

Black women are stereotyped as being strong but are indeed vulnerable to disease and

suffering in ways that other minority groups are not. Other health problems that

disproportionately affect women include asthma, obesity, glaucoma, hypertension, high cholesterol, lupus, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections.

On the upside, however, Dr. Lynn Rosenberg, principal investigator of the Black Women's Health Study, says the proportion of smokers in the study has dropped in the past fifteen years, and the number of women exercising has increased. In addition, more respondents are getting their mammograms and pap tests (Jeffries et al. 218-24). In the absence of cures to some diseases, early detection is a solution that saves lives and increases the likelihood of having a better quality of life.

African-American women also face health disparities as related to unwanted pregnancy and abortion because they are unable to afford quality contraceptives and health care services (Omara-Alwaha). According to the New York-based Guttmacher Institute, "Black women are three times more likely to experience an unexpected pregnancy than white women, and are four times more like to die from complications related to their pregnancy" (Omara-Alwala). Women face the stresses and struggles that stem from these undeserved conditions and challenges.

Additionally, HIV/AIDS is a threat to the health and well-being of women in America, as 66 percent of all new cases nationally belong to African-American women (Omara-Alwala). Atima Omara-Alwala says, "HIV/AIDS-related illness is now the leading cause of death among black women ages 25-34, as black women are at risk for HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases due to the way they experience life." Reduced partner options and declining marriage rates have resulted in some black women compromising their health by not insisting that their sexual partners use condoms. Jones and Shorter-Gooden attribute the high incidence of HIV among African-American

women to an increasing number of women contracting the virus from sexual relations

with HIV-positive men:

> Other than abstinence, the consistent and correct use of condoms is known
> to be the best defense against contracting HIV sexually, and a number of
> researchers have explored the factors that impact women's use and nonuse
> of condoms. Gail Wyatt and her colleagues at UCLA deduce from their
> research that because of the perception of male unavailability, African-
> American women may not challenge black cultural norms that encourage
> unprotected sex. (228)

Women compromise their health and in some cases, shorten their lifespan by having

unprotected sex.

While statistics show nationally, an alarming rate of HIV cases among African-

American women, minimal behavioral interventions are in place to help lower the risk of

HIV among women (El-Bassel et al. 996-1001). Accordingly, "[v]ery few US-based

studies have focused exclusively on African-American women, and a limited number of

studies have been tailored for this population" (996-1001). Because of extenuating

circumstances that find no easy solution, HIV/AIDS continues to be a great concern

especially in the African-American community, and particularly among women.

In addition, among the many health disparities in the African-American

community and particularly among women is obesity. Johnson labels the problem of

obesity as an epidemic: "There is a major epidemic going on within the [b]lack

population that [b]lack Americans, particularly [b]lack women, tend to ignore" (73).

While they ignore this problem, it continues to affect their health in alarming proportions.

Women are largely affected by obesity, as statistics show 81.6 percent of black women

being overweight or obese and 53.9 percent suffering from obesity. The vast number of

health implications that are associated with this condition is alarming (73). Women's

health is affected by obesity, and this causal factor contributes to some health disparities they experience. Johnson says, "Being obese is not just an issue of physical appearance; it has the insidious potential to create havoc in one's life. Surprisingly, numerous health problems are linked to obesity" (75). Johnson says black women have the highest rates of high blood pressure among all US women (75). Women must seek answers to this problem and not allow it to have long-term effects on their health and life expectancy.

Poverty

African-Americans suffer in greater numbers than other populations from hunger and poverty ("Fact Sheet"). The "Fact Sheet" reveals, "Among the 38.1 million African-Americans, who make up 12.4 percent of the US population, one in four lives below the federal poverty line, compared to about one in eight Americans overall." Poverty is a crippling factor in the African-American community and is especially a threat to children's mortality.

African-Americans have lower income levels than other US populations due to disparities in education and employment. Resultantly, they are unable to build up assets, which would enable them to recover when faced with a medical emergency or losing their job. In addition, "African-Americans are less likely to own their home than the overall US population. In 2009, 46.2 percent of African-Americans owned a home, compared to 67.4 percent of the total population" ("Fact Sheet"). Blacks suffer disproportionately due to low income.

Many women live in poverty due to unfair and unjust systems of oppression that continue to blame them for their demise as well as disallow them to become disentangled from hideous controlling images, two of which were born in slavery—the Jezebel and the

mammy—and continue along with others to resurface more than a century and a half

after emancipation. Authors Liliane Cambraia Windsor, Eloise Dunlap, and Andrew

Golub discuss the depowering controlling images that are handed down as a mechanism

of continuing a cycle of poverty and oppression for women. They say, "In this manner,

these stereotypes are central to the process by which impoverished African–American

women are blamed for their own oppression as opposed to supported in their struggles

with difficult and interconnected challenges" (291). Controlling images portray women in

ways that suggest they are responsible for the harsh treatment and disrespect that they

receive. These images are derogatory and defaming and assassinate the personhood of

women.

The images that assault the character and personhood of African-American

women are detestable and do not show who they really are:

a. The Jezebel image helped justify slavery by portraying African-American women as subhuman. This image promotes the belief that black women have insatiable sexual desires and promiscuity. Accordingly, they cannot be raped because they enjoy sex under any circumstances.

b. The mammy image can be traced back to the 1800s when slave traders attempted to hide the cruel reality of slavery by presenting it as a paternalistic system in which slaves and slave owners loved and took care of each other. Today, the mammy image persists as the overweight, happy, lazy, and stupid woman who is not capable of performing well in meaningful employment positions.

c. The sapphire image perpetuates a belief that African–American women are aggressive, domineering, and masculine. Sapphire was aggressive, loud, obnoxious, and capable of taking down any men. This image of toughness justifies imposing heavy work and violence on unfeminine, coarse women.

d. In the 1970s, Ronald Reagan crowned the welfare queen controlling image when he described the African-American woman who had successfully received a significant amount of money from the government by "playing" the welfare system. This controlling image reflects the belief that women are lazy, unwed, negligent mothers who

start bearing children during their teens and then depend on the
government to support their household.

e. In the 1980s, the crack whore controlling image emerged contending
that women who use crack will do anything to get their drugs
especially trading sex. Indeed, many black families were devastated
from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s by a mother's crack use. (291-
292)

Controlling images are vices used to destroy the image of women and to justify the

misdeeds of white slave masters. These images are still used today and present a negative

and untrue view about the personhood and character of women who have in many cases

been victimized by unfair circumstances. "Poor persons living in high-poverty

neighborhoods face numerous and interconnected social problems, including substandard

housing, educational failure, inadequate medical and dental care, hunger, poor nutrition,

drug abuse, crime, family stress, violence, and despair" (291). Women living in poverty

are often labeled as lazy and unfit mothers. Controlling images assign unfair images of

them and reinforce age-old systems of prejudice and racism.

Violence against Women

Women have experienced violence in many forms and at the hands of strangers

and acquaintances alike. The violence they face has often been ignored by others as well

as themselves. They are thought to have contributed to their own demise and are expected

to be stronger than others who experience the same assault.

Violence against women is a worldwide problem and is not limited to any

particular race or socioeconomic class, particularly domestic violence and also intimate

partner violence, also called as such because it is violence. Research indicates that while

one in four women will experience domestic violence, the implications for African-

American women are significant. They are seen as strong, fearless, and able to protect

themselves from assault (Bent-Goodley 307-16). Once again, age-old and demeaning stereotypes about women are at the helm of how others perceive their plight, and how they accord their response or lack thereof. Resultantly, women are not only victimized by their intimate partners but are also victimized by a cycle of demeaning and unfair stereotypes and presumptiveness.

Women have been denied housing and shelter because they did not sound fearful enough or sounded too strong. Angela Mae Kupenda of the Mississippi School of Law says, "In many minds a picture has been painted of Black women as hardened, tough, back-talking, strong, permissive, and undeserving of protection, women for whom blows might not be considered cruelty" (qtd. in Roberts). Thus, a lack of cultural competence has barred African-American women from receiving services to support and protect them adequately in the face of domestic violence.

While women are perceived as hard and tough, in actuality, they are vulnerable to their circumstances and very much affected by the abuse as well as the lack of support from systems that continue to keep them on the outside by denying them access to much-needed resources and services that could ultimately save their lives. An additional cause of continued abuse and lack of support is due to women's racial loyalty. Susan Chaney and Letty John say, "To some black women, racial loyalty requires a victim to withstand abuse and make sacrifices for the greater benefit of the black community. Black victims may hesitate to get help out of fear that their partners will be treated unfairly." Thus, women continue to carry the weight of their own oppression and fears as well as that of the African-American males. They face an unrelenting barrage of harm in trading their safety for the protection of the African-American man from the wiles of social injustice.

If women are to survive and thrive, society must refocus on programs and other

resources that will educate women on the dynamics of domestic violence, sexual assault

and rape, and other acts of violence; provide intervention for women who have been

victimized; provide a viable plan for survival; and, empower women to have authority

over possibilities of violence and/or assault. A collaborative effort among local, state, and

federal agencies will allow women to feel supported and empowered to live in victory

and break their silence. One domestic survivor's sentiments are expressed by Linda H.

Hollies:

> After experiencing the domestic violence of his own kinpeople, who sold
> him out to Herod and had him crucified by the Roman government, Jesus
> went to Calvary. He died, only to rise again! After resurrection, Jesus met
> Mary Magdalene in a garden and charged her to "go and tell." We are all
> like Mary Magdalene, women of destiny and purpose! I refuse to be the
> mule, the donkey, or the silent, raped, sodomized, and cut-up woman—not
> this time! I wanted you to know that it happened to me, so I am telling!
> (80)

Jesus was abused by his own people and became victorious as he defied death and the

grave through his resurrection and by the message of his victory. Women are empowered

to break the silence of domestic violence as they go and tell about the victory of Christ

over death and the grave.

Sexual violence is a problem that affects both women and men in the United

States. Mary Ann Liebert says, "In 1995, an estimated 400,000 women and men had been

raped in the preceding twelve months, with an estimated twenty-one million (eighteen

percent of women and three percent of men) being victimized at least once in their

lifetime" (453). These statistics reflect indicate the severity of this problem and the need

for solutions and resolve.

While sexual assault statistics are high, in general, rates among minority women are higher than those among white women. Resultantly, "it is important to understand factors, including disparities that are related to the assault history and quality of care in order to plan emergency care interventions and to prevent adverse health outcomes" (454). Subsequently, women clergy have also been victims of sexual assault. They know through lived experiences the effects of rape and are able to identify with the pain these women experience while providing both spiritual and emotional support.

Depression

Because the consuming image of women having a superhuman tolerance and ability to sustain incalculable pressures and to withstand the many storms, struggles, and stresses they may face on a daily basis, many women have withheld their true feelings and suppressed their emotions. As a result of denying and not sharing their fears, hurts, disappointments, and emotional needs, they may resultantly turn inward. Still, others have found a refuge in the church, which has provided a safe space for counsel and conciliation:

> When problems such as unwed motherhood and divorce arise, the prayer meeting is both a forum for announcing the impending trouble and for gathering social supports necessary to endure and actively cope with the situation. Church members may render various forms of social support besides prayer. (Wiggins 89)

Depression must be addressed as women pursue emotional and mental wellness and healing from past tormenting memories and present circumstances and realities.

Education

Included among the myths about African-American women is that they are inferior to other people. According to Jones and Shorter-Gooden, they are stereotyped as

unintelligent, lazy, unmotivated, unattractive, difficult to deal with, and unable to

maintain a functional family (13). However, these stereotypes and assumptions may be

challenged due to current statistics of African-American women's education:

> In reality, on a number of levels—higher education, career development, professional positions—Black women in our nation are increasingly competing shoulder-to-shoulder with other Americans. According to recent statistics, seventy-eight percent of African-American women ages twenty-five and older have completed high school, seventeen percent have completed a bachelor's degree or more, and close to half a million have earned a master's degree or more. The high school completion rate of seventy-eight percent compares favorably to the graduation rate of eighty-five percent for White women; and while the rate has almost doubled for White women since 1960, the rate for Black women has nearly quadrupled. (13)

Statistics prove that black women are not inferior to other Americans educationally and

are in the ranks of the highly educated in American society. Despite unfair stereotypes

they continue to advance educationally. Jones and Shorter-Gooden say, "Moreover, from

1977 through 1997, the number of Black women with bachelor's degrees increased by

seventy-seven percent and the number with master's degrees jumped by thirty-nine

percent" (13). Women are advancing in levels and proportions that show their ability to

transcend the challenges and barriers that have been placed before them since slavery.

They are freed to pursue the highest levels of academic achievement and disprove the

systemic myths thrust upon them.

Women are competitive in the business professional realm and account for a

significant percentage of managers and other professionals. Jones and Shorter-Gooden

indicate a rise in black women's achievements in comparison to those of white women:

> From 1989 to 1995, the number of [b]lack women in managerial and professional positions rose by forty-percent, which was a much greater rate of increase than [w]hite women. And yet the general public, by large, does not seem to be aware of these soaring rates of achievement. (14)

Statistics disprove the myth that black women are inferior to other women, and show,

rather, they are in some cases, superior to them in their achievements.

Women clergy are also concerned about ministerial education and training. While

the number of women attending and graduating from seminaries is also high, a potential

danger in their continued urgency in resisting elements of gender discrimination is

present:

> This may be due to the increase in women students to the point that they
> are no longer a minority in the student body (or not a small minority), the
> substantial gains women have made in being accepted and well-treated in
> seminaries, hearing inclusive language used by most professors and male
> students, and seeing more women in parish positions. (Carpenter 43)

African-American women have been viewed as inferior in many arenas and

unprofessional as compared to other Americans. Statics disprove this theory and show

them as equals to others and, in some cases, even more progressive and capable.

While women of every race face their own constellation of problems, the

challenges stacked against women of color in America are daunting. External stereotypes

and controlling images may not even be in the conscious awareness of a woman as such,

yet she finds herself fighting for self-confidence, dignity, and opportunity and, at the

same time, feels unable to ask for help or even make choices that are for her own

wellness. Even women who are believers find these same stereotypes and struggles

within their families and churches. Ministry to women, therefore, must deal with the grip

of historic, institutional, relational, and personal misidentifications and prejudicial

attitudes that African-American women internalize.

The Response of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The black church became a refuge to many, especially during the Civil Rights era, which proved to be a restless time of presumptive hope. Michael N. Dash and Christine D. Chapman say, "Social conditions placed a special burden on black churches; they had to be social centers, political forums, school houses, mutual aid societies, refuges from racism and violence, and places of worship" (2). The African Methodist Episcopal Church has through its worship and witness addressed the needs, concerns, and challenges of humankind and, in particular, those of the African-American.

Providing Dignity and Hope

The church developed strategies that helped dignify African-Americans. These included dressing in their very best clothing for church on Sunday morning and using their surname instead of their first name in interracial public settings. In addition, church officers' initials and surnames were written on cornerstones and signs, and many black clergymen became known by their title, first and middle name initials, and last name (Gilkes 47). In the church community, the terms *brother* and *sister* preceded the last name, and addressing one by his or her first name was not an option. While very little respect was given to these persons of color, within white America, titles became symbols of honor and respect, even for the *Brother* and *Sister*. The African-American community moved forth with the black church as its voice and as a place of refuge from the howling winds of oppression and racism:

> In a strange and alien land, they were enslaved, marginalized, denied respect, and oppressed by the very people who introduced them to Christianity! The unique history allows the gathered Christian community to freely call itself by whatever name it chooses. African American, Black, and Afro-American have replaced the names spuriously given by Euro-American evangelizers. (Costen 3)

African-Americans have been disrespected by white America and denied the honor of being called names symbolizing honor and respect. Consequently, in the black church, they found a place of honor and refuge and were empowered to rename themselves in dignity and as they saw fit.

Defending the Disadvantaged and Oppressed

Black churches combated racism and the oppression of blacks by defending the disadvantaged and providing opportunities for their advancement. Bettye Collier says, "Slave mothers also affiliated with the Methodist Church because of its support for the education of black children" (20). Subsequently, the African Methodist Episcopal Church emulates the character and conduct of Jesus. Ella Pearson Mitchell says, "The most important characteristics of Jesus' earthly ministry were grace and compassion, justice and equality, and the freedom to become fulfilled children of God" (15). Thus, the compassion and care Jesus showed coincides with the mission of the AME Church as it has been an arm for social justice and a beacon for equality and liberation since its beginning in 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Norma Cook Everist says, "The church is not just the vessel that bears the good news of Jesus Christ; the Church is the good news, it is gospel action" (151). The AME Church provides a message of hope and liberation and is actively involved in promoting social justice and restored hope.

Bishop Richard Allen, the founder of African Methodism, expressed a great concern for the plight of African-Americans who were enslaved in America. Martha Simmons and Frank A. Thomas quote Allen as, saying, "I mention experience to you, that your hearts may not sink at the discouraging prospects you may have, and that you may put your trust in God, who sees your condition" (109). The gospel of the African

Methodist Episcopal Church is a liberating gospel that reminds men and women that God

extends mercy to those who love him.

Preaching Salvation and Deliverance

Mitchell capsulizes the mission of the black church. She says, "We, as a black

church, with our inescapable involvement in our neighborhoods and communities, shall

never be whole without those whom Jesus Christ calls us to reclaim. Our Lord Himself

was deep into the reclamation of souls" (73). The black church, which includes the

African Methodist Episcopal Church, is a vehicle first and foremost for the reclaiming of

lost souls though the preaching of the gospel.

Promoting Health Education and Wellness

Many African-American churches promote health education through the varied

programs that address health issues especially prevalent in the African-American

community. These churches are willing to be responsible for providing health education

through many creative venues, including health fairs and health and wellness centers,

health information in church bulletins, and community health events. In her book, Everist

asks, "How come? How come we who believe in the God of life cannot promote

lifestyles of wellness in the parish?" (138). Promoting wellness means encouraging all

people to be proactive with their health by means of awareness and prevention.

St. Paul AME Church, Lexington, Kentucky. St. Paul AME Church in

Lexington, Kentucky, partners with the Hope Center in Lexington to host Hope in the

City, an annual community program in Douglas Park that includes entertainment and a

barbecue where information is shared on HIV awareness and prevention. Persons living

with the virus share their stories, and free HIV testing is provided. This event attracts

hundreds each year and is one of St. Paul's ways of helping heal HIV/AIDS, which

currently has African-American women as its largest population in Kentucky and in the

US. Rev. Troy I. Thomas is St. Paul's pastor, and I serve as the assistant pastor and

coordinator of the program.

Bethel AME Church, Wilmington, Delaware. Bethel AME Church, located in

Wilmington, Delaware, provides a model for churches in helping to reduce the stigma of

HIV/AIDS within communities of color and eliminating health disparities ("Beautiful

Gate"). Renee Palmore-Beaman, RN, Founder and Executive Director, and her husband,

Pastor Sylvester S. Beaman, established Beautiful Gate Outreach Center, an HIV and

AIDS testing program and part-time primary care facility at the church. Bethel is among

those AME churches who show concern by providing educational and preventive

services in the community.

Author James H. Evans, Jr. compares the idea of health and disease in the Hebrew

Bible as defined in the Mosaic Law as similar to the description adapted by the World

Health Association in 1946. Health is "a state of complete well-being and not merely the

absence of disease or infirmity" (59). The AME Church through its many programs,

services, and auxiliaries promotes total wellness in the lives of all.

Promoting Spiritual Empowerment

Ebenezer AME Church in Fort Washington, Maryland, where the pastors are Rev.

Dr. Grainger Browning and Rev. Dr. JoAnn Browning, has an annual women's season

each spring that culminates in a three-day women's retreat that provides an opportunity

for women to receive refreshing relaxation, healing, restoration, and spiritual revival.

Thousands of women from the church's congregation as well as women from other churches attend this event each year.

Spiritual empowerment is evoked when one is liberated from oppressive forces and freed from the shackles that allow a continuance of living in the bonds of oppression and indifference: Michael N. Dash, Jonathan Jackson, and Stephen C. Rasor say, "Our spirituality is truly a liberating and whole one when we are compelled by the Creator and the creative energy of spiritual reflection to participate with God in the life-giving acts of justice and peace in God's world" (7). The African Methodist Episcopal Church is deeply concerned about liberation and empowerment through living and acting justly in the world.

Promoting Power through Prayer

The Fourth Episcopal District of the AME Church presented the World of Women Praying Convocation in Chicago, Illinois, in 2013. The ecumenical gathering brought together women of varying denominations, races, and nationalities and presented specific colleges/collective gatherings that addressed topics, such as ending violence against women, poverty, education, and other topics concerning the health and spirituality of women. It was organized by the Rev. Dr. Cecelia Williams Bryant, supervisor of missions for the district where her husband Bishop John R. Bryant is the presiding prelate.

Providing Women's Ministry Events

St. Paul AME Church in Rockville Centre, New York, has an annual Sister to Sister Prayer Breakfast, which provides an opportunity for breaking bread together and sharing in Christian fellowship and sisterly love. A sermon is preached and an

opportunity extended for special prayer and healing. The pastor and convener of this ministry is Rev. Eleanor Dixon-Hobbs.

Addressing Social Issues

St. Peter AME Church in Decatur, Georgia, holds prayer breakfasts and panel discussions that address domestic violence. Thus, they highlight the need for the church to become instrumental in educating, equipping, and empowering the community to end violence against women.

Each of these programs and experiences reflects an effort of churches within the denomination to address some of the many challenges and concerns confronting women. They send a message to women that the church is concerned and ready to stand with them as they face challenges in health disparity, violence against women, the need for healthy self-esteem and self-identity, and the impact of poverty. The AME Church continues to fulfill its mission of ministering to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, that comprises twenty episcopal districts representing the geography of the entire US as well as seven districts outside of the US is not blind to the challenges, concerns, and struggles women face. These are only a few of the ways that churches have addressed some of the problems and concerns of women in the twenty-first century.

The Response of African-American Women Clergy

At a time when African-Americans were still living and reliving the aftermath of slavery, the black preacher man became a looming hope for spiritual retribution and advance. Still, women clergy and community leaders also shared in the conquest for

liberty and equality. Harriett Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Jarena

Lee, the first woman to become a preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal Church,

are among those preachers and leaders.

Women are not only subjected to racism and classism but also to sexism and

gender bias. While the black church became a catalyst for expressing love, liberty, and a

lifting of burdens of oppression for black people, still black women, particularly women

clergy within the black church, would face discrimination at the hands of white society

and also the black church in many cases.

Subsequently, if black women fill the pews, there should not be so few in the

pulpit. African-American women clergy face many challenges today, and therefore, stand

in need of healing themselves as they minister to the healing needs of other African-

American women.

Challenges AME African-American Women Clergy Face

Women clergy face many challenges that are connected to the church's perception

of the role of women in church. Due to patriarchy and headship, some question the

authenticity of their calling and function: "The question of women and their position as

equal partners in the church remains very much with all members of the church, men and

women" (Grissen and Spykman 12). Women in the pews often do not relate to the

struggle that women clergy have but see racism as the forefront antigen. African-

American women are more adamant about racial discrimination than gender inequity.

Therefore, their forefront concerns and how they exert their energy and passion have

been consistent with combating racism as opposed to sexism.

People's perceptions about male and female clergy. Challenges which stem from people's perceptions of male and female clergy are real today. The following list includes my personal observations and experiences as a woman in ministry and as I have interacted with other women clergy.

- Many still see clergy as being male;

- Minority women face both racial and gender discrimination;

- Perceptions, policies, and preferences keep qualified women out of the pulpit;

- Some claim women are not called by God to preach (1 Tim.; 1 and 2 Cor.);

- Some cite the story of Adam and Eve;

- Women are appointed to smaller, poor missions, and not major churches;

- Women have to switch denominations;

- Women have founded their own churches;

- Some brethren will not accept women preachers;

- Some believe Jesus only chose men (the disciples);

- Women are not being ordained, licensed, or officially recognized;

- Women in the pews prefer a male pastor over a female pastor; and,

- Women engage in self-hatred, helping to perpetuate the system.

Perceptions about the role of women in the church perpetuates continued discrimination against women and breeds feelings among women clergy of intimidation and even contempt for some current religious structures and systems. Although I have been discouraged by some of these personal experiences still I have not been distracted from my God-given assignment as a herald of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Calvin H. Sydnor, III cites several challenges AME women clergy face. These challenges stem from age-old conceptions of women being inferior to men and incapable of being in positions of leadership over men.

Disrespect by AME male clergy. Women clergy are still being addressed as *Honey, Darling, Sweetheart, Baby, Mrs., Miss,* and *Sister.* Some clergy and laity have trouble rendering the same level of respect to women as they do to men (Sydnor). Women face the challenge of a never-dying system of patriarchy. Some male clergy accepted the role of women clergy while in seminary with them but abandoned these women after their seminary experience together ended. Cleophus LaRue says, "Even black male seminarians, supporters of women while in school, upon graduation, tend to return to the all-male club of pastoral leadership, down-playing or outright forsaking the bonds forged with their women preacher friends and acquaintances while in school" (7). Women have traditionally supported the black male but have often been forsaken and abandoned by him in their time of need.

Not included to the extent as AME male clergy. At various levels of the denomination, women are not included as worship leaders in worship services. In addition, in some annual conferences, women have not preached the annual sermon.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, women are actively involved in ministry and service. Leona M. Anderson and Pamela Dickey Young say, "There are indications that women occupied many leadership roles in the early Christian community. Women are called 'deacon' and 'apostle' in Romans 16:1, 7" (163). Authors L. E. Maxwell and Ruth C. Dearing share the names and accounts of several ministering women in the New Testament (47-72). The following list provides a few that they cited:

- Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:28, 35),

- Anna, the first woman missionary to exercise the gift of prophecy (Luke 2:36-38),

- The woman of Samaria, whom many believed on Jesus because of her testimony (John 4:39),

- Mary of Bethany, who poured ointment on Jesus' body as an act that was a public testimony of the sacrifice the Lamb of God was about to make (Matt. 26:6-7), and

- Mary Magdalene to whom the risen Christ committed his first message in resurrection (John 20:18).

God has, from the beginning, provided a place of honor and service for women and does not consider them second class in giftedness or serving: "Jesus showed himself not simply to be at ease with women, enjoying their friendship, but siding with them against established practices that threatened their well-being" (Raines 19). Jesus showed compassion to women and affirmed and supported them in their challenges.

Not granted opportunities. Almost always, when significant pastoral appointments are made, women pastors are not considered in the mix. Still, many women clergy have resolved that no person or circumstance can hinder God's plan for their lives: "When God calls you, when God anoints you, when God puts words in your mouth and sets you before the people, know that you have been set aside, sanctified and ordained by God to do God's work" (Brown 48). Women clergy face discrimination and subjugation in the secular realm as well as in the church. The black church has not demonstrated the compassion for, and affirmation of, women that God shows, and has done little to promote women to positions traditionally held by men.

Within the past two decades, a new term, *womanist,* has emerged in black

theological scholarship. Alice Walker, who first coined this term, used it to describe the

qualities of bodaciousness, assertiveness, maturity, self-love, community involvement,

and faith manifest in the lives of black women. Walker's definition was predicated on the

folk expression "womanish" (Wiggins 174). Daphne C. Wiggins says, "Womanist

theologians and scholars have expanded the term to describe both methodology

approaches and particular ways of black women's being in the world" (174). Womanist

theology challenges the black church to include the specific issues of women as related to

sexism in its agenda of black liberation.

While patriarchal language is the outgrowth of viewing the world and every

aspect of life through the lenses of male dominance and superiority, womanist scholars

assert the need for inclusive language. They value and advocate for physical and spiritual

salvation of the family, redistribution of wealth, goods, and services in American society,

and the end of race, sex, and class supremacy. Wiggins says, "In addition, they are

devoted to articulating a theological liberative position for women even when it might be

at odds with a black male perspective on what would enhance African-American

existence" (175). Traditionally, women have felt the need to protect black men even

when the black church has fought for liberation and equality for blacks yet have not used

the same standard and level of energy and enthusiasm in insisting on ending sexism and

discrimination in the black church as related to how women are treated.

The womanist ethicist Katie Canon, according to Wiggins, describes what will be

required of the black church if it is to construct and embrace a more inclusive and

liberating ethic:

We need to analyze the social organization of the Black Church—
curricula, music, leadership, expectation, pastor-member interactions—as
well as outright sex discrimination. Far too often, the organization of the
church mirrors male dominance in the society and normalizes it in the eyes
of both female and male parishioners." (181)

She indicates a defect in the church that needs to be corrected. Of all places, women

should find equality, respect, and dignity in the black church and certainly should not be

victimized in a place that represents social justice and equality for African-Americans.

Wiggins shares another womanist theologian, Jacqueline Grant's description of

what is really meant when ministers say women are the backbone of the church.

According to Wiggins, Grant says, "What they really mean is that women are the

background and should be kept there" (177). Grant says she came to this conclusion as

she "observed that in many churches women are consistently given responsibilities in the

kitchen, while men are elected or appointed to the important boards and leadership

positions" (177). She argues that the image of Jesus as a suffering servant as the

metaphor for the Christian life is oppressive and crushes the lives of black women.

Womanist theologian Teresa L. Fry Brown says, "A womanist sees Jesus as co-sufferer,

not just as redeemer and liberator. The solidarity to fight oppression comes from a God

who suffers alongside one" (176). The womanist view embraces black liberation but

questions the black church's role in subjecting women to discrimination as it fights

against discrimination against black people.

Lack of support by African-American women in the church. Some women

observe that a woman clergy is struggling with a small, often dysfunctional congregation,

but instead of helping a struggling female pastor seems more comfortable, attaching

themselves to churches where a man is the pastor. Author Maura O'Neill offers an

explanation for the seeming lack of concern of women in coming to the aid of women clergy: "The black woman seeks liberation not only for herself, but for her family, and her efforts are directed not so much in opposing patriarchy as toward the broader social systems of society" (68). Resultantly, the battle for equality in the pulpit for women is not their battle as much as the battle for equality for a race of people.

Personal experiences. Women clergy need healing and empowerment in many of the same areas as women to whom they minister. Rejection is an experience common to women. Closely in line with rejection is being forgotten: "Women are more easily and more quickly forgotten, both singularly and together—with the added stigmas of religious, sociological, racial, and cultural prejudices" (McKenna 7). Women in ministry can relate to being forgotten as work they have done goes unnoticed and their names are not called for recognition or reward.

Women clergy have also experienced violence in their personal lives. When I held a women's conference in Lexington, Kentucky, in 2011, in a workshop for women clergy, at least five women shared personal stories that they were survivors of abusive relationships. One woman said she had survived abuse in more than one previous marriage and is grateful to be married now to a man who treats her with honor and respect.

At another women's conference sponsored by an AME church in Delaware, when an altar call was made for women who had experienced rape, women clergy were amongst those who came for healing and strength. They are aware of the lived violent experiences of other women because they, too have been victimized.

Women preachers have experience in being themselves even when they do not fit into a popular culture. They can relate to taking off masks and being real, whether accepted or not. They also rely on the strength of community for their survival and support. Sojourner Truth's narrative was positioned through the support of community:

> Indeed, the very fact that she has relied upon others to produce her narrative attests to the fact that it is in community (especially with women and children) that she establishes a sense of self-hood—even if the community is a predominantly a white one. (Douglass-Chin 68)

Women have traditionally relied on the support of community in their struggles and triumphs. They are aware of the power in building relationships in the community and in allowing the community to help bear their burdens and herald their triumphs and successes.

Rev. Leah Gaskin Fitchue, who became the first woman president of the AME Church's highly respected Payne Theological Seminary in its 160 year history, acknowledges that women have not broken through barriers of sexism in the church by themselves. Fitchue says, "[T]hey were aided by men who believed in *gender justice*" original emphasis (qtd. in Collier 481). Among those who helped Fitchue accomplish her goal were Bishops John Richard Bryant, Robert Vaughn Webster, Zedekiah Lazett Grady, Vinton Randolph Anderson, and a host of others (482). Not all men have subjugated women and perpetuated the system of sexism and gender bias in the church.

As women preachers minister to others, they can relate to their hurts and fears, as they too have their stories to tell. In 2007, Dr. Juanita Bynum, a well-known television evangelist, said she was the "new face to domestic violence" (qtd. in Reid). She allegedly suffered physical abuse at the hands of her husband, Bishop Thomas W. Weeks, who "allegedly beat, kicked, choked and threatened to kill her in the parking lot of an Atlanta-

area hotel" (Reid). She was determined to use her experience to help heal other victims of

domestic violence and "vowed to use her popular ministry and new celebrity victim

status to heighten awareness about the issue" (Reid). Women clergy have been devastated

by circumstances beyond their control and have been faced with finding safety, and, also,

healing for their hurts and pains. They have wrestled with the paradox of an omnipotent

God who has power to transcend life's circumstances but *weak and not in control* when

bad things happen to good people.

Another minister, Riva Tims, who copastored a megachurch that she and her

exhusband and the now deceased Zachary Tims built together in Orlando, Florida, shared

with *Charisma Magazine* the pain and losses she had experienced:

> According to Riva Tims, she fought to save her marriage even though her
> husband was involved in several adulterous affairs. The couple sought
> marital counseling to no avail. After being separated for two years, the
> couple divorced in 2009 ending a fifteen-year marriage. The leaders of
> New Destiny Christian Center stripped her of her co-pastor title, so she
> started Majestic Life Ministries. (Minnicks)

Women clergy have not only experienced harshness in society and in the church but also

in their homes. They have been mistreated and disrespected by those whom they have

trusted and with whom they have even formed ministerial partnerships. Still, they have

not counted all lost, but have remained committed to their call to serve as preachers,

teachers, and church leaders.

A minister's wife in New Jersey now shares her story of being viciously attacked

by a female church member whom she had befriended and who had some mental issues:

> When First Lady Theresa Whitfield found herself bleeding on the Trinity
> Baptist Church floor she couldn't cry out for help and she couldn't process
> the very real threat of death. Beating unbelievable odds, Theresa has
> recovered from a brutal attack which has left her face indelibly scarred.

> Over 2,000 stitches later and with uncounted prayer, Lady Whitfield has emerged wounded but victorious. (Whitfield)

Women clergy have befriended others and, in some cases, have been wounded by others' indifference and reproach. Some wounds lay open and continue to fester as resentment and cynicism settle in. Others have scabs and become sensitive to the touch and often bleed at inopportune times. Still others have healed completely, and only a scar remains as a reminder that what was once injured is now healed. Just as Whitfield's book is a healing testimony, so are the scars that women clergy bear.

Women clergy have experienced healing and deliverance in many areas of their lives, including deliverance from sexual sins, domestic violence, sexual assault, low self-esteem, and others. They continue to face the same temptations; thoughts of suicide and guilt; fear of failure; lack of support; disappointment; race, gender, and class discrimination; health issues, and, concerns that all women face. They are not exempt from needing the type of ministry they provide for other women.

The annals of history record the plight of women's suffrage. The Church universal must become the solution to sexism and not a conservative contributor thereto. Zero tolerance for making excuses for treating women and girls unjustly on the grounds of religious or any other ideology is needed. The church can play a pivotal role in encouraging love, support, and freedom for all people:

> Religion at its best, can give women and men, boys and girls (and people who are not wholly one or the other) a sense of being loved, valued, connected with others, and called to seek freedom for self and neighbor. (Hensman)

The church becomes a place of spiritual mockery when it abandons helping others to feel loved, valued, and connected, and an attempt to justify its contrary actions cannot be excused or justified.

Impact of AME African-American Women Clergy

Women clergy are unique in their responses to God and to the needs of others: "A woman is specially equipped with a sensitivity to walking in the Spirit" (Osaigbovo 81). Because of the spiritual makeup and sensitivity of women clergy, they are able to go to God in prayer and defend their loved ones and others for whom they intercede. Still, the journey for women who say they are called by God to preach has not been easy. Nevertheless, since the beginnings of African Methodism, and despite the odds against them, women have made known their call to preach and to serve their churches, communities, and all of humankind. Their influence and impact is innumerable, and these are a few ways their ministries impact others, in particular women.

Preaching to save souls. Despite the opposition they have faced, women clergy have captured the purpose of their calling and realize the power of the gospel to heal and mend broken lives. Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale, who pastors Ray of Hope Baptist Church in Decatur, Georgia, says, "Black preaching speaks to the troubled soul and the downtrodden spirit—giving hope to those who have lost it, offering peace in life's storms, and unearthing joy in the midst of unspeakable sorrow" (qtd. in Crouch and Gregory 8). The black preacher, both male, and, female, has traditionally preached messages to heal the souls of those who are in anguish due to life's circumstances.

Jarena Lee left her autobiography to attest to her journey into the preaching ministry. Susan J. Hubert says, "She was the first woman authorized to preach by Richard

Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1819" (49). She persevered

for the sake of the gospel. Hubert says, "Though she faced hostility in her ministry

because she was black and a minister, in one year alone, she travelled two thousand three

hundred and twenty-five miles, and preached one hundred and seventy-eight sermons"

(Hubert, 49). Her courage, tenacity, and unyielding faith have caused her to be a role

model for women in ministry today.

Lee is revered as a pioneer among women preachers, especially those who are

members in the AME denomination. She has contributed significantly to American

history and leaves an impacting legacy of faith and hope:

> Her importance is threefold. First, she exemplifies the nineteenth-century
> American religious movement's focus on personal holiness and
> sanctification. Second, she left a detailed account of her life of faith that
> serves as a valuable primary source, and third, she became an eloquent
> witness to her faith and a pioneer for women seeking license to preach in
> the Methodist traditions." (Andrews 27)

Her story is inspiring and empowering to generations of women who have heard and

responded to the call to preach in spite of prevailing attitudes, even in the church, of

racism and sexism.

Women in the AME Church who say God called them to preach still face

opposition and controversy. While they make many sacrifices, their work is left

unnoticed and unappreciated. Nevertheless, they continue to preach the gospel as well as

share their stories to strengthen and encourage other women.

Encouraging women in ministry. Rev. Lillian Frier Webb of the First Episcopal

District was elected president of the Connectional AME/Women in Ministry organization

in 1988 and served until 1996. The international organization currently has over 3,350

members worldwide and at each level (episcopal districts, annual conferences, and

presiding elder districts), and its officer are led by an executive board elected by women

preachers across its entire connectional church ("Objectives of AME/WIM"). The

mission of AME/WIM is to "define, enhance, support, and expand the presence of

women in ministry in the AME Church" ("Mission and Objectives"). The organization is

instrumental in providing guidance and encouragement for women who have accepted

the call to preach and pursue a vocational ministry.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church comprises twenty Episcopal districts in

the continental United States, Africa, India, the Caribbean, and Europe. Subsequently,

Women in Ministry (WIM) operates at each level of the denomination:

> WIM operates within each of the twenty Episcopal districts that define the African Methodist Episcopal Church and are led by an executive board elected by members—women preachers across its entire connectional church. At each level of the AME Church, (i.e., episcopal districts, annual conferences, and presiding elder districts), they have officers who serve the international network of preaching women of the gospel of Jesus Christ within the AME Church. AME/WIM currently has over 3,350 women in ministry worldwide.

Serving as leadership role models. The strength of the black community has

traditionally been assigned to the nobility and relentless persuasion of the women:

> African American women, as the womanist scholar Jacqueline Grant has asserted, have been the "backbone" of black churches, wielding enormous influence in setting the theological and cultural tone. Yet, many Americans still consider churches to be the domain of men; women are routinely cut off from access to power and ministerial authority in mainstream churches and some Pentecostal denominations. (Griffith and Savage 101)

The age-old problem of women being treated as unequal by men is seen in every arena of

life, including the church. While women have contributed much to theology and

Christianity, still they are not accepted and are in many cases, despised.

Still, women clergy have resisted the opposition that has arisen against them and have been determined to dismantle oppressive systems that have tried to nullify their gifts and calling. Bishop Vashti M. McKenzie, the first woman to be elected and consecrated as a bishop in the AME Church, says churches need prophetic leadership:

> There is a continuous need for prophetic leadership to rise up against those who would nullify the work of Jesus and question his mission in the world.... The criteria are based on being buried with Christ in baptism and raised up to be a part of the universal community. (63)

Women are those prophetic voices that are speaking out against injustice and apathy. They are prophesying in the pulpit as well as in their homes, places of work, community, and world. The need for these prophetic messengers is great and continuous.

Consequently, in the year 2000 at the forty-sixth session of the general conference of the AME Church, McKenzie, who had also received a historic appointment to Payne AME Church as its first female pastor, became the 116th elected and consecrated bishop in the AME Church. She shattered the stained-glass ceiling, opening the door for women to become episcopates in the more than two-hundred-year-old black denomination. In 2004, two more women were elected: Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry and Bishop Sara Frances Davis. The election of female bishops reminds African-American women in ministry that they can be included in the highest offices of leadership in the denomination. These historical elections speak to the systemic patriarchy that has for so long left women preachers on the outside looking in.

In 1973, Bishop Frederick H. Talbot appointed Rev. Dorothy Morris of the Guyana Conference (Sixteenth District) the first female presiding elder in the AMEC. In 1983, Bishop Vinton R. Anderson appointed Rev. Cornelia Wright of the West Virginia Conference (Third District) the first female presiding elder in the US. African-American

women clergy are being appointed to leadership positions that were traditionally reserved for men and are proving that women are just as capable of doing the business of the church and, in some cases, both more capable and more qualified.

Changes in leadership for women in the AME Church included journalism. In the 1980s and 1990s, Jayme Coleman Williams and Paulette Coleman were the first women to serve as editors of the AME Review.

In November 2003, Rev. Leah Gaskin Fitchue was appointed president of Payne Theological Seminary in Wilberforce, Ohio in its 160-year history. She became the first female to serve as president of a historically black theological seminary and the first black American woman president of a fully accredited seminary that held membership in the prestigious American Association of Theological Schools (Collier 481).

I am the assistant pastor of St. Paul AME Church in Lexington, Kentucky, and became the first female to be appointed both dean and chairperson of the Kentucky Annual Conference Board of Examiners at the Kentucky Annual Conference of the AME Church in August 2012. I coordinate programs, conferences, and events for spiritual empowerment for women that address health, violence against women, and more. I also plan ministerial training and empowerment seminars for women clergy, promoting planning initiatives for women and teen girls.

Preaching the annual sermon. Rev. Dr. Charlotte Sydnor, in the year 2011, while pastoring Shorter AME Church in Franklin, Tennessee, became the first woman to preach the annual sermon at the Tennessee Annual Conference. Opportunities for women to preach the annual sermon are given in various conferences in the AME Church. However, in some conferences, a woman pastor has never done so.

Providing ministry for African-American laywomen. Women's ministries are established at churches throughout the AME Church that call attention to the many needs and challenges of women. These challenges include violence against women, racial and gender oppression, educational needs, and building self-esteem. Some women who have taken the forefront in planning effective ministry that meets the needs of women include Rev. Dr. Cecelia Williams Bryant, episcopal supervisor of missions of the Fourth Episcopal District; Rev. Dr. Jessica Ingram, supervisor of missions of the First Episcopal District; Rev. Dr. Gloria Hammond of the New England Conference in the First Episcopal District; and Rev. Dr. JoAnn Browning, copastor of Ebenezer AME Church in Fort Washington, Maryland in the First Episcopal District. They have planned women's conferences and retreats and prayer convocations and established Women's Resource and Development Centers to provide special ministry for women. Their ministries and others address the spiritual, social, emotional, economic, and health needs of women. Areas that women's ministries touch include

- Building relationships—holding ministry events that include prayer breakfasts, luncheons, and special trips;

- Building networks— partnering with local, state, and national agencies and corporations (i.e., State Health Department, police department, HIV Prevention/Awareness agencies);

- Community outreach—providing job training and GED programs;

- Counseling—developing mentor programs for women and girls; and,

- Support systems—providing alcohol and drug programs and teen pregnancy ministries.

While facing unpleasant, undesired, and undeserved circumstance, women clergy have persevered with their faith in God and in their concern for the needs of others:

> In each historical situation, faith has to be tested and demonstrated anew. Our faith, if it is truly alive will address the complex and perilous times in which we find ourselves. The many issues and crisis of our day will test our strength and purpose. (Mollenkott 123)

Women clergy are concerned about the spiritual, health, emotional, financial, and employment needs to name a few. Their faith is tested and strengthened as they persevere in spite of the many challenges they face.

While gender bias continues to affect how women are received as reverend clergy, their impact while serving in formerly male-dominated leadership roles continues to pave a path for acceptance of women clergy not only in pulpits of traditionalism and patriarchy but into the softened hearts of those who have taken time to listen to what the Spirit continues to say to the church: "It is important that we have a deliberate, intentional ministry to women in the church because the Bible teaches so much and so clearly on manhood and womanhood" (Duncan 83). While women clergy face harsh realities of sexism in the pulpit, the church does have those who are becoming more aware of the purpose and convinced of the need for women's ministry.

Women clergy are on the brink of a new horizon to greater service, impact, and influence as they continue to preach, prophesy, and pronounce the coming of the kingdom of God in sermons as well as through practical and creative ministry experiences that provide holistic healing for both men and women, and in ministering to specific and identifiable needs of women in their churches, community, nation, and world. Women need someone who understands their stories to provide special ministry for them that will meet their needs. Brown says, "The identification of someone that

shares your story and recognizes what you need to do before you go where they have been is crucial to the lives of African American women" (Brown, God Don't Like Ugly 122). Women clergy understand the stories of other women and, in many cases, have shared the same or similar experiences. Their personal experiences along with their spiritual knowledge and understanding, have prepared them to minister to the needs of other women.

Research Design

I used a qualitative method for this research, incorporating five sources of data: pre- and postintervention surveys, evaluation of the one-day seminar, coaching call, a field notebook, and postintervention interviews. In his book, John W. Creswell defines qualitative research as "an inquiry approach that is used to explore and understand a central phenomenon where participants' responses to broad, general questions are in the form of words or images, and are analyzed for descriptions and themes" (645). According to Creswell's definition of qualitative research, "The researcher interprets the meaning of the information from this data, drawing on personal reflections and past research. The structure of the final report is flexible, and it displays the researcher's biases and thoughts" (645). Research as such provides voluminous data used to analyze and understand attitudes and behavior patterns.

The use of this interpretative paradigm helped indicate common themes among the seven women clergy in the study as data revealed their core feelings and attitudes as related to ministry for meeting the needs of women. This research design showed changes and consistencies in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior when comparing data from the pre- and postintervention surveys, coaching calls, and postinterviews. Data from the field

notebook showed patterns and themes of concerns. Data from the evaluation of the seminar showed the effectiveness of the AAWCTES in training women clergy to develop a ministry. The qualitative method provides voluminous data that may be analyzed and critiqued and helps the researcher to have a better understanding of the thought process of the participants.

An example of research using this design is Jane Goodall's study of chimpanzee social and family life. This study was unique due to Goodall naming the chimpanzees instead of giving numbers as was customary in this type of research. The study says, "In so doing, she observed them to have unique and individual personalities. She gave them names such as Fifi and David Greybeard" ("Jane Goodall's Wild Chimpanzees"). The research proved a conventional and unique approach to understanding the behaviors of the chimpanzees.

Another example is a study by D. J. Levinson and L. D. Levinson who interviewed forty-five women from varying backgrounds and compared the results with "developmental patterns discerned from earlier findings on male development" (Minter and Samuels 31). Accordingly, "they found women's lives evolved through periods of tumultuous, structure-building phases that alternated with stable periods" (32). The study allowed a wide expanse of responses where similar patterns and themes could be discerned and analyzed.

Summary

Women clergy face much controversy as to whether or not women preaching is unscriptural, when evidence in various passages of Scripture support women, as well as men being called to preach. One of the Scriptures that supports and endorses women as

preachers is Galatians 3:28. Throughout both the Old Testament and the New Testament are biblical illustrations of both men and women who engage in public ministry.

While ministry is necessary in a general sense, it is also vitally necessary in a genderspecific sense. A biblical example of addressing woman's needs is found in John 4:1-29. Jesus addressed the woman at the well's needs as he did not avoid contact with her, as he helped her to see and identify her needs, and as he provided her with resources to change the course and direction of her life. While women were devaluated in pagan culture and in ancient Rome, both the Old and New Testaments show God expressing particular care and concern for women. In the Old Testament, Hagar was visited by an angel from the Lord twice (Gen. 16:7-13; 21:15-20). In the New Testament, Jesus restored to life the widow of Nain's son (Luke 7:11-15).

In today's culture, many women are broken by their circumstances and choices they have made in life. Still others are fragmented in ways that are less obvious but merit equal attention. Some challenges women face include worldwide attacks against women, demoralizing stereotypes, America's myths, exploitation and dehumanization, health disparities, poverty, violence against women, depression, and education. Women also need spiritual empowerment that will impact their everyday living, and they need to be encouraged in the many roles they have, including being wives, mothers, widows, and single persons and caring for aged parents. These are only a few of the challenges and needs that women have.

Many people misunderstand their mystique, misinterpret their assignments, misjudge their value and worth, and mistake their strengths that they are unaffected by the weight of their burdens and incognizant of their personal needs for affirmation,

restoration, and inner healing. The problem is that churches do not have enough models of effective ministry that meet the needs of women living in the United States in the twenty-first century.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, which is the oldest black denomination in the United States, has responded to the needs of men and women by providing dignity and hope, defending the disadvantaged and oppressed, preaching salvation and deliverance, promoting health education and wellness, promoting spiritual empowerment, promoting power through prayer, providing women's ministry events, and addressing social needs.

However, women clergy have a unique opportunity to address needs of women by establishing and developing models for providing them relevant ministry. They are the ideal persons to develop such ministries because they share some of the same lived experiences and are able to see them in a spiritual light. Even though women clergy face many challenges, including people's perceptions of male and female clergy, disrespect by AME male clergy, lack of inclusion in ministry compared to male clergy, lack of opportunities, lack of support from other women in the church, and their past personal experiences. Still, they have made a significant impact in the life of the church, and especially in the lives of other women. Some areas where their impact is evidenced is in their preaching to save souls, encouraging women in ministry, serving as leadership role models, and providing ministry for laywomen.

Consequently, in order to establish more effective ministries that meets the needs of women in the twenty-first century, a three stage process must be engaged: (1) training clergy to identify the needs of the women in their setting, (2) devising a framework to

engage developing effective ministries, and (3) coaching the clergy as they develop these ministries. Women clergy are the ideal persons to develop effective ministries for women because their experiences, in addition to their spiritual insight and understanding, has prepared them to minister with understanding, compassion, and sensitivity to the needs of women.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Problem and Purpose

Many women are broken by their circumstances and the choices they have made in life. Still others are fragmented in ways that are less obvious but merit equal attention. Women need freedom from exploitation and dehumanization, educational opportunities, violence, health disparities, poverty, spiritual lethargy, and a lack of self-identity and purpose. Women clergy have a unique opportunity to address needs of women by developing effective ministries. The problem is that churches do not have enough effective ministries that meet the needs of women living in the United States in the twenty-first century.

The purpose of the research was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of those who participated in a one-day African-American women clergy training and empowerment seminar focused on the women clergy's ability to minister to the needs of women in the twenty-first century by developing ministries to women unique to their particular settings. In the qualitative method, the purposive sample entails selecting people who have awareness of the situation and who meet the criteria and attributes that are essential to the research (Sensing 83). The women clergy can relate to experiences of other women because they too are women with some of the same experiences. Additionally, their spiritual knowledge helps them to assess these experiences in light of Scripture.

Research Questions and/or Hypotheses

I designed all of the study's instruments and made sure I aligned all of my instruments to the specific research. The research questions guiding this study are as follows.

Research Question # 1

What are the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of African-American women clergy of the twenty first century as related to ministry that meets the needs of African-American women prior to and then after participating in the AAWCTES?

Research Question #2

What aspects of the ministry development process contributed most to the changes in knowledge, attitudes, and/or behavior in the seminar participants?

Research Question # 3

What other factors may have contributed to knowledge, attitudes, and/or behavior in the participants?

Population and Participants

The participants in this research project were seven women clergy of varying ages, marital status who live in Kentucky and are serving in ministry in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. They responded to an invitation via phone or e-mail to participate in the AAWCTES and to develop ministries for women unique to their particular settings, within eight weeks after participating in the AAWCTES. This research measures the changes in participant knowledge, attitudes, and behavior before and after the AAWCTES. It also assessed the effectiveness of the seminar components and other factors that may have caused changes in the participants.

Design of the Study

The following list outlines the nine steps used in this study:

1. Gathering the women clergy for the AAWCTES by inviting them via e-mail or phone call to attend and participate,

2. Instructing participants to complete the African-American women clergy preseminar survey,

3. Hosting the AAWCTES for the participants,

4. Instructing each of the seven women clergy to complete an evaluation of the one-day seminar before leaving,

5. Calling each clergy one to two weeks after the seminar to answer any questions or concerns they had as they worked on developing a ministry,

6. Requiring the women clergy to develop a ministry model within eight weeks of attending the AAWCTES,

7. Encouraging each woman clergy to journal weekly by responding to questions in a ministry development journal,

8. Providing a postseminar survey one or two weeks after their ministry events or at least the development of a ministry model, and

9. Interviewing each clergy one to two weeks after the completion of their ministry event to discover the impact of participating in the AAWCTES and developing a ministry for women unique to their setting.

The qualitative design used to accomplish the task was comprised of pre- and postintervention surveys, an evaluation of the AAWCTES, coaching calls, and postseminar interviews. Sensing says, "Qualitative research produces culturally specific

and contextually rich data critical for the design, evaluation, and ongoing health of institutions like churches (58). For these reasons, I chose a qualitative method. It lends itself to understanding the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of the women clergy in relation to ministry that meets the needs of women. Hearing the women clergy's stories about why they chose to develop particular ministry models, the support they received, the problems encountered, and the questions they had helped me to understand the changes that took place. The evaluation of the AAWCTES assessed the effectiveness of the seminar. Coaching calls revealed patterns of concerns and challenges the women clergy experienced. The postinterviews allowed further understanding of changes in how much the clergy knew about women's needs, how they felt about ministry to women, and what they did or planned to do to help meet the needs of women. The interviews also revealed other factors that caused changes in the participants.

Instrumentation

The research for this project entailed using five qualitative instruments. A pre- and postseminar survey was given before and after the clergy participated in AAWCTES and developed ministries for women unique to their settings to measure the changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of women clergy in relation to ministries that meet the needs of women. The qualitative method most often uses open-ended and informal questions in interviews and questionnaires. Three of these types of questions were asked on these surveys: #1 = knowledge; # 2 = descriptive; # 3 = opinion (Sensing 87-88). A third instrument, the Evaluation of AAWCTES, assessed the effectiveness of the seminar. The qualitative method's appreciative inquiry approach collects qualitative data that looks for language of success—especially stories that can be analyzed and shared with

others (Sensing 176). Even though the last option for each question was *the seminar was not helpful to me,* the statement assumed a positive impact. The research looked for positive ways that the AAWCTES affected the participants. A fourth instrument, the coaching call revealed patterns in challenges and concerns as they developed a ministry. A fifth instrument, the postinterview, allowed me to know additional changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of the participants and any other factors may have contributed to the changes. The instruments used were researcher designed.

The demographic of the project is women clergy in the state of Kentucky. The seven women clergy who participated in the research are all actively serving in ministry in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Variables

The independent variable in this project is the African-American women clergy training and empowerment seminar. Regardless of input or outcomes, it can stand alone as a means for training women clergy how to design and develop ministries for women. The dependent variables are the changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as a result of the AAWCTES and the development of ministries as measured by the pre- and postintervention surveys and the postintervention interviews. The intervening variables are the lived experiences of the participants and their training in ministry prior to attending the seminar.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research, and validity refers to the research measuring what it sets out to measure. This study dealt with one defined group: clergywomen in Kentucky. To maintain the integrity

of the results, all participants belonged to the same population defined as *clergywomen* in this project and lived in Kentucky. They were each personally invited via telephone call or e-mail to participate in this study. In addition, they are clergywomen whom I personally observed, by their action and conversation, as being women who are knowledgeable of the Bible and believing in its inerrancy. In addition, the clergywomen demonstrated a love for God and for people and are actively involved in ministry in their local churches.

Reliability. This research project can be repeated under the conditions described in this research. It also could be replicated in another state or geographic area where women face challenges that include demoralizing stereotypes, America's myths, exploitation and dehumanization, health disparities, poverty, violence against women, depression, and education. However, at least four limitations exist:

1. The impact of different speakers' approach in instructing and training,

2. The impact of geographic factors such as availability of transportation and resources,

3. The impact of denominational differences in beliefs as related to women in general and women clergy in particular, and

4. The impact of the context of the community as related to education.

Detailed information on the entire process of the research emanated from the instruments I used, which included pre- and postseminar surveys, evaluation of AAWTEC, a coaching call, and post interviews. A self-made design, the eight step approach to developing a ministry, was helpful to the women clergy (see Appendix K).

Validity. Conversations as I prepared the self-made instruments with the

Research Reflection Team and the Doctor of Ministry committee, which consisted of a

mentor, second reader, and a representative of the DMin faculty, validated the study. To

facilitate the process, I carefully analyzed the data from the pre- and postintervention

surveys, looking for and taking note of changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors

after the participants attended and participated in the AAWCTES and developed

ministries to meet the needs of women unique to their settings. I also carefully analyzed

the data looking for and taking note of patterns among the clergywomen in knowledge,

attitudes, and behaviors. I analyzed the evaluation of the AAWCTES, comparing points

of agreement as to the effectiveness of the seminar in training the women clergy to

develop a ministry. The coaching call that the clergywomen received during the process

gave them opportunities to ask questions unique to their particular ministry models. I

recorded each individual clergywoman's questions and my responses. I made a

comparison between questions asked or not asked and reflected this data in the final

analysis. I analyzed the women's clergy's responses to questions in the postinterviews

and drew comparisons as I identified similar themes and patterns.

The trustworthiness of the findings was essential for the integrity of this project.

To maintain the integrity of the results, all participants in the study belonged to the same

population defined as *clergywomen* in this project, and each engaged the same process,

meaning each (1) received a personal invitation to AAWCTES via a telephone call or e-

mail, (2) completed the e-mailed preseminar survey and returned it via e-mail, (3)

attended and participated in the AAWCTES, (4) completed an evaluation of the

AAWCTES, (5) received a coaching call, (6) developed a ministry model within eight

weeks of attending and participating in AAWCTES, (7) responded to questions in a

ministry development journal weekly, (8) completed the e-mailed postseminar survey e-

mailed and returned it via e-mail, and (9) responded to a postinterview. I handled all data.

Data Collection

Seven women clergy of varying ages and marital statuses living in Kentucky were

contacted via e-mail or phone call and invited to attend a one-day seminar titled African-

American Women Clergy Training and Empowerment Seminar. Those invited were

actively serving in ministry in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. They were e-

mailed a flyer announcing the AAWCTES to be held at a church in Lexington on a

specific date. A cover letter accompanied the flyer, requesting that if they would like to

attend the AAWCTES, they should download and complete the attached African-

American women clergy preseminar survey. Those who were invited via a phone call

were asked for their e-mail address and e-mailed the same information regarding the

upcoming AAWCTES.

Seven women clergy responded to the preseminar survey. The data on this survey

revealed their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministries for meeting the

needs of women before participating in the AAWCTES and developing ministries for

women unique to their settings. The AAWCTES presented a wonderful opportunity for

the seven women clergy to learn about women's needs and to be trained to develop a

ministry for women unique to their settings. The AAWCTES further allowed an

opportunity for the women clergy to engage in personal reflection, enjoy fellowship and

planning with colleagues and sisters in ministry, and receive encouragement and healing

in broken areas in their own lives. The AAWCTES schedule is presented in Appendix H.

The women clergy followed the printed agenda when they arrived for the

AAWCTES. This one-day seminar presented a combination of worship experiences,

lectures, and a practicum that helped the women clergy become more knowledgeable

about the needs of women and also to be trained in how to develop ministries unique to

their settings. The AAWCTES additionally presented an opportunity for personal

reflection and healing and for sisterly fellowship in prayer through the various sanctuary

experiences. A practicum provided the opportunity for the women clergy to learn

strategies and develop skills and training in formulating a women's ministry unique to

their settings.

Creative titles were used for the theme of the seminar, lectures, and other worship

experiences to inspire the women to want to attend and to assure them that, in attending,

they would be equipped to minister to women. Creativity and innovation are important

and helps inspire others to think out of the box and reach new levels in doing ministry.

After participating in the AAWCTES, the seven women clergy completed an

evaluation of the AAWCTES to measure its effectiveness. They each received a coaching

call one to two weeks after the seminar as a follow-up and a means of offering further

guidance and direction as each one developed a ministry. They responded to questions in

a ministry development journal once a week as they developed ministries. They each

developed a ministry for women unique to her setting within eight weeks of the

AAWCTES.

The women clergy postseminar survey was e-mailed after the coaching call to the

women clergy. After they developed a ministry for women unique to their settings, they

completed the postintervention survey and e-mailed them to me. The clergy were

interviewed in order to understand the changes in their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Subsequently, using the qualitative method, I was able to hear their stories, read their reflections, and process them for meaning.

Data Analysis

The design for research used was qualitative based using pre- and postintervention surveys, an evaluation of the AAWCTES, coaching calls, and interviews. Data was also collected from a field notebook and ministry development journals of the women clergy. The surveys were examined to discover themes and deep changes in thinking, and these ideas were the basis of the interviews. The data from the African-American women clergy preseminar survey was analyzed to reveal similarities in knowledge the clergy had in common about women's needs and challenges and what they knew about developing ministries for women. It analyzed patterns among the clergy as related to attitudes about women's needs and women clergy developing ministries to meet these needs. The data from this qualitative instrument also showed patterns in behavior among the clergy in responding to needs of women.

The data from the African-American women clergy postseminar survey was analyzed by looking for changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior among each of the seven women clergy as compared to the data on the preseminar survey. The comparison revealed changes in attitudes about the need for ministries for women and changes in levels of confidence in developing these ministries.

The data from the evaluation of the AAWCTES was used to determine the effectiveness of the seminar. The coaching calls were used to discover themes in questions and concerns as the women clergy developed a ministry. The data from the

coaching calls revealed similar themes and concerns as the women clergy developed a ministry. The data from the field notebook revealed attitudes, knowledge, and behavior of women clergy as they participated in the AAWCTES. The data from the ministry development journal showed similar themes as related to challenges and concerns as the women clergy developed a ministry. The postinterview further revealed changes in attitudes, knowledge, and behavior of the women clergy.

The data analysis was a narrative analysis that measured the consistency among the women clergy with regard to changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministries for meeting the needs of women. The data also assessed the effectiveness of the training seminar and other factors that contributed to the changes in the participants. The data was reflective of inner and core feelings and attitudes.

Ethical Procedures

The seven women clergy signed an informed consent form specifying that they were willing to participate in the research that was a part of my project as a student in the Doctor of Ministry program at Asbury Theological Seminary. This form also informed them that they could discontinue being a part of this research at any time and for any reason. The data from the research is only for the purpose of this study (see Appendix I).

The confidentiality of this research was guaranteed by each clergy having a number that would be used for themselves and their churches instead of their names or the names of their churches being used in any part of the dissertation. The information on the surveys, evaluation, coaching calls, journals, field notebook, and interviews was confidential and was saved on my personal computer secured by a private password and locked in my office.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Problem and Purpose

Women clergy are the ideal persons to develop ministries for women because they share some of the same lived experiences and are able to see them in a spiritual light. Even though they have faced age-old discrimination due to some who do not accept women as having been called by God to preach, women clergy have made a significant impact in the life of the church, especially in the lives of other women. Some areas where their impact is evidenced is in their preaching to save souls, encouraging women in ministry, serving as leadership role models, and providing ministry for laywomen.

Women clergy are the ideal persons to develop ministry models to meet the needs of women. Still, they need to know more about challenges women face and how to develop ministries to meet their needs. They also need to develop a greater compassion for women, become more confident in developing a ministry, and become more motivated to help women. This study provides the ground work for analyzing women clergy's knowledge, attitude, and behavior as related to ministry for women. The purpose of the research was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of those who participated in a one-day African-American women clergy training and empowerment seminar focused on the women clergy's ability to minister to the needs of women in the twenty-first century who then developed ministries to women unique to their particular settings.

Participants

The participants in this research project were seven women clergy who are all

members of the Kentucky Conference of the Thirteenth Episcopal District of the AME

Church and are all residents in the state of Kentucky. Theological training or any other

educational requirement was not used in selecting the women clergy who are of varying

marital status and ages. I selected women clergy who held varying titles and performed

varying roles in service within their local churches. They are all actively involved in

ministry within their local churches and each has attended at least one women's event

that I have planned and implemented within the last three years. The participants in this

research project responded to an invitation via phone or e-mail to attend and participate in

the AAWCTES. They developed a women's ministry model within eight weeks of the

AAWCTES. Table 4.1 illustrates a demographic scope of the women clergy participants

in AAWCTES.

Table 4.1. Demographics of Participants

Clergy Women	Title	Position	Marital Status	Age	Ministry Location	Developed Model	Ministry Presented
1	Exhorter	Minister to women	Married	56-70	Lexington	Yes	Yes
2	Local deacon	Supply pastor	Married	56-70	Danville	Yes	Yes
3	Itinerant deacon	Staff minister	Married	41-55	Lexington	Yes	No
4	Evangelist	Staff minister	Married	30-40	Manchester	Yes	Yes
5	Itinerant elder	Pastor	Divorced	56-70	Somerset	Yes	No
6	Itinerant elder	Former pastor	Married	56-70	Manchester	Yes	Yes
7	Local elder	Staff minister	Single	71+	Frankfort	No	No

Research Question #1

Women clergy are familiar with the issues and challenges women face because they too have faced some of the same challenges. However, their knowledge may increase due to training as well as developing ministries for women. In like manner, their attitudes and behaviors regarding ministry for women may also change when exposed to training and teaching that posits women clergy as the most capable persons to develop ministries to meet the needs of other women. In addition, changes in the clergy may occur when they experience the process of developing a ministry for women.

The qualitative method of research asks open-ended questions that allow participants to construct answers and generate data without unnecessary prodding. Additionally, the lack of a researcher-structured agenda creates a relaxed, conversational atmosphere conducive for eliciting narratives (Sensing 91). For these reasons, the qualitative method was used. It allowed me to hear and then analyze the women clergy's stories to determine the changes that took place.

Subsequently, the first research question sought to discover the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of African-American women clergy of the twenty-first century as related to ministry that meets the needs of African-American women. In order to make this analysis, each woman clergy completed a pre-seminar survey before attending the AAWCTES and then a postseminar survey after attending the seminar and then developing a ministry. In addition, the postinterview with each participant helped reveal the changes that took place.

Change in Knowledge

The data indicated that the participants' knowledge in relation to ministry to women changed after attending the AAWCTES and developing a ministry for women. The change was evidenced as they responded to questions 1, 2, and 3 in the postinterview. In question 1, I wanted to know what challenges women face that they discovered as they attended the AAWCTES and how knowledge of these concerns affected their vision of how to minister to women. The participants shared that they benefited from the seminar workshops because they highlighted many of the challenges women face. They admitted that while they already knew of some challenges women face, they had not considered the impact of this knowledge in helping to determine the types of ministries for women that are needed.

Clergy # 3 was helped by the knowledge she received at the seminar:

> Knowledge of the concerns and issues women face helped shape my vision and determine the direction to take in planning ministry that meets these needs. It is important to have relevant ministries that address the needs that are unique to women in their particular setting.

She said her vision for developing a ministry that would address special topics of concern to women came as a result of attending the AAWCTES. She planned to discuss topics concerning women's health, emotional healing, forgiveness, and deliverance from oppressive spirits.

She further stated that the seminar helped her realize the important role of prayer in women's lives as she recalled one of the workshop leaders talking about churches not placing a high importance on members coming together for prayer. Therefore, she started out with the women coming together for prayer and allowed the ministry to evolve into a forum for discussing topics of concern for women.

Subsequently, training in how to develop a ministry necessitates knowing what the problem is and being endowed with a vision that involves helping to solve the problem. Attending the seminar helped the participants to see that knowledge of challenges helps shape vision for ministry. In the absence of a vision, a ministry cannot be developed.

Clergy # 2 said the knowledge she received about challenges women face helped her to know better how to advise women who come to her with a problem. She said the seminar helped her become more knowledgeable of some of the reasons why women have certain challenges. As a result, she shares with them how to solve some of these problems by addressing the root issue. She recognizes the need for women to have a high level of self-esteem:

> When a woman has low self-esteem, she can easily become involved and stay in a relationship of violence. Now that I know a poor self-esteem can affect women's relationships, I am able to advise women to become involved in programs and activities, and relationships to help build their self-esteem.

She said the seminar inspired her to want to set up a file system of contacts and referrals for women who face certain challenges.

Clergy # 5 said, "Knowing that holding unforgiveness can contribute to physical illnesses helped me to want to develop my ministry of forgiveness." Women impact the lives of other women when they are knowledgeable of the problems they face and have a vision for doing ministry to women.

Question 2 asks what they had come to understand about the unique position clergy women have in developing ministries for women. Clergy # 3 said attending the AAWCTES helped her see the important role women clergy can play as role models:

> When you are in a leadership role, people will follow you and catch ahold of the vision. People have to see that you live it and then they will catch on. Women clergy will be able to help other women as they know we are living the life we teach and preach about. Women clergy have an opportunity to not only teach but to be role models and living examples for other women.

Women clergy are role models for other women and help them understand the complexities of life's circumstances as they seek solutions. The seminar increased their knowledge of the role women clergy can play in relation to challenges women face and also how they can teach other women and live as examples for them.

In question 3, I wanted to know how attending the seminar affected their view of how women clergy might be trained and inspired to embrace a calling to minister to women. The participants said the AAWCTES teaches skills for ministry as well as provides spiritual empowerment. Clergy # 7 said, "We have been empowered by this seminar. Other women clergy can be empowered too." Clergy # 3 said, "A seminar such as this can train other women clergy how to develop ministries." Clergy # 6 said, "Seminars like this are needed so that women can support others in developing their ministries. No one else can support you like another sister can support you." The participants viewed the seminar as being able to help women clergy to be more effective in helping other women.

The participants in this study received knowledge in how to develop a ministry to impact the lives of women in their communities. Clergy # 1 said, "After being trained, we have more finesse that enables us to create programs that are needed for women." The seminar provided an opportunity for women to discover challenges women face, and to learn how to develop a ministry to help address these issues. They used a tool I devised called the Eight Step Approach to Developing a Ministry. This approach takes into

consideration a problem needs to be solved and that in doing so, one can engage eight

specific steps (see Appendix K).

Five out of seven of the participants said the eight-step approach was helpful as

they developed a ministry. Clergy # 7 said, "Your plan for developing a ministry made

everything so simple. It really helped me as I used this approach." The eight-step

approach simplified the process of developing a ministry.

Clergy # 6 said she was so excited about the knowledge she received in

developing a ministry using the eight-step approach that she made copies of the handout

with the approach and gave them to the women who attended her ministry event. She has

since shared this approach with other ministers and in other group settings.

She also shared she was most recently invited by the Kentucky Council of

Churches (KYCC) to present her ministry at its annual convention:

> The KYCC Director was amazed by the stories I shared and wanted to
> know if I would be willing to set up a table with a Power Point
> presentation available to those who wanted additional information from
> me about my ministry. They also unanimously agreed to have a space
> available so that I could walk others through the process if they wanted me
> to and to have preachers available to pray with them onsite.

She attributed her success in developing her ministry model to the eight-step approach.

Training through use of a simple tool helps alleviate stress and heightens the

likelihood of not only successfully developing a ministry, but also, enjoying each step of

the process. Clergy # 3 felt blessed by the experience she had:

> Isn't this such an amazing out pouring of God's favor!!! I owe this to the
> eight-step ministry design that you created for your dissertation. Due to
> my attending your workshop, my U R N Control Ministries was birthed.
> You have spiritual ministries growing up all over the place.

The tool was an intricate part of the seminar that helped the participants as they developed ministries.

Attending the AAWCTES was a causal factor in the change in knowledge in the participants in this research as related to receiving a vision for a ministry and knowing how to develop a ministry. The participants held that other women clergy could benefit from attending and participating in a seminar as such just as they did.

Change in Attitude

The women clergy's attitude changed after attending the AAWCTES and developing a ministry for women. The changes in their attitudes are seen in changes in their compassion, confidence, compulsion, and motivation as related to ministry for women. The participants' responses to question 2 in the postinterview indicates a change in compassion for other women that leads to a desire to do ministry. Responses to question 4 in the postinterview shows a change in confidence in developing a ministry to women. Responses to question 2 in the pre- and postseminar survey, and question 3 in the postinterview shows a change in compulsion to develop a ministry to meet the needs of women. Responses to question 3 on the pre- and postseminar survey shows a change in motivation.

The research indicates a change in the women clergy's compassion. In question 2 in the postinterview, I wanted to know what the participants had come to understand about the unique position women clergy have in developing ministries for women in their communities. The participants indicated women clergy are more suited to ministry for women because they can relate to the pain and concerns other women face. Their

compassion helps them to empathize with other women. Clergy # 7 identifies a reason

why women find it easier to talk to other women about some of their experiences:

> There are certain things that women will reveal and share with women that they will not share with a male. For example, rape; it is too personal, and women will not necessarily tell a man their husband forcibly took them. We have a unique bond with women because we have a sense of how it affects them emotionally.

When women feel comfortable to share their experiences healing can take place.

Clergy # 2 said, "After attending the AAWCTES, I am more in tune to the

problems women face. I can be even more sensitive to things other women are going

through." The knowledge of the challenges women face did not change significantly, but

sensitivity to the needs of women changed as a result of attending the AAWCTES and

developing a ministry. Clergy # 6 said, "I know their pains because I am a woman. I can

now empathize more with what women are going through." Women clergy can minister

more effectively to other women when they have compassion for them and the problems

they face.

Clergy # 4 said as she presented her ministry model, My Shoulders Ministries, the

women really wanted to hear more. She said, "The tears that were shed by others caused

the women to want to hear more. As I looked into their faces, it was as if they were

saying, please let me tell my story too." The power of women healing one another

through story is made alive in community. The women clergy grew in compassion as

they became more sensitive to the needs of women. This sensitivity increased through

their attendance and participation in the AAWCTES and was also impacted by their

personal experience of ministry to women. Clergy # 4 said, "I now know what my

purpose is." Her attitude about ministry to women changed as her compassion increased.

Figure 4:1 shows the participants' responses to postinterview question # 2
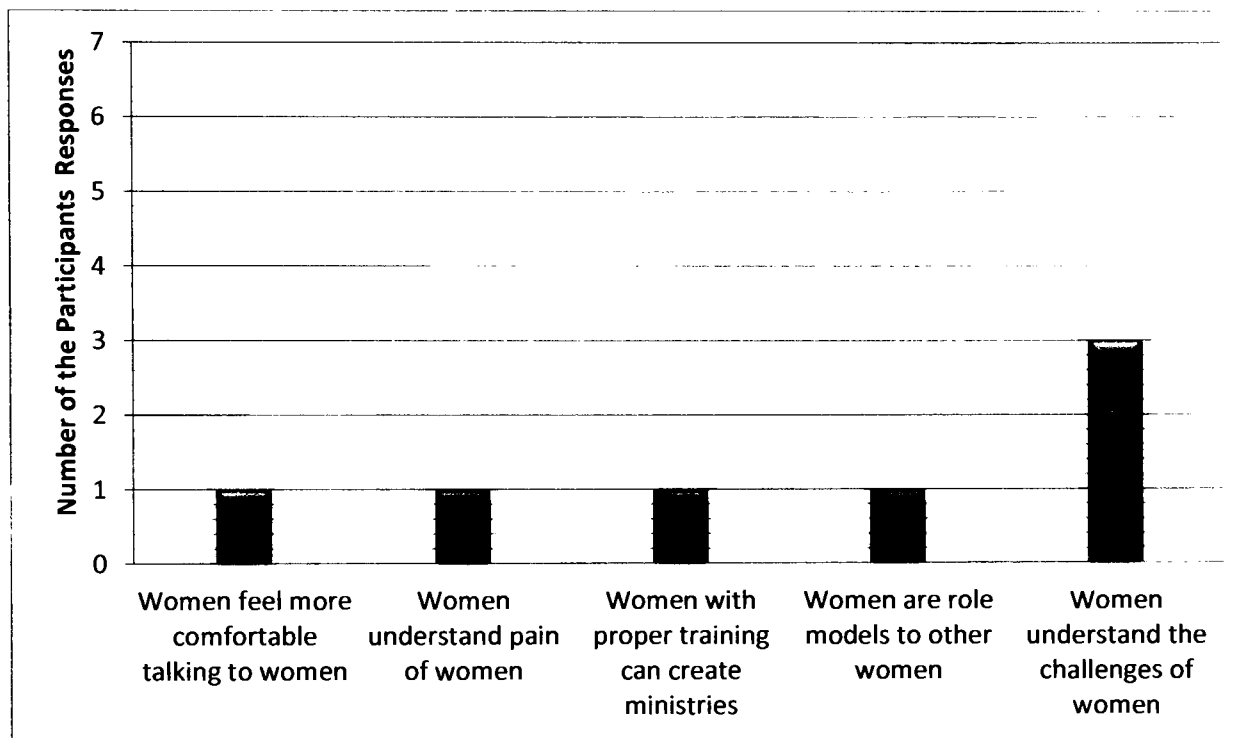
Figure 4.1. Postinterview question 2.

Change in attitude was also evident in the women clergy's level of confidence

after they attended the AAWCTES and developed a ministry. In question 4 in the

postinterview, I wanted to know what their experience was in building a ministry to meet

the needs of women. Clergy # 7 said, "I feel that I am better prepared after attending the

seminar. The AAWCTES opened up the knowledge that training is definitely needed."

Clergy # 4 responded, "I didn't know I could do this, but now I have done it. I learned a

lot from you, and I am ready to do this again." Clergy # 6 is relieved that she now knows

how to design a ministry:

The main thing that was discouraging me was not knowing how to design the women's ministry that I felt led to invest in. Now, since attending the AAWCTES, and designing my own ministry model using the ministry model of Rev. Maxine's, I am encouraged to go forth. I designed my ministry and with her coaching and follow-up, I was able to present it. It was received and hearts were changed; forgiveness was manifested; and women are free to create and design other ministries to assist other women in the future.

Table 4.2 shows change in participants' level of confidence in developing a ministry.

Table 4.2. Postinterview Question #4 (Describe your experience of building a new ministry to meet the needs of women in your context; what where the greatest roadblocks to your success?)

Participant	Response
Clergy #4	I did not have confidence to do this at first, but now, I have done it.
Clergy #6	I did not have the courage to do this before attending the seminar. I am now encouraged to go forth.
Clergy #7	I did not feel adequately prepared before attending the seminar, but I am now better prepared to develop a ministry.

The research showed the participants changed in their desire to provide ministry for women and to encourage and assist in training other women clergy to do so as well. The change was due to their understanding for a need for more ministries to women that will address the challenges they face. In pre- and postseminar survey question 2, I wanted to know of what ministries the participants were aware that addressed the top challenges women face. Clergy # 4 identified a few ministries but recognized she can help:

Here in my home town once a year we have a march for breast cancer and domestic violence. It is support showing that someone cares what you are going through or what you have been through. But if I could start my own ministry, it would help and support these causes.

Women clergy are compelled to help when they know of a need.

Clergy # 2 said, "I do not know of three ministries that are effectively helping women overcome these issues [she named finances, relationships, and children as top challenges] where they can contact on a daily or as need basis." Clergy # 5 listed community programs or agencies and not ministries. She said, "We really don't have any ministries in my community to address the challenges women face." The participants' compulsion to develop ministries to meet the needs of women changed due to their recognition of a lack of ministries for women.

In question 3 in the postinterview, I wanted to know how their training at AAWCTES had impacted their view of how women clergy can be trained and inspired to embrace a calling to minister to women and what they would do in their circle of women clergy to help inspire such a sense of calling. Clergy # 6 said, "I can now tell other women clergy about this experience, and I will support others in developing their ministries." Clergy # 4 said, "I can now share the experience we had, and get other women clergy involved." Clergy # 5 said, "I think it is incumbent for us who attended to take it and pass it along to inspire others." Not only were the participants compelled to do ministry to women due to the lack of ministries available, but they were compelled to get other women clergy involved in the process as well.

Another primary factor in the participants' changes in attitude was evidenced in a change in motivation. Clergy # 3 responded as follows to question 3 on the pre- and postseminar survey. On the preseminar survey she began with what discourages her from doing ministry:

> I have been discouraged from investing in ministry for women because in the past, Women in Ministry (an organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church) engaged in just having meetings, and paying dues, with no focus on the real issues that we struggle with. Women are hurting in

our churches—even clergywomen. Personally, I have not focused specifically on ministries for women. Maybe after this seminar, God will shift my focus.

Clergy # 3's attitude regarding doing ministry for women changed as indicated in her response to the same question on the postseminar survey, beginning with what motivates her to minister to women:

Having compassion for women that are in despair motivates me. Seeing the need motivates me. While the lack of support and help can be discouraging, we must become a part of the solution and not the problem. You motivated me.

Motivation is a key factor in having a desire to minister to women, and overrides feelings of discouragement even when support and help from others is lacking.

Women clergy can develop ministries for women when they have compassion for other women, have confidence that they can develop a ministry, are compelled to develop ministries to meet the needs of women, and are motivated for the task. The AAWCTES was a primary factor in the participants' changes in attitude about doing ministry to women.

Change in Behavior

Each of the seven participants changed in their behavior as related to ministry to women as they developed a ministry to meet the needs of women. In question 4 in the postinterview, I wanted to know what their experience was in building a new ministry to meet the needs of women. Six of seven participants viewed their experience in a positive manner while one viewed it as both positive and negative. The positive experiences stemmed from an appreciation of the step-by-step approach in developing a ministry plan, learning a lot, being inspired, receiving the coaching call and continued guidance, having the support of others who got involved in their process of developing ministries,

and being impacted by the experience of those women who attended the new ministries. The negative experience stemmed from an unwillingness of people to change and to want to do something they have not done before.

Clergy # 1 developed a ministry model, Tell Your Story: A Ministry of Journaling, by way of social media. She shared that she especially enjoys helping women to have a closer relationship with God through growing spiritually and mentally in all areas of their lives. She said, "Knowing Your Story will help women to become more in tune with God and with themselves through the various kinds of journals each woman will write. It is effective because women will know more about their inner feelings and attitudes as they draw closer to God." Clergy # 1 changed her behavior as she developed and presented a new ministry for women via Facebook and e-mail, and as she continues to communicate and give instructions to them. She said, "Every week, I post something about journaling, such as, how to tips and topics. I have had a good response and they are commenting on Facebook to say they are writing in their journals." Innovation is important in ministry and helps women to be more open to participating.

In question 4 in the postinterview, I wanted to know what the surprises were as she developed her ministry. She said, "I was surprised at the response I got and the people who were willing to do it. It really warmed my heart." She said some of the journals that the ladies are doing include prayer, health and diet, and daily journals. Twenty-three women who live in Lexington, Somerset, Danville, Frankfort, and Versailles have responded to her invitation to write in a journal so far. She anticipates a continued open-ended response as she continues to make her ministry available through Facebook and e-mail. She plans to have a Journaling Tea Party in the near future to bring

everyone who is a part of the ministry together for fellowship and further enlightenment and encouragement in journaling as a means to knowing more about themselves and growing closer to God.

Clergy # 2 developed a ministry model, Christian Women's Restoration Fellowship, to promote restoration for women. Her ministry brought together forty-seven women from Harrodsburg, Danville, Stanford, Springfield, and Lexington who were predominantly of the Baptist and Methodist denominations for a half-day seminar bearing the theme, "Since I Laid My Burdens Down." She said, "The seminar accomplished above and beyond my expectations, I am still receiving phone calls from women saying how they were blessed and restored." She also shared, "Some want to know if I am going to have the seminar next year and also asked if there was a video. It was just awesome!" The response to her ministry was phenomenal and opened the door to more women wanted to be minister to by women clergy.

Her attitude and behavior changed as she developed and presented her first ministry event to meet the needs of women. The change is indicated as she shared her experience in building a ministry model: "It was a rewarding experience, to know that I can now develop a ministry for women. It was good to know that I had you to answer questions and be concerned and available. It made me want to continue." Clergy # 2 said she is looking forward to presenting a seminar that promotes restoration for women on an annual basis. She anticipates the audience growing and the populations reached expanding with each seminar she presents.

Clergy # 3 developed a ministry model called Women Operating in Power and Purpose (WOPP), which she said would be a women's prayer model that will evolve to a

word study group. She said, "It was a good experience. I had been thinking about doing something to help women for a while. I could see it coming. Now is the time." While her ministry will not actually start until the spring, she says she is ready and the women are ready. Her attitude and behavior has changed. Whereas clergy # 3 started out not focusing on doing ministry to women at this time, she says she now knows she is in her season for doing it. In question 3 in the general questions for interview in the postinterview, I wanted to know if the participant thought the ministry model was effective. Clergy # 3 gave this response:

> I believe WOPP will be effective because it is ordained by the Holy Spirit. It is so needed. This ministry will start with prayer and evolve into a discussion group addressing topics that affect women. In so many churches, one of the most unattended ministries is prayer [meeting] and so we are starting with prayer. I have been toiling over this for years, and I know this is the time. God does everything in due season. You motivated me.

She said she plans to meet twice monthly to present this ministry to a group of thirty women at the church in Lexington where she serves as an associate minister. She also plans to share the knowledge and training she has received in developing a ministry with other women to help them develop ministries for women.

Clergy # 4 said she has always wanted to know how to "do something like this." She was referring to the desire to know how to bring women together so that they can be taught and encouraged. She said, "I wanted to know how to put a group together." Thus, her attitude and behavior changed after attending the AAWCTES for the first time, and she developed and presented My Shoulders Ministries with the theme "Lean on Me" to a group of fifteen women at the church in Manchester where she serves as a staff minister. The women who attended her ministry event were also members of other churches and

denominations in Manchester, Beattyville, and Lancaster. Two college students were also present.

In question 3 on the pre- and postseminar survey, I wanted to know what motivates them to invest in ministry for women and what discourages them. On the preseminar survey she said, "My motivation comes from relating to some of these issues. If I can help one woman and let her know that you don't have to live this way." Her attitude changed after attending the seminar and developing a ministry.

She coupled her motivation to help women with the effects of the women's expectation to receive her help. On the postseminar survey, she responded that she had been won over:

> Being a part of this experience for the first time has won me over. My motivation kicked in when I was standing there among those women and speaking, and they were all staring at me like they all wanted to tell their stories. At that time, God just took over my words. He said, "These women need this and I got you." The spirit was so high.

She expressed her excitement and joy due to all that had taken place when she presented her ministry where she encouraged women to lean on and support each other. She said, "I am just over joyed. I now know what my purpose is." Thus, her attitude and behavior as related to ministry to women changed. She plans to share her ministry on an as needed or requested basis.

Clergy # 5 developed a ministry model that will address the need women have to be more connected to other women so that they will not feel isolated. She said, "There is a need for all of us to be more connected." Her ministry model, which is a Women's Fellowship Dinner, will take the theme "Women Standing Strong Together" and will be held at the church she pastors in Somerset. Forty-five women at her church will attend the

dinner. She explained that it will provide an opportunity for the women to fellowship and get to know each other better. She said, "They know each other, but it seems like they are afraid of one another." Her knowledge of isolation as a top challenge did not change.

However, her behavior changed as she developed her first ministry model to address this particular challenge. She shared her experience in building a new ministry as she responded as follows:

> Even in sharing with them that we need fellowship with one another, they had a lot of questions. They mostly wanted to know, "why." So, it was invigorating and frustrating at the same time. Some wanted it and others didn't. So I had to talk from the pulpit and also talk to individuals personally.

Clergy # 5 said she has completed developing her model and will set a date for the Women's Fellowship Dinner sometime in early summer. As she concluded her postinterview, she said, "The people had some questions at first, but now, they are ready. It will be effective because it will help the church to be more cohesive." Her attitude and behavior has changed as she is addressing the problem of isolation and offering a beginning for fellowship to take place. This event represents a starting place for planning future opportunities for fellowship and building relationships at her church in Somerset.

Clergy # 6 developed and presented a ministry model, U R N Control Ministry, to address the issue of unforgiveness in relationships. The theme was "Forgive and Live: Healing through Forgiveness." She recently pastored an AME church in Manchester and coordinated with the current pastor to hold her event with the women after the morning worship service. Fifteen women of varying races and denominations attended from Manchester, Beattyville, and Lancaster.

In question 2 on the pre- and postseminar, I wanted to know if the participants knew of ministries that address challenges women face. On the preseminar survey, she did not name a ministry that addressed unforgiveness. On the postseminar survey, she named her own new ministry model. She described this model as follows:

> The U R N Control Ministry effectively led women through a process of forgiveness as a method of wholesome healing. Through acknowledging a four step process, women were able to forgive themselves and others. As a result, they attained liberation from that situation. They left knowing they were in control of their lives once again. Also, they were reassured that God was able to complete His plan for their lives.

Clergy # 6 experienced a change in knowledge, attitude, and behavior as related to providing ministry for women. She plans to present more opportunities for ministry using this model as needed or called upon.

Clergy # 7 is developing a ministry model, Mentoring Victims of Domestic Violence Program, to train women in Frankford to be mentors for women who have been abused and have recently gone or are currently going through the court system as pertaining to their abuse. She is currently a liaison for these women and is interested in planning for their independence from their abuser by providing a program of survival skills and someone to help them attend to personal needs as they maintain their independence.

She shared that she has already been trained in the dynamics of domestic violence and is aware of the danger that is involved for the woman who is abused, her children, and the community. She said, "I am very troubled and disturbed because I have lost three women to death due to domestic violence. It is systemic and passed from generation to generation. This program will be effective because there is a need to address domestic violence." Women who are abused can receive healing when women clergy who are

knowledgeable of, and trained in, the dynamics of domestic violence. She described her

experience in developing her ministry model:

> I thought it was a good experience. I like the step by step approach that
> you gave us. It gave a guideline to me so that the things I am trying to
> accomplish will eventually come to fruition. I like the fact that you had it
> laid out and now, I am using it, and it works. I was encouraged by the
> seminar. This is like a God send.

Practicality is important in training women clergy how to develop a ministry. Learning

becomes easy and the overall experience is viewed in a positive manner.

Clergy # 7 experienced a personal injury and is currently under the doctor's care.

She remains excited, committed, and prayerful as she continues to develop her ministry

model. She has developed her ministry plan using the eight-step approach to developing a

ministry, has four people who have signed up to be mentors, and has a temporary space

for training which is provided by the sheriff's office. She currently has a curriculum

prepared for her training. She has enlisted the support of the United Methodist Women in

Frankfort, and they have encouraged her in the work. Table 4.3 shows ministry models

developed by participants.

Table 4.3. Ministry Models Developed by Participants

Participant	Ministry Models Developed by Clergy Women	Location & Setting	Number Attended	Areas Represented by Attendees	Ministry Measurables
Clergy 1	Tell Your Story	Internet	23	Lexington. Harrodsburg, Somerset, Versailles, KY	Women knowing more about themselves and gaining a closer relationship with God.
Clergy 2	Christian Women's Restoration Fellowship	Community Center— Danville, KY	47	Harrodsburg, Danville, Stanford, Springfield, and Lexington, KY	Women received personal prayer and questions were answered during the panel discussion and women exclaimed they were restored.
Clergy 3	Women Operating in Power and Purpose (WOPP)	Church— Lexington, KY	30	Lexington, KY and vicinity	Expectation of women being strengthened spiritual and becoming more knowledgeable of women's issues.
Clergy 4	My Shoulders Ministries—a ministry of support and encouragement for women	Church— Manchester, KY	15	Manchester, Beattyville, and Lancaster, KY	Women were open to receive ministry from a clergy woman
Clergy 5	Women's Fellowship Dinner	Church— Somerset, KY	45	Somerset, KY	It will help the women in the church to become more cohesive.
Clergy 6	U R N Control Ministries (A Ministry of Forgiveness)	Church— Manchester, KY	15	Manchester, Beattyville, and Lancaster, KY	Women were led into a process of forgiveness that led to liberation from various situations.
Clergy 7	Mentoring Victims of Domestic Violence Program	Government Office Building— Frankfort, KY	4	Franklin County, KY	Expectation for women to become more sensitive to the needs of abused women.

Women clergy are the ideal persons to develop ministries to meet the needs of women in America in the twenty-first century. They too are women and can, therefore, relate to the many challenges women face. Women need someone who understands their stories to provide special ministry for them that will meet their needs. Women clergy understand the stories of other women and in many cases and have shared the same or similar experiences. Their personal experiences along with their spiritual knowledge and understanding, has prepared them to minister to the needs of other women.

When women are knowledgeable of challenges women face; have received training in developing ministry models to meet these needs; have compassion, confidence, and are compelled; and are motivated and inspired, they are able to develop ministry models to meet women's needs. Thus, the participants were able to develop a ministry model to address the challenges women face due to changes in their knowledge, attitude, and behavior as related to developing a ministry that meets the needs of women.

Research Question #2

Research question 2 asks what aspects of the process contributed most to the change seen in the participants. Data collected from the qualitative instruments of the postinterview responses to question 2 in the general questions; the responses to questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 on the evaluation of the AAWCTES; and responses to question 3 in the postinterview indicate that the AAWCTES contributed to the changes in the women clergy's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry to women.

First, in question 2 in the general questions for the postinterview, I wanted to know why the women clergy decided to accept the invitation and then attended and participated in the AAWCTES. I discovered they wanted to know more about challenges women face and how they as women clergy can help provide solutions to these problems. Three participants said they wanted to learn more about women's problems and techniques in developing ministry. Clergy # 1 said, "I thought it would be a learning opportunity. I knew it would be interesting and challenging." Clergy # 2 said, "In today's society, women need ministry. Women are dealing with a lot of issues they don't have support in. I came to learn about the issues women face and learn new techniques and

ways to address these issues." She said she was inspired to learn more about women's issues.

The study did not require the participants to have a particular level of education. Those who attended did so because they desired more knowledge and to be trained in how to develop a ministry.

Other participants attended and participated because they wanted to learn how to create a ministry. Clergy # 4 said, "I always wanted to do something like this. I wanted to know how to put a group together. I needed this seminar to help me to do this." She said we need more seminars like the AAWCTES to help more clergy to know how to design ministries for women.

The women clergy also attended because they trusted my skills and ability to train them in designing a ministry. Clergy # 7 said she wanted to be able to enhance her endeavors by hearing some of my thoughts and teachings. She said she felt that I have vast capabilities in training. Clergy # 3 said, "I decided to attend because of your anointing, and anything you have, we realize it is from God and will prepare us for a different dimension." Thus, women clergy may attend a seminar for training in an area of ministry when they know from experience that a particular individual is capable of providing a meaningfully learning and spiritual experience, allowing them the opportunity to receive something useful to their ministry. Thus, a limitation in producing the same results in attendance and participation in the AAWCTES could stem from the participants' relationship with the organizer of the seminar. Their evaluation could also be influenced by this relationship. Figure 4.2 answers question 2 in the general questions for the postinterview.
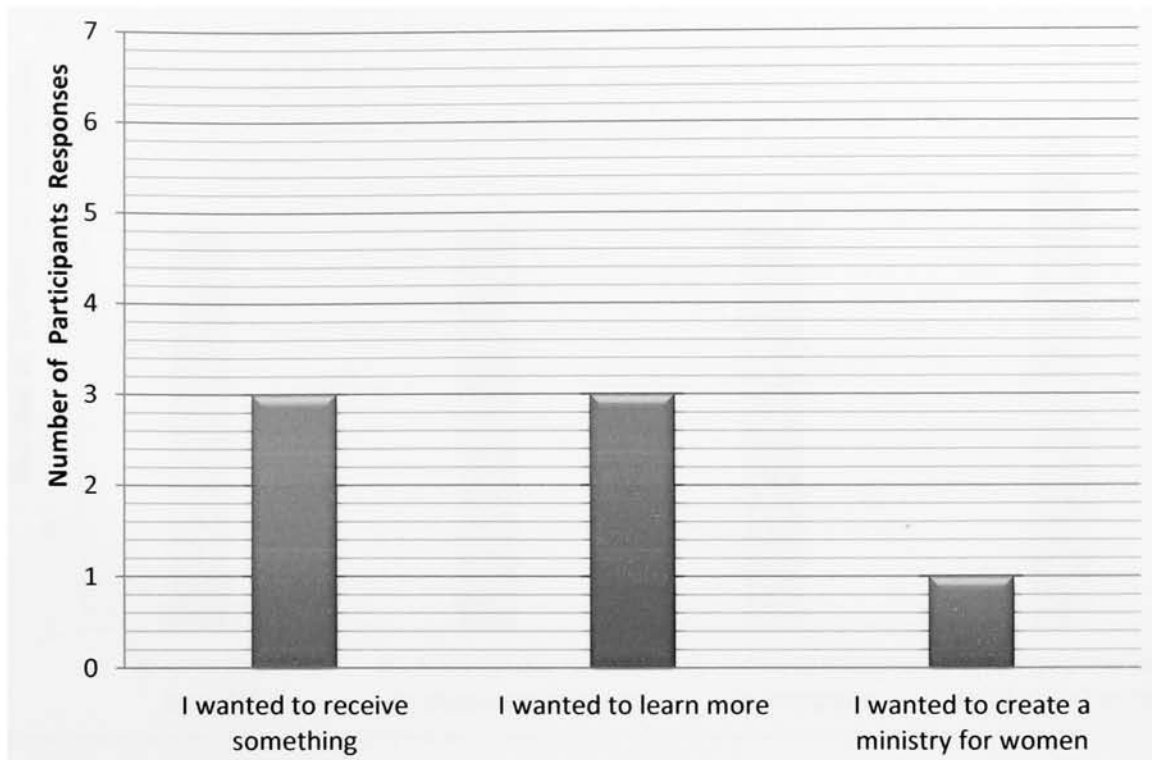
Figure 4.2. General question # 2 postinterview.

Second, data collected from the evaluation of AAWCTES also helped verify that

the seminar contributed to the change. In question 1a, five of seven participants said that

by attending the seminar, their knowledge about challenges women face today increased.

In question 1b, six of seven said attending the seminar inspired them to want to develop a

ministry to address the needs of women. In question 1d, five of seven said the seminar

provided helpful instructions in how to develop a ministry. In question 1f, five of seven

said the seminar helped them to identify and address possible or potential hindrances in

their developing a ministry. Six of the seven women developed a ministry because of the

inspiration they received at the AAWCTES. Figure 4.3 shows the response of the

participants to questions 1a, 1b, 1d, and 1f on the evaluation of AAWCTES.
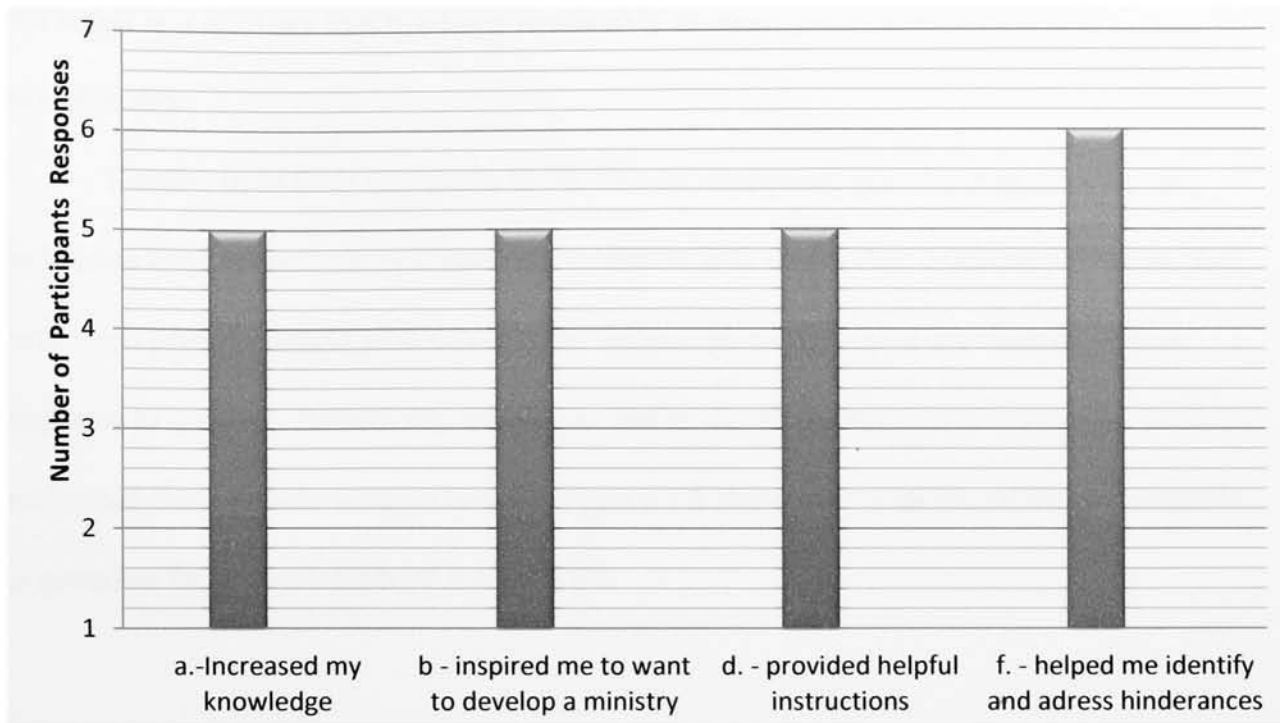
Figure 4.3. Question # 1 evaluation of AAWCTES.

All seven women clergy responded in question 2 that knowing the needs of African-American women is important. They said this knowledge helped them in selecting the kind of ministry they would develop in empathizing with other women.

Their response to question 3c showed they agreed that the seminar workshops were helpful, as the information about challenges women face increased their desire to help other women. Knowing more about women's problems is important in the process of developing a ministry

The participants' responses to questions 4a and 4b showed that the practicum on how to develop a ministry was helpful because the instructor helped them to organize their thoughts and establish a reasonable plan of action. The instructor has the power to influence and help transform others thoughts as related to how to develop a ministry. The

end result is a ministry that has been reasonably thought out and planned with intentionality.

Finally, in in their responses to 7b, five of seven said after leaving the seminar and going back to their church that they would be able to develop a ministry because they have been given a simple plan of action to follow. However, all of the women said in response to question 7a that they would be able to develop a ministry because the seminar motivated them to help women in need. Figure 4.4 shows the response of the participants to question 7a on evaluation of AAWCTES.
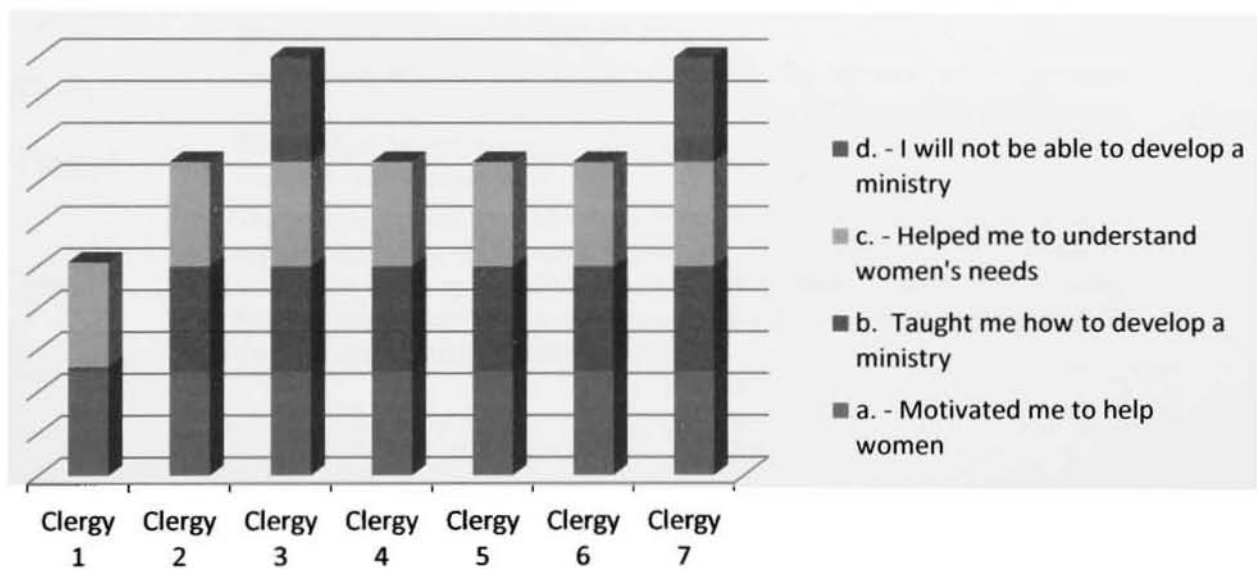
Figure 4.4. Question 7a on evaluation of AAWCTES.

Third, the women clergy participants viewed the seminar as instrumental in the changes in their attitude and behavior as indicated by their responses to question 3 in the postinterview. Their responses showed how they viewed the seminar and how women clergy might be trained and inspired to embrace a calling to minister to women. Table 4.4

shows the power of the seminar in training women clergy to develop ministries for

women.

Table 4.4. Women Clergy's View of the AAWCTES

| Participant	View of AAWCTES
Clergy 1	The seminar helped me to know more about what other women are going through. It will help other women clergy to be inspired to address the needs women have.
Clergy 2	The seminar inspired me to find opportunities to have round table discussions with other women to share needs and discuss how we might address those needs. It helped me to feel more sensitive to others' needs and to address them.
Clergy 3	The seminar was very empowering and well organized. It provided a simple approach to developing a ministry. When women are trained in how to develop a ministry, they can teach others what they have learned.
Clergy 4	The seminar motivated me to want to share my experiences with others, and get them involved in helping other women.
Clergy 5	The seminar helped me to be able to come up with a plan in how to develop a ministry, and now I am able to help other women in the challenges they face.
Clergy 6	The seminar helped me to be able to create a ministry model. Now I can have seminars with women in my circles so they can do the same as I have done.
Clergy 7	The seminar helped me understand that I have the same authority as my male counterparts to do God's work. It also gave me guidelines and knowledge of areas I can touch up in and be enhanced as I develop a ministry. The seminar helps women clergy realize they have the power to do more ministry work for the Lord and in helping other women.

The women clergy believed they would be able to develop a ministry for women

because of their faith in God (see Table 4.5). Consequently, the participants were open to

prayer throughout the process of their developing a ministry. Each of them used faith

language during the coaching call, as I followed up with them, and during the

postinterview. Clergy # 5 said in her postinterview, "My motivation came when I realized

the women I was ministering to were so attentive to my message. I could feel the

presence of God's Spirit as He took over my words." She had faith in God as she

performed ministry to women.

The participants relied on Scripture as a guide for their vision for ministry. Clergy

#2 developed a ministry model, Christian Women's Restoration Fellowship, to help

women be relieved from pains of their past. She used Psalm 34:18— "The LORD is close

to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit"—as her foundational

Scripture.

Table 4.5. Question #9 Evaluation (My faith plays a role in developing a ministry because?)

Evaluation Question #9	n	%
a.Helps me believe I can do it	6	85.0
b. Helps me invite others to share in the work of developing a ministry	7	100.0
c. Helps me to expect great results	6	85.0
d. Will not play a role	0	Nil
e. Other	0	Nil

The AAWCTES was seen as significantly effective in causing a change in the

women clergy as indicated by their responses to question 8 on the Evaluation of

AAWCTES. Figure. 4.5 answers question 8 on the evaluation of AAWCTES.

LEGEND: 1 = NO and 2 = YES

Lectures Meditation practicum sanctuary devotional myself was not enhanced
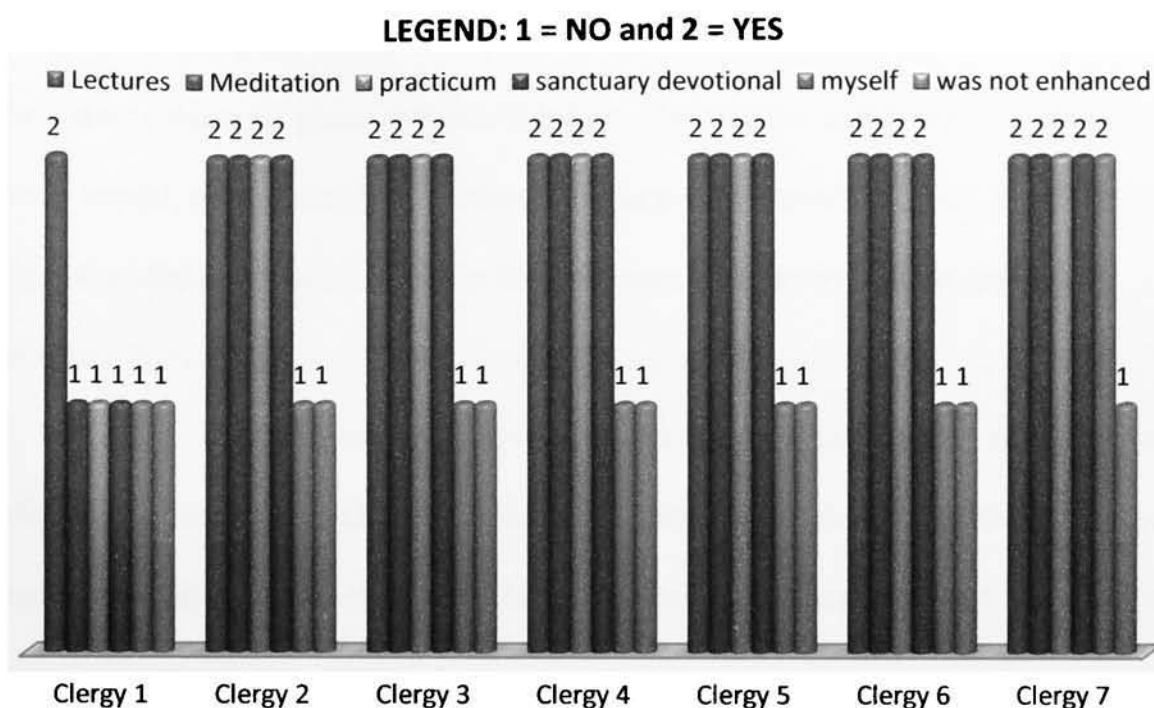
Figure 4.5. Question #8 evaluation of AAWCTES.

Research Question #3

The changes in the women clergy are undeniable and have resulted in the development of seven new ministry models for meeting the needs of women. While the AAWCTES provided a unique experience that led to the change in these women's knowledge, attitudes and behavior as related to ministry for women, the seminar was not the only cause for the change. Research question 3 asked what other factors may have contributed to the changes seen in the participants. This research was accomplished using the qualitative instrument of postinterviews. One other factor was the coaching call; the second was the continued follow-up after the coaching call; and the third was the support and help they received from others as they planned their ministry models.

Coaching Call

The coaching call allowed an opportunity for one-on-one support, reinforcement of the training that took place, additional help in planning for and developing their ministry model, and personal motivation. This factor supported the seminar as the women clergy were able to discuss their ideas and concerns better as they developed their ministries.

My mentoring/coaching proved effective as the participants said they felt more comfortable while they developed a ministry because I was there to give them guidance. Question 4 in the postinterview asked them to describe their experience of building a new ministry. Clergy # 2 said, "It was a rewarding experience to know that I had you to answer questions and to be there and be concerned and available." Mentoring entails being available to listen to concerns, help shape vision, and answer questions.

In question 1 of the coaching call, I wanted to know where the participant was in the process of developing the ministry she had planned. The participants were at different points as far as the development of their ministries. They had each begun working on developing a ministry plan but at that time were not following the eight-step approach in developing a ministry model as shared in the AAWCTES in how to design a ministry. I reminded each of them during her individual coaching call to utilize this effective approach. I collectively e-mailed another copy of this approach to them. Coaching involves checking on the protégé and helping her remain focused as she moves forward.

In question 2, I wanted to know the challenges they faced as they worked to develop their ministry model. One of seven participants said she had not experienced any challenges. Clergy # 1 responded, "I have not had any problems at all; only confirmation

all the way." The challenges for the other six participants were in the following areas: time in planning, availability of funds, and drawing an audience. I gave suggestions to each of them as related to their particular ministry models. Clergy # 2 said a perceived challenge was how to get the women to come out and attend the seminar that would present an opportunity for restoration. I encouraged her to develop a flyer announcing her seminar and to e-mail it to women in her circles. I shared with her that the best advertisement is word of mouth as I suggested that she identify ten women who would be excited about an opportunity for restoration and ask them to commit to trying to each get five women to attend.

Clergy #s 3 and 4 said they did not have any challenges, just time, a busy schedule, and prior obligations. I shared with them that they would try to develop the ministry model within the time frame of eight weeks, but if they had not developed and presented it within that time frame, they should not worry. I encouraged them still to present it in the time frame that was convenient and right for them. I offered my continued support, input, and help beyond the time frame indicated by this research.

Clergy # 5 said the members of her church are suspicious people and slow to accept change. I encouraged her to make every effort to answer any questions or concerns they had and to try to keep at the forefront that the fellowship dinner would be a great way to bring about fellowship and bonding with one another. I encouraged her to get as many people involved in the planning process as possible. I suggested that she announce the blessing of this upcoming fellowship dinner from the pulpit, as well as talk to individuals about it.

Clergy # 6 said her challenge was trying to find an audience of African-American women in her area, which is rural. She concluded, and I concurred, that she would gear the event to meet the needs of African-American women, although women of other races will attend.

Clergy # 7 said her challenge was getting funds to rent and establish an office where her domestic violence mentor program could be held. The challenge is temporarily remedied as the sheriff's office is space available to her at this time. Another challenge, she said, is that the clients who are abused do not have access to transportation. I offered encouragement and directed her to possible funding opportunities through available grants from the Women's Health Organization, the local and state public health departments, and funeral homes since they sometimes support community efforts through sponsorships, donations and community banks. I did not have an answer to the concern of transportation but encouraged her to continue to seek viable solutions.

The coaching call allowed an opportunity for the participants to share their excitement as well as how I could help them in the process as they continued to develop their ministry models. They each expressed the desire and need for my continued input, guidance, and help in the process.

Follow-Up

Another contributing factor in the change that took place in the participants was the continued follow-up that I gave via e-mail, texting, and telephone calls. They also called or texted as they developed their ministry plans based on the eight-step approach. I also gave feedback and input as the participants planned to present their ministry events.

The areas where I helped most were in coming up with a theme for their event, names of workshops or sessions, and helping them design the flyer.

In question 4 of the postinterview, I wanted to hear and understand their experience in developing their ministry. Clergy # 2 said, "It really helped to have you there each step of the way." Clergy # 4 said, "It has been a great experience. I learned a lot from you; you inspired me; I received a lot from you." The participants were able to develop ministries for women because they were guided, encouraged, and inspired throughout the entire process.

Support

Another factor that aided in the change experienced in the knowledge, attitudes and behavior of the women clergy was the support and help they received from others as they planned their ministry models. In question 5 in the postinterview, I wanted to know where the participants found the unexpected support or opposition. Clergy # 2 said, "The experience was also rewarding because of the excitability of those I contacted to help. They were happy and excited to make it successful." She continued, "The surprises were I had planned to pay for the caterer for the luncheon, and people made donations. People gave unexpected donations. The willingness of my co-workers to donate the desserts was a great surprise." Encouragement comes when others show their support in unexpected ways.

Clergy # 5 was encouraged and surprised to receive support from a member whom she thought would not support her vision for the fellowship dinner. She said, "The mother gave the grief and the daughter supported, and this was a surprise. The daughter is an abrasive kind of individual and does not mind speaking her mind; but she was

supportive." The researched showed that sometimes support comes from unexpected

sources.

Clergy # 6 said, "I was glad the current pastor allowed me to come and work with

my former congregation. She was very welcoming." She was excited when ladies whom

she did not expect to attend did so:

> Also, when I went to a community march and talked to people from the
> Catholic Church, some of the ladies said they would come, and I was
> surprised that they came. I was excited that the college students came to
> the worship service and stayed for the event.

The research shows that women can be effective in developing ministries as other women

help in in the process by opening opportunities for them to serve, providing emotional

support with their encouragement and supporting them with their prayers, participation,

and presence.

Research shows that women have relied on the strength of community for their

survival and support. Sojourner Truth's narrative was positioned through the support of

community:

> Indeed, the very fact that she has relied upon others to produce her
> narrative attests to the fact that it is in community (especially with women
> and children) that she establishes a sense of self-hood—even if the
> community is a predominantly a white one. (Douglass-Chin 68)

Women have traditionally relied on the support of community in their struggles and

triumphs. They are aware of the power in building relationships in the community and in

allowing the community to help bear their burdens and herald their triumphs and

successes. The surprise support they received was an encouragement and contributed to

the change in their attitude about doing ministry to women.

Attending and participating in the AAWCTES was a significant causal factor in the change in knowledge, attitude, and behavior as related to women's ministry in the seven women clergy who participated in this study. Other causal factors in the change were the coaching call, continued support and encouragement from me, and the support and surprises they each experienced from others who supported them as they developed a ministry for women.

Summary of Major Findings

Seven women clergy participated in this research project by attending the African-American women clergy training and empowerment seminar and then developed a ministries to meet the needs of women unique to their particular settings. Answers to questions using five qualitative instruments—a pre- and postseminar survey, an evaluation of the AAWCTES, a coaching call, and a postinterview—produced eight major findings.

The research project produced eight major findings:

1. The AAWCTES is a significant factor in the change that took place because the women clergy's knowledge about women's needs changed, their attitudes about doing ministry for women changed, and their behavior as related to ministry for women changed.

2. The coaching call was instrumental in the process of developing a ministry because it allowed the participants to receive one-on-one guidance and encouragement.

3. Relationships and working in community with others is important to the process of ministry development because the participants were encouraged by the support they received.

4. Journaling is perhaps ineffective unless taught because only one out of seven participants wrote in a journal as they were asked.

5. A simple tool can have a profound effect in developing a ministry because each of the seven participants found the use of the eight-step approach to be helpful as they developed a ministry model.

6. Experience can be translated into learning as a ministry is developed because the participants learned more about women's needs and what role they can play in helping women as they experienced developing and presenting ministries for women.

7. Sensitivity to women's needs changed as a result of attending the AAWCTES and developing a ministry because the participants were better able to discern the needs of women.

8. The participants' compulsion to develop a ministry to women changed because they recognized a lack of ministries for women.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Major Findings

Women clergy are the ideal catalysts to develop and present ministries for women in the twenty-first century. Subsequently, the research revealed that their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministering to the needs of women changed after they attended the AAWCTES and developed ministries to meet the needs of women. The research produced eight major findings.

The AAWCTES as a Significant Cause of Change

The seven women clergy in this study experienced changes in their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry to women after attending the AAWCTES. Their response to question 3 in the postinterview reveals they now know more about challenges women face, are more sensitive to the needs of women, and are better prepared to help address these needs.

Clergy # 1 said the seminar helped her know more about what other women are going through:

> I can now better relate to the things women go through, even if I have not personally gone through some things. I can't help anybody but myself if all I know is what I have been through and don't know what experiences others have had.

Clergy # 7 said the seminar helped her to see that women clergy need the support of one another. She said, "When we come together, we understand what each other go through because women in ministry are not treated the same as men who are in ministry." While women face challenges, women clergy also face unique challenges.

Traditionally, women clergy have struggled against sexism in the church without the support of other women. O'Neill offers this explanation: "The black woman's struggle for liberation has been mostly directed toward the broader social systems of society as opposed to patriarchy. Thus, her battle is for the equality for a race of people." The AAWCTES helped the participants to have a change in attitudes as related to women clergy needing the support of women in the church.

Clergy # 2 said the seminar inspired her to seek opportunities to have discussions with other women about women's needs and how to address them. Clergy # 5 said that the AAWCTES assisted her in ministry development for women.

Each of the clergy expressed throughout their postinterviews that the seminar had a significant impact on them and influenced them in their development of a ministry. Clergy # 4 said, "We need to have more seminars like this. I always wanted to know how to put something like this together, now I have done it." She shared that she wants to continue to be a part of meetings such as the AAWCTES so that she will continue to gain more knowledge about women's needs and be trained in how to help women.

Rev. Dr. Cecelia Williams Bryant, Rev. Dr. Joann Browning, and Rev. Elaine Flake in the AME Church have planned and presented women's conferences for more than twenty years that have provided information about women's issues and concerns, helped women to understand their purpose and destiny, and given them spiritual empowerment. More than two thousand women are healed and empowered at each of these conferences each year. The AAWCTES helped the participants to know more about the challenges women face, to become spiritually empowered, and to have a clearer sense of calling as related to ministering to other women.

Theological support for women clergy providing ministry is found throughout the

Bible. Anderson and Young say, "Women performed many leadership roles in the early

Christian community and are called 'deacon' and 'apostle' in Romans 16:1, 7 (163).

Maxwell and Dearing list several accounts of women ministering in the New Testament

(47-72). The following list provides a few that they cited:

- Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:28, 35),

- Anna, the first woman missionary to exercise the gift of prophecy (Luke 2:36-38),

- The woman of Samaria, whom many believed on Jesus because of her testimony (John 4:39).

The participants were open to the experience of learning more about some of the

challenges women face and how they could help other women by developing ministries

to address these and other challenges. They experienced change in their knowledge,

attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry to women because they accepted an

opportunity that was made available to them for knowing and understanding the special

role that women clergy can play in developing ministries for women.

The research informs the practice of ministry to women by revealing that women

clergy are able to provide ministry for women when their knowledge, attitudes, and

behavior as related to ministry to women change. Thus, change in what women think

about ministry to women is immanent when three things take place:

1. When more women clergy are knowledgeable of the challenges women face

and that more ministries are needed to meet these needs,

2. When women clergy come to understand the unique position they have in

developing ministries to meet the needs of women in their community, and

3. When women clergy are trained in how to develop ministries that address the challenges women face.

The Coaching Call as Vital to the Process

The coaching call was vital to the process as it allowed for one-on-one consultation, guidance, and encouragement. The participants said this call was critical in their developing ministries and helped increase their confidence. Clergy # 2 said, "It was a rewarding experience to know that I had you there to answer questions." She also said, "It helped to know that you were available and concerned." Clergy # 3 said, "If I have someone nudging me, I will get it done." The coaching call was effective because it allowed the participants to feel supported in their endeavors.

Thus, the coaching call is just as important as the seminar because the women clergy were able to discuss their ideas and concerns better as they developed their ministries. McKenzie says, "Mentors help provide the kind of advice that leads to greater success as they share with their protégés valuable insight and wisdom gathered over years of service" (84). The coaching calls provided opportunities for sharing advice with the women clergy as they developed ministries and allowed them to glean from my twenty years of experience in planning ministries to meet the needs of women.

The research informs the practice of ministry by revealing the importance of coaching during the process of developing and presenting a ministry. Consequently, the participants were able to develop their ministries as they were nurtured and supported in the process.

The Importance of Relationships and Working in Community

Relationships and working in community with others is important to the process of ministry development. The research indicated that some of the participants attended the AAWCTES because of their relationship with me. Clergy # 7 said in her postinterview, "You have vast capabilities to train; I wanted to be able to enhance my endeavors by hearing some of your thoughts and teachings." Due to previous experiences of my ministry, she anticipated a favorable experience. Clergy # 2 said, "I have always been blessed in previous seminars you held." Their relationship with me was one of the deciding factors in their decisions to attend the seminar. The relationship was nurtured as I continued to follow up with them as they developed their ministries. Thus, a limitation could be that participants came because of their relationship with me.

The participants found the support of others to be a tremendous help and encouragement as they developed ministries. Clergy # 6 said she was encouraged by the support of the pastor who allowed her to have her ministry event at the church where she previously pastored. She said, "I knew all along she would allow me to have my event there, but still, it was encouraging to hear her say it." Women clergy can encourage each other by their support.

Clergy # 2 said the support she received from her family, friends, and co-workers was amazing. She said, "I had planned to pay for the catering and some of it was donated. People gave unexpected donations to help defray the expenses." Women clergy are appreciative when others make personal investments of their time, energy, and resources.

Richard J. Douglass-Chin says, "Sojourner Truth's narrative was positioned through the support of community as she relied upon others to produce her narrative—

especially children and women, but also white people" (68). Women are aware of the power of working in community with others.

In addition, building relationships with representatives of community agencies is important in performing ministry. These agencies may be local, statewide, or international. I have formed community and national partnerships with organizations that promote health and wellness for all people, and particularly for women as I have done ministry for women over the last twenty years. These have included Aids Volunteer Organization of Lexington, Lexington Fayette County Health Department, Kentucky State Department for Public Health, Asbury Theological Seminary, Chrysalis House (recovery program for women), Women's Hope Center, Men's Hope Center, and American Heart and Stroke Association. The partnerships have provided financial support in doing ministry, women to participate in and benefit from ministry programs, and instructors to share information and provide special training.

Relationships are important to women as they bear life's burdens and stresses. In the story of the Widow of Nain in the gospel of Luke 7:11-15, the widow's only son dies and she depends on the community to walk with her in a funeral procession and to bear her burden as they carry her dead son on a bier. While the need for community support is real, the significant factor is when Jesus comes in and restores the widow's hope by bringing her son back to life. The Bible says, "He came and touched the bier; and they that bare him stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to you, rise!'" (Luke 7:15). Women do well to allow the community to support them in their struggles, but only a touch from Jesus can alleviate their pain and restore their hope. The participants were

able to help women receive healing and restoration as they worked in community with those who also sought to help meet the needs of women by their support.

Clergy # 7 was discouraged when she did not receive the support of her local church but encouraged when other churches supported her vision in mentoring women who are abused and go through the court system:

> The lack of support from the church was a surprise and discouragement. I need space for training sessions for those who will be mentors to the abused women. Some reasons for members of the official board denying my request was concern for expenses of the lights being used and that juveniles would be at the church.

She was encouraged by the support that she received from other churches in the community. Whether by fasting and praying for the success of an event, helping prepare the food, decorating, making contact calls to program participants, inviting others to attend, or making monetary donations, the work and support of the community proved effective in the women clergy providing ministry for women.

This research informs the knowledge and practice of ministry as it reveals that ministry to women is effective when the work is done in community. Relationships are important as one does ministry. These relationships may be with family members, prayer partners, church members, coworkers, and colleagues. Together, more work is done than apart. Working together allows a sharing of responsibility and also of reward.

Ineffective Journaling

The participants in the study, with the exception of one, did not write in their ministry development journals. The journals presented an opportunity for refection as they planned their ministries, and could perhaps have been useful in the overall observation of the mental process in which each participant engaged. William Andrews

says, "Jarena Lee's importance in part was because she left a detailed account of her life of faith that serves as a valuable primary source" (27). Writing in a journal produces details that otherwise may be missed as one gives an account of events that have taken place.

Jesus shows the significance of written messages at the scene of the woman who was caught in adultery. Jesus wrote on the ground twice, and after reading what he had written the second time, those who felt justified to condemn her changed their minds:

> Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her. Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. (vv. 7-9)

Writing is effective when the message is used in the process of bringing change to others' lives.

The tool might have worked if it had been a part of the agenda for the seminar, if I had provided ample instruction on how to journal, and if the seminar had taught and emphasized the benefits of journaling. When the AAWCTES is repeated, a workshop on how to journal and the benefits of journaling could be taught and its use throughout the process emphasized to determine whether or not journaling is an effective tool in developing a ministry for women.

The Profound Effect of a Simple Tool

Each of the participants found the use of the eight-step approach to developing a ministry model to be helpful. The tool was self-designed in an attempt to simplify the process of developing a ministry. The reasonable eight steps that were offered guided the participants in a way that helped them formulate the ministry model as a *nice, neat package*. Clergy # 3 said, "A seminar can teach and train women clergy how to develop

ministries by using tools such as handouts and guides." The eight steps served as a guide

and can be used by anyone who does ministry as he or she formulates a ministry model to

address any specified need or challenge.

Clergy # 6 shared the eight-step approach to developing a ministry model with the

women to whom she presented her newly developed ministry. She said the women were

excited about receiving a tool that would help them develop a ministry model. She has

used this simple approach in two additional ministry settings:

> Now since attending the AAWCTES, and designing my own ministry
> using the ministry model of Rev. Maxine, I am encouraged to go forth. I
> designed my ministry and with her coaching and follow-up, I was able to
> present it. It was received and hearts were changed; forgiveness was
> manifested; women are free to create and design other ministries to assist
> other women in the future.

Using a simple tool provides a practical and basic means for developing a ministry that

addresses the challenges that women face.

The eight-step approach to developing a ministry used several elements of the

methodology in preparing a dissertation. Step one, which is prayer, is engaged prior to

beginning the task of writing a dissertation as well as in preparing to develop a ministry

(and throughout the entire process of each). The *population and participants* are revealed

in step two as the participants identify the women in their particular community and those

who will participate by providing ministry to help them. The *problem and purpose*,

which is step three, identifies the need or challenge the women face. Step four holds

Scripture as the *instrument* used to understand the nature of the problem and provide the

evidence of a solution. Steps five through eight are seen as the *design of the study* as they

reveal the solution and the plan of action to arrive at such. Thus, the eight-step-approach,

just as the methodology in preparing a dissertation, allowed the participants to engage a simple but profound process as they developed a ministry to meet the needs of women.

The research informs the practice of ministry by providing a simple approach in developing a ministry model. The eight-step approach is easy to follow and helped the participants to focus on basic and practical steps that can be taken when developing a ministry model. It reminded participants that God can use the simplest part of a presentation to make the most profound statement. I am as amazed as Clergy # 6 as I witness the continual birth of ministries as God uses this simple tool to make a profound difference in designing ministry models.

Experience Translated into Learning

The participants learned more about the needs of women and what important role they can play in helping to address the challenges women face as they experienced developing and presenting ministries to women. The experience of ministering to women in their particular settings helped them to see that the women were eager to participate in their own healing. Clergy # 4 said that as the women listened to her they seemed to want to share their stories, too. The participant was excited about her first experience in providing ministry to a group of women, and said she now knows what her purpose is.

Clergy # 5 learned that support can come from those whom you do not expect it from, and a lack of support can come from those whom you expect it from. A church member whom she expected to support her vision for ministry did not, and the person whom she expected not to support it, in fact, did. She learned that in ministering to women, support will come from surprising places. Clergy #7's experience in developing a ministry helped her to see the need for ministry to the children of victims of domestic

violence. In addition, as she developed her ministry, she learned that when help does not come from those whom you expect, still, help will come from unexpected places. She said, "I was discouraged when my church would not allow me space for the mentoring program, but I learned that God will still send help that we need. Other churches have helped."

The learning that took place as the participants developed and presented their ministries is invaluable. As they provided ministry for women, the participants learned more about women's needs and the challenges they face; the intervention of God as he provides help, support, and resources; and the impact they can have on the lives of other women.

Rev. Dr. Cecelia Williams Bryant's Women of the World Praying Convocation was an experience that produced learning. Her event for women featured a Seren-i-Tea where women sat at tea and were silent and reflective as they were ministered to by liturgical dance and a harpist who played melodic worship songs. The women who attended the tea made gestures of kindness, such as passing the sandwiches and fruit to others who were at the table but still did not use speech as they communicated. They learned that ministry for women included embracing silence in order to hear God and hear the needs of others as well as of themselves. They learned that ministries for women are not always traditional and predictable but can be innovative and different from other events and programs. The participants learned more about the needs of women and how they could help as they developed and presented their ministries.

The research informs the practice of ministry by showing the importance of praxis in addition to theory. The AAWCTES was a mighty tool that helped train and prepare the

participants to build a ministry model. Still, when they actually developed and presented

a ministry to women, the experience was translated into learning as they discovered more

about the needs of women, God's intervention in the process of doing ministry, and their

purpose as related to ministry to women.

Sensitivity to Women's Needs

The participants' sensitivity to the needs of women changed as a result of

attending the AAWCTES and developing a ministry. Clergy # 2 said that after attending

the AAWCTES she feels more sensitive to others' needs:

> The seminar caused me to have a greater sense of caring and to want to be
> available to pray for women's needs. When I heard about the problems
> and issues some women face, it made me feel a burden for them. I just
> wished that it was something that I could do to help.

She said she was also sensitive to the women's needs as she had her restoration

fellowship luncheon. In addition, she said, "I could see that one woman was hurting.

Before we closed out, I asked if anyone needed prayer, and she came forward. She asked

for prayer for a family member who was facing an illness." Clergy # 2's sensitivity to the

needs of women was coupled with sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, as God helped her

discern the woman's need.

Brown says, "Women need to identify someone who shares their stories and

recognizes what they need to do before they go where they have been" (Brown, 122).

Women clergy understand the stories of other women because they have shared similar

experiences. They are, therefore, able to provide special ministry that addresses women's

needs.

Flake equates the misunderstanding of Job's wife with the misunderstanding of

women. Women clergy have not been seen as cosufferers for the sake of the gospel and

their pains and problems are overlooked. They can relate to the pain women feel when they are misunderstood and when their needs are neglected. The participants were sensitive to the needs of women as they developed and presented their ministries.

The research informs the practice of ministry as it reveals that receiving knowledge about challenges women face, being trained to develop a ministry, and ministering to women can contribute to a woman clergy becoming more sensitive to women's needs. When women clergy grow in sensitivity, they may become more compassionate toward women and their concerns.

Compulsion to Develop a Ministry

The participants' desire to develop ministries for women changed due to their recognition of a lack of ministries to women. Clergy # 2 said she did not know of three ministries that are effectively helping women overcome challenges they face, such as with their finances, relationships, and children. She said she is therefore, compelled to do something about the problems women face.

Clergy # 5 also said she did not know of ministries in her geographic setting to help women. She said, "We really don't have any ministries in my community to address the challenges women face." Clergy # 4 said a march for breast cancer, and domestic violence takes place each year. She concluded that she could help and support these causes by starting her own ministry. Women clergy's desire to offer ministry for women can grow when they recognize the need for more ministries that address the challenges women face.

In spite of the hardships and trials they face due to racism and sexism, women clergy have persevered with their faith in God and in their concern for the needs of

others. Virginia Raney Mollenkott says, "If our faith is truly alive, it will address the complex and perilous times in which we live" (123). Women clergy are compelled to provide solutions for the spiritual, health, emotional, financial, and employment needs of women especially when they see a need for more ministries for women. The participants saw a need for more ministries for women and ventured forth in faith to fill this need.

The research informs the practice of ministry as it reveals that knowledge about available resources or the lack thereof can affect the intensity of women's compulsion to minister to women. Women clergy may be more compelled to develop a ministry for women when they know women face challenges and see that there are few or no ministries to address their needs.

Implications of the Findings

The research yielded eight major findings as related to women's ministry, and each has specific implications that follow. The first finding is that the AAWCTES is a factor in the changes that took place in the participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry for women. Six of the participants in this study said their inspiration for developing ministries for women came as they attended and participated in the AAWCTES. Without the AAWCTES, they would not have created ministries. The implication is that women clergy need training, motivation, and skills in order to build ministries for women.

The second finding is that the coaching call was vital to the process of developing a ministry. Thus, the follow-up, continued guidance, and encouragement that I gave helped increase their confidence and gave them motivation. Women clergy are edified and increase in confidence when energized and encouraged as they interact with a coach

in developing ministries. Guidance as needed following the coaching call continued to aid in the total process, as it allowed the women clergy to feel supported in this area of ministry. The implication is that after women clergy have been trained at a seminar, they still need to be coached as they continue the process of developing ministries.

Third, the research showed that relationships are important in performing ministry for women. The participants were confident as they developed ministries because of their relationships with me as I guided, coached, and instructed them throughout the process. They were encouraged by the support they received from others, such as community, family, friends, and coworkers. They found that support often came from unexpected sources. The implication is that relationships play a pivotal role in developing ministries. Another implication is that more can be done in community than by working alone to develop and present a ministry.

Fourth, while participants were asked to write in a journal on a weekly basis as they developed their ministries, only one participant did so. Perhaps because journaling was not taught at the AAWCTES, the women did not choose to engage in this activity. Still, the participants developed and presented ministries that affected women in their particular settings. The implication is a need to place significant emphasis on each part of the process as they develop a ministry.

Fifth, a single tool can have a profound effect in developing a ministry. The eight-step approach in developing a ministry model proved to be an effective means of teaching the participants how to develop a ministry. The approach was simple and, therefore, easy to understand and apply. The implication is that simplicity can bring great results and is appreciated. When an approach is made simple, people will not feel intimidated and will

be more open to learning how to develop a ministry and then put their learning into practice.

Sixth, experience can be translated into learning. The participants experienced changes in their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry to women as they developed and presented ministries. They learned more about women's needs as they observed how women responded during the process. The participants were able to see God at work as he provided the help and support they needed. They also received personal insight as related to their God-given purpose. The implication is that developing and presenting a ministry is as important to learning as attending and participating in the AAWCTES. Some things that were learned could only come from ministering to women. For example, discovery of purpose is learned through experiencing that to which one is drawn. Learning to minister takes place when one actually *does* ministry.

Seventh, sensitivity to women's needs changed as a result of attending the AAWCTES and developing ministries. The participants were able to discern women's needs as they looked at their facial expressions as they presented their ministries. The sensitivity led to them to respond with compassion and embrace the women with love and concern. The implication is that women clergy can grow in sensitivity as they learn theoretically as well as experientially about challenges women face.

Eighth, desire to develop a ministry increased due to recognition of a lack of ministries that address challenges women face. The participants were unable to think of ministries in their communities that are readily available to women. Resultantly, they wanted to do something to help women with their problems. The implication is that

women clergy can increase in desire to develop ministries for women when they know more ministries for women are needed.

Limitations of the Study

The women clergy in the study each attended a ministry event for women that I had planned within the last two years. My relationship with them could have affected their responses on the evaluation of AAWCTES. The strength of relationship is still important as the data reveals the participants attended and participated in the seminar because they expected they would receive training that would be helpful to them due to their prior experiences at ministry events that I had planned and they attended.

This project could have been improved with the inclusion of women clergy from black churches in other Christian denominations. Still, I saw these participants as representative of women clergy, as all women clergy face similar concerns and challenges due to patriarchy and race and gender biases.

Considering the mission of AME/WIM, this project can be repeated at any of its levels to provide an opportunity for training women clergy as related to ministry for women. Women preachers serve across the entire connectional church. Further, this study can be used by women clergy of other African-American churches and students of feminist/womanist and/or liberation theology.

This research project benefits the Christian church in America and provides the help that is needed in addressing challenges women face. Women in Christian ministry everywhere have another lens to see the work of Jesus Christ in addressing the challenges women face today. Moreover, this project provides a model for assessing women clergy's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry for women and trains them how to develop ministries to address challenges unique to women in their particular settings.

The qualitative method was helpful as the instruments used in the study allowed the participants to share stories related to their process of developing ministries. I used "Appreciative Research," which looks for language of success, especially stories that can be analyzed and shared with others (Sensing 176). I wanted the participants to focus on the positive aspects of the training as opposed to what they thought it lacked. The limitation is that the questions on the evaluation assumed they would benefit from the experience.

Unexpected Observations

I was not surprised that the women clergy in the study would be so open to an invitation to attend and participate in the AAWCTES. Knowing the busy schedules of women clergy, I was surprised that they would agree to not only attend and participate in the seminar, but also to develop ministry models to meet the needs of women unique to their settings. The majority are married and have ministerial responsibilities at their churches, as well as other obligations. Women often take on too many commitments and, resultantly, run the risk of being burned out. The women who engaged the study, despite other responsibilities and commitments, said yes to an opportunity to invest their time, energy, and training selflessly for the betterment of women in their churches and communities.

I was surprised that the relationships and coaching were as important as the AAWCTES as the participants developed ministries. While the data revealed that the AAWCTES was a causal factor in the change in the participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry for women, they shared in their coaching calls and

postinterviews how receiving guidance from me and the support of others helped them to have positive experiences as they built their ministry models.

I was surprised at how helpful the eight-step approach to developing a ministry model was to the participants. They said it made developing their plans much easier. One participant asked if she could share this approach with others so they could have a simplified way of developing a ministry model. I was delighted to know that something so simple could render ministry models that are so profound (see Appendix K).

A ministry development journal was given to each participant at the AAWCTES, and she was asked to respond to questions on a weekly basis. I was surprised that only one of the participants wrote in her notebook. Clergy # 6 used her notebook to record when she received items that she had ordered through the mail as a part of her presentation on forgiveness.

I did not include theological training or any other prior education as a requirement for participation in the project. The women clergy were comfortable with who they are, and educational levels did not matter. What mattered was a desire to learn more about challenges women face and how they as women clergy could help. I was surprised to see the tremendous impact of what can happen when women sense that whether educated in a seminary or trained at a women's seminar, their ministries can be inspiring and impactful.

Recommendations

The AAWCTES presented an opportunity to see if the participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as related to ministry to women would change after attending and participating in the seminar and developing ministries to meet the needs of women. As

indicated in this research, these factors did change. The following recommendations are

offered as related to this study:

1. Follow-up with the participants two to three months after they have launched

their ministries by calling them to see if the changes in attitudes and behavior last, and

what other behaviors will be exhibited as a demonstration of such,

2. Repetition of the AAWCTES with the same women clergy measuring how

much of the experience of developing a ministry model remained with them, to the extent

that they would be able to develop their ministries without as much coaching and/or

follow-up. Consequently, I would be able to determine how much training is needed and

if the AAWCTES could be used effectively in the absence of the coaching call and

continued follow-up.

3. A test of the effectiveness of the AAWCTES with women clergy in black

churches of other Christian denominations and who are younger in age to see if the

outcomes are the same—the development of ministry models within eight weeks, the

implementation of the majority of these models, and the impactful results that ensued.

4. More extensive research of the needs of women clergy as related to their

personal struggles and lived experiences. The training would be extended for a period of

three days: (1) Day one would include opportunities for personal healing and restoration

for the women clergy through workshops, lectures, worship experiences, and sermons;

(2) Day two would include workshop, lectures, and practicums on how to develop a

ministry plan and how to develop a model ministry to meet the needs of women; and, (3)

Day three would be for a second practicum as the women clergy develop their ministry

models. The AAWCTES would end with an impactful worship service and service of commitment.

5. A reunion of the women clergy for a time of fellowship and sharing as research revealed the importance of relationships and working in community.

Postscript

September 1994 marks the beginning of my ministry to women as I presented my very first women's conference with 112 women in attendance. In 2004, I started Sisters Keeping the Covenant which now presents conferences promoting healing and wellness for women and teen girls and women clergy training and empowerment seminars. More than eight thousand women in the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania have been healed and spiritually empowered. Additional women on the island of Bermuda have benefited from this ministry.

Identifying the problem of too few ministries to meet the needs of women in America in the twenty-first century, preparing for the research, and engaging the literary review were very unique experiences. I have a better knowledge and understanding of some of the challenges women face and of the impact of American myths, controlling images, and systemic gender and racial bias in perpetuating health disparities that leave women devoid of services and care needed following rape or domestic violence. The literary review allowed me to obtain knowledge of how controlling images of black women that began in slavery still affect women today.

Planning the AAWCTES was a delight, as I truly enjoy developing ministry models for meeting the needs of women. Women clergy are encouraged in these settings

where they can learn, pray, and fellowship together. The women clergy's response to my invitation, attendance, and participation showed their openness to learn about women's issues and how they can help women in their communities who are hurting and in need of special ministry.

The coaching calls and follow-up that I gave to each individually were very rewarding, and their excitement as they developed their ministries caused me to feel even more excitement and anticipation. A great reward and blessing is knowing that women from throughout central Kentucky have benefited from this project as they have received restoration, deliverance, renewal, and a closer walk with God.

APPENDIX A

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN CLERGY PRESEMINAR SURVEY

Instructions: This questionnaire is intended to measure the change in knowledge, attitudes and behavior of women clergy as related to ministry to women before attending the AAWCTES and then developing a ministry to meet the needs of women in their particular setting. There are no right or wrong answers; therefore, your honest reactions will be appreciated. Please do not forget to place your name on this survey. Your responses are anonymous and will be strictly confidential.

Please write your responses to the following three questions.

1. Name the top three challenges facing women in your community.

2. Name three ministries that are effectively helping women overcome these issues. Please describe these ministries.

3. What motivates you to invest in ministry for women, and what has discouraged you from doing so?

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN CLERGY POSTSEMINAR SURVEY

Instructions: This questionnaire is intended to measure the change in knowledge, attitudes and behavior of women clergy as related to ministry to women after attending the AAWCTES and then developing a ministry to meet the needs of women in their particular setting. There are no right or wrong answers; therefore, your honest reactions will be appreciated. Please do not forget to place your name on this survey. Your responses are anonymous and will be strictly confidential.

Please write your responses to the following three questions.

1. Name the top three challenges facing women in your community.

2. Name three ministries that are effectively helping women overcome these issues. Please describe these ministries.

3. What motivates you to invest in ministry for women, and what has discouraged you from doing so?

APPENDIX C

EVALUATION OF AAWCTES

Instructions: This evaluation is intended to measure the effectiveness of the AAWCTES and to learn which parts of the seminar were most or least effective. It will also measure the confidence of women clergy in feeling ready to develop a ministry after participating in the AAWCTES in addition to other factors that are perceived as helpful or not helpful. There are no right or wrong responses. Your honesty is needed and appreciated.

Please complete this evaluation by putting a check mark in the appropriate space (check all that apply) or writing legibly, filling in the blank for your answer to each question. Please feel free to add comments to any answer.

1. How did attending the African-American women clergy impact your ability to develop a ministry unique to your particular setting that meets the needs of African-American women today?

    ___a. increased my knowledge about challenges women face today
    ___b. inspired me to want to develop a ministry to address the needs of women
    ___c. helped me understand the role of women clergy as related to other women
    ___d. provided helpful instructions on how to develop a ministry
    ___e. prepared me to utilize available resources in developing a ministry
    ___f. helped me to identify and address possible or potential hindrances in my developing a ministry
    ___g. helped me understand the theology of developing a ministry that meets the needs of women
    ___h. the seminar was not helpful to me in developing a ministry that meets the needs of women
    ___i. other_____

2. Knowing the needs of African-American women is important because

    ___a. this knowledge helped me in selecting the kind of ministry I would develop
    ___b. this knowledge helped me empathize with other women
    ___c. this knowledge was not important to me
    ___d. other_____

3. The seminar workshops were helpful because

   ___a. the speakers were passionate about the subject matter
   ___b. the information I learned was new to me
   ___c. the information increased my desire to help other women
   ___d. the workshops amply covered the subject
   ___e. the workshops left me feeling a sense of empowerment
   ___f. the workshops were not helpful to me
   ___g. other_____

4. The practicum on how to develop a ministry was helpful because

   ___a. the instructor gave basic practical help in "how to" develop a ministry
   ___b. it helped me to organize my thoughts and establish a reasonable plan of action
   ___c. it helped me to learn from other group members as we interacted together
   ___d. it provided an opportunity to put that which I had learned at the seminar into practice
   ___e. it did was not helpful
   ___f. other_____

5. The "Sanctuary"/devotional experiences were helpful because

   ___a. they provided an opportunity for personal reflection
   ___b. they provided an opportunity for personal healing
   ___c. they provided spiritual empowerment
   ___d. they were not helpful
   ___other_____

6. After leaving the seminar, the following will be helpful to me

   ___a. receiving a follow-up coaching call
   ___b. receiving the support of my pastor and church
   ___c. nothing else is needed
   ___d. other_____

7. After leaving the seminar and going back to my church, I will be able to develop a ministry because

___a. the seminar motivated me to help women in need
___b. I know better how to develop a ministry for women
___c. I better understand the needs of women in the 21st century
___d. I will probably be unable to develop a ministry
___e. other_____

8. A greater sense of personal responsibility in developing a ministry was enhanced by

___a. lectures
___b. morning meditation
___c. practicum
___d. *sanctuary* devotional experiences
___e. myself
___f. was not enhanced
___g. other_____

9. My faith plays role in developing a ministry because

___a. it helps me believe I can do it
___b. it helps me invite others to share in the work of developing a ministry
___c. it helps me to expect great results
___d. it will not play a role
___e. other_____

10. Having a personal relationship with Jesus is helpful in my developing a ministry because

___a. it causes me to have compassion for people
___b. it gives me a spiritual basis for the work I do
___c. it helps me see the needs of others more
___d. it will not be helpful
___e. other_____

Answer the following questions by rating the effectiveness with (1) poor, (2) fair, (3) good, (4) excellent.

11.	The presentations were clear and compelling	1	2	3	4
12.	The speakers were knowledgeable of their subject	1	2	3	4
13.	The seminar trained me in how to develop a ministry	1	2	3	4
14.	The seminar gave me more confidence to develop a ministry	1	2	3	4
15.	The sanctuary experiences were an essential part of the seminar	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX D

COACHING CALL

Instructions: The purpose of the coaching call is to follow-up with each woman clergy one to two weeks after she has attended and participated in the AAWCTES to see how she is doing and answer her questions as she develops her ministry that will meet the needs of women in her particular setting. This questionnaire will help discern common questions all clergy are experiencing, and will allow an opportunity for the women clergy to receive additional support and encouragement as they develop a ministry. There is no right or wrong responses. Your honesty is encouraged.

Please answer the following questions as related to your experience in developing a ministry for women. Please be as thorough as possible.

1. Where are you in the process of developing the ministry you have planned?

2. What are the challenges that have come up as you have worked to develop this ministry?

3. Tell me about the surprises you have encountered as you have invited people into this work with you.

4. How can I help you think through strategies to move forward?

APPENDIX E

POSTINTERVIEW

Instructions: This is a semi-structured interview. My purpose is to listen to you, more than it is to talk. Please feel free to express anything that would more completely or accurately answer any question. Remember that you are reflecting on the process of developing a ministry, so your responses should reflect the time frame that began with being invited to attend and participate in the AAWCTES and concluded with this post interview. This session will be recorded. All of your responses will be kept completely confidential.

General Questions for the Interview. These are intended to provide general information on the interviewees.

1. Would you briefly share your name, age, marital status, denominational affiliation, and your position or title in ministry?
2. Briefly state why you decided to accept the invitation and then attended and participated in the AAWCTES?
3. What ministry did you design, and how far in the development did you get? If the ministry took place, comment on its effectiveness. Did it accomplish what you hoped?

Interview Questions

1. What are the challenges and concerns of women that you discovered from attending the AAWCTES? How does your knowledge of these challenges and concerns affect your vision of how to do ministry to women?

2. What have you come to understand about the unique position clergy women have in developing ministries for women in their communities?

3. Having been through the AAWCTES training, how do you envision that women clergy might be trained and inspired to embrace a calling to minister to women? What could you do in your circle of women clergy to help inspire such a sense of calling?

4. Describe your experience of building a new ministry to meet the needs of women in your context. What were the greatest road blocks to your success?

5. Where did you find the unexpected support or opposition? What were the surprises?

Duration 50-60 Minutes

APPENDIX F

INVITATION E-MAIL LETTER

December 23, 2013

Greetings Friend:

I pray that all is well and that you are having a wonderful and blessed day.

Thank you for accepting my invitation to take part in my research project focused on developing effective ministries that meet the needs of African-American women. This research is the focus of a Doctor of Ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY in the U.S.A. and has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through its Doctor of Ministry Program.

The research begins with the African-American Women Clergy Training and Empowerment Seminar (AAWCTES) which will be held on Saturday, January 4, 2014 at 9:30a.m to 4p.m. at St. Paul AME Church, 251 North Upper Street, Lexington, KY. Lunch and a snack will be provided. Please see the attached flyer for more details.

Your participation involves attending a one day seminar called African-American Women Clergy Training and Empowerment Seminar (AAWCTES) to be trained in developing ministries that meet the needs of women. You will receive further guidance as you develop a ministry for women. You will also evaluate the seminar and your experience as you developed a ministry.

All information/data is confidential and will be used for the purpose of this research. No names or church names will be used in the completed research paper, as each of the clergy and their churches will be referred to as Church/Clergy # 1, Church/Clergy # 2, Church/Clergy # 3, and so forth. Further, all data will be stored on my personal computer under a secret password and locked in my office.

Participation is voluntary and you are free to leave the study at any time and to not answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Please complete the attached African-American Women Clergy Pre-Seminar Survey and e-mail it back to me by January 2, 2014.

Once again, thanks for accepting my invitation to be a part of this dynamic experience that will prepare women clergy to develop ministries to meet the needs of African-American women in the twenty-first century.

Blessings,
Rev. Maxine L. Thomas

APPENDIX G

AAWCTES FLYER

African-American Women Clergy Training and Empowerment Seminar

Theme: "Woman, Dry Your Weeping Eyes"

Date

Morning Meditation

"A Wonder in the Wilderness"—
A Biblical Reflection of the Story of Hagar
Rev. Barbara Hobson, Quinn Chapel AME Church, Lexington, KY

Lecture Topics include:

"And There Cometh a Woman to Draw Water"—A Critical Analysis of the Needs and Concerns of African-American Women in the Twenty-First Century
Rev. Dr. Sheila Harris, St. Matthew AME Church, Midway, KY
"Woman, Dry Your Weeping Eyes"—
A Theological Approach to Designing Practical Ministries for African-American Women Today
Rev. Dr. Crysanthia Carr-Seals
"Designer Women"—Biblical Threads for Mending Broken Lives (Designing Ministry Models to Meet the Needs of African-American Women in the Twenty First century)
Rev. Maxine Thomas, Doctoral Candidate at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore,KY

Spiritual Formation

Lectio Divino (Spiritual Reading of the Bible)
Sister 2 Sister Prayer Circle
Testimonials

For More information, call Rev. Maxine L. Thomas

APPENDIX H

AAWCTES AGENDA

Theme: "Woman, Dry Your Weeping Eyes!"

Date

Agenda

9:00 a.m   Welcome/Greetings

9:15 a.m.   Praise-Power

9:30 a.m.   Morning Meditation—"A Wonder in the Wilderness"
                A Biblical Reflection on the Story of Hagar—
                Rev. Barbara Hobson

9:50 a.m.   SANCTUARY—Spiritual Formation through Lectio
                Divino (Spiritual reading)

10:00 a.m.   Lecture #1—"And There Cometh a Woman to Draw
                Water"
                A Critical Analysis of the Needs and Concerns of
                African American Women in the 21st Century
                Rev. Dr. Sheila Harris

10:45 a.m.   SANCTUARY—Spiritual Formation through Community
                Sister 2 Sister Prayer Circle

11:00 a.m.   Lecture # 2—"Woman, Dry Your Weeping Eyes"
                A Theological Approach to Designing Practical
                Ministries for African-American Women Today—
                Rev. Dr. Chrysanthia Carr-Seals

11:45 p.m.   LUNCH

12:15 p.m.   Practicum —"Designer Women" Part I
                Biblical Threads for Mending Broken Lives—
                (Designing Ministry Models to Meet the Needs of
                African American Women in the 21st Century)
                Rev. Maxine L. Thomas

1:00 p.m.   SANCTUARY—Spiritual Formation through Cultural
                Expression (African Dance and African Drumming)

1:30 p.m.   Practicum—"Designer Women," Part II

Biblical Threads for Mending Broken Lives—
(Designing Ministry Models to Meet the Needs of
African-American Women in the 21st Century)
Rev. Maxine L. Thomas

2:15 p.m.   Wrap-Up
2:30 p.m.   Prayer of Consecration

APPENDIX I

INFORMED CONSENT FORM 1

Woman Clergy Participant in African-American Women Clergy Training

and Empowerment Seminar (AAWCTES)

Thank you for accepting my invitation to take part in my research project focused on developing effective ministries that meet the needs of African-American women. This research is the focus of a Doctor of Ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY in the U.S.A. and has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through its Doctor of Ministry Program.

The research begins with the African-American Women Clergy Training and Empowerment Seminar (AAWCTES) which will be held on January 4, 2013 at 9:00a.m. to 3:00p.m. at St. Paul AME Church, 251 North Upper Street, Lexington, KY. Lunch and a snack will be provided. Please see the attached flyer for more details.

Your participation involves attending a one day seminar called African-American Women Clergy Training and Empowerment Seminar (AAWCTES) to be trained in developing ministries that meet the needs of women. You will receive further guidance as you develop a ministry for women. You will also evaluate the seminar and your experience as you developed a ministry.

All information/data is confidential and will be used for the purpose of this research. No names or church names will be used in the completed research paper, as each of the clergy and their churches will be referred to as Church/Clergy # 1, Church/Clergy # 2, Church/Clergy # 3, and so forth. Further, all data will be stored on my personal computer under a secret password and locked in my office.

Participation is voluntary and you are free to leave the study at any time and to not answer any questions you do not want to answer.

If you are in agreement with all of the aforementioned, please indicate as you respond to the following:

With full knowledge of all the foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name:_____

Participant's signature:_____

Thanks again for your willingness to be a participant in this important research.

APPENDIX J

INFORMED CONSENT FORM 2

Workshop Facilitator/Worship Leader for African American Women Clergy

Training and Empowerment Seminar (AAWCTES)

Thank you for accepting my invitation to take part as a workshop facilitator and or leader in a special worship experience in my research project focused on developing effective ministries that meet the needs of African-American women. This research is the focus of a Doctor of Ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY in the U.S.A. and has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through its Doctor of Ministry Program.

The research begins with the African-American Women Clergy Training and Empowerment Seminar (AAWCTES) which will be held on Saturday, January 4, 2014 at 9:00a.m. to 3:00p.m. at St. Paul AME Church, 251 North Upper Street, Lexington, KY. Lunch and a snack will be provided. Please see the attached flyer for more details.

Your participation involves: preparing a lesson/workshop on a specific topic assigned to you as related to African-American women clergy being trained to develop ministry models that will meet the needs of women, or else providing a special and brief worship experience as requested.

Your name or organization will not be named in the completed research, but rather, the information shared and discussed by you and other participants, and or the style of worship or performance you provided will be shared, and that those providing the workshop information and or this ministry experience are residents in KY. In the final research, workshop facilitators will be referred to as Workshop Facilitator # 1, Workshop Facilitator # 2, and so forth. Those who provided a special and brief worship experience will be referred to as Worship Leader # 1, Worship Leader # 2, and so forth.

Further, your service and participation is graciously accepted and appreciated at no monetary cost to any individual, organization or institution.

Participation is voluntary and you are free to leave the study at any time.

If you are in agreement with all of the aforementioned, please indicate as you respond to the following:

I will participate as a:
_____ Workshop Facilitator _____ Worship Leader

With full knowledge of all the foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name:_____

Participant's signature:_____

APPENDIX K

EIGHT-STEP APPROACH TO DEVELOPING A MINISTRY

Designing a Ministry Model That Meets the Needs of Women in the 21st Century

Step 1: <u>Pray </u>for God's Guidance

Step 2: Identify the <u>people</u>

Step 3: What is the <u>problem</u>

Step 4: Stand on God's <u>promise</u>

Step 5: <u>Propose </u>a solution (ministry model)

Step 6: Devise a <u>Plan </u>of action

Step 7: <u>Promote </u>the ministry/event

Step 8: <u>Present</u> the ministry/event

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