### Andrews University Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Project Documents Graduate Research

2013

# Development of a Program for the Empowerment of Black Single Mother Families in the Church Congregation

Richardson Honore

Andrews University

This research is a product of the graduate program in Doctor of Ministry DMin at Andrews University. Find out more about the program.

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin

#### Recommended Citation

Honore, Richardson, "Development of a Program for the Empowerment of Black Single Mother Families in the Church Congregation" (2013). *Project Documents*. 59.

https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/59

This Project Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Project Documents by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.



Thank you for your interest in the

# Andrews University Digital Library of Dissertations and Theses.

Please honor the copyright of this document by not duplicating or distributing additional copies in any form without the author's express written permission. Thanks for your cooperation.

#### Andrews University

#### Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

#### DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF BLACK SINGLE MOTHER FAMILIES IN THE CHURCH CONGREGATION

A Project Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

**Doctor of Ministry** 

by

Richardson Honoré

February 2013

## DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF BLACK SINGLE MOTHER FAMILIES IN THE CHURCH CONGREGATION

A project document presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Ministry

by

Richardson Honoré

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTER	Ξ:
Adviser, Curtis Fox	Director, DMin Program Skip Bell
Calvin Thomsen	Dean, SDA Theological Seminary Denis Fortin
Hyveth Williams	

#### ABSTRACT

#### DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF BLACK SINGLE MOTHER FAMILIES IN THE CHURCH CONGREGATION

by

Richardson Honoré

Adviser: Curtis Fox

#### ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

#### **Project Document**

#### Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM FOR THE EMPOWERMENT

OF BLACK SINGLE MOTHER FAMILIES IN THE CHURCH CONGREGATION

Name of researcher: Richardson Honoré

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Curtis Fox, Ph.D.

Date Completed: February 2013

#### Problem

The most rapid growing family type in the United States is the single parent family. It is the dominant family type in the African-American community. According to the United States Bureau of the Census (2010), 69% of all Black children are born to single mothers. Single mother families are at a dramatically greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, suicide, poor educational performance, teen pregnancy, and criminality (National Center for Health Statistics, 1993). These findings are alarming and present great challenges for African-American single mother families. In an attempt to address this crisis, the church, as an agent of change, is in a position to develop effective coping skills that will enhance the well-being of African-American single

mother families. This project presents a program to aid the church in accomplishing this goal.

#### Method

This study used quantitative and qualitative data to explore the life experiences of single mother families. A questionnaire was utilized to collect pertinent information that guided the researcher in determining the specific content to be included in the coping skills seminar for single mothers. A syllabus was developed outlining eight presentations in the following areas: (a) finance, (b) education, (c) parenting, (d) communication, (e) physical self-care, (f) psychological self-care, (g) emotional self-care, and (h) spiritual self-care. The seminar was conducted in a group setting with 15 participants and one facilitator. The findings were reported in statistical data, illustrated tables, and charts.

#### Results

African-American single mother families of the Antelope Valley Seventh-day

Adventist Church were positively impacted by the coping skills seminar. The overall

well-being of the single mothers improved in specific and tangible ways after applying

the many coping skills acquired during the seminar. The local church congregation was

affected in more than one way as it experienced an increase in the well-being and

spiritual growth of the single mother families. A new ministry for single mother families

is in the process of being developed and will be implemented in the local church.

#### Conclusions

Single mother families are an integral part of society. The challenges they face are astronomical. The solution for improving the single mother paradigm is three-fold. First,

we need to be intentional about improving the quality of life for single mothers. This can be achieved by providing increased financial opportunities and making college education attainable. Secondly, we need to equip single mothers with life-skills that will improve parent-child relationship, employ positive discipline, and enhance communication. Finally, single mothers are encouraged to make self-care a top priority in their lives which is essential to the well-being of the entire family. It is essential that federal and state agencies, businesses, colleges, and churches become proactive in providing assistance that will empower single mother families. Churches have the added responsibility to function as an extended family to single mothers by providing support, healing, relevant resources, and modeling compassion as commanded by the head of the Church, Jesus Christ.

To my Parents: Nelson and Adulia

You gave your all

I will forever be grateful

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Statement of the Task	1
Justification for the Project	2
Description of the Project Process	2
Expectations from This Project	3
Definition of Terms	4
2. TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF SINGLE MOTHER FAMILIES	6
Overview of the Chapter	6
The Divine Ideal	7
The Consequences of Sin	9
The Divine Response	10
Biblical Affirmation of Single Mother Families	11
Factors Contributing to the Existence of Single	
Mother Families	12
Widows	12
Divorce	12
War	13
Non-Marital Sex	14
Abandonment	14
Personal Choice	15
Modern Technology	15
God's Provision	15
The Covenant Code	16
Feasts	17
Sheaf in the Field	18
Tithing	18

	God's Protection	19
	Jesus' Compassion for Single Mother Families	20
	Case Study 1: Hagar and Ishmael	21
	Background	21
	Theophany	22
	God Meets us Where we are	23
	Restored Identity	23
	Introspective Examination	24
	Retrospective Examination	24
	Hagar Confesses	24
	God of Comfort	25
	God of Compassion	25
	Acceptance	26
	Case Study 2: The Widow of Zarephath	26
	Background	26
	A Faithful Response	27
	Obedience Over Sacrifice	28
	God Provides	28
	God Heals	29
	Timeless Lessons	30
	Selected Principles from Ellen G. White	30
	Summary	32
٥.	LITERATURE REVIEW	34
	Overview of the Chapter	34
	Introduction	34
	Historical Overview of Single Parent Families	36
	Factors that Contribute to Single Mother Families	37
	Divorce	37
	Never Married Mothers	38
	Teenage Births	39
	Technological Advancement	41
	Absentee Fathers	41
	Poverty	42
	American Slavery	44
	Quality of Life	47
	Employment	49
	Income	49
	Education.	51
	Life Skills	53
	Parenting	53
	Communication	55
	Money Management.	57
	Self-Care	57
	Physical	58

	Psychological
	Emotional
	Spiritual
	Summary
	•
4.	METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION
	Purpose and Intent
	Participants
	Recruitment
	Questionnaire
	Intent of Questionnaire
	Questionnaire Selection
	Data Gathering
	Cover Letter
	Church Approval
	Seminar Outline
	Methods and Means
	The Questionnaire
	Formal Invitation
	Costs
	Informed Consent
	Seminar day and Time
	Break Time
	Child Care
	The Setting
	Presentation
	The Curriculum
	Gifts
	Directory of Resources
	Lost on the Moon Exercise
	Seminar Presentation – Session I
	Introduction
	Biblical Principle
	Case Studies
	Selected Principles From Ellen G. White
	Divine Restoration
	Seminar Presentation – Session II
	Exploring our Present Setting and Historical Overview
	Quality of Life
	Finance
	Education
	Life Skills
	Parenting
	Communication
	Solf Core

	Evaluation	;
5.	SUMMARY, EVALUATION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	;
	Summary of Questionnaire Responses	
	Subjects Single Mothers Would Like to See Covered	
	Statistical Evaluation of Continuum Questions	,
	Finance	,
	Education	
	Parenting	9
	Communication	9
	Physical Self-Care	9
	Psychological Self-Care	9
	Emotional Self-Care	9
	Spiritual Self-Care	9
	Seminar Conclusions	9
	Results and Discussions	10
	Four Week Follow Up Evaluation	1
	Recommendations	1
	Project Summary	10
Appendix		
A.	Single Parent Questionnaire	1
	Questionnaire Cover Letter	1
C.	Lost on the Moon Worksheet.	1
	Church Approval	1
	Informed Consent	1
	Itemized Expenses	1
	Brochure	1
	Formal Invitation	1
I.	Budget Worksheet	1
J.	Seminar Evaluation Form	1
	Post Seminar Four-Week Follow-up Evaluation	1
L.	Sen care i issessment i orksneet	1:
M.	The Joy of Single Mother Families Seminar	1
REFEREN	NCE LIST	1
VITA		1
4 T T T J		1.

#### LIST OF TABLES

1.	A Comparison of Sexually Active Teens	40		
2.	Demographic and Economic Characteristics of Married, Cohabiting, and Single Mothers in the Fragile Families Study	48		
3.	Sources of Support for Single Mothers	51		
4.	Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Finance	89		
5.	Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Education	90		
6.	Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Parenting	91		
7.	Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Communication	92		
8.	Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Physical Self-Care	93		
9.	Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Psychological Self-Care	94		
10.	Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Emotional Self-Care	95		
11.	Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Spiritual Self-Care	96		
LIST OF FIGURES				
1.	The Process of Communication	56		
2.	Single Mother Age Range	86		
3.	Children Age Range	87		
4.	Seminar Topics of Interest	88		

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I thank the members of the Antelope Church, in California, who taught me the value of what it is to shepherd God's people. I could have not asked for a more loving people and dynamic church to pastor. I will forever be grateful to the Lord for your contributions to my life.

Especially, I thank my adviser, Dr. Curtis Fox, who inspired me to strive for academic excellence. I greatly appreciate his persistence, patience, time, recommendations, knowledge, and the willingness to share this journey with me. I am grateful for his commitment and sacrifice to the entire duration of this project.

I am grateful for the support and encouragement of my second reader, Dr. Calvin Thomsen, who, from the very beginning encouraged me to write on this topic. His contributions to this project are invaluable.

I am indebted to my brother Kevin Mapp, who committed much time to the preliminary review and edit of this work so that it can reflect a level of excellence pleasing to God.

Words cannot express my gratitude to Jacqueline Maquilan, a single mother of three, whose life, experiences, and faith fully demonstrated what God is able to do through every single mother who submits fully to Him. Her passion and story sparked this project and has been the fuel that kept it going.

I thank the single mothers who responded to the questionnaire, participated in the

seminar, and contributed to this study by sharing their insights.

I thank my Family Ministries cohort, who gave me a sense of brotherhood, support, accountability, and encouragement to complete this project. I am confident that we shall all complete the requirements, and soon.

I am extremely grateful to my wife, Janelle. The completed project would have been impossible without her patience, understanding, and the willingness to put up with more than her fair share of discomfort while her husband spent many sleepless nights writing. Her undivided support has made the impossible a reality. Our love for each other is a tower of strength and courage that empowered me to complete this work.

I thank God for the best daughters any Papa can ever ask for, Micaiah Chinuwe and Amariah Ajani, for their patience and sacrifice in order for me to commit to this project. Remember, the sky is not the limit.

Finally, I give the utmost praise and thanks to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, in whose strength my weakness is made perfect. He is, therefore, I am.

#### CHAPTER 1

#### INTRODUCTION

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

The most rapid growing family type in the United States is the single parent family. It is the dominant family type in the African-American community. According to the United States Bureau of the Census (2010), 69% of all Black children are born to single mothers. Single mother families are at a dramatically greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, suicide, poor educational performance, teen pregnancy, and criminality (National Center for Health Statistics, 1993). A lack of effective coping skills further gives rise to these greater risks. These findings are alarming and present great challenges for African-American single mother families. In an attempt to address this crisis, the Church, as an agent of change is in a position to develop effective coping skills that will enhance the well-being of African-American single mother families. This project presents a program to aid the church in accomplishing this goal.

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

The task of this project was to develop and implement a coping skills seminar that would enhance the well-being of African-American single mother families in the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church. The project was evaluated to determine

if single mothers improved their skills in: Finance; education; parenting; communication; physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual self-care.

#### **Justification for the Project**

African-American single mother families are the fastest growing family-type in the Unites States. Therefore, it is imperative that we are proactive in developing coping skills to ensure their viability and success. Single mother families make up the largest type of families in the Black Seventh-day Adventist churches. We need programs in place that will enhance the well-being of single mother families.

#### **Description of the Project Process**

Theological foundation focused on exploring the Bible for information pertaining single mothers. Two case studies of single mother families in the Bible were explored. In addition, selected principles were extracted from the writings of Ellen G. White. Finally, various principles and conclusions were derived from the Biblical counsel and writings of Ellen G. White.

Current literature was reviewed. This included the use of books, peer reviewed journals, and the Internet on the following topics: finances, education, poverty, parenting, communication, self-care, and single parent historical background.

A standardized questionnaire that had been thoroughly validated was distributed to collect information that was pertinent to the specific life experiences of single mother families. The data collected was used to determine the level of coping skills that the single mothers had prior to the seminar.

Further information regarding the desires of single mother families was acquired through personal visitation and conversations. The intents of the home visitations and what I hoped to accomplish were clearly explained to the single mothers.

A Coping Skills Seminar was developed and presented to the single mothers. The following areas were covered: finance; education; parenting; communication; physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual self-care. Development of the coping-skills seminar was based on the information obtained from the questionnaire, current literature, the Bible, and personal experience from working with single mothers. The implementation of the seminar took place in the local church. While Black women served as the targeted population, other women from diverse ethnicities were encouraged to attend. All single mothers, including church members and non-members were invited and encouraged to attend the seminar. The effectiveness of the seminar was evaluated at the end of the seminar presentation, as well as a four-week follow up to see if the single mothers had applied the coping skills in their personal life.

#### **Expectations From This Project**

This project will enhance the spiritual life of Black single mother families in the Antelope Valley Church. This project will enhance the financial health of Black single mothers. This project will improve the parenting skills of Black single mothers. This project will develop the communication skills of Black single mothers. This project hopes to increase college attendance among our Black single mothers. This project intends to improve the physical, psychological, and emotional self-care of Black single mother families. This project is intended to grow the spiritual experience of Black single mother

families. Finally, this project is intended to create a support network and provide community based resources to aid Black single mother families.

This project will serve as a resource for other pastors in the Greater Los Angeles Region. This project is intended to provide a tool that will equip and empower Black single mother families in the church congregation. This project will be used to develop and initiate a single mother ministry in the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Southern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

#### **Definition of Terms**

Single mothers -- This term refers to single mothers who are unmarried, have never married, or are widowed or divorced. When used in the seminar project, single mothers are non-cohabiting.

Single parent -- This term refers to a single parent who is rearing a child or children alone.

Single mother families -- A single mother family consists of a householder and one or more other children living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Household -- A household includes all of the people who occupy a housing unit who may or may not be related to the householder.

Quality of life -- This term refers to income, socioeconomic satisfaction, mental/physical/emotional well-being, and social support system. For the purpose of this study, quality of life includes one's finance and education.

Life skills -- Refers to a set of human skills acquired via teaching or direct experience that are used to handle problems and questions commonly encountered in daily human life.

Self-care -- Refers to the personal health maintenance activities of an individual, family or community, with the intention of improving or restoring health, treating or preventing disease, whether it is physically, psychologically, emotionally, or spiritually.

Antelope Valley Church population -- The people who regularly attend the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church. They may or may not be baptized members. The single mothers who participated in the project were members and regular visitors or close friend of members who are familiar with the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Coping skills -- Refers to what a person does in order to avoid, remove, minimize, or "get through" a stressful situation. Coping is defined as the process of making adaptations to meet personal needs and to respond to the demands of the environment.

Coping skills seminar -- A seminar focusing on practical coping skills and strategies for single mothers.

African-American single mothers – this term refers to all black single mothers who reside in the United States, either by birth or migration.

#### CHAPTER 2

#### TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF SINGLE MOTHER FAMILIES

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

There is hardly any institution on God's earth that has received more recognition and, at the same time, more criticism than the human family. The institution of family is so essential to the kingdom of God that He firmly established the rules of engagement in the opening chapter of the Bible. The first two chapters of the Bible deal extensively with human relationship. In fact, the subject of families is not only the focal point, but also the climax of the creation story. The author of Genesis spares no time to inform his readers that "God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27, NRSV). The author then proceeds to inform his audience of the function, role, and duties of the family from the Divine perspective.

This chapter will explore four areas of theological inquiry as it relates to single mother families. First, the Divine ideal for the family as given by God will be examined. This is crucial since it lays the foundations and the principles that are to be the standard for any family regardless of the circumstances. Second, the Divine response to sin will be explored. We will look at the impact of sin and its consequences on the human family. Third, we will see the depths that a loving God will go to in order to restore all human

families, including single mother families. Fourth, we will carefully examine two case studies of single mother families in the Holy Scriptures. These two case studies, centered on Hagar and the widow of Zarephath, highlight the depths of Divine involvement into the lives of single mother families. Additionally, selected principles will be extracted from the writings of Ellen G. White, which will enhance our understanding of the Divine plan and human responsibilities for single mother families.

#### The Divine Ideal

The family is essentially the building block of all societies, whether it is government, education, church, or the home. The Divine ideal is intended to transform the very fabric of society for the better. God intended that the marital relationship would be the ideal for all future relationships. Allender and Longman point out (as cited in Davidson, 2007):

The first three chapters of the Bible are like a North Star to guide in marriage relationships, providing God's design for marriage, and constituting the ground floor of the Bible for understanding the foundational perspectives and the Creation foundations for marriage. (p.16)

From the very beginning, it was intended that intimate relationships would reside at the very core of the human experience. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:26a, 27). The relationship between male and female was intended to reflect the dynamic correlation that exists amid the Trinity. Craig (2004) beautifully captures this principle when he stated:

Marriage is a beautiful reflection of the heart of God. At the institution of marriage in the Garden of Eden, the Creator fashioned and shaped human beings in His image and according to His likeness. God is and what He is like. It might also help us understand and connect with the deep yearning of His heart and appreciate why He

created marriage. By observing His great handiwork, we catch a glimpse of His character, personality, and motivations. (p. 21)

After God created Adam and Eve, He immediately placed them in a monogamous heterosexual relationship with each other. The story is recorded in the book of Genesis:

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. (Gen 2:21-24)

God formed a union so intimate that the two became one flesh in God's sight.

Adam and Eve were created to complement one another, while God alone would complete the relationship. Barclay (2001) makes this important observation and comments:

Marriage should not narrow life; it should complete it. For both partners it must bring a new fullness, a new satisfaction, a new contentment into life. It is the union of two personalities in which the two complete each other. That does not mean that adjustments, and even sacrifices, have not to be made; but it does mean that the final relationship is fuller, more joyous, more satisfying than any life in singleness could be. (p. 237)

The writer of Genesis elaborates further on the Divine design for human relationships. The book of Genesis states, "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen 1:28). The divine model for human relationships is based on the ideal of heterosexuality, monogamy, equality of the sexes, wholeness, permanence, intimacy, and procreation. Intrinsic within the Divine design, is the idea that the family unit functions

strongly when there is a presence of male and female leadership in the home. Eventually, an outside intruder called "sin" would interrupt the divine ideal.

#### The Consequences of Sin

Unfortunately, an intruder called "sin" invaded and distorted the Divine ideal. The human family, in all its form, became fragmented. Monogamy would be threatened by polygamy (Davidson, 2007). According to *Gray Ethnographic Atlas Codebook* (1998), of the 1,231 societies coded: 186 were monogamous, 453 had occasional polygyny, 588 had more frequent polygyny, and 4 had polyandry. Equality among the sexes would be threatened by male "headship" and dominance (Davidson, 2007). Intimacy would be threatened by adultery, fornication, and premarital sexual relations. Permanence would be threatened by divorce (Davidson, 2007). Procreation would be threatened by abortion. The consequences of sin on the marriage relationship would eventually result in the development of many different family types that would increase with time. Craig (2004) observes:

Once equals, co-regents over the earth, the Edenic couple now experienced disconnectedness, a loss of integrity and a distortion of their gender identities. The delicate alignment, the joy of interdependence, was disrupted, and the dance of intimacy spoken of so concisely and meaningfully was now replaced by the dance for intimacy. Human innocence has been destroyed by the intrusion of self-interest, defensiveness, and denial, and the balance and unity in the marriage partnership were severely affected. Adam and Even had lost the "oneness" which they had known with their Creator-God and with each other. (p. 33)

Today, sociologists have divided the family into several categories. Powell & Cassidy (2007) have identified various family types that are in existence today. The nuclear family consists of a mother, father, and child or children. The extended family consists of grandparents, parents, mother, father, and child or children. The single parent

family consists of a mother or father, and child or children. We have cohabitation families. We have single families consisting of only one person that for one reason or another chooses to live alone. A stepfamily, also known as a blended family is the union of two families coming together to form one unit. A same sex family consists of two persons who enter into a partnership having the same sexual orientation. These different family types are recognized and accepted by our culture as legitimate. However, it should be noted that the Bible makes a clear distinction between acceptable relationship and relationship that are morally unacceptable.

While it is apparent that the numerous forms of families are a direct consequence of sin, one should not conclude that a single mother family is "sinful." I believe whole-heartedly that every mother family can be "complete" in Jesus Christ. After all, God vows, "For your Maker is your husband--the LORD Almighty is his name--the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth" (Isa 54:5). It is God, and God alone who completes the single mother family.

#### **The Divine Response**

While sin may have perverted God's ideal for the family, God was not taken by surprise. He quickly initiated the work of salvation that would ultimately restore the human family in all of its facets. God's restorative grace preceded His judgment and the pronounced destruction upon the human family. God's first message to the human family (in providing proper clothing for the Edenic couple) is that, "Apart from Me, all families are inherently dysfunctional and are unable to become fully whole." However, God is

able to produce proper coverings for each human family that can ultimately lead to wholeness

A close observation of the Bible reveals the intimate details and plans of a loving God who will stop at nothing to restore the human family. Through careful observation, I have come to believe that God especially has a soft spot for single mother families. Throughout scripture, God is very particular on how the community of believers should respond, provide, and relate to the single mother family. There were several illuminating factors that led me to this conclusion. First, the Bible affirms the existence of single mother families. Second, and of primary importance, God's provisions as instructed in the covenant laws included specific instructions for the provision of the single mother families. These instructions consisted of moral codes which would either be a blessing on the community for observing them, or a curse on the community for violating the Divine directives. Third, God meticulously set laws in place that was intended to protect the single mother families. There were severe penalties for the community that neglected to protect the single mother families. Lastly, the salvific work of Jesus, as demonstrated in the gospels and the writings of the apostles, clearly reveals God's passion and saving plan for single mother families.

#### Biblical Affirmation of Single Mother Families

The term single mother or single mother families is not specifically used in the Bible. However, there is a preponderance of biblical evidence that affirms its existence. It is clear that the Bible affirms the existence of single mother families with the usage of words such as: *widow, fatherless,* and *orphan*. These words can be used interchangeably to refer to a family that consists of a mother and child or children. It can also be used to

refer to a married woman who becomes a widow due to the death of her husband. The noun "fatherless" (Heb. יְתוֹם - yatom) refers to one who has lost his father, not necessarily his mother. The fatherless were extremely vulnerable and were frequently exploited.

Consequently, they are often mentioned as epitomizing the oppressed (New Bible Dictionary (3rd ed). The Bible points to the fact that there are many contributing factors for why a mother suddenly can find herself in a predicament as the sole parent.

Factors Contributing to the Existence of Single Mother Families

#### Widow

One reason a woman may suddenly find herself in a single mother family setting is when she becomes a widow. The term widow is inclusive of all women of marital age who had lost a spouse (Fruge, 2012, p. 1). Fruge (2012) states, "Unlike contemporary American society where divorce and childbirth outside of marriage account for the majority of single parent homes, ancient Judean single parent homes arose primarily from the death of a spouse" (p. 1). He further states that in biblical societies, where birth control as we know it was non-existent and abortion extremely rare, it is safe to assume that a vast number of these widows had children (Fruge, 2012, p. 1).

#### **Divorce**

A second reason a woman can find herself in a single mother family setting is divorce. Marriage was meant to last till death do us part. Sadly, in today's world, divorce is very common as the world grossly under-values the sacrament of marriage. This is not how God intended relationships between men and women to end up. As a result of man-

made laws, divorce was common and took place frequently. Consequently, many women would find themselves as single mothers with children. Jesus addressed the issue of divorce by reiterating, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery" (Matt 19:8-9).

#### War

A third reason a woman can suddenly find herself in a single mother family setting is war. The devastating effect of war is seen in the book of Isaiah, where the prophet Isaiah writes, "In that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, we will eat our own food and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace!" (Isa 4:1). Rabbi Kimchi (as cited in *Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*, 1983) concluded that this happened in the days of Ahaz, when Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judea 120,000 men in one day (2 Chr 28:6). The amounts of widows left were so numerous that the prophet Jeremiah said, "They are multiplied beyond the sand of the sea" (Jer 15:8). According the *Word Biblical Commentary* (2005), the casualties of battle described in Isa 3:25 and the destruction of the occupation (Isa 3:26) left surviving women in a humiliated and humiliating state (Isa 4:1) since the war has significantly reduced the number of men. Consequently, when husbands went out to war and died, women became widows and/or single mother families.

#### Non-Marital Sex

A fourth reason mother can find herself in a single mother family setting is non-marital sex. In 1 Thess 4:3, Gal 5:19, Eph 5:5, and 1 Cor 5:9 and 18, Paul warns the body of Christ to abstain from sexual immorality. Melick (2001) suggests that Paul mentioned sexual sins because they were the particular weakness of Gentiles. It is interesting to notice that in Paul's list of sexual sins, "fornication" (*porneia*), always refers to illicit sexual intercourse. According to Melick (2001):

Fornication was consistently forbidden in the Bible. It was the will of God that his people abstain from sexual immorality (1 Thess 4:3) since no one whose life-style was characterized by sexual immorality would inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9). It was the legitimate cause for divorce (Matt 5:32; "unfaithfulness," NIV). Apparently it came first in Paul's lists because it not only expressed an intensely personal sin of self-indulgence but also became the focus of a group of sins with which it normally occurs. (p. 289)

The act of fornication is often followed by "impurity (akatharsia)," "lust (epithymia)," and "passion (pathos)," "greed" or "covetness (pleonexia)." One of the consequences of pre-marital sex is pregnancy. As such, a woman who is engaged in this forbidden sex may find herself with child. Since there is no guarantee for marriage, a woman often finds herself in a predicament where she has to raise the child by herself, thus becoming a single mother family.

#### Abandonment

A fifth reason a mother can find herself in a single mother family is abandonment. In the book of 1 Corinthians Paul writes, "But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace" (1

Cor 7:15). Unfortunately, some spouses abandon their wives, and as a result, these mothers are left alone with the responsibility of providing for the family.

#### **Personal Choice**

A sixth reason a mother can find herself in a single mother family setting is by choice. There are several reasons that can influence this choice (e.g. domestic violence, child abuse, sexual abuse, etc.). These are all valid reasons or predicaments why a mother can choose to live as a single mother. Sometimes none of these cases exists. Sometimes a woman may simply choose the life of a single because she feels content, secure, and complete in Christ without the need of a man in her life.

#### **Modern Technology**

Finally, the 20<sup>th</sup> century introduced all sorts of technological advancements to the world. Modern technology has made it possible for a woman to purchase or surgically implant herself into single motherhood. While modern technology may be beneficial for married couples, who, for one reason or another may not be able to have children, it also presents opportunities to others who desire to enter into parenthood without the biblical mandate. Marriage is no longer a pre-requisite for child bearing since females are now able to produce offspring without engaging in sexual relation or being a part of a committed relationship. The theological implications of modern reproductive technology are numerous: (a) It is a wonderful tool that can aid married couples in child bearing; (b) One does not have to be married for the purpose of procreation; (c) It can deprive children of the benefit of having a mother and father present; (d) It replaces faith in God with faith in technology.

#### God's Provision

The Bible reveals a God who cares about the single mother families. God is so concerned about their welfare that He makes special provisions to ensure their protection, livelihood, and continuity. God's provision is demonstrated in the covenant code, the command to protect, the command to provide, and the command to help. The new covenant in Jesus Christ not only provided salvation but also included the responsibility of the church community towards single mother families. It is specifically stated, that God works on their behalf, for "He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing" (Deut 10:18). A curse of condemnation awaits those who oppress them. It is written, "Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow" (Deut 27:19). In the book of Malachi, the coming Messenger will pass judgment "against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans" (Mal 3:5). The resounding echo of the whole Bible clearly demonstrates that God is passionate about the health, viability, survival, and total well-being of single mother families.

#### The Covenant Code

The Covenant Code has serious ramifications as it relates to social justice, family roles and responsibilities, societal expectations, communal responsibilities, and human relations. The laws were most solicitous for the welfare of widows and the fatherless.

One of the moral principles in the Deuteronomic codes states:

You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless. (Exod 22:22-24)

These are some sterns words coming from the heart of God. These words depict how God feels about injustice, unfair treatment, afflict toward others. God is especially concerned about the how the less fortunate are treated by the general population. For this reason, He created specific laws for the benefit and protection of single mothers or the fatherless child.

#### **Feasts**

The community of Israel is instructed during the Feast of Weeks, "Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you. You shall rejoice before the LORD your God... the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are among you, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide" (Deut 16:10, 11). The community of believers is also instructed to invite the orphan to the Feast of Tabernacles: "You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates" (Deut 16:13, 14). The festive seasons were set aside as a time for celebration, reflecting on the mighty acts of God, restoration, and reconciliation into the family of God. This was a pivotal experience for all Hebrews. As such, God placed laws in place so that the single mothers would not be excluded, but would be part of the community of believers during these feast weeks.

#### Sheaf in the Field

Another area that God provided for single mother families was through the sheaf in the field. The people of Israel were given the following instructions:

When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean *it* afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing. (Deut 24:19-22)

Here again, God is showing great concern for the well being of single mother families. In a patriarchal society, the inheritance is passed down from father to son. Consequently, women or single mothers in general did not own any land or real estate properties.

Without any access to land, many single mothers lack the necessary means to produce food, clothing, and the basic necessities of life. God is fully aware of this reality and therefore commanded that the excess that is left behind during the reaping of the harvest, be left for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. There was a great reward for those who obey this commandment. God promised that He would bless them in all the works of their hands.

#### **Tithing**

One of the most important finding that was discovered during this theological quest is the fact that portions of the tithe were to be used to feed the orphans and widows. The recorded law stated:

When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year—the year of tithing—and have given *it* to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, then you shall say before the LORD your God: 'I have removed the holy tithe from *my* house, and also

have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them. (Deut. 26:12–13)

Every legitimate church organization emphasizes and encourages their members to be faithful in tithes and offering. Depending on the organization, the tithe is used to compensate pastors, administrator, schools, hospitals, mission projects, and a host of other functions. However, church organization worldwide has neglected this commandment. God instructed the leaders to divide the third year tithe among the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. A violation of this law was considered sin or a transgression of the commandment. On this matter, church organizations worldwide, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church is in violation of this law. Perhaps, the church will realize this in the near future and become proactive by putting policies in place that will address this spiritual issue.

#### God's Protection

God gave specific instructions that were intended to protect the single mother family. In the book of Zechariah, the people are told, "Do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the stranger or the poor" (Zech 7:10). In the book of Jeremiah, the people are instructed, "Do not wrong the alien, the orphan or the widow" (Jer 22:3). In the book of Proverbs, the "fields" of the fatherless were to be protected. The command was given, "Do not enter the fields of the fatherless" (Jer 23:10). The promise to dwell in the land forever depended partly upon the fair treatment of the fatherless and the widow (Jer 7:6). God judges for orphans and widows so that the justice due to them will not be perverted (Deut 10:18; Deut 24:17). God will also be a witness against those who oppress the widow and the orphan (Mal 3:5). The Lord supports the fatherless (Ps 146:9) and is the

helper of the orphan (Ps 10:14). Isaiah provides stern rebuke against those who do not defend the fatherless and plead for the widow (Isa 1:17). Job wrote in defense of his case, "I delivered the fatherless and the one who had no helper, and caused the widow's heart to sing" (Job 29:12, 13b). The fatherless are safe in the arms of God. God declares Himself to be a father of the fatherless, and a defender of widows (Ps 68:5). He assures that if they should leave their orphans, He will preserve them alive and the "widows will trust in Me" (Jer 49:11).

#### Jesus' Compassion for Single Mother Families

Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated a spirit of compassion for single mothers. The compassion of Jesus is demonstrated in Luke 7:12-15:

Now when they came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her he had compassion on her and said unto her, weep not.... And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

In the passage mentioned above, Jesus took the initiative. He could have walked right past the funeral procession and no one would have taken notice. After all, she is only a single mother with no position, power, or influence. But Jesus' heart was moved with sympathy for a woman who had lost both her husband and her son. Her grief touched the depths of His heart to the point where He reached out in compassion to her.

Throughout the ministry of Jesus he protected the welfare of single mothers. In the book of Mark, Jesus sternly rebuked the religious leaders in their treatment of the widows. Jesus' stern rebuke is recorded as follows:

And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market places, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts; which devour widows' houses, and

for a pretense make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation. (Mark 12:38-39)

These are tough words from the Master. Exploiting or refusing to minister to single mothers is viewed as spiritual disobedient. This text fully discloses that human needs and suffering, from whatever sickness, sin, or situation, touches the heart of God. Jesus goes to great length to defend the cause of single mothers, even when it meant confronting powerful religious leaders, who would later conspire to take His life. In this text, single mothers find a wonderful support. God loves them dearly and expects for His Church to demonstrate the same kind of unconditional love towards them.

# Case Study 1: Hagar and Ishmael

Genesis 16:7-11, 13 NKJ

Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction. Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"

# Background

In this passage, we find the consequences of a tightly constructive plot. The principal characters are women. The previous section provides the background. It is said, "Sarai, Abram's wife had bore him no children" (Gen. 16:1). Sarai takes matters into her own hand and "took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife" for the purpose of conception (Gen 16:3). The narrative further divulges that

Abram "went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes" (Gen 16:4). This outcome set the stage for the subsequent decisions and actions that follows.

Tension builds up between Hagar and Sarai as they compete for the attention of Abram and to be recognized as the supreme woman of the home. Sarai acknowledges, "When Hagar saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes" (Gen 16:5). In response, we are told, "Sarai dealt harshly with her" (Gen 16:6). Wenham (2002) observes the same word (ענה) – harsh) is used to describe the suffering endured by the Israelites in Egypt (Exod 1:12). Hagar's suffering was so intolerable that she ran away (ברח), another term used of the Israelites leaving Egypt (Exod. 14:5), but very frequently used of people escaping from attempts to kill them (Exod. 2:15; 1 Sam 19:12, 18). Wenham (2002) further observes:

Though Sarai is portrayed as mistress throughout, not simply exploiting her maid Hagar but also telling her husband what to do, it is apparent that Hagar comes out best in the end. She becomes Abram's wife. She receives divine promises. And eventually she bears a son not for Sarai as was planned (v 2) but, as the narrative says three times (v 15–16), for Abram. (p. 84)

A close examination of this passage reveals the character of a loving God who is intertwined in the affairs of the single mother family. It further demonstrates numerous implications and conclusions that can be drawn from the story and are applicable to the plight of every single mother. The LORD takes a special interest in the single mother and wishes to protect, provide and to be a companion of the single mother.

### Theophany

We are told that "the Angel of the LORD" found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur (Gen 16:7). This phrase appears 58 times in

the Old Testament. This is the first time in scripture that we are told of an angel's appearance. According to Wenham (2002), when the text simply speaks of a single angel of the LORD, this must be understood as God himself appearing in human form, nearly always to bring good news or salvation. He meets her on the way to Shur. This implies that she is heading for Egypt since Shur is the name of the desert in northwestern Sinai, next to Egypt. There are few times in scripture that God appears in person. This time, it is to bring hope to a woman who is pregnant and will be a single mother. Whenever God appears to human beings in scripture, we need to pay close attention to what He has to say.

#### God Meets Us Where We Are

According to Henry (1996), God suffers those that are out of the way to wander awhile, that when they see their folly, and what a loss they have brought to themselves, then they may be better disposed to return. Hagar was not stopped until she was in the wilderness, weary, had set down, and glad to find clear water with which to refresh herself. God brings us into a wilderness, and there meets us. The wilderness can be seen as a metaphor to reveal the dry and thirsty soul of a single mother who desperately needs fresh living water. With the absence of Abraham, the wilderness forces Hagar to turn to God completely who will be her sole provider. God is capable of meeting all single mothers at the lowest point in their lives in order to bless them to positions of honor.

### Restored Identity

Hagar is Egyptian, but her name is Semitic. The name Hagar comes from the verb (hgr) which is not used in the Bible and the meaning is unknown (Uittenbogaard, 2011). According to Uittenbogaard (2011), the name Hagar resembles two other Hebrew

words: אור (garar) and אור (gur). אור (garar) means to drag or drag away. אור (gur) means abide, be gathered, or be a strange. So the name Hagar could possibly mean, flight, the sojourner, or the dragged away one (Uittenbogaard, 2011). God called Hagar by name. The use of name is very significant in the Bible. It provides the one being spoken to a sense of identity and worth. God shows her respect by referring to her name. The use of the personal name by God also reveals intimacy. God informs her that He knows who she is, and He knows her situation.

## **Introspective Examination**

The LORD asks Hagar a very pertinent question: "Where have you come from?" (Gen 16:8). This question requires self-examination. God is more concerned about her "being" than her "doing." Every single mother must examine her situation from the Divine perspective.

### **Retrospective Examination**

The second question He asks Hagar was, "Where are you going?" (Gen 16:8).

This question examines her situation. God is leading her to see her situation for what it is.

It requires honesty and transparency. This is necessary to prove that God will take control of the single mother environment and situation, no matter how precarious it may be.

## **Hagar Confesses**

Hagar responded to the Angel, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai" (Gen 16:9). God is a loving God, and He knows that she is not ready for such a journey since she is pregnant. He is concerned about her safety and security. It is not because God is unable to take care of her, but it is for the purpose of the greater work He

is doing in Abram, Sarai, and Hagar. So God instructed Hagar to, "return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand" (Gen 16:9).

#### God of Comfort

God makes a solemn promise to Hagar. He acknowledges, "Behold you are with child, And you shall bear a son" (Gen 16:11). These are comforting words for her condition. Henry (1996) observes, "It is a great comfort to women with child to think that they are under the particular cognizance and care of the divine Providence. God graciously considers their case and suits supports to it" (Logos Bible Software, Gen 16:10-14). He guarantees and foretells the safe delivery of her son. He promises to multiply her descendants. It is noteworthy to observe that whereas the Old Testament promise is usually associated with the lineage of the male, God fully acknowledges her as the "head" of her house, and declares that He will increase her "descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count." This promise still exists today. The Turks are descendants of Ishmael and they are a great people.

# God of Compassion

God also names the son. He shall be called Ishmael, meaning, God will hear. The reason is given in the text: "Because the LORD has heard your affliction" (Gen 16:11). This offers a microscopic look into the heart of a God who sympathizes with her case. This is great news for the single mother family that is often surrounded by affliction, as observes by Henry (1996):

The experience we have had of God's seasonable kindness to us in distress would encourage us to hope for similar help in similar exigencies, Ps. 10:17. He has heard thy affliction, v. 11. Note, Even where there is little cry of devotion, the God of pity sometimes graciously hears the cry of affliction. Tears speak as well as prayers. This

speaks comfort to the afflicted, that God not only sees what their afflictions are, but hears what they say. (Logos Bible Software, Gen 16:10-14)

### Acceptance

Recognizing that she is in the presence of the omniscient and omnipotent God, Hagar accepts herself and her condition as fully in the Lord's hand. Her words affirm her belief in the God who promises to be with her. She testifies with her lips the sentiment of her heart when she said, "You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"" (Gen 16:13). The confession of her faith will forever stand as a memorial for every single mother by which they will serve and trust Him as the God who sees. God does not only see, but incarnates Himself into the experience and lives of every single mother who dare to accept Him as their God.

# Case Study 2: The Widow of Zarephath

1 Kings 17:8-10, 13-16, NKJ

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.' So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.

## Background

Elijah has just pronounced to Ahab and Jezebel that there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years unless Yahweh says otherwise. It stands that this is a direct challenge to Baal since he is believed to be god of storm and fertility. God immediately

orders Elijah eastward to the Kerith Ravine. God makes a solemn oath to Elijah that He will provide "drink from the brook, and the ravens will feed him with bread and meat" (1 Kgs 17:4). After the brook dries up, Yahweh directs Elijah to travel to Zarephath, located on the Mediterranean about seven miles south of Sidon. Again Yahweh promises that I have "commanded a widow there to provide for you" (Kgs 17:4).

God could have sent Elijah to any number of wealthy homes in Israel for sustenance during the drought, but instead He directed him to the home of a widow, a single mother in an obscure village. This story provides many insights regarding the unseen experience of single mother families. It reveals the countless crises, struggles, challenges, limitations, and resiliency that single mothers face on an everyday basis. But God met all the demands of the family with many miracles performed through Elijah in that home. He met the physical needs, he resurrected life, he restored faith and hope in God. These principles will be the subject of our exploration in this passage.

### A Faithful Response

Elijah called the widow and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.' And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand" (1 Kgs 17:10b, 11). She responds to Elijah's full request with:

As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I *am* gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die. (1 Kgs 17:12)

The famine was so cataclysmic and catastrophic that this woman had already predetermined in her mind, that this would be her last meal. She had stretched the little of flour and oil that she had. And after this meal with her son, she is expecting to lie

down and die. But her words, "As surely as the LORD your God lives" (1 Kgs 17:12) exposes her faith. There is something about the prophet that leads the widow to express a resounding faith in the living God. Her god has abandoned and forsaken her. She has been praying to Baal but to no avail. Baal has been unable to provide for his people. Yahweh is about to manifest His power by providing for Baal's people in Baal's territory. Yahweh is about to reveal once and for all that He is God and there is no other. And this revelation that could have been available in Israel, among the chosen people of God, will now take place in the home of a single mother, the poorest of all society.

### Obedience over Sacrifice

And Elijah said to her:

Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.' (1 Kgs 17:13-14)

This woman was willing to sacrifice the hand full of flour and the little oil she had because she was obedient to the Word of God. The life of her family depended on the small provision left, but she realized that what she had did not belong to her. If God says to give it up, then she will give it up. She recognized that God has the full access to whatever He wants, whenever He wants it!

#### **God Provides**

The consequence of her obedience was a continual blessing. The scriptures revealed that "the bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah" (1 Kgs 17:16). God provided for the mother and her child. We should not assume that God filled up the bin with flour and the

jar of oil in a one-time event for the duration of the famine. But rather, each day that passed, God provided sufficient amount to last the day. This is a lesson in trust and total dependence on God. This verse echoes the book Lamentations where it is written, "Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lam 3:22-23). The hope of every single mother family is that the God whom they serve is able to provide in times of plenty and in times of little.

#### God Heals

Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. "And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him" (1 Kgs 17:17). The woman sees this as a Divine judgment against her son. But she is about to discover that God has a greater work to accomplish in her house so that "the works of God might be made manifest in him" (John 9:3). Elijah takes the child to his room and laid him on his own bed. In a typical symbolic act of prophetic movement Elijah "stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived" (1 Kgs 17:21-22). This miraculous healing compels the single mother to confess, "Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth" (1 Kgs 17:24).

#### **Timeless Lessons**

The lessons of this narrative are true for single mothers today who face economic, social, religious, and health challenges. God is willing to provide for single mothers. He has unlimited resources and ways to provide. He is on their side. No geographical, political border can prevent God from getting to the home of a single mother who trusts Him completely. Unlike human beings, God does have play favoritism. He will defend the cause of single mother families.

# **Selected Principles From Ellen G. White**

Ellen G. White writes extensively on this topic. Although, she never uses the phrase single mother, it is implied in the overwhelming statements she makes regarding widows, orphans, and the fatherless. In *Signs of the Times* (May 21, 1896), she refers to the widow and the fatherless as "the object of the Lord's special care." God will even judge those who look upon them with disfavor. She commented in Signs of the Times (July 9, 1894):

The cries of orphans and widows come up before God. Their tears are all registered in the books of heaven; and those who have had the opportunity to help, and yet refused the aid they might have given, are charged in the ledger of heaven with robbery toward God, and are sentenced as those who have oppressed and defrauded the poor. God is deeply concerned about the well-being and the welfare of the single mother family. (para. 7)

White views the body of Christ as working in partnership with God for the care of the fatherless. White comments in *Welfare Ministry* (1952) that they are lent to Christians in trust for God. Therefore, she emphasizes the duty of the church family to assist in the raising of fatherless children and provide for them when necessary. She raises the consciousness level of the people of God in *The Review and Herald* (December 23, 1890) with inquisitive questioning such as:

Have you looked after the fatherless and the widow? This is a branch of home missionary work that should by no means be neglected. Are there not around you, poor and suffering ones who need warmer clothing, better food, and, above everything else, that which will be most highly prized,--sympathy and love? What have you done for the widows, the distressed, who call upon you to aid them in educating and training their children or grandchildren? How have you treated these cases? Have you tried to help the orphans? When anxious, soul-burdened parents or grand-parents have asked you, and even begged you, to consider their case, have you turned them away with unfeeling, unsympathetic refusals? (para. 8)

White (1952) believes that among all those who demand our interest, "the widow and the fatherless have the strongest claims upon our tender sympathy" (p. 214). She makes constant referral to a reference in the book of James which states, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas 1:27) One should not expect for God to rain manna from heaven to supply for the widow and fatherless. White (1905) notes that:

The Lord provides for the widow and the fatherless, not by a miracle in sending manna from heaven, not by sending ravens to bring them food; but by a miracle upon human hearts, expelling selfishness, and unsealing the fountains of Christlike love. The afflicted and bereaved ones He commits to His followers as a precious trust. They have the very strongest claim upon our sympathy. (p. 202)

White also expressed that part of the role and duty of the faith community is to assist the single mother in the raising of her children. She recognized the tremendous burdens and challenges a single mother face. The burden of providing, day care, education, parenting can be burdensome for a single mother. She encouraged those who do not have any children of their own to care for the children of others. White (1905) expressed this strong belief of alleviating the burden of a single mother when she appeals to the church body:

Many a widowed mother with her fatherless children is bravely striving to bear her double burden, often toiling far beyond her strength in order to keep her little ones

with her and to provide for their needs. Little time has she for their training and instruction, little opportunity to surround them with influences that would brighten their lives. She needs encouragement, sympathy, and tangible help. God calls upon us to supply to these children, so far as we can, the want of a father's care. Instead of standing aloof, complaining of their faults, and of the trouble they may cause, help them in every way possible. Seek to aid the careworn mother. Lighten her burdens. (p. 203)

White amply commented on the role of a mother. Although, the comments were always stated in the context of a married woman, it is relevant for our study. She considered the position of a mother with high esteem. I believe that this also applies to single mothers who are often treated as outcasts or inferior because there is no husband present in their in the home. This should not be so. It is God who affirms the mother's position and authority. In a *Signs of the times* article written by White (1891), she made one of the most profound statements about motherhood when she voiced:

The king upon his throne has no higher work than has the mother. The mother is queen of her household. She has in her power the molding of her children's characters, that they may be fitted for the higher, immortal life. An angel could not ask for a higher mission; for in doing this work she is doing service for God. Let her only realize the high character of her task, and it will inspire her with courage. Let her realize the worth of her work and put on the whole armor of God, that she may resist the temptation to conform to the world's standard. Her work is for time and for eternity. (para. 1)

Overall, White's writings call attention to the support and well-being of single mothers. She expressed an attitude of compassion and kindness for the widow and the fatherless. To assist single mothers is the great work of the church and emulates the character of Jesus.

### **Summary**

Scripture maintains that there is a Divine ideal for the family. This ideal was interrupted by sin. But God responded by implementing codes to protect, provide, and care for single mothers families. Paul writes in the book of Colossians, "For God was

pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Col 1:19-20). Through Jesus Christ, the human family, in its fragmented forms, can experience wholeness. God does not reject or turn aside from single mother families. But rather, He becomes involved in a dynamic relationship with them until they are fully reconciled and restored to wholeness. It is in God, through Jesus Christ, that the orphan finds mercy (Hos 14:3).

While the Bible maintains that the ideal family includes a husband and wife, it also maintains that we are "complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Col 2:10). The single mother has equal value in the eyes of God. They should not be looked upon as inferior or incomplete. The Blood of Jesus can make up for the difference. Paul admonishes that "He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6). I say it without apology that the single mother family is complete in Christ. Let the words of Paul stands as a beacon of hope to every single mother family:

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb13:20-21)

#### CHAPTER 3

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

## **Overview of the Chapter**

The literature review will explore different areas of varying quality and relevance. The first section of this chapter will provide a historical synopsis of single parent families with special emphasis placed on Black single mothers. The second section of this chapter will highlight the factors that contribute to single mother families with special emphasis given to Black mothers. The third section of this chapter will emphasize three significant areas that can potentially improve the quality of life for single mothers. The fourth section of this chapter will emphasis three categories of life skills that can equip single mothers to effectively deal with the tremendous demands of leading a single family home. The final section of this chapter will address the importance of self-care that is essential to the overall health of single mothers.

## Introduction

Everyone agrees that Blacks have the highest percentage of single mother families. However, there are differences of opinions as to why this trend exists. The most rapid growing family type in the United States is the single parent family. It is the dominant family type in the African-American community. Single parent families can be defined as families where a parent lives with dependent children, either alone or in a larger household, without a spouse or partner (Coontz, 1997). Single parent families have

been the focus of extensive research since the release of the Moynihan Report in 1965. The proportion of children born to unwed mothers has increased considerably since the 1950s. A shift in societal acceptance towards childbearing outside of marriage and high divorce rate are some of the contributing factors for the increase of households headed by single women. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), there were 21 million one-parent families in 2010. Of the 21 million families, 15.3 million or 73% were single-mother families and 5.7 million or 27% were single-father families.

The literature review on this subject is necessary for many reasons. First, further research needs to be conducted to understand the dynamics of single mother families. Second, we need recognizable authorities on this subject. There are many experts who are too eager to use their findings as a means to establish predetermined conclusions and preconceived ideas. Third, there is need to incorporate the experiences of single mothers into further study. Valuable information can be obtained from their collective experiences and knowledge. Fourth, single mothers make up the greatest percentage of attendance in the Black Seventh-day Adventist Churches. There is a pressing need for church leadership to develop ministries that will provide training and resources for single mother families. Finally, the majority of research uses a reactive approach and are often inundated with negativity, bias, and unsubstantiated opinions. Researchers mostly focus on the challenges while ignoring the resilient fortitude of single mothers and all the positive conclusions and contributions that can be drawn.

The literature review will be used to inform and enhance our knowledge of single mother families. The information gathered will be used to shape and develop effective coping strategies in selected key areas. This project does not propose to be the final

answer or solution. It is however, an additional tool that can aid in the coping process and contribute to the well-being of single mother families.

## **Historical Overview of Single Parent Families**

One of the most striking changes in family structure that evolved over the last 20 years has been the increase of single parent families. Eighty-three percent of children lived with two parents in 1880 and 85% lived with two parents from 1910 to 1970 (Kreider, 2011). However, during the same period, the proportion of children who lived with their mother without their father present increased from 8% to 12% (Kreider, 2011). The percentage of children living with two parents declined from 85% in 1970 to 73% in 1990 (Kreider, 2011). During the same period, between 1970 and 1990, the proportion of children living with their mother without their father present doubled from 11% to 22% (Kreider, 2011). In 1960, non-marital births accounted for 5.3% of all U.S. births (Martin et at., 2009). By 1980, the number of non-marital births drastically increased to 18.4% (Martin et al., 2009). The number of children living with two parents between 1991 and 2009 declined to 69%, while children living with their mother only increased to 24% (Kreider, 2011). In 2007, the number of homes headed by single parents reached an epic 39.7% (Ventura, 2009). According to the National Center for Health Statistics, in 2009 an astonishing 40% of all children born in the United States were born to unwed parents. Half of the children born to unwed mothers live with a single mother who is not residing with the child's father (Beck & McLanahan, 2010).

When we analyze the data based on racial demographic, the result is startling. Since the mid-1990s, Blacks make up the greatest percentage of single parent families with 70%, followed by Hispanics with 50%, and Whites with 27% (Hummer &

Hamilton, 2010). Sanders (1996) states, "African American children are 11 times more likely than White children to be the offspring of never-married parents and to live with only one parent" (as cited in Thomas, Krampe, & Newton, 1996, p.2). The majority of African American children who are younger than 18 years of age do not live with their fathers (The U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002).

The rapid changes in society from the traditional family to the various forms of family types that currently exist, pose many challenges for researchers. These challenges have led some to argue that we are witnessing the breakdown of the family (defined as a married couple residing with their dependent offspring) resulting in negative effects for children, families, and society (Popenoe, 1996). Others argue to the contrary that single parent families should be embraced. They have always been present in all societies and should not be viewed as deviant or problematic, but rather as an alternative family form (Coontz, 1997). Regardless of how family diversity is viewed, one thing is clear, the increase and prevalence of families headed by one parent has a major influence on the social, economic, and political context of family life.

## **Factors that Contribute to Single Mother Families**

#### Divorce

One of the leading reasons for the increase of single parent home is divorce.

During the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the proportion of marriage rate among Blacks was in proportion to Whites. Between 1880 and 1910, about 56.3% of Black and 66.9% of White households were nuclear households, about 23.5% of Black and 19.7% of White households were extended family households, and 20.3% of Black

and 13.4% of White households were categorized as fragmented or "broken" homes (Ruggles, 1994).

A radical shift took place during the middle to the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century where the U.S. divorce rate steadily and dramatically increased. According to Mandara, Johnston, and Murray (2008), the percentage of Black families headed by married couples declined from 78% to 34% between 1950 and 1996. This rapid growth of divorce rate resulted in a growing number of households headed by Black mothers. Between 1960 and 1990, the divorce rate for Black women jumped from 78 in 1,000 marriages to 350 in 1,000 (Tucker & Mitchell-Kerman, 1995).

The divorce rate in the United States of America is highest among African-American couples and among lower income couples. This presents a double hurdle for Blacks. Since African-Americans tend to be on a lower income bracket, it can be expected that homes headed by single mothers will continue to increase at even a faster rate with greater magnitude. The solution is at least two-fold. If we wish to experience a decrease in homes headed by single mothers, we need to strengthen existing marriages, which will result in a reduction of divorces. We also need to strengthen single parent home through education, resources, and empowerment so that the cycle will not continue with the next generation of mothers.

#### **Never Married Mothers**

Another factor that contributes to the increase of single mother homes is never married mothers. The decreased stigma on both divorce and pregnancy out of marriage, has led more women to remain unmarried and keep their children (Watson, 2001).

Nonmarital childbearing increased dramatically in the United States during the latter half

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, changing the context in which American children are raised (McLanahan, Garfinkel, Mincy, & Donahue, 2010). Consequently, the proportion of all children born to unmarried parents grew tenfold over a 70 year period from about 4% in 1949 to nearly 40% in 2007 (McLanahan et al., 2010). According to Martin et al., (2009), this drastic change found its greatest impact among African-American families with 7 out of 10 Black babies now being born to unmarried parents.

For the most part, the increase in births to unwed mothers is the consequence of unplanned and accidental pregnancy, coupled with the decision not to marry. This applies to teenage mothers who are less likely to marry, as well as adult women who delay marriage while pursuing educational and career opportunities, thus, increasing the probability of pregnancy outside of marriage. The literature remains silent regarding the moral aspect of individuals having children outside of marriage. We cannot overlook the role that culture and media plays in desensitizing society to accept sexual intercourse outside of marriage as a norm. Therefore, to reverse this cycle of never married mothers, the coping strategies need to address the value of adhering to biblical moral standards.

# Teenage Births

Teenage birth is another contributing factor leading to the increase of single parent homes. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011), more than 400,000 teenage girls, aged 15-19 years, give birth each year in the United States. Teen births represent 10% of the 4 million births each year. It is also worth noting that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011) reported, Hispanic and black teen girls are about 2-3 times more likely to give birth than white teen girls. The factors contributing to teen pregnancy and childbirth include: lack of close contact with adult

role models; peer pressure; family poverty; the perception among many teens that few opportunities for success are available; and inadequate sex education, especially about contraception and family planning (Sidel, 1998).

The highest percentage of teenage births occurs among Black teens. An outdated study by Zelnik and Kanther (as cited in Osborne, 1989) revealed some shocking realities as shown in Table 1.

The result of this study is alarming. It shows that Black teenagers are more sexually active (2 to 1) than their White counterparts (3 to 1). Forty five percent of the Black teenagers who were sexually active became parents, in comparison to White teenagers where only 23% became pregnant. Furthermore, 91% of the pregnant Black teenagers remained unmarried in comparison to 45% of White pregnant teenagers who remained unmarried. According to Osborne (1989):

These figures indicate an extremely bleak future as to marriage prospects and growth of the two-parent family in the Black community. More Black teenagers also prefer to keep their children after they are born. If there is a bright spot in this picture, most Black mothers did not abort or adopt out the children they conceive and birth. Though this study is relatively old, current indicator do little to suggest any reversals in the single-parent trend of Black households. (p. 21)

Table 1

A Comparison of Sexually Active Teens

Teen Girls	Black	White	
Sexual active	540/1000	279/1000	
Pregnant	248 of 540	62 of 279	
Unmarried/remain	266 of 248	30 of 62	
Live birth	162 of 248	12 of 62	
Lives with teen	149 of 162	9 of 12	

Effective coping strategies need to be developed that will address the promiscuous lifestyle of teenage mothers. Parental involvement, role models, religious

education, and sexual education are key components that can reduce this epidemic of teenage pregnancies and teenage single mothers.

# Technological Advancement

Another form of parenthood outside of marriage involves single women choosing to bear or adopt without sexual intercourse. Technological advancements allowing insemination without intercourse contribute to women's choices in this regard. Women choosing to conceive children in this manner include lesbians, who may raise their children as a single parent or with a same-sex partner; and heterosexual women who are in their thirties, single, and want children before they are past childbearing age (Burns & Scott, 1994). Many women are choosing this as an alternative to marriage, commitment, and as validation to illegitimate forms of relationships.

#### Absentee Fathers

Another contributing factor for the increase of single mother families is absentee fathers. A father's absence can have negative consequences for children. It may lead to social problems, lower academic achievement, and delinquent behavior (Harris, 2002). On the other hand, father presence often increases self-esteem, academic achievement, and stability in peer relations (Harris, 2002). The differing conclusions regarding absentee fathers among scholars are worth noting. The Moynihan Report (as cited in Blackman, Claytan, Glenn, Malone-Colon, & Roberts, 2005) argues, "Father absenteeism in the African-American community, along with racism and unemployment drives a tangle of pathology that conspires to keep Blacks from improving their circumstances" (p. 10). Baskerville (2002) furthers asserts:

Virtually every major social pathology has been linked to fatherlessness: violent crime, drug and alcohol abuse, truancy, teen pregnancy, suicide—all correlate more strongly to fatherlessness than to any other single factor. The majority of prisoners, juvenile detention inmates, high school dropouts, pregnant teenagers, adolescent murderers, and rapists all come from fatherless homes. The connection is so strong that controlling for fatherlessness erases the relationships between race and crime and between low income and crime. (p. 695)

This statement undermines the diligent work of single mothers and in particular, Black single mothers, who, due to unfortunate reasons, have been the backbone of the community in keeping the family together. Not everyone shares Baskerville's conclusion. Several studies by Ruggles, 1994; Miller, 1998; Jayakody and Hatters, 1997 (as cited in Blackman, Claytan, Glenn, Malone-Colon, & Roberts, 2005) argued to the contrary that:

The single-parent, extended, and foster families more common among Black Americans are not necessarily negative, and are in many ways positive: They reflect African cultural-familial norms and have allowed Blacks to cope with the hardships they have faced in America....it is not so much family structure that is important for African Americans' well-being as it is the quality of family interaction, socioeconomic status, and other factors. (p. 10)

While no one can argue against the value of having a father in the home, we must be careful however, not to imply that single mother families cannot be successful families without the presence of a father. The coping strategies have to equip single mothers with the resources and information that will create opportunities to enhance their quality of life. Single mother families are fully capable of becoming vibrant, stable, and healthy families.

## **Poverty**

The term feminization of poverty, coined in the 1970s by Diana Pearce, refers to the concentration of poverty among women, particularly female-headed households (Thibos, Lavin-Loucks, & Martin, 2007). A true commitment to strong families and healthy children begins with a focus on the debilitating effects of poverty in the African-

American community (Cain & Combs-Orme, 2005). Not only are female heads of household more likely to be poor, their poverty is also more likely to be long term. For Black women, the picture is so austere that Palmer introduced the concept of racial feminization of poverty to describe their unique plight (Palmer, 1983). Among single mothers, African-American and Hispanic mothers suffer poverty rates that are significantly higher than White mothers. According to Franklin (1992), "African-American single mothers are more vulnerable to poverty than are white single mothers, and African-American mothers who live in socially isolated urban neighborhoods are at greatest risk of experiencing the most persistent poverty" (p. 142).

According to the United States Bureau of the Census (1991), 60% of all poor families with children under age 18 are in female-headed households. In the United States, the majority of children living at or below the poverty line reside in single-mother households (Tiamiyu & Mitchell, 2001). In 2001, 16.5 million American children lived with a single mother, and a disproportionate 48% of those were African American, when they make up only 12% of the general population (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Lee, 2006). In 2005, White single mothers comprised 46.5% of all single mothers with a poverty rate of 29.2% (Fuchs, 1986). In contrast, 33.0% of single mothers were African-American with a poverty rate of 42.0%, and 17.8% of single mothers were Hispanic, with a poverty rate of 45.2% (Fuchs, 1986).

Since poverty is a key factor in determining the potential for single motherhood, there needs to be a concerted effort from the social, political, religious, business, and private sectors that will be sensitive to the needs of single mothers and have measures in place that can assist them in their plight. It is clear that poverty contributes to many

dysfunctions in the home. When people are poor and uneducated, they are more likely to live a life of criminality, violence, drugs, and pregnancy. This cycle is repeated with greater intensity and in greater amount from one generation to another. When we improve the quality of life for single mothers, we are breaking the cycle that plagues our society and providing a better future for all families.

# American Slavery

One cannot under overlook or underestimate the impact of slavery as a contributing factor to the current state of black families today. According to Belgrave and Allison, 2011 (as cited in Thomas, 2011), "To understand the Black family one must recognize the historical and socio-political environment of African Americans in this country beginning with enslavement and its devastating effect on the Black family" (para. 1). For many decades, social theorists have argued consistently that slavery played an important role in the disorganization and dysfunction of black families (DuBois, 1909; Elkins 1963; Frazier, 1939; & Myrdal, 1944). This argument reached its peak with the famous Moynihan report which concluded that the "pathological" nature of black communities could be traced to the deterioration of black family life stemming from slavery (Moynihan, 1965).

As a reaction to Moynihan's work, the revisionist movement was born.

Revisionists (e.g., Robert William Fogel and Stanley Engerman) argued to the contrary,

"Slavery may have been unpleasant, but it did not destroy the African-American family.

That family system, the new critics suggested, had been weakened by contemporary

forces in American life, chiefly racism and joblessness" (Williams, 2002, para. 4).

Historian, Herbert Gutman produced perhaps, the best known study of African-American

families during and after slavery in his book, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom:* 1750-1925. Gutman, based on the genealogies he constructed, argued contrary to Moynihan that Black family life was not chiefly shaped, if shaped at all, by slavery. Upon their emancipation, ex-slave families had two parents (Williams, 2002). Wilson (1987) supported the argument of Herbert Gutman by arguing that slavery did not affect the black family structure.

The revisionist view of history suggests that slavery had little or no impact on black family structure. Americans generally accepted this view until the work of Steven Ruggles. Ruggles (1994) refuted these arguments by using a new series of census microdata that spans the period of 1880 to 1980. Ruggles (1994) confirmed through the findings of recent studies that, "The high incidence among African-Americans of single parenthood and children residing without their parents among black is not new" (p. 147). Ruggles (1994) further confirms:

The pattern is clearly evident as far back as 1850 among free blacks. From 1880 through 1960, the percentage of black children with at least one absent parent was fairly stable and about two-and-one-half times greater than the percentage among whites. Recently, the percentages of both black children and white children with absent parents have risen dramatically. (p. 147)

Ruggles (1994) raised a critical question when he asked, "What is the source of this distinctive African-American pattern of single parenthood?" (p. 147). Ruggles (1994) argue that while economic and cultural norms explanations cannot be ruled out, it is probable a result of single parenthood and not the cause.

What, then, are the origins of the current pat-tern of African-American family structure? Economic explanations cannot be ruled out, but they have to be more subtle than the simple thesis that single parenthood resulted from economic stress. To assess the effects of socioeconomic factors on the black family in the late nineteenth century, it will probably be necessary to turn to qualitative sources and local studies based on linked census listings.... European norms transmitted by American masters

under slavery doubtless influenced the black family, but the experience of slavery and African traditions were probably just as important. (p. 148)

Ruggles (1994) provided two alternative explanations for the origins of the black single mother family pattern. The first alternative explanation provided by Ruggles (1994) is, "Residence of children without both parents could have been a response to the socioeconomic conditions faced by newly-freed blacks after the Civil War and by free blacks in 1850" (p. 147). The second alternative explanation to the black single parenthood pattern could be attributed to, "A difference in social norms between blacks and whites, which could have developed either through the experience of slavery or could have its roots in differences between European and African cultures" (p. 147).

Although the proclamation of emancipation was issued on January 1, 1863, the black community for the most part, still remained under the chains of psychological slavery. The past has shaped how Black people view the family, relationship, parenting, and marriage. This is comprehensible since slaves were prohibited from entering into a legal marriage. According to Williams (2013), "Colonial and state laws considered them property and commodities, not legal persons who could enter into contracts, and marriage was, and is, very much a legal contract" (para. 2). Some slaves lived in a nuclear family (the presence of a mother, father, and children), While others, "Lived in a near-nuclear families which the father had a different owner than the mother and children. Both slaves and slaveowners referred to these relationships between men and women as "abroad marriages" (Williams, 2013, para. 3). The systematic breakup of the slave families has certainly contributed to the present conditions of Black families today. Consequently, the absence of fathers in most Black homes, and the increasing number of black single mother families can be traced to the psychological impact of American slavery.

The family is the hallmark of society. Slavery prevented black families from becoming a cohesive unit capable of providing security, love, acceptance, empowerment, and identity. The nuclear family was weakened and destroyed by the prohibition to marry, or through the sale of a family member, which had adverse reactions to the black family structure. Is any wander that the current state of black families today is marked by separation, lack of father presence, and majority of homes headed by single mothers? All these are symptoms of a bigger problem that is partially rooted in the atrocious system called slavery.

## **Quality of Life**

The literature focuses predominately on the problems and challenges that single mothers face. It is equally important to invest in the area of study that enhances the quality of life for single mothers. Table 2 reveals some shocking information from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS). The findings in this study raise the level of urgency for why we need to improve the quality of life for single mother families. It compares the economic and demographic characteristics between married, cohabiting, and single mothers. Single mothers experienced the highest poverty rate with 53%, followed by cohabiting couples with 33%, and married couples with only 14%. The average household income is lowest for single mothers averaging \$18,662, in contrast to the annual household income of married mothers which was \$55,057. This study is very important because it highlights the areas that must be targeted to improve quality of life.

This section will focus primarily on employment, income and education as the three major areas that can enhance the quality of life for single mother families. Single mothers face many barriers that make it difficult to qualify for higher wage employment.

The educational level among single mothers is low. Table 2 reveals that approximately 49% of single mothers lack a high school diploma, in comparison to only 18% of married mothers. Only 2.4% of single mothers hold a college degree in contrast to 36% of married mothers.

Table 2

Demographic and Economic Characteristics of Married, Cohabiting, and Single Mothers in the Fragile Families Study

Demographic & economic characteristics	Married	Cohabiting	Single			
Demographic characteristics						
Mean age (years)	29.3	24.7	22.6			
Teen parent	3.7	17.7	34.3			
Child with other partner	11.7	38.8	34.5			
Human capital & economic characteristics						
Education						
Less than high school	17.8	41.0	48.8			
High school or equivalent	25.5	39.2	34.2			
Some college	21.1	17.3	14.3			
College or higher	35.7	2.4	2.4			
Mean earnings	\$25,618.86	\$11,433.78	\$10,764.05			
Worked last year	79.3	83.4	79.40			
Poverty status	14.0	32.5	53.1			
Household income	\$55,057.05	\$26,548.43	\$18,662.04			
Health and behavior						
Poor/fair health	10.4	14.4	17.1			
Depression	13.2	16.2	15.7			
Heavy drinking	2.0	8.0	7.7			
Illegal drugs	0.3	1.7	3.1			
Child's father incarcerated	8.0	32.6	45.2			

Source: Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study statistics. Numbers are in percent unless otherwise indicated.

# **Employment**

Single mothers experience a higher rate of unemployment and receive less pay than their male counterpart. Black women face a double obstacle in both gender and racial discrimination when seeking employment and receiving financial compensation (Caiazza, Shaw, & Werschkul, 2004). Seccombe (as cited in Watson, 1990) noted:

It is further assumed that female single parents are not as employable as other segments of the population. When they are employed, their earning potential is greatly restricted. They are less involved, due to time, energy, and interest, in community activities. Performance as parents is generally categorized as dysfunctional. They tend to have more ritualized spiritual expression. And they tend to be less empowered as demonstrated by their low self-esteem and frequent victimization. (p. 208)

Single mothers face many stigmas and barriers in the workforce. They appear to be distant and non-involving. But when one considers the burden of being the only person in the household that is responsible for work, educating, household expenses, day care, it can be understood why they are overwhelmed. They do not have the luxury to participate in company functions, thus appearing to be not interested. However, companies should be supportive by providing opportunities such as better health care packages, tuition assistance, and even in-house day care that can reduce the stress on single mothers. These assistance or services would allow single mothers to focus more on their jobs and become viable contributors and assets to the company.

#### Income

A study of low-income single mothers by Edin and Lein (1997) provided many insights into the income status of single mothers. They discovered that single mothers seldom survived on income from paid work or welfare benefits alone (Edin and Lein, 1997). Kalil and Ryan (2010) observed, "The vast majority relied on a range of

economic supports, including cash and in-kind benefits from public programs and help from relatives and friends" (p. 47). The implications of this study are numerous. Even though, a vast number of policies were introduced since then, the findings of Edin and Lein still describe the reality for many single mothers (Kalil and Ryan, 2010). In addition to work, single mothers rely heavily on public assistance programs such as:

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); food stamps; Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Medicaid; and housing assistance

Table 3 highlights several things that are pertinent to our study. Most single mothers depend on public assistance in order to make ends meet. The United States Census Bureau Current Population Report provides information about the income and public program participation of individuals and households in the United States (Dye, 2006). This report displays a long-range projection of participation by mothers in these programs since the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWOA) was enacted. The table revealed the following findings: (a) one-half of mothers were working while receiving assistance (53%); (b) the program with the highest participation rate among women aged 15 to 44 was Medicaid (14%), followed by food stamps (9%); (c) seventy-eight percent of mothers participating in two or more programs were receiving both Medicaid and food stamps; (d) mothers who were not living with their spouse and did not receive child support payments were more likely to be program participants (46%) than mothers who received child support from the child's father (31%).

Table 3
Sources of Support for Single Mothers

		Other	No	
Source of support	Cohabiting	relationship	relationship	All unwed
Earnings from regular work	70	73	73	71
Public support				
WIC	83	84	84	83
Medicaid	66	73	73	70
Food stamps	42	53	51	48
TANF	24	41	40	33
Housing	22	30	30	26
Child care	14	18	19	16
Private support				
Father contributions	100	89	53	86
From family or friends	57	70	72	64

Source: Julien O. Teitler, Nancy E. Reichman, and Lenna Nepomnyaschy, "Sources of Support, Child Care, and Hardship among Unwed Mothers, 1999–2001," *Social Service Review* 78, no. 1 (2004): 125–48. The survey included 1,299 cohabiting mothers, 928 mothers in other relationships, and 612 mothers in no relationship, totaling 2,839.

#### Education

Education is one of the most important factors that can enhance the quality of life for single mothers. Kates, Rocha, and Sandoval (as cited in Watson, 2001) noted:

The one known key to escaping the rap of the cycle of poverty is education - which is the single most important avenue to empower lone parents to acquire a skill, to increase their choices, to improve their self-esteem, and to role-model success to their families. (p. 5)

Hardly anyone can argue against the benefits that can arise from a few additional years of schooling. About 63% of all female householders with children under the age of 18 years did not complete high school (The United States Bureau of the Census, 1991). According to Ryan and Siebens (2012), "people with the highest educational attainment were the least likely to be unemployed in any given month during this 3-year period" (p. 15). In August 2010, the unemployment rate for people with less than a high school diploma or GED was 13.3 percent, while the unemployment rate for people with an advanced degree was 4.1 percent (Ryan & Siebens, 2012). The respective rates for these two groups in

March 2008 were 9.5 percent and 1.5 percent. High school graduates were more likely to be unemployed than bachelor's degree holders (Ryan & Siebens, 2012).

The lifetime earning potential between a college graduate and a high school dropout is estimated to be more than \$1.2 million (Cheeseman & Newburger, 2002). Historically, the earning potential of males and females with equivalent educational attainment has not been the same (Cheeseman & Newburger, 2002). One study found that among impoverished women who were able to obtain a college degree, only 3% did not move out of the poverty threshold (Schiller, 1995). Thibos, Lavin-Loucks, and Martin (2007) observed:

Comprehensive educational assistance at the community college and university level for female heads of household looking to return to school can be of great benefit. In today's economy, all but the lowest-skill and lowest-paid jobs require some degree of technical training of the sort available at community colleges and vocational schools. While a university degree offers the greatest protection against poverty, an associate's degree in an applied field may offer the most accessible and viable way out of poverty for women already in the workforce and/or who have children. (p. 16)

Rocha (1997) views education as "The one human capital resource that is consistently found important in determining economic well-being" (p. 11). Kates (1996) notes that higher education might be the pathway towards a better quality of life for single mothers.

Higher education has substantive long-term outcomes. It materially raises family incomes by opening up opportunities, and it transforms the participating women in important ways; these changes, in turn, benefit their children. Obtaining to a higher education may be a more extended pathway to employment than others; in the long run, it is less costly in both financial and human terms than the periodic cycling on and off welfare that results from the entrapment of women in low-paying jobs. (p. 549)

Since education plays a major role in enhancing the quality of life for single mothers, the coping strategies will highlight the value of education and provide the necessary resources so that single mothers can attain a college education.

#### Life Skills

### **Parenting**

Current research on parenting practices does not fully embrace the diversity of parenting styles within the African-American community. There is a lack of longitudinal research, a severe lack of attention to intragroup variability, and a minimization of the staggering effects of economic deprivation, racism and social stratification on processes and functioning in the African-American home (Garcia-Coll, Lamberty, Jenkins, McAdoo, Crnic, Wasik, & Garcia, 1996). Cain and Combs-Orme (2005) noted, "The current research does not represent the diversity in family structure configurations among African-American families, nor does it give voice to the parenting resilience of single mothers" (p. 19). Their study further reveals, "Poverty and the quality of the parenting experienced by mothers influenced parenting more than marital status or family structure" (Cain & Combs-Orme, 2005, p. 34).

The outcome of children in single mother homes can be greatly impacted by the availability of resources (Thomas & Sawhill, 2005). Cain and Combs-Orme (2005) in their study examined the parenting of infants by African-American mothers and found that mothers' marital status and family configuration did not affect parenting stress or practices. Cain and Combs-Orme (2005) further noted, "It seems that the economic status and parenting perceptions of mothers contributed more to parenting stress than did marital status or family structure" (p.19).

Social support theory contends that various types of support such as emotional, appraisal, informational, and instrumental assistance, can improve well-being and buffer

the effects of stressors (Secco & Moffatt, 1994). According to Florsheim, Tolan, and Gorman-Smith (as cited in Sterrett, Jones, & Kincaid, 2009), "Support from a male role-model or family member has been linked to lower levels of externalizing behaviors among African-American youth" (p. 424). Extended family support has been linked to improve psychosocial adjustment among adolescents in single mother families (Lamborn & Nguyen, 2004).

Social ecological theory contends that, in addition to intrapersonal characteristics, environmental factors also shape the psychological adjustment of youth (Conger, Conger, K.., Elder, Lorenz, Simons, & Whitbeck 1992). It gives credence to the West African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." A large-sample of multivariate study finds that Black single parents are about half as likely to be poor when they lived in an extended family household (Lerman & Wiseman, 2002). Single Black mothers are more likely to receive childcare assistance from kin than married mothers (Hogan, Ling-Xin, & William, 1990). Research that examines communal childrearing practices in the African-American home asserts that this tradition may mitigate some of the negative effects of single parenthood (Jackson, 1993).

Parenting is a vital issue with single mother homes. Ineffective parenting produces stress, tension, and can further lead to all manners of dysfunctions in the relationship. Therefore, it is imperative that coping strategies equip single mothers with the necessary skill set and tools for effective parenting. Effective parenting strategies reduce stress, reverse negative cycles, address destructive behavior, create a healthy environment and bring the family to wholeness.

#### Communication

Communication is undeniably a vital aspect of any relationship. Our entire relationship depends on our ability to communicate effectively to those with whom we interact in close proximity. Communication allows us to resolve conflict, articulate feelings, disclose beliefs, and validate values in a way that can enhance the relationship between the parent and the child. When dealing with children, psychologists are beginning to understand that perhaps the most essential ingredient for building relationship is the "language of acceptance." Gordon (2000) noted:

When a person is able to feel and communicate genuine acceptance of another, he possesses a capacity for being a powerful helping agent for the other. His acceptance of the other, as he is, is an important factor in fostering relationship in which the other person can grow, develop, make constructive changes, learn to solve problems, move in the direction of psychological health, become more productive and creative, and actualize his fullest potential. (p. 38)

Powell (1969) identified five levels of how we communicate with others as: (a) cliché conversation, (b) reporting the facts about others, (c) my ideas and opinions, (d) my feelings and emotions, (e) and intimate communication. Communication is achieved when genuine emotional honesty and intimate connections begin to take place. Craig (2004) notes that intimate communication takes place when "Two people who are willing to risk being absolutely open, honest, and genuine with each other. This personal encounter leads to deep insights and an authentic friendship that results from emotional connection, mutual empathy, and understanding" (p. 77).

It is important for single mothers to recognize the communicative process since so many problems and misunderstanding come out of the inability to communicate properly. Figure 1 outlines the six stages of communication. True communication is not achieved until the receiver can fully articulate and decode the message of the sender.

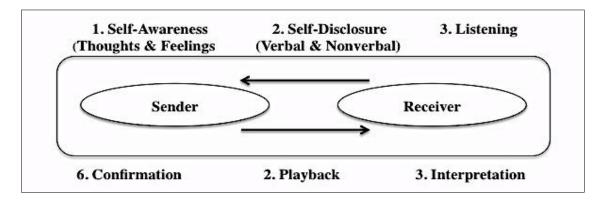


Figure 1. The Process of Communication. Source: Bryan Craig, Searching for Intimacy in Marriage, 2004.

Self-awareness refers to our ability to be aware of and in touch with our own thoughts and feelings, as well as with others. Self-disclosure involves messages that are sent via spoken word or what social scientists call nonverbal messages (i.e. facial expressions, gestures, postures). According to Nichols (2004), active listening is a very powerful vehicle that allows us to be immersed in the experience of someone else as we make him or her feel validated and valued through attention and understanding. Interpretation is the ability to effectively decode the feeling, meaning, and grasping the significance of what is being communicated. According to MacKay (1994), playback is defined as:

The restraint which ensures that we will receive a message before we react to it; if our playback is inaccurate - either in content or tone - this gives the speaker an opportunity to correct our understanding of what has been said. (p. 178)

The final stage in the process of communication is confirmation. Craig (2004) noted, "The process of communication is completed when the sender confirms that connection has been made and the listener has accurately heard the message and acknowledged the reality of their feelings" (p. 81).

### Money Management

According to Blank and Barr (2009), policies aimed at increasing the saving rate of low-income households could be particularly beneficial. Access to liquid savings may be more important in situations like these than access to illiquid assets. Single mothers find it especially hard to save and live on a budget especially when their expenses often exceed their income. Kalil and Ryan (2010) noted:

Without savings or credit, it is difficult to maintain income in challenging economic times. With unwed mothers depending heavily on their own earnings, their incomes will cycle more closely with the economy. As the economy dips, their hours of work may fall, job losses may increase, and earnings may drop, creating greater income shocks. Having no financial cushion also makes unwed mothers more vulnerable to ordinary problems such as needing to repair a malfunctioning car. If a mother cannot repair the car, she may lose her ability to get to work and consequently lose her job. A job loss, with its attendant earnings losses, could set in motion a cascade of other problems that will make it all the more difficult for her to escape poverty. (p. 44)

Our coping strategies will provide basic financial skills that can be of great benefit to single mothers who have to stretch every dollar. It is even more critical for single mothers to acquire money management principles since they mostly earn less than the average family. Therefore, we must educate and equip single mothers with a financial plan and attitude that can enable them to improve their standard of living. The Bible states, "He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10). Therefore, the financial skills acquired by single mothers in days of scarcity will teach them to be faithful stewards in the days of plenty.

# **Self-Care**

African-American mothers are more vulnerable to poor health conditions.

According to Mead, Cartwright-Smith, Jones, Ramos, and Siegel (2008), "Minorities generally rate their health as poorer than whites. Non-Hispanic blacks are the most likely

of all races examined to report they are in fair or poor health, with nearly 20 percent of non-Hispanic blacks reporting this compared with 11 percent of non-Hispanic whites" (p. 19). There are a number of chronic stressors in their lives that contributes to an overall poor health. Stressors such as employment, poverty, racism, and sexism may lead to low self-esteem, depression, and negative thinking among Black mothers. The cost to society as a consequence of these health disparities is excessive. At the same time, African-American single mothers, as an ethnic group, perform much better when compared with single mothers from other ethnic groups (Hatcher, Rayens, Peden, & Hall 2008). Hatcher et al., (2008) note, "Attention to the strengths of African-American women is necessary to design interventions that build upon those strengths" (p. 94). Therefore, it is imperative that we develop self-care strategies that will contribute to the overall health of Black mothers. This section will address physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual self-care of Black single mothers.

## **Physical**

The demands of making ends meet in a single mother home can be physically overwhelming. Swenson (2004) notes, "A large percentage of Americans are sadly out of shape and have diminished physical energy reserves because of poor conditioning.

Others, such as mothers of newborns and those who work two jobs, are chronically sleep-deprive" (p. 95). When we are depleted of physical strength, we feel overwhelmed and exhausted. As a result, we are not able to tend to our needs, let alone the needs of others. Swenson (2004) identifies three areas which he refers to as the rites of sleep, the recipes of nutrition, and the regiments of exercise that can enhance physical energy.

The rites of sleep emphasize the need for healthy sleep patterns, not oversleeping, taking naps, and exercising for sounder sleep. The recipes of nutrition can be achieved by: decreasing the intake of fats, sugars, and total calories; replacing processed snacks with fruit; not overeating; eating garden-fresh foods or buying food direct; drinking plenty of water; and using exercise as both appetite and weight reducer. The regimens of exercise include exercise of the heart, muscles, flexibility, mind and spirit. According to Swenson (2004):

God gave us an amazing gift, and all we are required to do is feed it, water it, rest it, and move it. Yet it needs to be the right food, water, rest, and movement. If we perform our assignment well, we will find energy we never knew we had. We will work better, feel better, heal better, and live better. (p. 105)

There is a correlation between the body and the mind. According to White (1890a), "There is an intimate relation between the mind and the body, and in order to reach a high standard of moral and intellectual attainment, the laws that control our physical being must be heeded" (p. 601). When the physical body is unhealthy individuals are not capable of performing at their highest level of potentials. Thus, poor health conditions can impact job performance, home conditions, and self-image. Individuals are more likely to make poorer decisions. These decisions can be the difference between a quality life and a cycle of repetitive destructive behaviors. The writings of Ellen White provide extensive counsel on this subject. White (1903) was ahead of her time when she commented:

Since the mind and the soul find expression through the body, both mental and spiritual vigor are in great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character. (p. 195)

Therefore, the coping strategies will stress the importance of improving the physical well-being of single mothers. Single mothers will be encouraged to exercise regularly, eat healthy foods with high nutritional value, and maintain regular doctor visitation.

# Psychological

Another area that is critical to the overall health of single mothers is psychological health care. Hatcher et al., (2008) note:

Economic, physical and social disadvantages mark low-income single African-American mothers as vulnerable, at risk population for a variety of health problems, especially depression. Chronic stressors, self-esteem, negative thinking, and physical health status are indicated as critical elements of mental health. (p. 90)

Single mothers report more depression, higher rates of poor overall health, and psychological problems than married mothers and undoubtedly function less well as parents as a result (Friedlander, Weiss, & Traylor, 1986). Several research studies have indicated that African-American women are more likely to experience high levels of depressive symptoms. In a study of parenting among low-income African-American single mothers with young children, 47% of the 193 women had clinical levels of depressive symptoms (McGroder, 2000).

African-American single mothers also suffer with self-esteem. Low self-concept increases the chance for poor mental health. Brown and Keith (2003) found that high levels of mental health issues for the African-American woman are due in part to multiple oppressions that they face. They recommended that it is essential that Black mothers reject "Distorted, false, denigrating, anti-self, anti-African messages they have internalized, such as negative images related to skin color and physical appearance, as well as stereotypes of sexual promiscuity, domestic servitude, welfare dependence and

many, many others" (p. 5).

In order to have good mental health Black mothers must achieve self-acceptance and self-validation. This is especially relevant for low-income single mothers, as low income is associated with poor self-esteem (Jackson & Mustillo, 2003). On the positive side, a meta-analysis study by Twenge and Crocker (2002) compared the self-esteem among Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians. They found that Blacks scored higher than all other minority groups. Another study by Hatcher et al., (2009) found that reducing depression among African-American single mothers could improve their children's behaviors and result in favorable parent-child interactions.

Greater understanding of the mental health of the African-American mothers may prove helpful in designing interventions to reduce depressive symptoms in this especially vulnerable population, thereby improving their children's behavior and ultimately resulting in more favorable parent-child interactions. (p. 92)

The coping strategies will stress the importance of developing the psychological faculties. Single mothers face many challenges that place them at a disadvantage for psychological fortitude. Therefore, it is even more critical that single mothers safeguard their mind to the details of life which can impact psychological well being. White makes a keen observation regarding the existence of laws that plays a role in our psychological well being. In the book, *The Great Controversy*, White (1888) comments:

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward. (p. 555)

#### **Emotional**

The issue of emotional self-care is extremely vital for anyone who wishes to develop a vibrant, well-balanced life. Single mothers more than any other category of mothers go through a range of emotional experiences. No one has unlimited amount of emotional energy. When that energy is depleted, we experience pain and grief. Swenson (2004) notes:

When we are emotionally resilient, we can confront our problems with a sense of hope and power. When our psychic reserves are depleted, however, we are seriously weakened. Emotional overload saps our strength, paralyses our resolve, and maximizes our vulnerability, leaving the door open for even further martin erosion. (p. 79)

Chen, Lin, and Li (2011) note, "Parents have their own experiences, philosophies, and attitudes about their emotions and the emotions of their children. Before parents can interact with their children's emotions, they must first interact with their own emotions" (p. 404). Gottman, Katz, and Hooven (1997) coined the term Parental meta-emotion, which refers to an organized set of feelings and thoughts parents have about their own, as well as, their children's emotions. It includes parents' awareness of specific emotions, their awareness of these emotions in their child, and the coaching of these emotions in their child (Chen, Lin, & Li, 2011).

Because emotion affects productivity, parenting, and relationship, it is essential that single mothers be aware of the factors that can protect and replenish their emotional reserves. Swenson (2004, p. 86-94) has identified 14 factors that are essential for maintaining optimal emotional health: (a) cultivate social supports; (b) pet a surrogate; (c) reconcile relationships; (d) serve one another; (e) rest; (f) laugh; (g) cry; (h) create appropriate boundaries; (i) envision a better; (j) offer thanks; (k) grant grace; (l) be rich in

faith; (m) hold fast hope; (n) and above all, love.

## Spiritual

The area of spiritual life is an important aspect of self-care. Perhaps, it contributes more to the well being of single mothers more than any other type of care. According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, the word religion is from the Latin *religare*, which means "to bind together." A religion organizes the collective spiritual experiences of a group of people into a system of beliefs and practices (Mueller, Plevak, & Rummans, 2001). Religious involvement or religiosity refers to the degree of participation in or adherence to the beliefs and practices of an organized religion (Mueller et al., 2001). Spirituality is from the Latin *spiritualitas*, which means "breath" (Emblen, 1992). It is a broader concept than religion and is primarily a dynamic, personal, and experiential process. Features of spirituality include:

(a) a quest for meaning and purpose; (b) transcendence; (c) connectedness with others, nature, or the divine; (d) and values such as love, compassion, and justice (Mueller et al., 2001).

Spirituality and religiosity have been established as coping mechanisms for stressful life circumstances (Koenig & Larson, 2001). According to Cashwell and Young (as cited in Gill, Minton, & Myers, 2010), "Spirituality is difficult to define, given that it is both universal (e.g. 96% of the American population report a belief in God) and highly personal" (p. 293). Myers (as cited in Gill, Minton, & Myers, 2010) defined spiritual wellness as "A continuing search for purpose and meaning in life; an appreciation for depth of life, the expanse of the universe, and natural forces which operate; a personal belief system" (p. 11).

Spiritual wellness includes the components of meaning and purpose in life, inner resources, transcendence, and positive interconnectedness (Briggs, 2000). Warwick (1996) notes that among the sample participants of single parents in her study:

The majority reported high levels of religious values and beliefs. More than 4 out of 5 (84%) viewed religion as important. More than half the mothers in the sample were Protestant, 14% Catholic, and the remainder reported no affiliation, atheist or members of sects. (p. 62)

According to Anandarajah and Hight (2001), "Most authors report that a positive relationship between religious commitment and mental and physical health was found in up to 84 percent of studies that included a measure of religious commitment as part of the study" (p. 83). Religious commitment has been shown to be helpful in the prevention of ailments such as depression, substance abuse, and physical illness in coping with illness and in recovery from illness (Matthews et al., 1998). Anandarajah and Hight (2001) concluded:

Many people find spirituality through religion or through a personal relationship with the divine. However, others may find it through a connection to nature, through music and the arts, through a set of values and principles or through a quest for scientific truth. (p. 86)

The scientific community is recognizing a correlation between total health and spiritually. Single mothers who establish a firm spiritual foundation and connection to Jesus are more likely to face their situation with greater resiliency. The church can be very instrumental in this aspect by creating a spiritual environment where single mothers will be embraced, cherished, supported, respected, and loved unconditionally.

#### Summary

Single parent families are an integral part of society. In the African-American community, single mothers head the majority of homes. Historically, this has not always

been the case. During the late 1800s up to the mid-1900s, the majority of nuclear families for both Blacks and Whites comprised of mother, father, and children. As noted earlier, non-marital births in 1960 accounted for 5.3% of all U.S. births. But by 2007, an astonishing 40% of all children born in the United States were born to unwed parents. There were many contributing factors that led to this radical shift. The increase of divorce, societal acceptance of child bearing outside of marriage, technological advancement, the lack of father presence, and the overwhelming impact of poverty are some of the reasons for the increase in single parent homes.

The solution for changing the single mother paradigm is two-fold. First, we need to be intentional about improving the quality of life for single mothers. This can be achieved by providing employment opportunities that are sensitive to the plight of single mothers, providing sufficient income for household expenses, and making college education affordable and achievable. Secondly, we also need to be intentional about equipping single mothers with life-skills. Life skills can enhance parent-child relationship and help manage day-to-day responsibilities effectively. As single mothers become more competent in parenting, communication and budgeting, the entire family is more likely to become healthy and successful.

Self-care is an area that is often neglected both by single mothers and research.

Self-care is essential to the well-being of the entire family. So often, single mothers become lost in their predicaments, children, and the everyday challenges to make ends meet. They are overwhelmed with stress, lack of available resources, low self-concept, and depression. Consequently, single mothers face greater health risks and are least likely to maintain adequate self care. It is a matter of utmost importance and urgency that

single mothers take care of their physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual health. It goes without saying that this cannot be achieved without the support and assistance of family, friends, and the church community.

The problems and challenges that single mother families face are astronomical. It is essential that the larger community pool resources together that will offer assistance and empower single mother families to become successful. All facets of society need to be proactive in the plight of single mothers. Federal, state and city agencies have the responsibility to develop policies that will provide community based resources, economic assistance, shelter assistance, affordable education, and employment for single mothers. Businesses need to be sensitive to the needs of single mothers and provide accommodations that will improve the work performance of single mothers, qualifying them for better pay and promotions. Churches have the responsibility to create effective ministries that targets the needs of single mother families. Churches must also function as an extended family to single mothers by providing support, relevant resources, and modeling compassion as commanded by the head of the Church, Jesus Christ.

"The Greatest Love of All" is a song written by Michael Masser and Linda Creed, later popularized by Whitney Houston in 1986. The central message of the song is "the children are our future." In that case, it would be wise to invest in the total well-being of the homes in which they reside, and for the mothers who oversee them. Effective coping strategies for single mother families can potentially improve the quality of life for single mother families and create a brighter future for our communities, churches, and nation. Then, with confidence, the Messiah Jesus Christ can say:

'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you

gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matt 25:34-40, NIV)

#### CHAPTER 4

#### METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

## **Purpose and Intent of Seminar**

The purpose of the seminar was to develop effective coping skills for single mothers using information from the literature review, the Bible, Ellen G. White writings, pastoral experience, and interaction with single mothers. There is a tremendous need to improve the well being of single mother families. It is essential the single mothers are involved in the process of contributions. There are many lessons that we can learn from single mother families in the area of strength, resiliency, and even coping. These lessons may be quite beneficial to other family types, including nuclear families. For this reason, the seminar had a dual purpose. The seminar was intended to gather pertinent information regarding single mother families, and at the same time, enhance the well-being of single mothers in the following areas: (a) finances; (b) parenting; (c) education; (d) communication; (e) physical self-care; (f) psychological self care; (g) emotional self-care; (h) and spiritual self-care.

## **Participants**

Participants consisted of members from the Antelope Valley Seventh-day

Adventist Church and the community. The seminar participants comprised of single

mothers ranging from the ages of 18 and older. The target population was black single

mothers, also referred to in this study as African Americans. The sample size (N=15) consisted of 15 single mothers who do not belong to any protected population. The total of number of interests and responses to the seminar were approximately 30. However, the sample was limited to 15 due to the financial expenses, space, and time frame. A second consideration for restricting the sample to 15 was the total number of children in attendance. With a total number of 15 participants, I had to provide day care, food, and space for 35 children. In actually, I had to prepare for 50 persons during the seminar, not counting the individuals who were hired for set up, baby seating, and room decorations.

### Recruitment

Participants were recruited by personal invitation of the researcher and a brochure. The brochure was distributed to black single mothers at the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church and surrounding churches. A copy of the brochure is included in the appendix.

### Questionnaire

### **Intent of Ouestionnaire**

The intent of the questionnaire was to collect information from the participants that were pertinent to the specific life experiences of a single mother family. Black single mothers were asked to complete a modified pre-seminar questionnaire extracted from (Osborne, 1989) and used with permission. The summary responses from the questionnaire were used to guide the researcher in developing relevant seminar topics and provide appropriate resources. The topics were presented in order of most important to the least important.

## **Questionnaire Selection**

The questionnaire was selected for its thoroughness and the specific categories that it addressed. Furthermore, the questionnaire reflected the following principles:

- 1. The researcher personally acquainted himself with the single mother population of the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church through dialogue and personal home visitation.
- 2. The questionnaire was formulated in agreement with the literature review, biblical discoveries, and the writings of Ellen G. White.
- 3. A demographical study of families in the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church was conducted in order to identify the single mother families.
- 4. The questionnaire was developed by Osborne (1989) who received academic training in the area of research and designing of questionnaire while a graduate student at California State University, East Bay (formerly Hayward).

A copy of the modified questionnaire, as presented to the single mother population of the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church, is included in the appendix.

### **Data Gathering**

The questionnaire was designed to gather information in the following areas: (a) finances; (b) education; (c) dating; (d) parenting; (e) communication; (f) physical self-care; (g) psychological self-care; (h) emotional self-care; (i) spiritual self-care; and (j) child abuse. The questionnaire contained two sentences of instructions. The five-point continuum was used. The participant needed to place an "x" in the appropriate box indicating a response of 1, 2 3, 4, or 5. The first 75 questions required a response of

strongly agree or strongly disagree. Question 80 allowed the respondent to select from eight topics that she would like to have covered in the seminar. A space was provided for topics suggested by the participant. One open-ended statement soliciting any personal experiences the participant might want to share about being a single mother concluded the questionnaire.

#### Cover Letter

A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire explaining my intent, confidentially, and brief instructions pertaining to the questionnaire. A copy of the cover letter as distributed to the single mother respondents is included in the appendix.

# Church Approval

The researcher was granted full permission to conduct study among members of the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church. A copy of the approval letter from the Church Executive Board is included in the appendix.

#### Seminar Outline

The single mothers were given a detailed outline of the seminar which covered the following broad areas: (a) Introduction; (b) Biblical principles and case studies; (c) Selected principles from the writhing of Ellen G. White; (d) Divine restoration; (e) Exploring our present setting; (f) Historical overview of single parent families; (g) Quality of life; (h) Life skills; (i) Self-care; and (j) Directory of available resources. A copy of the coping skills seminar as presented to 15 single mothers in a two-session presentation, lasting four hours, is included in the appendix.

#### **Methods and Means**

# The Questionnaire

The respondents were given two weeks to complete and return the questionnaire in the sealed envelope provided. The results from the questionnaire were tabulated and entered by the researcher. All information and test results was be kept secure and confidential by the researcher. The researcher is the only person that had access to the individual data. Participants will not be identified individually in any type of publication or presentation. The sharing of the data gathered was with the informed consent of the single mothers who participated in the seminar.

### Formal Invitation

Upon completion of the questionnaire deadline, participants received a formal invitation to the seminar. A copy of the invitation is included in the appendix.

### Costs

My Pastoral Ministry Budget provided by the Antelope Valley Seventh-day

Adventist Church covered all expenses for the seminar. A copy of the itemized expenses is included in the appendix.

### **Informed Consent**

The informed consent provided a written explanation of the study which included participant expectations, risks, benefits, and the right to withdraw without penalty.

Participants received a copy of the informed consent agreement and were asked to sign it.

A copy of the informed consent is included in the appendix.

## Seminar Day and Time

The seminar was initially scheduled to take place during a two-day interval totaling four hours. However, the participants decided that conducting the seminar in one day for four hours best fit their schedule. Sunday, late afternoon, was selected as the most favorable time since most of the single mothers were occupied during the weekdays. The late hours were selected because it provided an opportunity to dine and relax while learning. The seminar was presented in two sessions, lasting two hours per session.

#### **Break Time**

During the break, participants were broken up into groups of three to four to work on the Lost on the Moon exercise. The mothers received a 10 minutes break after the first 50 minutes of the presentation. The presentation resumed after the break and lasted 50 minutes, after which the participants received a final 10 minutes break. The break was used to foster interaction, promote teamwork, create friendship, and hopefully develop an ongoing network among the single mothers who were present.

### Child Care

Childcare was a major concern for single mothers with under aged children. In order to increase member participation and to alleviate the burden of childcare, three single members from the Antelope Valley Church were compensated for providing childcare. A room in the church was reserved for that purpose. They provided a spiritual program to keep the children engaged and learning while the parents were attending the seminar. The seminar would have not been a success without the provision of childcare.

### The Setting

Ample time was spent regarding the setting. A room was reserved at the Antelope Valley Church. Tables were arranged in u-shaped format to allow face-to-face communication and interactions. Each table was set up with food, fruits, bottles of water, and a bottle of Martinelli Sparkling Cider. Participants were allowed to eat while the seminar was taking place. The room was beautifully decorated with the intention of creating an ambience of beauty and peace. Various candles producing a calming aroma were placed on the tables. A young man was designated to escorted each single mother to her seat as instrumental music played softly in the background. It was the intention of this researcher to create an atmosphere of comfort, tranquility and acceptance for the single mothers. They are often neglected and under appreciated for the hard work that they do. Everything about the seminar was designed to express a high level of appreciation and gratitude to the unsung heroes or ("sheroes") of the Black community. For at least one night, they would be treated with the utmost respect, dignity, and honor.

### Presentation

Scientific studies have shown that different people learn differently. Some mothers were visual learners, while others preferred kinesthetic, auditory, sensory, or tactile. Scientific studies have also concluded that combining the different senses increases learning potential. In an attempt to reach maximum learning potential, all of the senses were incorporated to enhance learning. Selected incenses were used to stimulate the mind. Notepads were provided for those who preferred to write down their notes, thoughts and questions. A copy of the seminar outline was included in the participant's binders for sensory learners who needed to touch the documents. Games were utilized

for tactile purposes. The Microsoft PowerPoint presentation was filled with visuals, pictures to stimulate the mind of visual learners. Sound bites were included in the presentation to stimulate the mind of auditory learners. The combination of all these tools enhances the learning curse for the single mothers. As a result, the content of the seminar was well received by the participants.

The seminar presentation was vibrant and interactive. Everyone responded with excitement and liveliness. Everyone stayed for the entire duration of the seminar. The level of excitement and involvement was so high that the mothers requested and agreed to extend the time for further discussions. Since the seminar was on a set schedule, and I had individuals who were being paid to watch the children for only four hours, it was best not to extend the time for the seminar. However, it certainly brought a high level of satisfaction to my heart to know that the mothers desired to know more.

### The Curriculum

A binder containing the curriculum was placed on the table for each participant. The curriculum binder was divided into five different sections. Section one of the binder contained a full and complete outline of the actual seminar. Section two contained copies of the two evaluations. One evaluation was completed immediately following the seminar. The second evaluation was completed four weeks after the seminar. Section three of the binder included a copy of the questionnaire that the participants filled out prior to the seminar. Section three also included the results from the questionnaire which allowed them to see the areas of greatest concerns and opportunities. Section four of the binder included a copy of the *Lost on the Moon* Exercise. Section five of the binder was labeled miscellaneous, and included additional materials such as: Antelope Valley

Church demographic, directory of available resources, and sample budget. A copy of the sample budget is included in the appendix.

A pre-paid stamped envelope was distributed to each single mother for the four weeks post seminar evaluation. Participants were allowed to take home all of the materials on their table, including the notebook at the conclusion of the seminar.

### Gifts

Participants received several gifts which were distributed at selected times during the seminar. The gifts included: (a) A copy of *Parenting from the inside out* and *Ministry of healing*; (b) A planner for 2012-2013; (c) A copy of Crown Money Map; (d) And a survival kit to be used in case of emergencies.

# Directory of Resources

A directory of available resources was included in the miscellaneous section of the binder. The directory listed all of the available services in the area of counseling, finance, government agencies, and so on. Information was compiled on the following resources: social services, court services, community organizations, private organization, non-profit organizations, churches, federal and state funded agencies. The services were classified intro three categories and listed in order of importance. Organizations that offered free services were listed first. Free services were deemed most valuable for single mothers since the majority struggled financially. Services that required minimal fees were listed next because they were more affordable and geared towards low-income families. Finally, services that required regular payments were listed last since they were least affordable and required full payment for services rendered.

#### Lost on the Moon Exercise

The *Lost on the Moon* exercise developed by NASA was a planned, interactive, and fun exercise to test the wisdom of a group against the wisdom of one individual. The task was to rank the 15 items in terms of their importance for survival. The number "1" was placed by the most important item. The number "2" was placed by the second most important, and so on, through number "15," the least important. This exercise took place during the ten-minute breaks. There were a total of four ten minutes breaks during the seminar. The purpose of this exercise was to foster friendship, build relationships, and support among the single mothers.

A copy of the *Lost on the Moon* worksheet (included in the appendix C) was passed out to each participant with paper faced down. The participants were given 10 minutes to complete the exercise as individuals. All the participants were encouraged to have the exercise completed in the time allotted. The participants were then placed in mixed groups of three to four to discuss and give reasons for their choices. The group was instructed to enter the team responses on the worksheet by majority consensus.

Upon completion of the individual and group tasks, the single mothers were guided on a voting method to select one set of results for the entire group. We agreed to use a point system and listed the items according to the most number of votes they received. The item that received the most number of votes by each group was ranked with a "1." The item that received the least number of votes by each group was ranked with a "15." If one group felt strongly about their answer, they were allowed to argue their position until all the groups reached a consensus.

Finally, the entire group compared their answers to a group of NASA engineers who were given the same task. The difference between NASA's ranking and the ranking of the individual or the group is how the scores were calculated. The scores were categorized as follows: (a) 0-25: Excellent; (b) 26-32: Good; (c) 33-55: Fair; (d) 56-70: Oops; (e) 71-112: Oh Well. A low score was considered best. Hopefully, the group score was lower than any one individual score.

An answer and explanation page was provided after the individual and group activity was completed. We went over the group choices, reading the accompanying explanations as to why that object had that number. The objects were ranked according to the order provided by the NASA experts. However, participants were allowed to argue their positions, if they disagreed with the experts. If their answers were reasonable, it was accepted.

At the conclusion of the explanations to the *Lost on the Moon Exercise*, the following questions were presented to the participants for reflections and discussions: (a) discuss some of the differences between working as an individual and as a team; (b) which method do you think was more effective, overall; (c) which was easier; (d) what were some of the challenges encountered when working with 3-4 other people?

Seminar Presentation, Session I: What the Bible Says About Single Mothers and Selected Principles From Ellen G. White

#### Introduction

The first session of the seminar was entitled, *What Does the Bible Say About*Single Mothers and Selected Principles From Ellen G. White. The seminar began by

welcoming the single mothers and thanking them for their presence. Next, each mother was given the opportunity to present herself to the group. Following the introductions, the single mothers were invited to join me in prayer. The prayer was specifically for the success of the seminar, the success of their children, and the success of the single mothers. The prayer was sensitive in nature since some of the mothers did not attend my church or any church.

The session opened up with a formal introduction of the presenter, which included background information, education, and my passion for single mother families. The introduction also provided the rationale, design, objectives, and principles of the seminar (See Appendix L).

# **Biblical Principles**

The next section of the presentation formed a Biblical foundation for the seminar. It was valuable for the single mothers to see themselves and their situations in the Bible. It was equally important for the mothers to recognize that they are the "apple" of God's eye and how He held a special place for them in His heart. As they saw themselves through God's eye, it would inevitably offer newfound hope, attitude, and strength to move forward. The Biblical principles began with the human family, exploring the creation story. Next, we discussed the institution of marriage and how sin distorted the Divine ideal. Finally, we discussed how God responded to sin by establishing laws requiring the protection and provision for single mother families.

## Case Studies

The first session provided an overview of two case studies. These case studies

were selected because of the numerous lessons and principles that they provided. The case studies made it really personal for the participants because they were able to identify with these biblical mothers. Furthermore, the case studies brought encouragement to their hearts to see how God related to these mothers. Single mothers families have been in existence since the beginning of time. The same God, who demonstrated compassion in the past, is the same God who reveals Himself to single mothers in the present.

# Selected Principles From Ellen G. White

Selected principles from the writings of Ellen G. White were incorporated throughout the presentation as necessary. Her statements provided further support for the role of the Church towards single mother families. Her statements also further presented the Adventist message in the proper light and context. This was very encouraging to Church members who did not accept Ellen White as an authentic messenger to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At the same time, the principles from the writings of Ellen White provided a positive message about the Seventh-day Adventist Church to non-church members.

#### Divine Restoration

Session I ended with a look at the broader plan of salvation and the depths that God went through in order to restore the entire human family in all of its forms, flaws, and beauty.

### **Seminar Presentation, Session II: Coping Skills**

Exploring Our Present Setting and Historical Overview

The second session of the seminar was entitled *Coping Skills*. This session was

designed to equip single mothers with coping skills in three broad areas: (a) quality of life; (b) life skills; (d) and self-care. This session opened up by exploring our present setting. The various forms of family types were presented to the attendees. Next, a historical overview of single parent families was presented. Findings from the literature review were used to substantiate the information presented. Various concepts were presented, while staying true to the peer reviewed findings and statistics.

# Quality of Life

### **Finance**

The first topic that was presented was finance. Finance was a major concern for the single mothers. The overwhelming majority of single mothers in connection with the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church struggled financially. Furthermore, research has shown that an increase in socio-economic status was a major contributing factor to the overall success of single parent families. The statistics gathered from the questionnaire expressed the financial challenges that were facing the single mothers.

This section of the seminar was very enlightening to the single mothers. The information was well received as it offered a glimmer of hope to their financial dilemma. Various available resources were shared with the single mothers that could potentially offer financial assistance to those needed it.

This section was very practical and hands on. The participants were offered various coping skills so they could move towards financial independence. They were asked to put together a budget listing their income and expenses, and to create a food-shopping list. Finally, participants made a personal commitment to live within their means, stick to their budget, and be financially responsible in all they do.

### **Education**

Education was the final topic that was presented under the quality of life.

Education was highly emphasized since it plays an important role and impacts so many areas in the life of a single mother family. Education increases opportunities for a better job, career, higher income, and the ability to assist children with schoolwork. In essence, education benefits the entire family.

Various coping strategies were presented in this area. Most of the single mothers present had some college experience. Some were currently attending college. Some attended college before but were not able to complete. All types of available financial assistance for college were shared. At the end of this section, every single mother made a commitment to acquire a college degree or to seek further education. They were very hopeful and recognized that it was an achievable goal. They were shocked to realize the amount of financial assistance available, especially for individuals at the lower income bracket. In fact, most of them realized that after their tuition, fees, and books are paid for, they would still have monies left over.

#### Life Skills

## **Parenting**

Parenting was a major concern for the single mothers. The majority of the single mothers responded in the questionnaire that they needed help to raise their children. Most of the participants find parenting to be very challenging. All of the single mothers expressed frustration, lack of skills, and lack of education in this area. This section of the seminar was extremely interactive and vibrant. The mothers had many questions and

impatiently waited for answers. All of the mothers expressed the burden that they needed to be more effective parents. They were hard on themselves and felt that they could be doing a much better job.

Various coping strategies were presented to the participants. The mothers participated in various role playing exercises to demonstrate various parenting skills. At the end of this section, most of the mothers expressed their sentiments with tears in their eyes. Many decided that they would reconcile with their children, seek forgiveness, and took a vow to be a better parent.

#### Communication

Communication was the second life skill shared with the participants. Most of the parents expressed that they needed help communicating their thoughts, feelings, and ideas to their children. The majority of the single mothers communicated with their children by yelling. Yelling became the norm to the point where the children would not listen or respond unless there were being yelled at.

Various coping strategies were presented to the single mothers for more effective communication. Many of the parents expressed that their children had a hard time talking to them for fear of not being understood or accepted. The mothers participated in various role-playing exercises to demonstrate the various communication coping strategies acquired. Eventually, the mothers were able to used appropriate language that showed they understood what was being expressed and were able to share their feelings effectively. At the conclusion of this section, the participants committed to communicate and listen more effectively to their children no matter how long it took.

#### Self-Care

This was the last section of the seminar. A self-care assessment worksheet (included in appendix L) was used to assess the self-care skills of the single mothers. This section of the seminar provided effective coping strategies for physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual self-care. The seminar concluded with this section because it is extremely important to the well being of single mothers. Practically all of the single mothers expressed that they were overwhelmed and burnt out. They were so preoccupied with the demands of parenting and work that they rarely took any time to replenish themselves physically, emotionally, psychological, and spiritually.

Self-care is of vital importance. Self care is a preventive tool that can reduce the risk for health problems, sickness, and depression. It also allows a person to focus with clarity of body, mind, and spirit. It is almost impossible to function effectively in the long run without proper self care. Many of the challenges that single mothers face can be traced to a lack of self-care.

I was elated to discover that most of the single mothers did not neglect their spiritual life. Spirituality and church was their primary source of strength. Many expressed a desire to attend church more frequently. However, the demand of work often prohibited them from going to church.

The participants were encouraged to follow a systematic plan of self-care. They were encouraged to start small and eventually reach the point where self-care would be a normal reoccurring aspect of their lives. The mothers made a commitment to maintain their physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritually self-care on a regular basis. This section concluded the seminar.

## Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete the evaluation sheet immediately at the conclusion of the seminar. Upon completion, the evaluations were collected and the seminar was officially concluded.

A post seminar evaluation was included in the evaluation section of the binder. Participants were asked to complete the post seminar evaluation four weeks later. Participants received a courtesy phone call the week of the due date as a reminder to complete and return the evaluation (either by the pre-stamped envelope or by hand delivery at church). *The Joy of Single Mother Families* seminar officially ended when the last evaluation was received by the due date.

### CHAPTER 5

## SUMMARY, EVALUATION, AND RECOMMEDATIONS

## **Summary of Questionnaire Responses**

The Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church is composed of predominately Black members. Demographically, our respondent group was comprised of only single mothers. The general information requested was biographical in nature. Most of the respondent (56%) has never been married. The rest of the women were single mothers due to divorce, separation, domestic violence, and no relation with the father. Chart 1 displays the age range of single mothers who completed the questionnaire. The youngest participant was aged 22. The oldest participant was aged 50. The single mother population by age groups was almost equally represented. This provided a rich setting for discussion and interaction during the seminar.

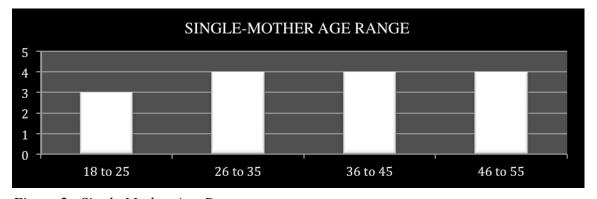


Figure 2. Single Mother Age Range

Figure 3 displays the total number of children and their age ranges. There were a total of 35 children between the single mothers. The ages of the children ranged from 0

years old to 27 years old. One of the single mothers has five children. Another single mother has four children. Four of the 15 single mothers have three children each. Five of the 15 single mothers have two children each. Four of the 15 fifteen single mothers have one child each. The median age of children is 10 years old. The average age of children is 12 years old. The vast majority of the children (18 out of 35) are ages 18 and under.

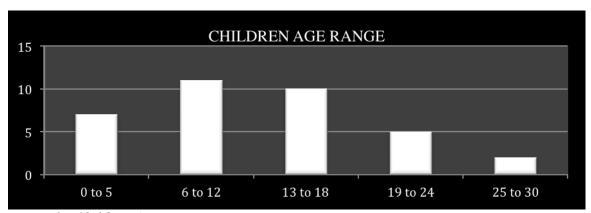


Figure 3. Children Age Range

Twelve single mothers had no male adult living in the home. Five of the single mothers had at least one female adult in the home. Only one of the 15 mothers had a father figure living in the home periodically. Thus, the vast majority of the children are being raised without the benefit of their father's presence on a regular basis. All the 35 children are of biological birth to the mothers who are raising them.

# Subjects Single Mothers Would Like to See Covered

Figure 3 displays the various topics that the single mothers would like to see covered in the seminar. Six possible considerations were listed. A space was provided for participants to write down additional topics of interest. The most important subject that single mothers wanted to see covered was self-care. Fourteen or 93% of the single

mothers wanted to see self-care covered. The next most important topic was finance, with 13 or 86% of the single mothers wanting to see it covered in a seminar.

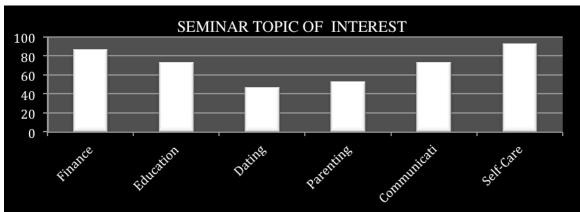


Figure 4. Seminar Topic of Interest

Eleven or 73% of the single mothers felt equally that education and communication should be covered. Dating is apparently the least important topic to the single mothers, with seven or 47% reporting that they would like to see it covered. The other least important topic was parenting with eight or 53% of the mothers listing it as a topic of interest. That is surprising since more time and questions was spent on parenting than any other topic. Two mothers wrote the following topics that they wanted to see covered in a seminar: (a) respect of self and others, (b) how to trust and let people in; (c) building a circle of support.

## Statistical Evaluation of Continuum Questions (1-80)

The questionnaire was designed to gather information in eight broad areas from the single mothers of Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church. Inquiries were made in the following areas: (a) finance; (b) education; (c) parenting; (d) communication; (e) physical self-care; (f) psychological self-care; (g) emotional self-care; (h) and spiritual self-care. The margin of error for each entry is  $\pm$  0.5%.

#### Finance

Table 4 displays the responses to the financial questions on the questionnaire. An alarming 67% of the single mothers reported that they are struggling financially. Only 53% of the mothers appear to receive child support regularly. The good news is that only 26% of the mothers eat out regularly, while most of the mothers (87%) cook meals regularly.

Table 4

Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Finance (N=15)

Category			n (%)		
	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
I cook meals regularly	3 (20%)	6 (40%)	4 (26.7%)	0	2 (13.3%)
I have a savings account for each child	6 (46.2%)	0	1 (7.69%)	1 (7.69%)	5 (38.5%)
I work outside my home for a living	6 (40%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)	0	5 (33.3%)
Income is less than \$15,000 annually	7 (46.7%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.3%)	4 (26.7%)
I receive child support	4 (26.7%)	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)	6 (40%)
State Welfare System recipient	5 (33.3%)	0	0	1 (6.67%)	9 (60%)
I eat out more than I cook for myself	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	6 (40%)	5 (33.3%)
I am struggling financially	4 (26.7%)	3 (20%)	3 (20%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (6.67%)

Code: SA = Strongly Agree; A=Agree; SWA=Somewhat Agree; D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

Sixty percent (60%) of the mothers are living on the poverty line with an annual income under \$15,000. It is any wonder that 67% of the mothers have to work outside the home to make ends meet? Most of the single mothers are not taking advantage of the state welfare system, with only 33% receiving funds from the state. Forty seven percent (47%) of the mothers value saving and has an account for each child.

### Education

Table 5 displays the response to the educational questions on the questionnaire. Eighty percent (80%) of the mothers have a High School Diploma. Fifty three percent (53%) of the single mothers have at least an Associate's degree. Forty percent (40%) of the single mothers have a Bachelor degree. Forty six percent (46%) of the mothers desire

to attend college but cannot afford to, while 50% attended college but did not graduate.

Overall, the educational attainment of the single mothers is commendable.

Table 5

Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Education (N=15)

Category			n (%)		
	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
I have a High School Diploma or GED	11(73.3%)	1 (6.67%)	0	0	3(20%)
Have at least an Associate's Degree	6 (40%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.3%)	5 (33.3%)
I attended college but did not graduate	4 (28.6%)	1 (7.14%)	2 (14.3%)	2 (14.3%)	5 (35.7%)
I plan to attend college	7 (50%)	0	1 (7.14%)	2 (14.3%)	4 (28.6%)
College is not affordable	4 (30.8%)	1 (7.69%)	1 (7.69%)	3 (23.1%)	4 (30.7%)
Have at least a Bachelor's Degree	6 (40%)	0	0	3 (20%)	6(40%)

Code: SA = Strongly Agree; A=Agree; SWA=Somewhat Agree; D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

# **Parenting**

Table 6 displays the responses to the parenting questions on the questionnaire. Most of the single mothers (67%) are comfortable raising their children and do not need any help. Only 36% reported that their children are more than they can handle. Sixty four percent (64%) of the mothers are consistent with discipline whether angry or not. An overwhelming 90% of the mothers reported that they live by the same rules as they expect from their children. However, during the seminar, many of the single mothers expressed that they were inconsistent with the rules in their homes. In fact, about 60% of the single mothers confessed that they did not abide by the same rules that they expected from their children.

Table 6

Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Parenting (N=15)

Category			n (%)		
	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
Children ask friends to come over	4 (28.6%)	3 (21.4%)	4 (28.6%)	1 (7.14%)	2 (14.3%)
I hug my children regularly	10(66.7%)	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.3%)	0	2 (13.3%)
Teach children to respect authorities	11(73.3%)	1 (6.67%)	0	0	3 (20%)
Children are more than I can handle	3 (21.4%)	0	2 (14.3%)	1 (7.14%)	8 (57.1%)
Take my children on vacation	6 (40%)	0	3 (20%)	2 (13.3%)	4 (26.7%)
Live by the same rules as my children	7 (46.7%)	3 (20%)	2 (13.3%)	0	3 (20%)
I keep children close to my relatives	7 (46.7%)	0	4 (26.7%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)
I avoid relatives of the other parent	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)	0	3 (20%)	8 (53.3%)
I need help to raise my children	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.67%)	9 (60%)
I often tell my children I love them	11(73.3%)	1 (6.67%)	0	0	3 (20%)
Granted full legal & physical custody	6 (42.8%)	0	1 (7.14%)	1 (7.14%)	6 (42.8%)
Send children to other houses to play	2 (14.2%)	1 (7.14%)	4 (28.5%)	4 (28.5%)	3 (21.4%)
Give material objects to win their love	3 (20%)	0	0	1 (6.67%)	11(73.3%)
I avoid my relatives	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	5 (33.3%)	4 (26.7%)	4 (26.7%)
My parents accepts my children	9 (60%)	0	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)
Consistent with discipline angry or not	2 (14.3%)	4 (28.5%)	3 (21.4%)	2 (14.3%)	3 (21.4%)

Code: SA = Strongly Agree; A=Agree; SWA=Somewhat Agree; D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

The majority of single mothers (80%) tell their children how much they love them on a regular basis. Eighty seven percent (87%) of the single mothers display physical affection by hugging their children regularly. Only 20% of the mothers give material objects as a way of gaining love from their children. Forty seven percent (47%) of single mothers for one reason or another avoid their own relatives, while only 27% of single mothers avoid the relatives of the other parents. Seventy three percent (73%) of the single mothers reported that their parent have no problem accepting their children. Seventy nine percent (79%) of the children often ask for their friends to come to the house, but only 50% of the mothers regularly send their children to other people's houses to play. Eighty percent (80%) of single mothers teach their children to respect all authority figures. Statistically, the single mothers seem to demonstrate strong parenting values, discipline and relationship with their children.

Table 7

Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Communication (N=15)

Category			n (%)		
	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
I scream for my children to listen	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.67%)	4 (26.7%)	4 (26.7%)	4 (26.7%)
I need help with communication	3 (20%)	1 (10%)	4 (26.7%)	2 (13.3%)	5 (33.3%)
Need better communication with children	1 (6.67%)	4 (26.7%)	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)	6 (40%)
Need more time talking to children	3 (20%)	3 (20%)	2 (13.3%)	4 (26.7%)	3 (20%)
My children are comfortable talking to me about their personal feelings	9 (60%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)

Code: SA = Strongly Agree; A=Agree; SWA=Somewhat Agree; D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

### Communication

Table 7 displays the responses to the questions pertaining to communication. Fifty seven percent (57%) stated that they needed help with communication. Eighty six percent (86%) of the single mothers reported that their children are comfortable talking to them about their personal feelings. Fifty three percent (53%) felt that they needed to spend more time talking to their children, and 40% felt the need to communicate better to their children. Forty seven percent (47%) have to scream for their children to listen. Overall, the single mothers appear to exhibit strong communication skills.

## **Physical Self-Care**

Table 8 displays the responses to the questions pertaining to physical self-care. Sixty seven percent (67%) exercise regularly, and 60% take walks regularly. Twenty seven percent (27%) take vacation alone without the children. Only 53% get massages regularly. The majority of single mothers (64%) have not taken a vacation since single parenthood. Seventy three percent (73%) of mothers take time off when needed.

Table 8

Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Physical Self-Care (N=15)

Category			n (%)		
	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
I get massages regularly	6 (40%)	0	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	5 (33.3%)
I have not taken a vacation since single parenthood	4 (28.5%)	0	1 (7.14%)	3 (21.4%)	6 (42.8%)
I exercise regularly	3 (20%)	0	7 (46.7%)	3 (20%)	2 (13.3%)
I go for walks regularly	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.67%)	6 (40%)	6 (40%)	0
Take vacation without children	3 (20%)	0	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)	2 (13.3%)
I eat at least three meals a day	4 (28.5%)	1 (7.14%)	4 (28.6%)	2 (14.3%)	3 (21.4%)
I take time off when needed	6 (40%)	0	4 (33.3%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)
I get regular medical care for prevention	4 (26.7%)	4 (26.7%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)
I get enough sleep	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	6 (40%)	4 (26.7%)	1 (6.67%)
I eat healthy	4 (26.7%)	3 (20%)	6 (40%)	0	2 (13.3%)

Code: SA = Strongly Agree; A=Agree; SWA=Somewhat Agree; D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

The majority of single mothers (73%) get regular medical care for prevention. Sixty six percent (66%) reported that they get enough sleep. Sixty four percent (64%) eat at least three meals per day, and 87% eat healthy food. The single mothers are to be applauded for their efforts. Even though they are the sole provider, they still manage to find time to maintain their physical health.

#### **Psychological Self-Care**

Table 9 displays the responses to the questions pertaining to psychological self-care. This section provides an introspective look into what the single mothers think about themselves. Seventy eight percent (78%) give themselves praise and affirmation. I was very glad to discover that the vast majority of single mothers (93%) fully accept themselves. Eighty seven percent (87%) of single mothers reported that they love themselves.

Table 9

Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Psychological Self-Care (N=15)

Category			n (%)		
	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
I have no problem saying no to others	4(26.6%)	3 (20%)	3 (20%)	2(13.3%)	3 (20%)
I give myself affirmations and praise	5 (35.7%)	1 (7.14%)	5 (35.7%)	2 (14.3%)	1 (7.14%)
I fully accept myself	7 (46.7%)	4 (26.7%)	3 (20%)	0	1 (6.67%)
I talk to a professional counselor	2 (14.3%)	0	3 (21.4%)	1 (7.14%)	8 (57.1%)
No vacation since single parenthood	4 (28.6%)	0	1 (7.14%)	3 (21.4%)	6 (42.9%)
I keep an active social life	(33.3%)	4 (26.7%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.3%)
I take time off when needed	5 (40%)	0	4 (33.3%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)
I make time for personal reflection	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)	10(66.7%)	0	1 (6.67%)
Talk to other adults about my feelings	4 (26.7%)	0	7 (46.7%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)
I love myself	7 (46.7%)	5 (33.3%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)
I write in a journal	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)	5 (33.3%)	3 (20%)	3 (20%)
I take personal time for myself daily	4 (26.7%)	2 (13.3%)	5 (33.3%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)

Code: SA = Strongly Agree; A=Agree; SWA=Somewhat Agree; D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

Most of the single mothers (64%) do not talk about their personal life to an outside professional. Perhaps, it is because they cannot afford it. It is reaffirming to see that at least 73% talk to another adult about their feelings. Somehow, 73% of the single mothers have managed to take personal time daily, and 93% make time for personal reflection. The overall psychological health of the single mothers looks very promising.

#### **Emotional Self-Care**

Table 10 displays the responses to the questions pertaining to emotional self-care. Parents are often more concern about the well-being of their children than themselves. Perhaps that is why 73% feel sorry for themselves, while 35% feel sorry for their children. Ninety three percent (93%) of mothers read regularly. Seventy three percent (73%) manage to take time off for self weekly. Eighty percent (80%) keep an active social life. However, only 86% are comfortable with crying. Ninety three percent (93%)

feel that their emotions are under control. Seventy one percent (71%) can become extremely moody. Eighty percent (80%) of single mothers do spend time with important people in their lives. The overall responses on emotional self-care revealed that the single mothers are proactive about improving their emotional health.

Table 10

Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Emotional Self-Care (N=15)

Category			n (%)		
	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
I spend time with important people in my life	10(66.7%)	0	2 (13.3%)	0	3 (20%)
I feel sorry for myself	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)	4 (26.7%)	2 (13.3%)	5 (33.3%)
I feel sorry for my children	3 (21.4%)	2 (14.3%)	0	2 (14.3%)	7 (50%)
I read regularly	4 (26.7%)	4 (26.7%)	6 (40%)	1 (6.67%)	0
I take time off when needed	5 (40%)	0	4 (33.3%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)
I keep an active adult social life	5 (33.3%)	4 (26.7%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.3%)
I feel comfortable with crying	8 (53.3%)	2(13.3%)	3 (20%)	0	2 (13.3%)
I talk to other adults about my feelings	4 (26.7%)	0	7 (46.7%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)
I feel comfortable with laughing	10(71.4%)	1 (7.14%)	0	1 (7.14%)	2 (14.3%)
I love myself	7 (46.7%)	5 (33.3%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)
I take personal time for myself weekly	0	5 (33.3%)	9 (60%)	1 (6.67%)	0
My emotions are under control	2 (13.3%)	5 (33.3%)	7 (46.7%)	1 (6.67%)	0
I regularly become extremely moody	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)	5 (33.3%)	5 (33.3%)	1 (6.67%)

Code: SA = Strongly Agree; A=Agree; SWA=Somewhat Agree; D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

#### **Spiritual Self-Care**

Table 11 displays the responses to the questions pertaining to spiritual self-care. Eighty percent (80%) of the single mothers express strong faith in God, but only 67% attend church at least twice a week, and only 60% are active in a Church ministry. Interestingly, 80% of the single mothers consistently support the Church financially. That is overwhelming, and shows great stewardship on the part of single mothers, since only 20% of the membership typically supports the church financially. To love oneself and neighbor is the second great commandment of Jesus. It gives me great joy to see that

87 % of the mothers love themselves. Research consistently shows that those who attend church respond better to the challenges of life.

Spiritual discipline is vital to spiritual self-care and spiritual life. Ninety three percent (93%) of the mothers read the Bible regularly. Still, 67% of the mothers reported that they need to spend more time in Bible reading. The single mothers are spending time talking to God, with 93% reporting that they pray regularly.

Table 11

Questionnaire Results Pertaining to Spiritual Self-Care (N=15)

Category			n (%)		
	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
I attend Church at least twice a month	8 (53.3%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	3 (20%)
I read the Bible regularly	4 (26.7%)	4 (26.6%)	6 (40%)	1 (6.67%)	0
Attend a Bible class once a week	6 (35.7%)	0	2 (14.3%)	2 (14.3%)	4 (28.6%)
Need to read my Bible more	6 (40%)	4 (26.7%)	0	0	5 (33.3%)
I pray regularly	8 (53.3%)	3 (20%)	3 (20%)	0	1 (6.67%)
I need to spend more time in prayer	4 (26.7%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	3 (20%)	4 (26.7%)
I have a strong Faith in God	9 (60%)	3 (20%)	0	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.3%)
I love myself	7 (46.7%)	5 (33.3%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)	1 (6.67%)
I support my church financially	5 (33.3%)	2 (13.3%)	5 (33.3%)	3 (20%)	0
I am part of a Church Ministry	6 (40%)	1 (6.67%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	3 (20%)

Code: SA = Strongly Agree; A=Agree; SWA=Somewhat Agree; D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

Only 50% of the single mothers participate in a Bible study class at least once a week. The single mothers, as individuals, have an active spiritual life. However, there is a need for many of the single mothers to be more active in the corporate experience of church life. Overall, the single mothers are to be commended for their commitment to spiritual care. It is rewarding to know that single mothers turn to God as their source of strength and hope. The single mothers expressed a desire to have an intimate relationship with Jesus as the author and finisher of their faith.

#### **Seminar Conclusions**

The seminar changed the lives of many single mothers, children, and households in the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church. The seminar was well attended. One single mother had even requested if she could bring her boyfriend. The request was denied because this seminar was for single mothers only. The ambience of the room conveyed to the mothers that they were appreciated, valued, and respected. It gave me great pleasure to have heard every single mother that walked into the room uttered the sound "ahh." Our time together strengthened the bond between the participating mothers, provided education based on research, shared valuable life experiences, and decisions were made that may potentially impact the rest of their lives. By the end of the seminar, the older mothers took on the role of mentors to the younger ones. Consequently, the group committed to form a support network that would share childcare responsibilities, hold one another accountable to the coping skills, and regular communicate with each other.

During the introduction, I shared the rationale and expectations of the seminar. I informed them that any information shared would be kept confidential, and that their names would never be published. No information would be used without their implied consent. By this point, everyone felt comfortable to move forward in the *Joy of Single Families Seminar* journey.

#### Theological Foundation

The first session of the seminar expounded on the theology of single mother families. There were hardly any questions asked in this session because the information was new to every single mother in the room. One could see the expressions on their faces

as they processed this new information. There were expressions of liberation, hope, confidence, and acceptance as they realized the overwhelming evidence in Scripture about God's plan for single mother families.

Various quotes were shared from the writings of Ellen G. White reaffirming the Bible mandate and the responsibility of the church to single mother families. It was reassuring for them to know that another woman, especially the highest authority and voice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, write so diligently about single mothers. It gave them tremendous respect for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

#### Finance

The second session of the seminar dealt with the coping skills. We began with finance since it was listed as the most important topic that the mothers wanted to see covered in the seminar. By the end of the topic, the mothers adopted ways to save money, created a budget, find available resources, and free events where they can spend time with the family. As a result, some mothers filed for child support. Other mothers began cooking at home more frequently as a means of saving money and having quality family time. Still other single mothers filed for State Welfare benefits that they qualified for, such as cash assistance, WIC, and medical. At the request of one mother, I assisted her 13-year-old daughter with getting to the bank and opening up a high school savings account. By the end of the seminar, the mothers were financially empowered, more competent, and confident. Four weeks after the seminar, most of the single mothers were in a better financial position.

#### Education

I was impressed to see the high level of educational attainment among the single mothers. Only two of the single mothers did not complete high school. Some had achieved Associate's or Bachelor's degrees. Two of the mothers had Master's degrees. Many of them were currently in college and I have complete confidence that they will achieve their goals. Following the seminar, some of the mothers decided to enroll in college, and some made a commitment to return to college and complete their degrees. I was so excited because I know what difference a college education can make in improving the quality of life for a single mother.

#### Parenting and Communication

Due to time restraint, I had to combine communication and parenting into one unit. In a way, they go hand in hand. We spend more time on parenting than any other topic. Although the questionnaire responses showed that the majority of the single mothers were competent, the seminar revealed otherwise. During the coping skills presentation, many mothers confessed of their inability to parent effectively. In fact, many admitted they had no control over their home or children. There were so many questions asked about parenting, that I agreed to offer counseling to one of the mothers who appeared devastated with guilt and a lack of assertiveness.

Prior to the coping skills, many of the mothers considered screaming and spanking as acceptable forms of discipline. One mother thought that it was acceptable for her kids to stay out all night and slam the door in her face. She felt that her children were great kids since they were not involved in drugs, alcohol, or gangs. Weeks after the seminar and armed with new parenting and communication skills, the following goals

were achieved: (a) Parents improved communication with children; (b) Appropriate boundaries were set for children; (c) More time was invested in home cook meals; (d) Spanking was discouraged; (e) and discipline was appropriately administered.

Physical, Psychological, Emotional, and Spiritual Self-Care

The presentation of this coping skill was a breath of fresh air. Very little was said by the single mothers during this portion. Their eyes said it all. There was an undeniable pain in their eyes as they realized how little attention they paid to their physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual self-care. Although the questionnaire responses revealed that they were functioning adequately with self-care, the seminar revealed otherwise. There was a resounding silence in the room when I said, "How can you take care of your children when you are not taking care of yourselves. Furthermore, the best thing you can do for your children is to take care of yourself."

As a result of this presentation, many of the single mothers now put their children in bed by 8 pm so they can have time off their daily work. Many of the single mothers are now exercising, eating healthier, have partnered up for walks, write in a journal, and are seeing a professional counselor. In fact a good therapist friend of mine, who is aware of this study, offered to counsel the single mothers that attended the seminar pro bono. The single mothers are also more active in church life, Bible study, and prayer. That is great news for single mothers, the church, and the Kingdom of God.

#### **Results and Discussions**

The seminar concluded with each participant submitting an anonymous written evaluation. It was beneficial to obtain immediate feedback while the ideas were fresh in

their mind. The seminar was commended for its excellence, professionalism, and content. The single mothers were asked to respond to five questions: (a) Has this seminar for single mothers been helpful to you? (b) What specific things have you learned? (c) What would you add?; (d) What would you change? (e) Would you recommend a seminar like this one to a single mother you know?

#### The Single Mothers Seminar Has Been Helpful

Every single mother responded positively to the seminar and agreed that it was favorable. Following are additional responses to the question, "Has this seminar for single mother been helpful to you?"

- 1. "Kept me aware of details on statistics of poverty on single parents."
- 2. "Yes, It was very helpful! Thank you Pastor Honoré."
- 3. "Very helpful! Love the topics covered. Hits the nail right on the spot."
- 4. "Yes it has been helpful. I have seen that I have more to learn as a single mother."

#### Specific Things Learned

The responses to this question were very encouraging. Following are a few representative statements by the single mothers in response to the question, "What specific things have you learned?"

- 1. "How to communicate to my kids and take care of myself."
- 2. "How to deal with my children when they are needing time out/punishment."
- 3. "Coping skills, and I loved the everyday survival kit."

- 4. "Parenting, finance, child discipline, available resources, budgeting, Christianity."
  - 5. "I have learned that in everything I do, I need God's help and guidance."
  - 6. "God still has a plan for me, even though I'm a single mother."
  - 7. "Not to call my kids outside of their name."
  - 8. "Benefits of being complete in God."

#### Things I Would Add to the Seminar

The majority of the single mothers responded that they would not add anything. Following are a few representative statements in response to the question, "What would you add?"

- 1. "More time."
- 2. "Maybe do it in two sessions."
- 3. "Personal feelings behind being a single parent (guilt, shame)."
- 4. "Nothing. Seminar was planned well and covered many subjects."
- 5. "Maybe have a six hour seminar, with an hour lunch break after the first three hours."

# Things I Would Change I Would Recommend This Seminar

The single mothers were unanimous in their response to these two questions.

Every single mother responded that they would not change anything. Every single mother responded that they would definitely recommend this seminar to another single mother.

#### Four-Week Follow up Evaluation

#### Primary Reasons for Attending

The four-week follow up evaluation gave further indication to the success and results of the seminar. Three fourths of the single mothers returned a completed evaluation. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. The primary reasons for attending the seminar by percentage are listed as follows:

- 1. Twenty eight percent (28%) listed help as the primary reason for attending the seminar.
- 2. Eighty six percent (86%) listed information as the primary reason for attending the seminar.
- 3. Forty three percent (43%) listed incentive as the primary reason for attending the seminar.
- 4. Twenty nine percent (29%) listed referral as the primary reason for attending the seminar.

Relevancy, Knowledge, Organization, and Resources

100% of the single mothers responded in the affirmative to the following questions:

- 1. Was the information presented relevant? Yes
- 2. Did the speaker demonstrate knowledge of the subject? Yes
- 3. Was the speaker well organized? Yes
- 4. Was the directory of resources helpful for your needs? Yes
- 5. Did the coping skills work for you? Yes

#### The Following Coping Skills Were Put Into Practice

- 1. Seventy one percent (71%) applied the finance coping skills.
- 2. Seventy one percent (71%) applied education coping skills.
- 3. Seventy one percent (71%) applied the parenting coping skills.
- 4. Seventy one percent (71%) applied the communication coping skills.
- 5. Sixty percent (60%) applied the physical self-care coping skills.
- 6. Sixty percent (60%) applied the psychological self-care coping skills.
- 7. Sixty percent (60%) applied the emotional self-care coping skills.
- 8. Seventy one percent (71%) applied the spiritual self-care coping skills.

#### Comments, Observations, or Concerns

The single mothers were asked to list any other comments, observations, or concerns. Following are some of the representative statements by the single mothers:

- 1. "The seminar is a great benefit to mothers who are raising their children on their own. The resources that were provided and spoke about in class are very helpful. I believe the seminar should continue on future dates. Mr. Honoré is a great speaker. I encourage him to continue in his work for God and bettering the lives around him."
- 2. "The seminar was so good. I learned a lot. I hope you have another one soon. Thank you."
  - 3. "I enjoyed it, wish it happened more often."
- 4. "I really enjoyed the seminar. I received a lot of understanding and relief from what the Bible had to say. If there are any follow-up seminars, I will attend and invite others."

5. "Next time it should be done in two parts so all the information can be fully presented."

All the single mothers attempted to apply the specific coping acquired during the seminar in their personal life. My heart rejoiced to see that every one of the single mothers reaped the benefit of the coping skills and realized that it worked for them. I commend the single mothers for being proactive and taking the initiative to test the coping skills. The coping skills in and of themselves do not produce results. They are dependent upon the recipients who are willing to put them into practice.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations might prove helpful should another Pastor or researcher desire to explore further on the topic of single mothers. The suggestions in this project can further contribute to the enhancement of Black single mother families. These recommendations are applicable to pastors, churches, and researchers who have a passion to see the lives of single mother families transformed in the church community. While applicable to all single mothers, these recommendations are particularly important for Black Seventh-day Adventists, and may be implemented at various levels within the church organization.

- 1. Single mothers represent a fast growing population in the church. Further research needs to be conducted on the issues impacting Seventh-day Adventist singlemother families. The more we know, the more we are able to deal with the problem, and build on the strengths.
- 2. Publish periodic articles, materials, magazines, and books to help single mother families with additional coping skills. There has to be a corporate awareness and

response by the world church, since the concerns of single mother families have an impact on the entire family of God.

- 3. The Seventh-day Adventist Conferences nationwide need to adhere to the biblical mandate of Deut 26, requiring portions of tithe to be used for the welfare of single mother families. To do otherwise, is to transgress the commandments of God.
- 4. Develop a curriculum and implement a single mother family ministry at the local church and conference level.
  - 5. Host affordable conferences, retreats, and seminars on single mother families.
  - 6. Organize enrichment programs for single-mothers.
- 7. Establish support group or small groups ministries in the local church. This should also be an outreach opportunity as single mothers from the community are invited to be part of the small groups.
- 8. Children ministry can provide childcare opportunities throughout the year which will allow single mothers some time to reflect, relax, and attend to self care.
- 9. Utilize Men's Ministry, Deacons' Ministry to assist single mothers with simple car and home repairs.
- 10. "It takes a village to raise a child." Establish a big brother/sister program as part of an extended church family. Provide orientation for the big brother/sister so that they may be informed of their roles and responsibilities. Emphasize a long term commitment, since it could be devastating to suddenly breach a relationship with a child.
- 11. Preach relevant messages that are based on truth and not opinions. Sermons should be sensitive, inclusive, build, affirm, and empower all members of the congregation.

- 12. Recognize single mother families in all family related programs and functions such as: mother's day, father's day, women's ministry day, family retreats, and so forth.
- 13. Further theological inquiry needs to be made regarding what the Bible has to say in regards to the various types of "modern" single families. That is, women who became single mothers not as a result of the factors listed in the project document, but by other modern means (e.g., artificial insemination). What is the Biblical counsel in such cases? Is there a theology that can be extracted from the Bible to aid such families? These questions and more needs to be the issue of further theological inquiry.
- 14. This project document listed some of the contributing factors to the increased number of Black single mothers families. However, further research needs to explore other contributing factors such as: (a) Researching the family structure in West Nigeria, where most slaves came from; (b) The aftermath of emancipation on the Black family; (c) The impact on fathers having to leave the home in search of jobs; (d) The benefits and crippling effects of the welfare system; (e) a more detailed look into American slavery and its effects on the Black family.

#### **Project Summary**

The single mothers who participated in this study had a higher overall well being when compared to the unchurched and non-Seventh-day Adventists population. I believe that the Seventh-day Adventists Church position on health, Christian standards, stewardship, education, and spiritual discipline played a major role as to why these mothers function much higher than their non-Adventist counterparts. The Seventh-day Adventists Church is to be commended for promoting a holistic lifestyle that encompasses the entire person.

The problems of single mother families are overwhelming. The strength of single mothers is unmatched. The needs of single mother families in the church present a tremendous opportunity for ministry. This project was a journey that began several years ago. God sparked up a passion in the heart of this pastor for single mother families. Countless hours in research and prayer has been invested in this project to ensure that the material content demonstrates excellence. It is the hope of this researcher that this project will empower single mothers to become a viable part of our community.

Families are the building blocks of churches and society. True transformation begins at the home. A total of 15 homes were impacted by this project. The life of 15 single mothers will never be the same again. The fate of 35 children has been decided as a new generation strives to break the cycle and establish healthy nuclear families of their own. The church stands to experience untold growth as it embraces every family in the church with respect, dignity, and unconditional love.

The life and ministry of this pastor will never be the same again as a result of this project. I have learned valuable lessons as a result of this project. First and foremost, I have learned that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not limited. The Gospel has the power to transform families and bring them to wholeness. Every family can be complete in Christ. Secondly, the project has filled my heart with sensitivity for single mothers and all types of families in the church. I have gained a much greater respect for the struggle and resiliency of single mother families. Thirdly, as a result of this project, the church has learned to accept and value our single mother famines. There is a concerted effort by the church body to embrace and support all the different types of families in the church congregation. Finally, I am grateful for the opportunity to join God in advancement of

His kingdom, and will continue to do so until the second coming of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

#### APPENDIX A

# SINGLE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

#### **General Information**

I am female	Male
Age	Number of children
Ages of children	
Number of male adults living	with me
Number of female adults living	ng with me
I have the following number of	of:
Foster children	1
Biological chil	ldren
Adopted child	ren
Legal guardian	nship
Without legal	status
Other	

Please answer each question with an "X" under the appropriate number 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. For 'yes or no' or 'true – false' answers use '1' or '5' respectively.

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Somewhat agree
- 4. Disagree

	5. Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5
01.	I spend time with important people in my life.					
02.	My children are comfortable talking to me about their personal feelings.					
03.	I take personal time for myself daily.					
04.	I take some personal time for myself each week.					
05.	I pray regularly.					
06.	I get enough sleep.					
07.	I was married before I had my children.					
08.	I have never married.					
09.	I work outside my home for a living.					
10.	My income is less than \$15,000 per year.					
11.	I receive child support from the other parent.					
12.	I receive money from the State Welfare system.					
13.	I am struggling financially.					
14.	My emotions are under control.					
15.	I regularly become extremely moody.					
16.	I spank my children.					

17.	I have to scream for my children to listen.		
	I am consistent with discipline whether angry or		
18.	not.		
19.	I need to spend more time in prayer.		
20.	I chose to be a single parent.		
	I have been granted full legal and physical		
21.	custody of my children by the Court.		
	Every year I take my children on vacation away		
22.	from home.		
23.	I take vacation alone (away from children).		
	I have not taken a vacation since single		
24.	parenthood.		
25.	I have a strong Faith in God.		
26.	I attend church at least twice a month.		
27.	I exercise regularly.		
28.	I go for walks regularly.		
29.	I cook meals regularly.		
30.	I eat out more than I cook for myself.		
31.	I graduated College with at least an Associate		
31.	Degree.		
32.	I read the Bible regularly.		
33.	I attended College but did not graduate.		
34.	I feel my children are more than I can handle.		
35.	I need help with communication.		
36.	I make time for personal reflection.		
37.	I get regular medical care for prevention.		
38.	I love myself.		
39.	I keep an active adult social life.		
40.	I plan to attend College.		
41.	I need to communicate better to my children.		
42.	I need help to raise my children.		
43.	I attend a Bible Study class at least once a week.		
44.	I feel comfortable with laughing.		
45.	I take time off when needed.		
46.	I talk to adults regularly about my feelings.		
47.	I give myself affirmations and praise.		
48.	I eat healthy.		
49.	I write in a journal.		
50.	I have a High School diploma or GED.		
51.	I get massages regularly.		
52.	I live by the same rules I expect from my children.		
53.	I feel comfortable with crying.		
54.	I need to spend more time in Bible reading.		
55.	I have a savings account for each child.		 

	<b>*</b>	· ·			<del></del> 1	
56.	I eat at least three meals a day.					
57.	I feel sorry for my children.					
58.	I feel sorry for myself.					
59.	I want to attend college but cannot afford it.				I	
60.	I need to spend more time talking to my children.			$\prod$		
61.	I fully accept myself.				]	
62.	I teach my children to respect all authority figures.					
63.	I keep my children in close contact with close relatives.					
64.	I prefer to be alone than to be around people.					
65.	I avoid relatives of the other parent.					
66.	I avoid my relatives.					
67.	I give my children material objects to win their love.					
68.	I have no problem with saying no to people.					
69.	I often tell my children I love them.					
70.	I hug my children regularly.					
71.	I talk about my personal life to an outside					_
/1.	professional.					
72.	I am interested in a seminar to help me cope more effectively.			_ T		_
73.	I support my Church financially.					_
74.	I am part of a Church Ministry.					
75.	My parents accept my children as their grandchildren.					
76.	I regularly send my children to other persons' houses to play.					
77.	My children often ask their friends to come to our house.					
78.	I graduated College with at least an Bachelor Degree					
79.	I eat at least 3 meals a day.					
80.	I would like to see the following subjects covered	in a sei	ninar.			

a.	Finances	bEducation
c.	Dating	dParenting
a.	Communication	eChild Abuse
a.	Available Resources	
b.	Physical, Psychologic	eal, Emotional, & Spiritual Growth
c.	Other	

I would like to share the following information about my experience as a single parent.

#### APPENDIX B

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER**

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Doctor of Ministry Department

**Title of Study:** Development of a Program for the Empowerment of Single Mother Families of Color in the Church Congregation

Dear Respondent,

I am a Doctor of Ministry student attending Andrews University. I am conducting a study to ascertain information pertinent to the specific life experience of being a single mother family in the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist. The objective of this study is to develop an effective coping skills seminar that will enhance the well being of African-American single mother families in the areas of finances, education, parenting, communications, and self-care.

I would like to ask each participant to complete the enclosed questionnaire and upon completion, place it in the envelope provided. <u>PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR</u>

<u>NAME ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE</u>. You will remain anonymous and your responses will not be identified with you personally. It should take approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire and participation in this study is voluntary.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also contact the IRB if you have questions, complaints or concerns which you are unable to discuss with the researcher. The Andrews University IRB may be reached by phone at 269-471-6360.

Thank you for you participation in this important study that will potentially transform the well being of African-American Single Mother Families in the Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church and community.

Sincerely,

Richardson Honoré
Doctoral Student Candidate
Andrews University

**Doctor of Ministry Department** 

#### APPENDIX C

#### LOST ON THE MOON WORSHEET

Your spaceship has just crashed on the moon. You were scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship 200 miles away on the lighted surface of the moon, but the rough landing has ruined your ship and destroyed all the equipment on board except for the 15 items listed below. Your crew's survival depends on reaching the mother ship, so you must choose the most critical items available for the 200-mile trip.

Your task is to rank the 15 items in terms of their importance for survival. Place a number 1 by the most important item, number 2 by the second most important, and so on, through number 15, the least important. First, rank the items on your own, then confer with your crew for a group rank. Finally you can compare your answers to a group of NASA engineers who were given the same task.

Item	(1) Your Rank	(2) Team Rank	(3) NASA Rank	(1) – (3) Your Score	(2) – (3) Team Score
Box of matches					
Food concentrate					
50 feet of nylon rope					
Parachute silk					
Solar Powered heating unit					
Two .45 caliber pistols					
One case of dehydrated milk					
Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen					
Stellar Map of the moon's constellations					
Life raft containing CO <sub>2</sub> bottles					
Magnetic compass					
5 gallons of water					
Signal flares					
First-aid kit containing injection needles					
Solar-powered FM receiver- transmitter					
	l	•	Totals		

# **ANSWERS TO LOST ON THE MOON**

Item	NASA Rank	NASA Reasoning
Box of matches	15	No oxygen on the moon: worthless
Food concentrate	4	Efficient means of energy
50 feet of nylon rope	6	Useful in scaling cliffs, tying injured together, etc.
Parachute silk	8	Sun protection
Solar Powered heating unit	13	Not needed unless on dark side of the moon
Two .45 caliber pistols	11	Possible means of propulsion
One case of dehydrated milk	12	Bulkier duplication of food concentrate
Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen	1	Most pressing survival need
Stellar Map of the moon's constellations	3	Primary means of navigation
Self-inflating raft containing CO <sub>2</sub> bottles	9	Co2 bottle in raft may be used for propulsion
Magnetic compass	14	Magnetic field on moon not polarized: useless
5 gallons of water	2	Replacement for tremendous liquid loss on light side of moon
Signal flares	10	Distress signal when mother ship is located
First-aid kit containing injection needles	7	Needles fit special aperture in space suits
Solar-powered FM 2-way radio	5	For communication with mother ship, but FM requires line-of-sight transmission, short range

Error Points are the Absolute Difference Between your Rankings and NASA'S (Disregard Plus or Minus Signs)

0-25 (Excellent) 26-32 (Good) 33-55 (Fair) 56-70 (Oops) 71-112 (Oh Well)

#### APPENDIX D

#### **CHURCH APPROVAL**



Antelope Valley
Seventh-day
ADVENTIST

836 East Ave. I Lancaster, CA 93535 P.O. Box 1806 Lancaster, CA 93539-1806 (661) 729-4106 (661) 729-4219 Fax

April 12, 2009

Institutional Review Board Andrews University Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355

To Whom It May Concern:

The Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church welcomes the opportunity to cooperate with Richardson Honoré and Andrews University in his graduate research project entitled: "Developing an Effective Coping Mechanism Seminar for African-American Single Mother Families." The Church Executive Board has voted to grant full permission to Richardson Honoré to conduct his survey among the members of our congregation.

Yours truly,

Chinagozi Wogu,

Vice-chair

Antelope Valley SDA Church

#### APPENDIX E

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM



Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministries Department

## **Informed Consent Form**

#### Title:

Development of a Program for the Empowerment of Single Mother Families of Color in the Church Congregation

**Purpose of Study:** I understand that the purpose of this study is to conduct an assessment of the many challenges that African-American single mother families face in the area of finances, education, parenting, communication, and self-care. This study will develop an effective coping mechanism that will contribute the well being of African-American families.

**Inclusion Criteria:** In order to participate, I recognize that I must be an adult between the ages of 18 and over and of sound mind, and must either currently or at some point in the past, been an active participant in a Seventh-day Adventist congregation.

**Procedure:** I understand that I will be given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. I will be given additional time if I have not completed the questionnaire within the allotted time.

**Risks and Discomforts:** I have been informed that there are no physical or emotional risks to my involvement in this study.

**Benefits/Results:** I accept that I will receive no remuneration for my participation, but that by participating, I will help the researcher and the Seventh-day Adventist Church arrive at a better understanding of some of the challenges that African-American single mother families face, and that this study will enable the church to develop strategies that will enhance the well being of single mother families.

**Voluntary Participation:** I understand that my involvement in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw my participation at any time without any pressure, embarrassment, or negative impact on me. I also understand that participation is anonymous and that neither the researcher nor any assistants will be able to identify my responses to me.

**Confidentiality**: I understand that all information and test results will be kept confidential. Records will be identified by numbers and be kept secure by the researcher. Only the researcher will have access to my individual data. At no time will I be identified individually in any type of publication or presentation.

**Request for more Information:** In the event that I have any questions or concerns with regard to my participation in this research project, I understand that I may contact either the researcher, Richardson Honoré at <a href="mailto:richardsonhonore@gmail.edu">richardsonhonore@gmail.edu</a> (Tel: (818) 626-1364), or his advisor, Dr. Curtis Fox, Director of Family Studies and Family Life Education at <a href="mailto:cfox@llu.edu">cfox@llu.edu</a> (Tel: (909) 558-4547). I have been given a copy of this form for my own records.

I	D-4-
Investigator Signature	Date
research, the study procedures that I will undergo that this may have for me. I have read and understand	and this consent form and have had all
* *	efore, I agree to give my consent to
my questions answered to my satisfaction. Ther participate as a subject in this research project.  Participant Signature	Date

# APPENDIX F

# ITEMIZED EXPENSES

Category	Price	Quantity	Total
Curriculum Supplies			
Labels		1	
5 Tabs Dividers		15	
Pens		15	
Notepads		15	
Binders		15	
Manila Envelopes		35	
Pencils		15	
Printing Paper		1	
Curriculum Total			90.00
Gifts			
Books	10.17	13	132.00
Survival Kit	-	15	40.00
Planners	1.00	15	17.00
Financial Map	3.00	20	75.00
Gifts Total			\$264.00
Roses	-	15	25.00
Tables Supplies			
Paper Plates			
Napkins			
Silverware			
Table Clothes			
Table Supplies Total			40.00
Food			
Foot Sandwiches (Donated)	56.00	2	0.00
Vegetable Platters	15.00	1	
Fruit Platters			
Apple Juices (Donated)	13.00	30	0.00
Box of Fruit Snacks (Donated)	9.00	1	0.00
Cans of Juices (Donated)	12.00	17	0.00
Bottles of Martinellis (Donated	15.00	5	0.00
Bottles of Water (Donated)	3.50	20	0.00
Box of Assorted Chips	12.00	1	0.00
(Donated)			
Childcare/Set-up/Clean-Up	75.00	3	225.00
	GRA	ND TOTAL	\$644.00

#### APPENDIX G

#### **BROCHURE**





Facilitator ☐
Pastor Richardson Honoré ☐
Doctoral Student Candidate ☐
Andrews University ☐

#### WHEN?□

Sunday, July 15, 2012 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

#### WHERE?

Antelope Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church 836 East Avenue, Lancaster, CA 93535

## **LIMITED SPACE - Only 15 Seats Available!**

First Come, First Serve Basis Child Care & Lunch Provided

Come to Learn About How You Can Be A Strong, Vibrant, & Successful Single Mother

## TOPICS/REQUIREMENTS

- What the Bible say about Single Mothers
- God's Plan for Single Mother Families
- Discover the Latest Peer Reviewed Research on Single Mother Families
- ◆ How I Can be a Better Parent
- How I Can Increase my Finance
- How to Obtain a College Degree for Free
- How to Communicate Effective with My Child

- How do I Take Care of Myself Physically, Psychologically, Emotionally, and Spiritually
- What are the Available Resources
- Must be a Single Mother over the Age of 18 to Attend
- Must Complete and Return the Survey to Attend
- · Formal Invitation Required to Attend

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: RICHARDSONHONORE@GMAIL.COM OR 661-900-5728

#### APPENDIX H

#### FORMAL INVITATION



# APPENDIX I

# **BUDGET WORKSHEET**

							`	A of sol Case de	2000						
	2012 Budget		1		10		10	Terration of		,				;	
	7017 Panger		Jan-12	Z Feb-12	Mar-12	Apr-12	May-12	Jun-17	Jul-12	Aug-12	Sep-12	Oct-12	Nov-12 1	Dec-17 1	Iotals
MONTHLY DISCR	MONTHLY DISCRETIONARY INCOME	- -													
	EXPENSES														
	Mortgage/Rent														- 8
	Homeowners/Renters Insurance														
	Tithes & Offering														- \$
	Saving -Emergency Fund														- \$
	Gas -Auto														- \$
	Auto Maintenance														- \$
	Entertainment/Recreation														- \$
	Credit Cards														- \$
	Groceries														- \$
	Dining Out														- \$
	Childcare														- \$
	Personal Care														- \$
	Auto Insurance														- \$
	Life/Health Insurance														- \$
	Clothes														
	Household Supplies														- \$
	Travel/Vacation														- \$
	Phone - Landline														- \$
	Phone -Mobile														
	Electric														- \$
	Gas -Household														- \$
	Cable														- \$
	Internet														- \$
	Water														- \$
	Trash														- \$
	Medical														- \$
	Sewer														- 8
	Education														
	Car Payments														
	Charity														
	Investments -Post Taxes														
	Miscellaneous														
TOTAL	- \$	- S	- -	\$9		- \$	. \$		- \$		- \$	. \$		1	ı <del>S</del>
	. <u>-</u>	=	_	_									_	_	
Excess/(Shortfall)		\$	\$	- \$	- \$	- \$	- \$	- \$	- \$		- \$	- \$	- \$	- \$	- - -
Invest All Excess															

# APPENDIX J

# SEMINAR EVALUATION FORM

#### APPENDIX K

# POST SEMINAR FOUR-WEEK FOLLOW UP EVALUATION

Dear Participant,

Please fill out this evaluation form completely. Your confidential response is extremely important. It will be used to determine the effectiveness of the seminar. This is the final segment of the single mother seminar you participated in four weeks ago. Thank you for your participation.

1.	What was your primary reason for attending this semination ( ) Help ( ) Information ( ) Incentive			) Refe	rral
2.	Was the information presented relevant?	(	) Yes	(	) No
3.	Did the speaker demonstrate knowledge of the subject	(	) Yes	(	) No
4.	Was the speaker organized	(	) Yes	(	) No
5.	Was the seminar directory of resources helpful for your		eds? ) Yes	(	) No
6.	Did you apply any of the coping skills that we discussed personal life?		uring the ) Yes		ar in your ) No
7.	If so which ones did you try? check all that apply  ( ) Finance ( ) Education ( ) Parenting ( ) Physical Self Care ( ) Psychological Self-care ( ) Spiritual Self-Care				
8.	Did the coping skills work for you?	(	) Yes	(	) No
9.	If not, why did you choose not to try any of the coping	skil	lls shared	d at our	seminar?
10.	Please list any other comments, observations, or concer	ns.			

Please hand deliver or mail completed evaluation to Richardson Honore - 38743 37<sup>th</sup> Street East, Palmdale CA 93550

#### APPENDIX L

# SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

This assessment tool provides an overview of effective strategies to maintain self-care. After completing the full assessment, choose one item from each area that you will actively work to improve. Using the scale below, rate the following areas in terms of frequency:

5 = Frequently	
4 = Occasionally	
3 = Rarely	
2 = Never	
1 = It never occurred to me	
Physical Self-Care	
Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch and dinner)	
Eat healthy	
Exercise	
Get regular medical care for prevention	
Get medical care when needed Take time off when needed	
Get massages	
Get massages  Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is f	ain
Take time to be sexual—with yourself, with a partner	
Get enough sleep	
Wear clothes you like	
Take vacations	
Take vacations Take day trips or mini-vacations Make time away from telephones	
Make time away from telephones	
Other:	
Psychological Self-Care	
Make time for self-reflection	
Have your own personal psychotherapy	
Write in a journal	
Read literature that is unrelated to work	
Do something at which you are not expert or in charge	
Decrease stress in your life	
Let others know different aspects of you	
Notice your inner experience—listen to your thoughts, judgments, beliefs, attitudes,	and
feelings	
Engage your intelligence in a new area, e.g. go to an art museum, history exhibit, spo	orts
event, auction, theater performance	
Practice receiving from others	
Be curious	
Say "no" to extra responsibilities sometimes	
Other:	
Emotional Self-Care	
Spend time with others whose company you enjoy	
Stay in contact with important people in your life	

Give yourself affirmations, praise yourself
Love yourself
Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies
Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out
Allow yourself to cry
Find things that make you laugh
Express your outrage in social action, letters and donations, marches, protests
Play with children
Other:
Spiritual Self-Care
Make time for reflection
Spend time with nature
Find a spiritual connection or community
<del></del>
Be open to inspiration Cherish your optimism and hope
Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life
Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
Be open to not knowing  Identify what in magningful to you and notice its place in your life
Identify what in meaningful to you and notice its place in your life
Meditate
Pray Sing
Sing Spand time with children
Spend time with children
Have experiences of awe
Contribute to causes in which you believe
Read inspirational literature (talks, music, etc.) Other:
Other.
Washington on Designation of Calif Com-
Workplace or Professional Self-Care
Take a break during the workday (e.g. lunch)
Take time to chat with co-workers
Make quiet time to complete tasks
Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
Set limits with your clients and colleagues
Balance your caseload so that no one day or part of a day is "too much"
Arrange your work space so it is comfortable and comforting
Get regular supervision or consultation
Negotiate for your needs (benefits, pay raise)
Have a peer support group
Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest
Other:
Balance
Strive for balance within your work-life and workday
Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play and rest
Source: Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization. Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of

TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996)

# APPENDIX M

# THE JOY OF SINGLE MOTHER FAMILIES SEMINAR

**PRESENTED** 

BY

Richardson Honoré

2012

LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA

#### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us – Oliver Wendell Holmes

#### **SESSION I**

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SINGLE MOTHERS & SELECTED PRINCIPLES FROM ELLEN G. WHITE

- I. Introduction
  - A. Who is Richardson Honoré?
    - 1. Background
    - 2. Education
    - 3. My passion for single mother families
  - B. Rationale for a Single Mother Seminar
    - 1. Pastoral perspectives
      - a. Single mothers make up the largest family group in the Black
         Church
      - b. Broken relationship is the number one priority of my pastorate
      - c. No current ministry exists that addresses the need of single mother families
      - d. Dialogue and interactions with single mothers
    - 2. Requests
      - a. From single mothers
      - b. From churches
      - c. From the community
      - d. From the children of single mothers

## C. Seminar Design

- 1. An interactive dialogue with one another and Scripture
- 2. A three-way exegesis
  - b. Exploring biblical models and principles
  - c. Evaluating and incorporating the personal experiences of single mothers
  - d. An opportunity for personal reflection, application, and decisions

# D. Objectives and Expectations of the Seminar

- 1. To educate single mothers
- 2. To be educated by single mothers
- 3. To see God and ourselves in a new light
- 4. To see the Church and its work in a new perspective
- 5. An effective approach for ministering to an ever-growing population
- 6. To teach coping skills in alignment with the Seventh-day Adventist mission
- 7. To encourage further research in the subject of single mother families
- 8. To seek the heart of Jesus and to find a new joy in our families

# II. Biblical Principles and Case Studies

# A. The Human Family

- 1. Male and female created in the image of God
- 2. Male and female similarities
- 3. Male and female differences
- 4. Individual identity established

# B. The Institution of Marriage

- 1. The Divine ideal
- 2. Human being compliment
- 3. God completes
- 4. Role of the man
- 5. Role of the woman
- 6. Mutual roles and responsibilities

# C. The Great Intruder

- 1. Sin
- 2. The consequences
- 3. Family types

# D. The Divine Response

- 1. God's first message
- 2. Biblical affirmation of single mother families
- 3. Factors contributing to the existence single mother families
  - a. Divorce
  - b. Widow
  - c. War
  - d. Abandonments
  - e. Non-marital sex
  - f. Never married mothers
  - g. Teenage births
  - h. Choice

- i. Technological advancements
- j. Absentee fathers
- k. Poverty
- 4. God's provision
  - a. The covenant code
  - b. Feasts
  - c. Sheaf in the field
  - d. Tithing
- 5. God's Protection
- 6. Jesus' Compassion for Single Mother Families
- E. Breakout Session
- III. Case Studies
  - A. Case Study 1: Hagar and Ishmael
    - 1. Background
    - 2. Theophany
    - 3. God meets us where we are
    - 4. Restored identity
    - 5. Introspective examination
    - 6. Retrospective examination
    - 7. Hagar confesses
    - 8. God of comfort
    - 9. God of compassion
    - 10. Acceptance

- B. Case Study 2: The Widow of Zarephath
  - 1. Background
  - 2. A faithful response
  - 3. Obedience over sacrifice
  - 4. God provides
  - 5. God heals
  - 6. Timeless lessons
- IV. Selected Principles from Ellen G. White
- V. Divine Restoration

#### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

# Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least - Goethe

#### **SESSION II: COPING SKILLS**

- I. Exploring Our Present Setting
- II. Historical Overview of Single Parent Families
- III. Quality of Life
  - A. Overview
  - B. Finance
    - 1. Questionnaire results
      - a. Eighty seven percent (87%) cook meals regularly
      - b. Fifty four percent (54%) have savings account for each child
      - c. Sixty seven percent (67%) work outside of home for a living
      - d. Fifty nine percent (59%) have an income under \$15,000 annually
      - e. Fifty two percent (52%) receive child support from the other parent
      - f. Thirty three percent (33%) receive money from the State Welfare System
      - g. Twenty seven percent (27%) eat out more than they cook
      - h. Sixty seven percent (67%) are struggling financially
    - 2. Coping strategies for finance
      - a. Apply for all the benefits you qualify: TANF, CALWORKS, WIC,
         MEDICAL, Food Stamps, Section 8
      - b. Create a budget (income, savings, expenses) and stick to it

- c. Live within your means
- d. Pay God first
- e. Pay yourself second save 10% before you spend
- f. File for child support if you have not
- g. Contact the D.A.'s office if support is delinquent
- h. Prepare more home-cooked meals rather than buying
- i. Pursue a career or a trade
- j. Start saving for each child
- k. Shop with a shopping list according to need
- 1. Do not loan money you cannot afford to live without
- m. Make ample use of city, state, and national parks, beaches, and museums.

#### C. Education

- 1. Questionnaire results
  - a. Eighty percent (80%) have a High School Diploma or GED
  - Fifty three percent (53%) graduated college with at least an Associates
     Degree
  - c. Fifty percent (50%) attended college but did not graduate
  - d. Fifty seven percent (57%) plan to attend college
  - e. Forty five percent (45%) want to attend college but can't afford it
  - f. Forty percent (40%) graduated college with at least an Bachelors

    Degree
- 2. Coping strategies for education

- a. Get your GED if you have not done so yet
- b. Apply for college
- c. Reapply for college
- d. Complete college
- e. Speak to a college counselor
- f. Apply for grants: FAFSA, CAL GRANT
- g. Apply for private scholarship
- h. Apply for GAIN
- i. Apply to Child Care Resource Center (CCRC)
- j. Apply for California BOG
- k. Take career exams at Antelope Valley Community College
- 1. Take styles of learning exams

## IV. Life Skills

- A. Overview
- B. Parenting
  - 1. Questionnaire results
    - a. Seventy seven percent (77%) reported children ask often for their friends to come over the house
    - b. Eighty six percent (86%) hug children regularly
    - c. Eighty percent (80%) teach children to respect all authority figures
    - d. Thirty five percent (35%) report children are more than they can handle
    - e. Sixty percent (60%) take children on vacation away from home

- f. Seventy nine percent (79%) live by the same rules they expect from their children
- g. Seventy three percent (73%) keep children in close contact with close relatives
- h. Twenty six percent (26%) avoid relatives of the other parent
- i. Thirty four percent (34%) need help raising their children
- j. Eighty percent (80%) tell their children I love them
- k. Fifty percent (50%) have been granted full legal and physical custody by the Court
- Fifty percent (50%) regularly send their children to other persons' houses to play
- m. Twenty percent (20%) give children material objects to win their love
- n. Forty six percent (46%) avoid their relatives
- o. Seventy three percent (73%) reported that their parents accepts their children as their grandchildren
- p. Sixty three percent (63%) are consistent with discipline whether angry or not
- 2. Coping strategies for parenting
  - a. Appropriate vs. inappropriate punishments
    - (1) Communicate exactly what he/she is being punished for
    - (2) If a child deserve punishment give it
    - (3) Do not bring up old events
    - (4) Punish in the present not in the future

- (5) Punishment should not exceed the infraction
- (6) Do not reward and punish for the same behavior
- (7) Let the child know how he/she can avoid such punishment again
- b. Logical consequences & natural consequences
- c. Setting boundaries
  - (1) Household rules
  - (2) Household responsibilities
  - (3) Behavior
- d. Treat your children equally under the same house rules
- e. Cautions for discipline
  - (1) Do not spank when tired
  - (2) Do not spank when angry
  - (3) Do not spank when frustrated
  - (4) Do not spank when afraid
  - (5) Do not use heavy objects to inflict pain
  - (6) Do not use whips of cord or metal
  - (7) Do not use fists
  - (8) Following through with what you say
  - (9) Do not make idle threats
  - (10) Discipline without love and concern for the child is "wrong"
- f. Child abuse
  - (1) Definition of abuse according to California State Law
  - (2) It is a crime no matter what the child had done

#### C. Communication

- 1. Questionnaire results
  - a. Forty seven percent (47%) have to scream for their children to listen
  - b. Forty seven percent (47%) need help with communication
  - c. Forty percent (40%) need to communicate better with their children
  - d. Fifty three percent (53%) need to spend more time talking to children
  - e. Eighty seven percent (87%) report that their children are comfortable talking to them about their personal feelings
- 2. Coping strategies for communication
  - d. Know the five levels of communication
    - (1) Cliché conversation
    - (2) Reporting the facts about others
    - (3) My ideas and opinions
    - (4) My feelings and emotions
    - (5) Intimate communication
  - e. Know the process of communication
    - (1) Self-awareness (thoughts & feelings)
    - (2) Self-disclosure (verbal & nonverbal)
    - (3) Active listening
    - (4) Interpretation
    - (5) Playback
    - (6) Confirmation
  - f. The language of acceptance

- g. Do not use foul word or damaging language
- h. Do not call names

#### V. Self-Care

- A. Overview
- B. Self-Care Assessment
- C. Physical Self-Care
  - 1. Questionnaire results
    - a. Fifty three percent (53%) get massages regularly
    - b. Thirty three percent (33%) have not taken a vacation since single parenthood
    - c. Seventy eight percent (78%) exercise regularly
    - d. Sixty one percent (61%) go for walks regularly
    - e. Twenty seven percent (27%) take vacation alone away from children
    - f. Sixty two percent (62%) eat at least three meals a day
    - g. Seventy three percent (73%) take time off when needed
    - h. Seventy three (73%) get regular medical care for prevention
    - i. Sixty six percent (66%) get enough sleep
    - j. Eighty seven percent (87%) eat healthy
  - 2. Coping strategies for Physical Self-Care
    - a. Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch and dinner)
    - b. Eat healthy
    - c. Exercise
    - d. Get regular medical care for prevention

- e. Get medical care when needed
- f. Take time off when needed
- g. Get massages
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun
- i. Get enough sleep
- j. Wear clothes you like
- k. Take vacations
- 1. Take day trips or mini-vacations
- m. Make time away from telephones

# D. Psychological Self-Care

- 1. Questionnaire results
  - a. Sixty six percent (66%) have no problem with saying no to others
  - b. Seventy eight percent (78%) give themselves affirmations and praise
  - c. Ninety three percent (93%) fully accept themselves
  - d. Thirty five percent (35%) talk about their personal life to an outside professional
  - e. Thirty five percent (35%) have not taken a vacation since single parenthood
  - f. Eighty percent (80%) keep an active social life
  - g. Seventy three percent (73%) take time off when needed
  - h. Ninety three percent (93%) make time for personal reflection

- Seventy three percent (73%) talk with adults about their feelings regularly
- j. Eighty six percent (86%) says I love myself
- k. Sixty percent (60%) write in a journal
- 1. Eighty three percent (83%) take personal time for themselves daily
- 2. Coping strategies for Psychological Self-Care
  - a. Make time for self-reflection
  - b. Have your own personal psychotherapy
  - c. Write in a journal
  - d. Read literature that is unrelated to work
  - e. Do something at which you are not expert or in charge
  - f. Decrease stress in your life
  - g. Let others know different aspects of you
  - Notice your inner experience listen to your thoughts, judgments,
     beliefs, attitudes, and feelings
  - i. Engage your intelligence in a new area, e.g. go to an art museum, history exhibit, sports event, auction, theater performance
  - j. Practice receiving from others
  - k. Be curious
  - 1. Say "no" to extra responsibilities sometimes

#### E. Emotional Self-Care

1. Questionnaire results

- a. Eighty percent (80%) says I spend time with important people in my life
- b. Fifty three percent (53%) says I feel sorry for myself
- c. Thirty six percent (36%) says I feel sorry for my children
- d. Ninety three percent (93%) read regularly
- e. Seventy three percent (73%) take time off when needed
- f. Eighty percent (80%) keep an active adult social life
- g. Eighty six percent (86%) feel comfortable with crying
- h. Seventy three percent (73%) talk with adults about their feelings regularly
- i. Seventy eight percent (78%) feel comfortable laughing
- j. Seventy seven percent (77%) says I love myself
- k. Ninety three percent (93%) says I take personal time for myself weekly
- 1. Ninety three percent (93%) says my emotions are under control
- m. Sixty percent (60%) regularly become extremely moody
- 2. Coping Strategies for Emotional Self-Care
  - b. Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
  - c. Stay in contact with important people in your life
  - d. Give yourself affirmations, praise yourself
  - e. Love yourself
  - f. Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies

- g. Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out
- h. Allow yourself to cry
- i. Find things that make you laugh
- Express your outrage in social action, letters and donations, marches,
   protests
- k. Play with children
- 1. Know your limits (self-awareness)
  - (1) What angers me?
  - (2) What relaxes me?
  - (3) What irritates me?
  - (4) Who angers me?
  - (5) Who relaxes me?
  - (6) Who irritates me?

## F. Spiritual Self-Care

- 1. Questionnaire results
  - a. Sixty seven percent (67% attend church at least twice a month
  - b. Ninety three percent (93%) read Bible regularly
  - c. Fifty percent (50%) attend Bible class once a week
  - d. Sixty six percent (66%) need to spend more time reading Bible
  - e. Ninety three percent (93%) pray regularly
  - f. Fifty three percent (53%) need to spend more time in prayer
  - g. Eighty percent (80%) have a strong Faith in God

- h. Eighty percent (80%) says I love myself
- i. Eighty percent (80%) says I support my church financially
- j. Sixty percent (60%) are part of a Church Ministry
- 2. Coping Strategies for Spiritual Self-Care
  - a. Make time for reflection
  - b. Spend time with nature
  - c. Find a spiritual connection or community
  - d. Be open to inspiration
  - e. Adjust your lifestyle to your beliefs
  - f. Come to an understanding of religious moral and values
  - g. Cherish your optimism and hope
  - h. Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life
  - i. Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
  - j. Be open to not knowing
  - k. Identify what is meaningful to you and notice its place in your life
  - 1. Meditate
  - m. Pray
  - n. Sing
  - o. Spend time with the Word of God
  - p. Join a church ministry
  - q. Join a volunteer program in the community
  - r. Have experiences of awe
  - s. Contribute to causes in which you believe

- t. Read inspirational literature (talks, music, etc.)
- VI. Directory of Available Resources

#### REFERENCE LIST

- Anandarajah, G., & Hight, E. (2001). Spirituality and medical practice: Using the HOPE questions as a practical tool for spiritual assessment. *American Family Physician*, 63(1), 81-89.
- Barclay, W. (2001). *The daily study Bible: The Gospel of Matthew* (Vol. 2). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox.
- Barna, T. (2000). Revolutionary parenting. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.
- Barnes, A. S. (1987). *Single parents in Black America: A study in culture and legitimacy*. Lima, OH: Wyndham Hall.
- Baskerville, S. (2002). The politics of fatherhood. *Political Science and Politics*, 35(4), 695-699.
- Beck, A. N., & McLanahan, S. (2010). Parental relationship in fragile families. *The Future of Children*, 20(2), 17-37.
- Beebe, S. A., Beebe, S. J., & Ivy, D. K. (2009). *Communication: Principles for a lifetime* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Belgrave, F. Z., & Allison, K. W. (2009). *American psychology: From Africa to America* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Blackman, L., Clayton, O., Glenn, N., Malone-Colon, L., & Roberts, A. (2005). *The consequences of marriage for African Americans*. New York, NY: Institute for American Values.
- Blank, R., & Barr, M. (2009). *Insufficient funds: Savings, assets, credit, and banking among low-income households*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Press.
- Briggs, G. (2000). Spiritual wellness and depression among college students (Doctoral Dissertation). Dissertation Abstracts International, 62, 2034.
- Brooks-Gunn, J., Craigie, T., & Waldfogel, J. (2010). Fragile families and child wellbeing. *The Future of Children*, 20(2), 87-112.
- Brown, D. R., & Keith, V. M. (2003). The epidemiology of mental disorders and mental health among African American women. New York, NY: Columbia.
- Burns, A., & Scott, C. (1994). *Mother-headed families and why they have increased*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Caiazza, A., Shaw, A., & Werschkul, M. (2004). Women's economic status in the states: Wide disparities by race, ethnicity and region. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.
- Caine, D. S., & Combs-Orme, T. (2005). Family structure effects on parenting stress and practices in the African American family. Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 32(2), 19-40.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). *Vital signs: Teen pregnancy in the United States, 60.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/teenpregnancy/index.html
- Cheeseman, D., & Newburger, E. C. (2002). The big payoff: Educational attainment and synthetic estimates of work-life earnings. *Current Population Reports*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Chen, F., Lin, H., & Li, C. (2011). The role of emotion in parent-child relationships: Children's emotionality, maternal meta-emotion, and children's attachment security. *Journal of Child & Family Studies*, 21(3), 403-410.
- Clarke, A. (1983). *Adam Clarke's commentary on the Bible* (Rev. ed). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.
- Conger, R. D., Conger, K. J., Elder, G. H., Lorenz, F. O., Simons, R. L., & Whitbeck, L. B. (1992). A family process model of economic hardship and adjustment in early adolescent boys. *Child Development*, *63*, 526–541.
- Coontz, S. (1997). The way we really are: Coming to terms with America's changing families. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Craig, B. (2004). *Searching for intimacy in marriage*. Silver Springs, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists.
- Davidson, R. M. (2007). Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the old testament. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- DeNavas-Walt, C., Proctor, B. D., & Lee, C. H. (2006). Current population reports, income, poverty, and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2005. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- DeVries, S. J. (1985). Word biblical commentary: 1 Kings (2nd ed., Vol. 12). Dallas, TX: Thomas Nelson.
- Dickerson, B. J. (1995). *African American single mothers: Understanding their lives and families.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Dowd, N. (1999). *In defense of single-parent families*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Dubois, W. E. B. 1909. The *Negro American family*. Atlanta, GA: University Press.
- Dye, J. L. (2008, May). Participation of mothers in government assistance programs: 2004 current population reports. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/2 008pubs/p70-116.pdf
- Edin, K., & Lein, L. (1997). *Making ends meet: How single mothers survive welfare and low-wage work.* New York, NY: Russell Sage.
- Elkins, S. (1963). *Slavery: A problem in American institutional and intellectual life.* New York, NY: University Library.
- Emblen, J. D. (1992). Religion and spirituality defined according to current use in nursing literature. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 81, 41-47.
- Franklin, D. L. (1997). Ensuring inequality: The structural transformation of the african-american Family. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press USA.
- Frazier, F. E. (1939). *The Negro family in the United States*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Frazier, S. C. (1989). Psychological well-being of black single-parent women: Child care, social support, and sex-role attitudes. Dissertation Abstracts International, 50, 1153B.
- Friedlander, S., Weiss, D. S., & Traylor, J. (1986). Assessing the influence of maternal depression on the validity of the child behavior checklist. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *14*, 123-133.
- Fruge, E. (2012). *Single parent family in the Bible*. Retrieved from http://web.kybaptist.org/web/doc/SingleParentFamilyMinistry.pdf
- Fuchs, V. R. (1986). *The feminization of poverty? NBER working papers No. 1934*. Retrieved from http://www.nber.org/papers/w1934.pdf
- Garcia-Coll, C., Lamberty, G., Jenkins, R., McAdoo, P. H., Crnic, K., Wasik, H. B., & Garcia, V. H. (1996). An integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children. *Child Development*, 67, 1891–1914.
- Gill, C. S., Barrio Minton, C. A., & Myers, J. E. (2010). Spirituality and religiosity: Factors affecting wellness among low-income, rural women. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 88(3), 293-302.

- Gordon, T. (2000). Parent effectiveness training. New York, NY: Random House.
- Gottman, J. M., Katz, L. F., & Hooven, C. (1997). Parental metaemotion philosophy and the emotional life of families: Theoretical models and preliminary data. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 10, 243–268.
- Gottman, J. M., Katz, L. F., & Hooven, C. (1997). *Meta-emotion: How families communicate emotionally*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gove, P. B. (1961). Webster's third new international dictionary of the English language, unabridged. Springfield, MA: G & C Merriam Co.
- Gray, P. J. (1998). Ethnographic atlas codebook. *World Cultures*, *10*(1), 86-136. Retrieved from http://intersci.ss.uci.edu/wiki/index.php/Ethnographic Atlas
- Graybill, A., & Esquivel, G. (2012). Spiritual wellness as a protective factor in predicting depression among mothers of children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health*, 16(1), 74-87.
- Gutman, H. (1977). The Black family in slavery and freedom, 1750-1925. New York, NY Vintage Books.
- Harris, S. M. (2002). Father absence in the African American community: Towards a new paradigm. *Race, Gender, and Class*, *9*, 111-133.
- Harrison, A. O., Bowman, P. J., & Beale, R. L. (1985). Role strain, coping resources, and psychological well-being among black working mother. In A. W. Boykin (Ed.), *Empirical research in Black psychology*, (pp. 21-28). Washington, DC: National Institutes of Mental Health.
- Hatcher, J., Rayens, M. K., Peden, A. R., & Hall, L. A. (2008). Predictors of depression for low-income African American single mothers. *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice*, 2(3), 89-110.
- Henry, M. (1996). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: Complete and unabridged in one volume*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Hogan, D. P., Ling-Xin, H., & William, P. (1990). Race, kin networks, and assistance to mother-headed families. *Social Forces*, *68*, 797–812.
- Hummer, R. A., & Hamilton, E. R. (2010). Race and ethnicity in fragile families. *The Future of Children 20*(2), 113-132.
- Jackson, A. (1993). Black, single, working mothers in poverty: Preferences for

- employment, well-being, and perceptions of preschool-age children. *Social Work,* 38, 26-34.
- Jackson, P. B., & Mustillo, S. (2001). I am woman: The impact of social identities of African American women's mental health. *Women and Health*, 32(4), 33-47.
- Kalil, A., & Ryan, R. M. (2010). Mother's economic conditions and sources of support in fragile families. *The Future of Children*, 20(2), 39-61.
- Kates, E. (1996). Educational pathways out of poverty: Responding to the realities of women's lives. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 66(4), 548-556.
- Koenig, H. G., & Larson. D. B. (2001). Religion and mental health: Evidence for an association. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 13, 67-78.
- Kreider, R. M. (2011). *Living arrangements of children: 2009 current population reports.* Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Lamborn, S., & Nguyen, D. (2004). African American adolescents' perceptions of family interactions: Kinship support, parent-child relationships, and teen adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *33*, 547–558.
- Lerman, R., & Wiseman, M. (2002). *Restructuring food stamps for working families*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Lindblad-Goldberg, M., & Dukes, J. (1985). Social support in lack, low-income, single-parent families: Normative and dysfunctional patterns. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 55(1), 42-58.
- Mackay, H. (1994). Why don't people listen? Sydney, Australia: Pan MacMillan.
- MacKenzie, R, J. (Ed.). (2001). Setting limits with your strong-willed child: Eliminating conflict by establishing clear, firm, and respectful boundaries. Roseville, CA: Prima.
- Mandara, J., Johnston, J., Murray, C., & Varner, F. (2008). Marriage, money, and African American mothers' self-esteem. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70(5), 1188-1199.
- Martin, J. A., Hamilton, B. E., Sutton, P. D., Ventura, S.J., Menacker, F., Kirmeyer, S., & Mathews, T. J. (2009). Births: Final data for 2006. *National Vital Statistics Report 57*(7). Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57\_07.pdf
- Matthews, D. A., McCullough, M. E., Larson, D. B., Koenig, H. G., Swyers, J. P.,

- Milano, M. G. (1998). Religious commitment and health status. *Arch Family Medicine*, 7, 118-124.
- McGroder, S M. (2000). Parenting among low-income African American single mothers with preschool-age children: Patterns, predictors, and developmental correlates. *Child Development*, 71(3), 752-771.
- McLanahan, S., & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McLanahan, S., Garfinkel, I., Mincy, R. B., & Donahue, E. (2010). Introducing the issue. *The Future of Children*, *2*(2), 3-16.
- Mead, H., Cartwright-Smith, L., Jones, K., Ramos, C., Woods, K., & Siegel, B. (2008). *Racial and ethnic disparities in U.S. health care: A chartbook.* Retrieved from http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr\_doc/Mead\_racialethnicdisparities\_chartb ook\_1111.pdf
- Melick, R. R. (2001). Philippians, Colossians, Philemon. *The new American commentary* (Vol. 32). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.
- Moynihan, D. P. 1965. *The Negro family: The case for national action*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Mueller, P. S., Plevak, D. J., Rummans, T. A. (2001). Religious involvement, spirituality, and medicine: Implications for clinical practice. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 76, 1225-1235.
- Myrdal, G. (1944). *An American dilemma: The Negro problem and modern democracy*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Nichols, M. P. (1995). The lost art of listening. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Osborne, E. (1989). Development of a coping mechanism seminar for single parents within a seventh-day Adventist context (Doctoral dissertation). Berrien Springs, MI. UMI No. 9007146
- Palmer, P. (1983). The racial feminization of poverty: Women of color as portents of the future of all women. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 11, 4-6.
- Popenoe, D. (1996). Life without father. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Powell, J. (1969). Why am I afraid to tell you who I am? Niles, IL: Argus Communications.

- Powell, L. H., & Cassidy, D. (2007). Family life education: Working with families across the life span (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Rocha, C. (1997). Factors that contribute to economic well-being in female-headed households. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 23(1), 1-17.
- Rock, C. (Ed). (1996). *Black Seventh-day Adventist face the twenty-first century*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald.
- Ruggles, S. (1994). The origins of African-American family structure. *American Sociological Review*, *59*, 136-151.
- Ryan, C. L., & Siebens, J. *Educational attainment in the United States: 2009*. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p20-566.pdf
- Schiller, B. (1995). *The economics of poverty and discrimination*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Secco, M. L., & Moffatt, M. E. (1994). A review of social support theories and instruments used in adolescent mothering research. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 15, 517–527.
- Seiler, W. J., & Beall, M. L. (2010). *Communication: Making connections* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sidel, R. (1998). *Keeping women and children last: America's war on the poor*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Siegel, D., & Hartzell, M. (2004). *Parenting from the inside out.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Sterrett, E. M., Jones, D. J., & Kincaid, C., (2009). Psychological adjustment of low-income African American youth from single mother homes: The role of the youth-coparent relationship. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 38(3), 427-438.
- Swenson, R. A. (2004). *Margin: Restoring emotional, physical, financial, and time reserves to overloaded lives* (Rev. ed). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
- Taylor, R. J., Jackson, J. S., & Chatters, R. J. (Eds.). (1997). Family life in black America. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Thibos, M., Lavin-Loucks, D., & Martin, M. (2007). *The feminization of poverty*. Retrieved from http://www.ywcadallas.org/ PDF/womenshealth/Feminization ofPoverty.pdf

- Thomas, A., & Sawhill, I. (2005). For love and money? The impact of family structure on family income. *Future of Children*, 15(2), 57-74.
- Thomas, G. (2005). Sacred parenting. Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan.
- Thomas, P., Krampe, E. M., & Newton, R. R. (2008). Father presence, family structure, and feelings of closeness to the father among adult African American children. *Journal of Black Studies*, *38*(4), 529-546.
- Thomas, S. (2011). *The black family: Battered, bruised but unbowed*. Retrieved from http://www.ourweekly.com/features/black-family-battered-bruised-unbowed
- Tiamiyu, M., & Shelley M. (2001). Welfare reform: Can higher education reduce the feminization of poverty? *The Urban Review*, 33(1), 47-56.
- Tucker, M. B., & Mitchell-Keman, C. (Eds.). (1995). *The decline in marriage among African-Americans: Causes, consequences, and policy implications*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.
- Twenge, J. M., & Crocker, J. (2002). Race and self-esteem: Meta-analyses comparing Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and American Indians and comment on gray-little and hafdahl. *Psychological Bulletin*, *128*(3), 371-408.
- Uittenbogaard, A. (2011). *Meaning and etymology of the Hebrew name Hagar*. Retrieved from http://www.abarim publications.com/Meaning/Hagar.html# .USsuiOt35r3
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (1990). *Poverty in the United States*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2002). *Household and families*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2010). *Household and families*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Ventura, S. (2009). Changing patterns of nonmarital childbearing in the United States. *NCHS Data Brief, 18*, 1-8.
- Warwick, A. L. (1996). Single mothers and their educational attainment (Doctoral Dissertation). University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 35, 0123
- Watson, E. D. (2001). The impact of the college experience on the lives of female single-

- parent students (Doctoral dissertation). Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. UMI No. 3019339
- Watts, J. D. (2005). *Isaiah 1-33: Word biblical commentary* (Rev. ed). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Wenham, G. J. (2002). *Genesis 1-15. Word biblical commentary* (Vol. 1). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- White, E. G. (1890a). Patriarchs and prophets. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1890b, December 23). An appeal to our churches. *Review and Herald*, 67(50), 785-800.
- White, E. G. (1891, March 16). Words for mothers [CD-ROM]. *Signs of the Times, 2*. Retrieved from Ellen White Writings Infobase.
- White, E. G. (1894, July 9). Failure of the rich in bearing the test. *Signs of the Times*, 20(35), 545-560.
- White, E. G. (1888). *The great controversy*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1896, May 21). And shall not God avenge his own elect [CD-ROM]? *Signs of the Times, 22.* Retrieved from Ellen White Writings Infobase [2012, May 12].
- White, E. G. (1903). *Education*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1905). *The ministry of healing*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1952). Welfare ministry. Washington, DC: Review and Herald.
- Williams, H. A. (2013). *How slavery affected African American families*. Retrieved from http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/freedom/1609 1865/essays/aafamilies.htm
- Wilson, J. Q. (2002). *The marriage problem*. Retrieved from http://archive.frontpagemag. com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=24001
- Wiseman, D. J., Packer, J.I., Millard, A. R., & Howard, M. I. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

# **VITA**

# RICHARDSON HONORÉ

38743 37<sup>TH</sup> Street East, Palmdale, CA 93550 richardsonhonore@gmail.com

# **EDUCATION**

DMin. Family Minstry	Andrews University SDA Theological Seminary, May 2013
MDiv.	Andrews University SDA Theological Seminary, August 2001
B.A. Mathematics	Oakwood University, May 1999
B.A. Computer Science	Oakwood University, May 1999
B.A. Theology	Oakwood University, December 1998

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

2013 - Present	Senior Pastor, Altadena Seventh-day Adventist Church, Altadena, CA
2011 - Present	Chaplain, Captain, Los Angeles Air Force Base, Los Angeles, CA
2009 - 2012	District Pastor Antelope Valley & Hidden Treasures Bilingual SDA Churches
2006 - 2012	Senior Pastor, Antelope Valley SDA Church, Lancaster, CA
2005 - 2006	Teacher, Guidance Charter School, Palmdale, CA
2004 -2005	Interim Pastor, Antelope Valley SDA Church, Lancaster, CA
2001 - 2005	Teacher, Computer Administrator Henry Hearns Charter School, Littlerock, CA
2000 - 2001	Graduate Assitant: Office of Instructional Support & Tech. Andrews University Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, MI
2000 - 2001	Substitute Teacher, Berrien School District, Berrien Springs, MI
1999 - 2001	Associate Pastor, Highland Avenue SDA Church, Benton Harbor, MI
1997 - 1999	Computer Lab Specialist, Oakwood University, Huntsville, AL

#### **VOLUNTEER SERVICES & LEADERSHIP**

2012 - Present: Member, Lancaster Sheriff Station Community Advisory Committee
2011 - Present: Vice President, Valley Oasis Board of Directors
2009 - Present: Executive Secretary, Antelope Valley Sheriff Clergy Council

2009 - Present: Executive Secretary, Kingdom Builders Fellowship United We Stand

2009 - Present: SARS (Sexual Assault Response Services) Advocate 2008 - Present: Member, Antelope Valley Christian Ministerial Alliance