The discovery and development of identity: the abundant life prayer, praise and worship center, Incorporated

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THE DISCOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY: 
THE ABUNDANT LIFE PRAYER, PRAISE AND WORSHIP CENTER, INCORPORATED

By

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submitted to the faculties of the schools of the
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Doctor of Ministry
at
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ABSTRACT

THE DISCOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY:
The Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Incorporated

by
Aurelio DuPriest Givens
2008
169 pages

It is the desire of many to serve humanity in such a manner that they leave a positive
lasting impression that speaks to their relationship with God; A relationship that reflects their
obedience to God’s will for their lives. It is believed that God has called the church to
reflect God’s spirit. However, it is important to be able to identify who you are and where
it is that you desire to go. This Doctor of Ministry project studied three aspects of Gullah
religious life: (1) symbols—objects, behaviors, stories—that are powerful religious forces
in Gullah culture, (2) the religious symbols that help Gullah people interpret the meaning of
life and (3) demonstrate how a body of believers used their cultural uniqueness to discover
and identify their theology (how they know and understand God in their lives).

A historical perspective representing the “church” was presented. Secondly,
religious symbols unique to the Gullah culture that helped them to interpret their life
meaning were identified, and thirdly, ways the Gullah culture helped persons to know and
understand God in their lives were examined. It is from a process of spiritual formation one
makes a lasting contribution that benefits others. The researcher used information gathered

v
from the Gullah culture to help organize a newly formed congregation, The Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Inc.

As a result of this project being done, a Ministry and Administrative Leadership Manual (see Appendix A) was developed. This manual was formulated to train and educate the leadership of this new congregation. It serves as a tool that articulates how ministry is done by the church body. It was the researcher’s goal to develop a manual that helps all understand the ministry role in fulfilling vision.
DEDICATION

God’s Minute
I have only just a minute.
Only sixty seconds in it,
Forced upon me—can’t refuse it
Didn’t seek it, didn’t choose it,
But it’s up to me to use it.
I must suffer if I lose it,
Give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny little minute—
But eternity is in it.

--Benjamin Mays

It is to GOD that I give the GLORY!

It is to my SON, Kendall, I give BLESSINGS!

It is to my MOTHER, Ivenia Victoria Givens Little, I give THANKS!

It is to my GRANDMOTHER, Beatrice Myers Givens, I give PRAISE!

And to my beloved ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH Family, I give HONOR!

This is dedicated to the memory of "DADDY"

Deacon Leroy Givens, Sr.

His love and presence continue to guide me through my ministry.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge all those who gave their love, support, prayers, encouragement and understanding to me during the completion of this Doctor of Ministry project & dissertation. I am grateful for your concerns and aiding in the capacity that you have. We can truly say, TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

My family and dear friends who endured the lack of attention that I gave to them (smile), thank you for still being there for me. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging me to keep on keeping on. My Uncle, Virgil Mandell Givens, who provided a place to stay and words of encouragement and hope through it all, I am eternally grateful for the role you’ve played in my education. You have been a constant bulwark over the years. Your strength and wisdom is remarkable.

Dr. Stephen Rasor, Mrs. Cece Dixon and Mrs. Sally Brown who gave of their time and energy, thank you so ever much. I bid you God’s blessings.

Dr. Christine Chapman, your patience and guidance is greatly appreciated. Thanks for being who you are. You will be forever remembered for pushing me along and make sure that I finish the project.

Abundant Life Church Family who has made it possible for me to shine, we will continue to bless God together for the great things God has done and is manifesting through our lives.
Kendall, my beloved son and friend – I pray that you will continue to prosper in all you do. Your Dad is very proud of you for the support and love you gave to me during this time of enlightenment. This is as much yours as mine. Love you forever and a day.

And to all others who I may not have called by name, I acknowledge your support and belief in me. Prayer does work. Thank you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Motivation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Outline</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Methodology</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summaries</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. MINISTRY ISSUE</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ministry Setting</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL APPLICATION</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Black Church Leadership</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Call for Leaders to Lead</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Literature</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical Literature</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Literature</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of Leadership</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV. MINISTRY PROJECT</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ministry Project Objectives</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ministry Project Group</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Results</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

If I can help somebody as I pass along;
If I can cheer somebody with a word or song;
If I can do my duty as a Christian ought;
Then my living will not be in vain.

African-American spiritual

The cultural heritage of African Americans is one that makes very little if any distinction between the sacred and the secular. For African Americans, God is often at the center of their lives. Having faith means more than attendance of Sunday morning church service; it is a way of life. African-American spirituality is the essence of African-American culture and religion and the impetus for the struggle for freedom of the African-American community in America (Bridges 2001, 1). In most African-American communities, the faithful believe that God is with them in their everyday lives, whether they are engaged in religious activities or not. Even before there is a legitimate confession of faith and more so after their conversion experience and the acceptance of faith, God is present. God is their God of history who has been a very present help in difficult times and trouble.

According to E. Franklin Frazier (1974), African-American religion has historically functioned as a “refuge in a hostile white world.” The spirituality of African-Americans has made it possible for them to endure the complexities of having to merge two distinct
cultures, African and American. African Americans are not monolithic in terms of their religious expression; however, a great majority have chosen to express their spirituality through Protestantism. Protestantism is the religion that many embraced, either by force or choose upon being enslaved and brought to America. Bridges (2001) states that African scholars make it abundantly clear that Africans do not regard traditional religion as a separable element of their culture. The people’s social life and spiritual formation are integral parts of their culture. God is at the center of who they are and what they do. African-American spirituality has been greatly influenced by the African past. It is a past that begins and continues with God. John Mbiti writes,

The belief in God is found everywhere in Africa. When people explain the universe as having been created by God, they are automatically looking at the universe in a religious way. We can say, therefore, that the African view of the universe is profoundly religious. African see it as a religious universe, and treat it as such. (1975, 45)

The religion/spirituality of African-Americans has been used to bridge many gaps as they’ve dealt with a past full of various forms of racism and class stratification. It is their faith in a higher power that keeps them holding on to the American dream despite the many disappointments and barriers faced. It is a belief that transcends the difficulties of time and gives hope of future, equality and liberality. Through often contradictory in nature and questioned by many, the spirituality and religion of African-Americans has created a legacy that serves as foundation of the leaders who have emerged from the African-American community.

For African Americans there is a strong belief that God responds to anyone in their community that is standing in need of God’s help. It is clear among them that God is not
only there for those who profess their faithfulness to Him, but God is there for all regardless of the grounds on which they stand. God is all present and all knowing. A typical prayer offered in 2006 in the African-American community may resemble the following prayer:

Most all knowing and all loving God it is to you we pray. You Dear God has promised never to leave nor forsake us. God, you sit high and you look low. The God who woke us up this morning in our right mind, giving us the activities of our limbs, put food on our tables while the blood is still warm in our veins. He (God) didn’t let us sleep too late, but woke us right on time so that we can go about our daily business.

God is present in their preparations to celebrate any life-changing events, from the birth of a baby to the death of a loved one. God is made known in their night on the town as they evoke God’s presence to bring them back home safely after enjoying the pleasures of nightlife.

Most African Americans remain a people of abiding faith. What is sacred to them is their belief in their God, who has comforted and strengthened the community of African-Americans through all of their experiences in life. Anything that is known to be secular or worldly is made possible through God’s permissive will in their lives. Their non-religious experience does not disqualify them from having a faith in God that works on their behalf. In the African-American community in which we speak, faith in God is not diluted or eliminated because of secular activities. It is the belief of many that it is not what one does that defines rather or not they are people of faith, but rather their understanding that God exists and is available to them to aid them in building their lives. God defined who they are, for God is known as a God of the oppressed and afflicted. God is a creator, sustainer and redeemer. Individuals are privileged to have God to depend upon for their daily existence.
This dissertation will present a case study of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise, and Worship Center, Inc. (ALPPWC). ALPPWC is a ministry that does not have a denominational affiliation, thus there is no known heritage or history to draw upon for denominational identity. Abundant Life is located in Camden, South Carolina with a small membership of approximately 160. ALPPWC empowers and educates a particular African-American community to develop a greater sense of awareness and assurance of who they are created to be through a leadership development program incorporating holistic perspectives of the Gullah culture. ALPPWC relies on the God of history for its understanding of who it is and God’s plan and purpose for its meaning. For ALPPWC, there is a need to reflect on God’s activities in the life of a people that was called to discover their identity and further develop their identity. It is a story that helps to express their faith in God.

ALPPWC isn’t any different from many other African-American churches. Their understanding of God has been clearly influenced by their African ancestry. Paris in *The Spirituality of African Peoples* notes that scholars have always agreed that religion permeates every dimension of African life. In spite of their many and varied religious systems that ubiquity of religious consciousness among African peoples constitutes their single most important common characteristic. John S. Mbiti’s claim that secularity has no reality in the African experience is affirmed by all scholars of African religion.

Wherever the African is, there is his religion: he carries it: to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university; if he is a politician he takes it to the house of parliament. Although many African languages do not have word for religion as such, it nevertheless accompanies the individual from long before his birth to long after his physical death. (Mbiti 1970, 28)

One of the most important marks of continuity between Africans on the continent and those in the Diaspora is their common belief in a transcendent divine power primordially related to them as the creator and preserver of all this is (Paris 1995). It is without doubt that the Africans that came to America came with their religion. It was religion that made it possible to endure the traded of their earlier years in America.

Religion was (and remains) a vital part of the lives of most Africans. For some it encompassed their entire existence. It substantiated and explained their place in the universe; their culture, and their relationship to nature and humankind; it also dictated their roles in the community and society at large. Religion among most African ethnic groups was not simply a faith or worship system; it was a way of life, a system of social control, a provider of medicine, and an organizing mechanism. (Holloway 1990, 37)

One cannot overemphasize the similarity between African and Christian theism (Paris 1995), and ALPPWC is a ministry that has embraced elements that are both African and Judeo-Christian. ALPPWC discovered their identity through experience of existence and through the awareness of another body of believers identified as those of the Gullah culture. It is here that the researcher shares the story.

This case study of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center will reflect how through being empowered and educated by the lives of a particular African-American community, the people of ALPPWC have been able to develop a greater sense of awareness
and assurance of who they are created to be. It is through creation of a leadership development program incorporating holistic perspectives of the Gullah culture that a newly organized community was able to recognize new beginnings do not have to be overwhelming and unconquerable. When one is aware of the greatness of ones past and a cultural heritage as people of African-American descent, a spirit of determination to conquer challenges they are faced with can be embodied.

**Project Motivation**

Kwanzaa is a spiritual and cultural celebration that many African Americans observe each year from December 26th through January 1st. Kwanzaa has been noted as a festive occasion, a special time spent with family and with friends. It is a time of great rejoicing, but also a time to quietly think about our lives and the future (Medearis 1994). The word Kwanzaa is derived from a Kiswahili phrase, matunda ya kwarza, which means the “first fruits of the harvest.” First celebrated in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, a Black Studies professor and black activist, Kwanzaa is America’s fastest-growing African-American holiday, observed by an estimated 18 million people. The congregation of the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center can be found celebrating Kwanzaa.

Kwanzaa served as motivation for this doctoral project because the celebration of Kwanzaa is a means for African-Americans to reaffirm their commitment to themselves, their families, their community, and the black struggle. Dr. Karenga envisioned that Kwanzaa would provide African Americans with spiritual renewal and sustenance, as well as an opportunity to connect with our rich cultural heritage. The researcher envisioned this project as an opportunity for ALPPWC, this newly formed body of believers, to identify with
the richness of their African culture and develop a positive image of them. The purpose of Kwanzaa could be utilized to help educate and nurture the individuals affected by this ministry project. The seven principles of Kwanzaa could help to reflect the importance of a known history and heritage to increase the self-esteem and self-awareness of the members of ALPPWC. When history and heritage is appreciated and valued, God’s purpose for a particular community can be fulfilled. There is a lifting of community that helps strengthen and sustain their existence. It can then be said that help has been given to somebody as one passed along.

**Project Outline**

The overall goal for this doctoral project was twofold. (1) The researcher proposed to build the confidence and self-esteem of those in leadership at ALPPWC by utilizing the history and culture of the Gullah culture within a Kwanzaa framework. (2) The researcher will develop a leadership-training manual to be used at ALPPWC to help the congregation’s members to define who they are, both as individuals and in relation to God’s plan for them.

The researcher believes that all people learn by precepts, examples and/or experiences. Precepts are instructions or rules that may guide one’s actions. Learning by example is close observation of another that may serve as a model to determine one’s actions. Experience has been said to be the best teacher of all. It is when one is actively involved over a period of time where knowledge and skills may be acquired. Other congregations will be able to do as the researcher has done by identifying a culture that reflects who they are or striving to become, identify the elements of the particular culture that can be used to help strengthen the leadership of that congregation, and employ them as
they are manifesting their vision.

To build the confidence and self-esteem of the ALPPWC Ministry Leadership Team, the spirituality of the Gullah people was explored. The Gullahs are a distinctive group of Black Americans from South Carolina and Georgia. They live in small farming and fishing communities along the Atlantic coastal plain and on the Sea Islands that run parallel to the coast of those states. Because of their geographical isolation and strong community and spiritual life, the Gullah people have been able to preserve more of their African cultural heritage than any other group of Black Americans.

The purpose of this study was to bridge the gap between cultural awareness and spirituality. This was based on cultural theory that the more African Americans learn how they are descendants of people with unconquerable spirits and a deep sense of spiritual connection to the Almighty God, the more confidence they (African Americans) will have in themselves. The Gullahs’ spiritual life operates as a central ethos and foundation for their culture. It is here that one can argue that the spiritual overtones in the African-American culture makes them who they are and helps to affirm their spirituality and connection with God.

The development of an ALPPWC Ministry and Administrative Leadership Manual is to provide a tool by which congregational leaders will be able to clearly identify their respective ministry calling. The manual contains policies and procedures for effective leadership utilizing Gullah cultural perspectives and a Kwanzaa framework. It is important for leadership to know the parameters they are to work within in order for the overall mission to be accomplished.
The project involved three activities: (1) the creation and teaching two leadership courses (seven three-hour classes) developed by the researcher; (2) a series of sermons on "Black Self-Esteem" delivered by the researcher, and (3) the execution of a Leadership Conference: L.I.F.E. (Leadership in Fellowship & Enrichment). The doctoral project also included several meetings over two years between the pastor and the ministry leaders. It was through those meetings that each of ALPPWCs twelve-member ministry defined what they were called to do and how they were to accomplish their assigned duties within the church.

**Part One: Creation and Teaching of two courses**

**Course #1: Heritage & History of the Gullah People.**

This course focused on the history and cultural aspects of language, religion, family and social relationships of the Gullah people. Overcoming the threats to their survival inflicted upon the Gullah people largely depended on their sense of self-worth and God's affirmation of their worth and value. This course explored how the Gullah positioned themselves to survive and achieve through the various shadows of slavery, civil rights and various forms of genocide (i.e., black-on-black crime, institutional racism, sexism, crime, mis-education, under-education and poverty).

This class fostered an understanding and appreciation of the Gullah people. It provided the leaders of the ministry with a point of reference. Using it, they could survive any shadows that may try to hinder progress and carry out the vision and mission of their ministry. They too can be survivors and conquerors, like the Gullah people themselves.

**Course #2: Leadership: Passion, Purpose & Power**

This course extracted the qualities of leadership needed to lead others. Through a
theological, biblical, and social/psychological lens, this study helped to affirm the importance of individuals recognizing and utilizing leadership abilities within themselves. Practical application and evaluation of leadership skills and abilities was exercised throughout this three-month course. Goals and objectives were identified and executed accordingly.

Developing an understanding of Gullah culture helped the congregational leaders to develop a leadership that gave meaning to what they were called to do. Development of this course was instrumental in the creation of the leadership manual which outlines the policies and procedures necessary for effective congregational leadership utilizing an indigenous culture.

Part Two: Sermon series

The sermon series was conducted over a period of four weeks during February 2006. Topics covered included:

- The Power of Knowing—examining theological tenets behind being created in the image and likeness of God.
- Dispelling the Myths—examining sociological aspects of “blackness is not a curse”.
- God’s Handiwork—examining aspects of a proper relationship with God through an understanding of Christ.
- Created for Greatness—celebration of who we are and what we are created to do within a relationship with God and community.

Part Three: LIFE Conference

The LIFE Conference (Leadership in Fellowship with Excellence) was held in Camden, South Carolina in October, 2005. The purpose of the conference was to convene
leaders of ALPPWC and conduct a two-day series of team building and leadership
development. A strategic planning component for ALPPWC was also included. Sixteen
ALPPWC leaders attended. The researcher, Rev. Douglas Slaughter of Second Baptist
Church, Akin, South Carolina and Dr. Rosetta Mitchell, Trident Technical College were
presenters.

**Project Methodology**

The study required the use of qualitative research methods. The researcher collected
data that helped identify some of the dominant cultural driving forces in the Gullah
community that impact leadership development within a congregational setting. Heavy
focus was placed on the area of the Gullahs’ religious lives and the spirituality of the Gullah
people. The data was collected through a series of interviews and from the researcher’s field
observations. The researcher conducted two types of interviews: one-on-one interviews and
small focus group interviews. Field research provided observations from the researcher’s
personal assessment and participation in the activities of the Gullah community.

The methods of data collection via interviews used in this study are described below:

**One-on-One Interviews**

Individuals were selected on the basis of demographic information that included: age,
place of birth, residence as a child, adult residence, parent’s identity, community and church
involvement, family orientation, status in their community, other civic involvement, and
willingness to share special knowledge, expertise and accomplishments. Key individuals
were identified to help in the scheduling of these interviews and the development of a core
group to be interviewed. In these interviews the same questions were asked to all who
participated in these conversations with a purpose. (Jarrett & Lucas 2002, 12) There were a total of 9 individuals interviewed: 4 females, 3 males and 2 youth (male and female). These were structured interviews in the sense that the same questions were asked, yet unstructured because of the relax setting of being in the interviewee residence. There was a level of comfort due to the fact that the researcher was familiar with those being interviewed. Either family or friends of family members were selected.

**Small Focus Group Interviews**

Jarrett and Lucas (2002, 18) define a focus group as “an interview style designed for a group discussion, usually a small number of people under the guidance of a qualified moderator.” The small focus group interviews were organized with the help of a key informant to provide the researcher diversity among the make-up of the group. The researcher facilitated the dialogue in the small group interviews. These sessions lasted an hour to one and half hours in length and were held over a period of three years. The focus group included males and females, pastors, educators, church members, and community leaders. They provided information concerning the Gullah culture. This also provided an opportunity for role-playing in some instances, i.e.—what an authentic conversation between members of the Gullah community in their respective language.

**Ethnographic Research**

Ethnography is a form of research focusing on the sociology of meaning through close field observation of sociocultural phenomena. Typically, the ethnographer focuses on a community (not necessarily geographic, considering also work, leisure, and other communities), selecting informants who are known to have an overview of the activities of
the community. Such informants are asked to identify other informants representative of the community, using chain sampling to obtain a saturation of informants in all empirical areas of investigation. Informants are interviewed multiple times, using information from previous informants to elicit clarification and deeper responses upon re-interview. This process is intended to reveal common cultural understandings related to the phenomena under study. These subjective but collective understandings on a subject (ex., stratification) are often interpreted to be more significant than objective data (ex., income differentials).

It should be noted that ethnography may be approached from the point of view of art and cultural preservation, and as a descriptive rather than analytic endeavor. The comments here, however, focus on social science analytic aspects. In this focus, ethnography is a branch of cultural anthropology.

The ethnographic method starts with selection of a culture, review of the literature pertaining to the culture, and identification of variables of interest -- typically variables perceived as significant by members of the culture. The ethnographer then goes about gaining entrance, which in turn sets the stage for cultural immersion of the ethnographer in the culture. It is not unusual for ethnographers to live in the culture for months or even years. The middle stages of the ethnographic method involve gaining informants, using them to gain yet more informants in a chaining process, and gathering of data in the form of observational transcripts and interview recordings. Data analysis and theory development come at the end, though theories may emerge from cultural immersion and theory-articulation by members of the culture. However, the ethnographic researcher strives to avoid theoretical preconceptions and instead to induce theory from the perspectives of the
members of the culture and from observation. The researcher may seek validation of induced theories by going back to members of the culture for their reaction (Garsen 2006).

Those who participated in the interviews were made aware of the researcher’s goal to help strengthen the leadership development of a newly formed congregation through awareness of the Gullah culture ability to survive over the years. The researcher’s involvement in the activities of the field observation were used to help verify the information obtained from interviews and to further an understanding of the Gullah culture.

Secondary Analysis Research

In addition to the above data collection methods, the researcher gathered pertinent data by use of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). An effective method of assessing the needs of rural populations, RRA served as a basic foundation for the collection of data concerning the Gullah culture. RRA stresses the importance of listening to the community that is being studied without any preconceive ideas or understanding. RRA believes that through dialogue one can learn the needs of community and how the community has sustained itself over period of time without industrialization. It is through careful analysis of data collected through conversations and observations that one’s culture may be defined.

Casley (1993), Chambers (1992), Dunn (1994), and Kumar (1990) suggest there are advantages associated with using (RRA) for data collection in rural areas.

Advantages of RRA

- RRA has an international reputation for rigorous and systematic principles of data collection.
- RRA has proven a particularly effective method for assessing attitudes of residents living in rural, isolated locales.
RRA has a reputation for understanding the value of local knowledge and the importance of listening to native perspectives.

RRA has an appropriate structure for the application of multidisciplinary research techniques in the field.

RRA has become an increasingly important method of data collection in studies hindered by the constraints of time and funding. (Jarrett & Lucas 2002, 11)

Charles W. Jarrett and David M. Lucas (2002), two sociologists that presented at the 65th Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, modified certain features of Rapid Rural Appraisal to develop a more innovative methodology of data collection entitled “Folknography.” The researcher used data from the interviews conducted as well as information gleaned from the ethnographic observations to describe the Gullah culture and the symbols that help to identify the powerful religious forces in the Gullah culture.

“Folknography” is designed to assist researches who are interested in acquiring a more in-depth understanding of the subjective perspective of a particular “folk” selected for investigation. In the case of this study, that particular folk would be the Gullah people. A literal interpretation of the term “Folknography” suggests that “folk” refers to people of a specified kind, while “nography” is a direct reference to the use of ethnographic methods during research. “Folknographers” gather raw data for the purpose of gaining an empathetic understanding of the social reality experienced by a particular folk (Jarrett & Lucas 2002, 16).

Foundations of Folknography in Abbreviated Form

1. Folknography represents a modified version of Rapid Rural Appraisal combining elements of ethnographic research with principles of rural sociology, symbolic interactionism, and phenomenological sociology.

2. Folknography is defined as a qualitative research methodology providing a
3. Folknography employs methods of data collection that encourage the use of ‘verstehn,’ or empathetic understanding, to gain insight into native perspectives of social reality.

4. Folknography requires a limited, intermediate time frame for data collection and field experiences.

5. Folknography employs ‘methodological triangulation’ during stages of data collection.

6. Folknography is a ‘multidisciplinary approach’ to field research, data description, and qualitative analysis.

7. Folknography promotes the concept of ‘feed forward,’ or methods designed to allow immediate access of data and information.

8. Folknography recognizes the importance of using a community liaison throughout the field experience. (Jarrett & Lucas 2002, 16)

It is through the study of the individuals that make up the Gullah society that the researcher has been able to identify them as a prime candidate to share with the leadership development of the ALPPWC. The Gullah community is one that operated outside the city limits and had limited access to the main lands. It was important to hear from those who make up the community how they viewed themselves and what aided me their ability to survive and their development over time. The researcher recognizes the progression of the Gullah culture from each formative year to present and gleaned from the perspective of those who still live in the community to express how they came to be.

Not all of the components of Folknography were used, however; through the employment of suggestive means of data collection, the researcher was able to help identify those symbols of the Gullah culture that could be use to help teach their history and extract the elements of leadership needed to help in the leadership development of ALPPWC.
Identifying the Religious Symbols

A good way to understand a people is to study their religion, for religion is addressed to that most sacred schedule of values around which the expression and the meaning of life tends to coalesce. (Lincoln & Mamiya 1990, xi) In studying the Gullah religious experiences, the researcher provided an authentic and objective profile of their culture that speaks to the significance of belief in God. It is through religion of the Gullahs that objects, behaviors and stories evolved to identify their uniqueness.

Also, it was the researcher’s intent to uncover the symbols in Gullah culture that serves as significance to Gullah spirituality through interviewing those who still reside in the area that is known as a Gullah community and as well as those who grew up in the Gullah community. The researcher spent time on the field in fellowship with the Gullah people, specifically in the Hickory Hill Community of the Gullah culture to glean from a first hand perspective of those forces that aid in identifying them as individuals with a strong spiritual connection to God. As a result of spending time within the context of this study, the researcher was able to observe what provides meaning to their lives.

We are products of our environment. Much can be said about a person or a group of persons when you engage in healthy communication with them. In careful analysis of the Gullah community, it becomes clear where priorities lie through their conversation and day-to-day activities. The central ethos in the life of the Gullah people is their relationship with God. It is a relationship that is heavily focused around church involvement. The “church” is critical in what takes place in their everyday living.

The black pilgrimage in America was made less onerous because of their religion. Their religion was the organizing principle around which their life
was structured. Their church was their school, their forum, their political arena, their social club, their art gallery, their conservatory of music. It was lyceum and gymnasium as well as sanctum sanctorum. Their religion was the peculiar sustaining force that gave them the strength to endure when endurance gave no promise, and the courage to be creative in the face of their own dehumanization. (Wilmore 1991, 23)

Reliable investigators have consistently underscored the fact that black churches were one of the few stable and coherent institutions to emerge from slavery (Wilmore 1991). C. Eric Lincoln (1990) found that the black church has no challenger as the cultural womb of the black community. Thus the church is identified as a major symbol that helped the Gullah people interpret the meaning of life. It is through the church that they have found a sense of purpose. Their relationship with each other is largely defined within the context of church. The researcher will explore the Gullahs’ view of themselves and others through the religious involvement that is played out in their church activities. Music plays a vital role in the Gullah culture. In this study, the significance of music in Gullah community’s lives and how music speaks to identify them as a community of faith is expressed. It is through the music that others are made aware of one’s commitment to God. In the words of James Cone,

Black music is unity music. It unites the joy and the sorrow, the love and the hate, the hope and the despair of black people; ...It shapes and defines black being and creates cultural structures for black expression. Black music is unifying because it...affirms that black being is possible only in a communal context. (1992, 5)

**Identifying Theology**

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands
Come before his presence with singing

---Psalm 100
I got a song, you got a song
All God's children got a song
When I get to heaven gwine to sing-a-my song
I'm gwine to sing all over God's heaven!

--Traditional African American Spiritual

The demonstration of how a body of believers, i.e., the Gullahs, used their cultural uniqueness to discover and identify how they know and understand God in their lives can be clearly seen and experienced in the 'performance of the Word'. In the lives of black churches, good preaching and good singing are almost invariably the minimum conditions that identify them as being successful. Both activities trace their roots back to Africa, where music and religion and life itself were all one holistic enterprise. There was no disjunction between the sacred and the secular, and music, whether vocal or instrumental, was an integral aspect of the celebration of life, as indeed was the dance that the music inspired in consequence of its evocation of the human spirit (Lincoln & Mamiya 1990, 346).

The researcher was able to extract excerpts from sermons and songs of the Gullahs that demonstrated their theology. A characteristic activity of the Gullah culture is clearly expressed in their worship experiences. It is seen in their preaching, singing, dancing, and responses of the participants. The sermon, or more accurately, the preaching, is the focal point of worship in the Black Church, and all other activities find their place in some subsidiary relationship. In most black churches, singing is second only to preaching as the magnet of attraction and the primary vehicles of spiritual transport for the worshiping congregation (Lincoln & Mamiya 1990, 347).

The uniqueness of the Gullah culture is expressed in the music. Their music came from their heart, their soul, and their spirit. The Gullahs' belief in their God and self is
clearly expressed in the spirituals that they sing. These songs—variously called Negro spirituals, jubilees, folk songs, shout songs, sorrow songs, slave songs, slave melodies, minstrel songs, and religious songs—are most commonly known as Negro spirituals because of the deep religious feeling they express. The songs sung and the life lived by the Gullah people express theology, their understanding of God and God’s presence in their lives. William B. McClain, in the preface of Songs of Zion state,

...songs express theology. Not the theology of the academy or the university, not formalistic theology or the theology of the seminary, but a theology of the experience—the theology of a God who sends the sunshine and the rain, the theology of a God who is very much alive and active and who has not forsaken those who are poor and oppressed and unemployed. It is a theology of imagination—it grew out of fire shut up in the bones, of words painted on the canvas of the mind. .... theology of grace that allows the faithful to see the sunshine of His face—even through their tears. Even the words of an ex-slave trader become a song of liberation and an expression of God’s amazing grace. It is a theology of survival that allows a people to celebrate the ability to continue the journey in spite of the insidious tentacles of racism and oppression and to sing, “It’s another day’s journey, and I’m glad about it!”(McClain 1981, 8)

Many of the customs and traditions of the Gullah people clearly define their faith in God. Some of the customs and traditions that were born of the Gullah culture have extended beyond their individual culture and have become woven in the lives of others throughout the world. A glossary has been included with words that were once unique to the Gullah culture but has now bled into the lives of many other cultures. To demonstrate the uniqueness of this body of believers, the Gullah people, and how their theology is identified, the researcher has simply told their story. For the story of the Gullah people is a story of their theology.

It could be expressed in song:

Ha’v you got good ‘ligion?
Cert’nly, Lawd!
Chapter Summaries

Chapter One introduced the Doctor of Ministry Project, the motivations for conducting the research, an outline of the project, methodology used, and a brief outline of the researcher’s theological perspective. Chapter two describes the ministry setting and provides clarification of the ministry issues. Chapter three includes a review of previous research and efforts of others concerning the African-American culture and religious experience. The researcher provides empirical, theological, biblical, historical and cultural basis to understand the ministry project. Additionally, chapter three gives historical information regarding affirmation of the history of African-Americans and the practical application of the ministry setting. The researcher identified elements of leadership that will help in building an indigenous leadership team. Chapter four gives a full account of the project objectives, people with whom the researcher worked, a recounting of the specific activities of the ministry project, evaluation results, and the research results of the Doctoral project. The final chapter of the Doctor of Ministry project summarizes what was accomplished, what was learned, what might have been done differently and summarizes lessons learned.
CHAPTER II
MINISTRY ISSUE

Telling His-Story: A Tale of Discovery

“Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, 
That he may run whom reads it. 
For the vision is yet for an appointed time; 
But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. 
Though it tarry, wait for it; 
Because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”
(Habakkuk 2:2-3)

Having been called by God and chosen to do ministry under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the researcher was given a vision by God in the fall of 1993 to organize and establish a ministry that will promote life as God desires for God’s children to live. A ministry that will promote living life in the fullness of God’s abundance of blessings and security for God’s people was what God was calling for. The researcher was reminded that although the devil comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy, God sent Christ Jesus to give us life and to give us life more abundantly. The Abundant Life Ministries was born of this vision.

The Abundant Life Ministries, as it was first called, was primarily responsible for bringing groups of individuals together to celebrate God’s goodness through Christian education. Once or twice a week, those who accepted the invitation to come and learn more of God’s purpose for their lives would gather and share their stories of survival. The researcher would offer homilies and Bible studies to further their Christian development.
A major component of the ministry at this time was music. Certain individuals would express their understanding of God and God’s activities in their lives through singing. Many would call upon these individuals to share their songs of praise and inspiration. They called themselves the Abundant Life Fellowship Chorale, an ecumenical body of believers from various churches throughout the community.

The author continued in prayer and supplication before the Lord, seeking guidance and direction on how to walk in obedience concerning the vision of God for God’s people. In 1994, he was led to further the vision and initiated a Prayer, Praise and Worship Clinic. This Spiritual Clinic has been held in locations throughout South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia. It is considered the foundation of the Abundant Life Fellowship Ministries and has been held annually since the ministry’s conception. The clinic is usually a three-day session with workshops and seminars on the topics of prayer, praise and worship. It concludes with a Gospel Music Extravaganza that features those who attended the Gospel Music Workshop segment of the clinic. From the conception of this clinic, there has been an Abundant Life Fellowship Chorale that ministers through music.

At the close of 1997, the Abundant Life Fellowship Ministries began seeking membership to function as a church congregation that would further enhance individuals’ overall relationship with God. In March of 1998, the Abundant Life Ministries began weekly Bible Study and Spiritual Enrichment Classes on Thursdays at the Cooke Memorial Chapel in Camden, South Carolina. With the increase in attendance there was a need to secure a larger facility. The congregation of believers began to seek such a place and soon began leasing their present location, #1 Commerce Alley, to house their ministry. The
Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center (ALPPWC), was incorporated. With the expansion of the ministry, the author served as the Pastor and Executive Director. God blessed the congregation, and shortly after arriving at #1 Commerce Alley, 5.66 acres were acquired for its use. Most recently, the church has purchased an entire city block where two businesses are located that lease building space from the ministry, as well as another six acres of land specified for the erection of an edifice for the Ministry.

The Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center is located in the heart of downtown Camden, South Carolina, in Kershaw County. The following demographic information was taken from the 2000 Census. Camden has an estimated population of 7500, with the population of Kershaw County estimated at 53,409. The make up of racial lines is as follows: 71.6% white, 26.3% black, 1.7% of Hispanic or Latin origin, 0.3% American Indian, Alaska Native and Asian persons, and persons who reported two or more races at 0.8%.

The gender and age break down is as follows: 48.3% males and 51.7% females. The ages of people in the area are based on the following break down: 0-17 at 25.6%; 18-24 at 7.75%; 25-44 at 30.1%; 45-64 at 24.5%; and 65 and over at 12.7%.

The demographics of education, employment and income of the area are as follows: 75.4% of persons with high school diplomas (aged 25 and over), while the percentage of residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher (aged 25 and over) is 16.3%.

The majority of Camden’s citizens are employed with the education system, textile and other industrial plants, and food service establishments. The major employers are Kershaw County School District, Invista (formerly E.I. DuPont DeNemours), Kershaw
County Medical Center, Standard Corporation, and Wal-Mart Superstore. Many in the minority population are employed in private non-farm establishments. The median household income is $38,804, with per capita income at $18,360.

Abundant Life members are African American with one family of Mexican American descent. Forty percent of the members are female, 25% are males and the 35% are children 18 years or younger. The average household income is $21,000, and 55% of the adults in the ministry have bachelor degrees or above. This has helped to promote the importance of education among members of the congregation.

Every Member in Ministry – Feeding the Fire that Burns Within is the official motto of the ministry. With the development of the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise, and Worship Center (ALPPWC), attendance began to increase and various ministries were created. The mission of ALPPWC is to involve every member in ministry by having them to actively participate in the life of the church. They are engaged in exhorting the Savior, evangelizing the sinners, equipping the saints and elevating society by meeting the needs of those less fortunate. Through sound teaching and preaching of God’s Holy Word and the fellowshipping of like-minded individuals, the vision is unfolding.

In the fall of 1999, ALPPWC Ministers in Training (MIT) Institute was organized at Abundant Life. The purpose of the MIT Institute is to train those whom God has called and who have a desire to walk boldly in their calling to carry out the mission of the ALPPWC. Leadership training is provided under the tutelage of seminary trained and other professional trained individuals to those who would later be commissioned as Elders, Ministers, Deacons and Missionaries of the ministry. It was important that these servant
leaders be dually equipped to do the work that God has placed them to do – the work of an evangelist; preaching in season and out of season: exhorting, rebuking, convincing with all longsuffering. Since the initial class in 1999, seven elders, seven deacons, twelve missionaries and five ministers have been consecrated to the services of God and God’s people. Three churches have been birthed from the ministry of Abundant Life and now serve as a testimony of the work of ALPPWC.

The Ministry Setting

The Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center is engaged in one that brings individuals together, those who have church experience and those who do not. It has been nearly eight years since the formation of ALPPWC and identifying leaders for various ministries and assignments continue to be a challenge. There were times when individuals would come forward expressing their desire to lead; however, it was quickly noticed that there was a need for training. Leadership skills, especially in the area for which leadership is to be provided, are essential for effective administration. It was discovered that many church members who were in leadership positions were insecure and those insecurities affected their self-esteem and their approach to ministry.

The author has defined the need in the Abundant Life ministry setting to be that of a lack of confidence in leadership abilities and low self-esteem. There is a need for concrete information that specifically outlines the duties and responsibilities of those engaged in ministry leadership. The goal was for individuals to become educated and trained for leadership. Effective leadership is when leaders are comfortable with their skills and the knowledge needed for effectiveness in their assigned area. It was important that leaders do
not allow their insecurities and ignorance to affect their work. A leader is more effective at leading others and performing necessary tasks when he or she is comfortable and knowledgeable in the workplace. Without confidence, it is impossible for a leader to fulfill his potential. The greater usefulness is when one is successfully accomplishing that which has been assigned. Being confident and having a positive self-image are necessary for carrying out God’s vision and mission.

When leaders are not confident, it hinders growth and productivity. Insecure leaders may spend more time trying to prove to themselves that they are leaders. They may find themselves engaged in conversations and activities to mask their lack of knowledge and skills. They may take their position of leadership in the ministry as an opportunity to exert authority that they do not feel they have anywhere else.

More can be accomplished when there is certainty that the task of doing ministry will be completed because of a sense of confidence in ones calling. A more effective leader is one who is secure with the ability to perform ministry. It is important to know that God has given you the necessary tools to do His work.

As pastor, the author can attest to the fact that if a leader has insecurities, leadership is often ineffective. Usually there are insecurities with leaders when they lack knowledge of the position and spend more time meeting the expectation of others and not God’s.

In addressing the ministry issue, it is important to note the importance of not adding to the insecurities that already exist. Avoid exacerbating existing feelings of uncertainty in others. If possible, show the insecure leaders that their view of themselves may not be lining up with God’s view of them and one must see himself as God does.
CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL APPLICATION

Chapter three is a review of previous research and provides empirical, theological, biblical, and a cultural basis to understand the ministry project. This chapter will also provide identifiable elements of leadership that helped build an indigenous leadership team.

The Black Church Leadership

In an article written by Kelly Douglas and Ronald Hopson, *Understanding the Black Church: the Dynamics of Change*, they define the black church as “a multitudinous community of churches, which are diversified by origin, denomination, doctrine, worshiping culture, spiritual expressions, class, size, and other less obvious factors. Although black churches vary from church to church, they share a special history, culture, and role in black life that can not be denied.” (Douglas & Hopson 2001, 98) Though they may differ greatly among one another, they collectively are identified as the black church. The black church has always served as a vital change agent in the life of her community and continues to thrive as such. Without doubt these churches are necessary for the survival of God’s people.

Black church history began during the antebellum period in America and was born during black suffering of capture, Middle Passage, and enslavement. “During the antebellum period (1820-60), Christianity continued to grow among the slave population in the South. Some of this growth was institutional, as black churches continued to increase their
membership, frequently recording the largest congregations in their local associations and far out-numbering many white congregations.” (Raboteau 2001, 42) The Black Church took shape as the enslaved Africans rejected their enslavers’ version of Christianity, which asserted that God sanctioned slavery. More than anything else, slaves wanted an escape from the hostility and dehumanization that they found themselves under. There was need for those enslaved to express their faith in a God that would allow there to be an escape from such. The black church can be viewed during such time as black people’s resistance to such an ugly culture created by white slave owners and as their testimony that God would grant them freedom from the oppression they were under.

The black church is distinguished by the pervasive role that it plays in the lives of black people. DuBois poignantly captured the magnitude of the black church’s responsibility with this timeless description:

The Negro church of today is the social center of Negro life in the United States, and the most characteristic expression of African character....Various organizations meet [in Negro church buildings] – the church proper, the Sunday-school, two or three insurance societies, women’s societies, secret societies, and mass meetings of various kinds....Considerable sums of money are collected and expended here, employment is found for the idle, strangers are introduced, news is disseminated, and charity distributed. At the same time this social, intellectual, and economic center is a religious center of great power....Back of [its] more formal religion, the Church often stands as a real conserver of morals, a strengthener of family life, and the final authority on what is Good and Right. Thus one can see in the Negro church today, reproduced in microcosm, all the great world from which the Negro is cut off by color-prejudice and social condition. (DuBois 1903, 89)

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya affirm the timelessness of DuBois’
description in their observation that while “social processes of migration, urbanization, and class differentiation have diminished aspects of the [the black church’s] centrality and dominance,” the black church continues to greatly influence the social and religious life of the black community (Lincoln & Mamiya 1990, 8). The black church is indeed a social and a religious center, especially for the black community. There were leaders, most known as leaders who got their early beginnings in the church that help to transform the black community. It became the Black Church’s responsibility to speak truth to power and to serve as a catalyst in overcoming oppression through transformation.

**A Call for Leaders to Lead**

There will always be negative barriers that must be transformed into stepping-stones of success. Leaders are responsible for helping those that they lead understand that there will be delays and detours that can not be avoided while on the road being journeyed. However, the delays and detours can be use to help strengthen them as they continue down their path of destiny. These delays and detours can be viewed as character builders. Leaders can often speak from experience that the challenges faced while in pursuit of one’s destiny will strengthen and further develop character.

The world in which we live has never been void of leadership. From the very foundation of the world, leadership has been provided. The Almighty God who created the heavens and the earth serves as the King of Leaders and Leadership. From the example of God’s mighty act of creation to God as both humanity’s sustainer and redeemer, the foundation of leadership can be embraced and used as the platform for all other leaders to go forth serving the purpose for which they have been created.
Truly leadership in general has experience what can be considered several evolution of thought. Many once thought that to be given the mantle of leadership was an exclusive right of the privileged. It was then believed that leaders were shaped by events. Today, Stephen Covey, John C. Maxwell and others are promoting the thought of principle-centered leadership. “Leadership is not a matter of birth or circumstances, but is driven and shaped by ones belief and values.” (McKenzie 2001, 3)

Vashti M. McKenzie in her book *Strength in the Struggle* says,

When leadership is considered the exclusive right of a privileged, you hear the phrase, ‘Leaders are born not made.’ Leadership guided by this thought means that leadership is a matter of birth. You have to be born into the right family or have the right heritage. Leadership is an inherited right. It is born out of a continuum of leader persons who pass the mantle down from one generation to the next. It is like leaders beget leaders. This means that leadership is available to a limited number of people. Either you are born to it or you are not. If you have it, you may lead. If you don’t, you follow. (McKenzie 2001, 4)

She further claims that “leadership within that mindset cannot be learned or earned. One cannot aspire to it.” (McKenzie 2001, 4) The researcher believes there is a major flaw with this thought that leaders are born and not made. Leadership is not a rare entity limited to a select few. Everyone has the potential to become a leader. It is not a matter of the family you were born in or where you born. It is not a matter of socioeconomic status at all. God has gifted each and every individual with the opportunities to lead. It becomes the responsibility of those who desires to lead to develop the skills and characteristic necessary to provide leadership.

Good leaders are not produced by simply obeying the formulas that some may suggest will result in good leadership. There are tools that may help in proving and
developing leadership, however; there aren’t any guarantees that good leaders will be the result of ascribing to such tools. It is possible to learn theories that may enhance leadership skills and techniques, however; it is when those theories are put into practice that your skills are honed and tested that good leadership can be measured. One thing is for sure, God has created us to lead each other. Leadership is a calling that requires a true desire to be lead by God in order to properly lead others.

**Theological Literature**

It is a theological view that God values us. God has given us gifts, talents and graces that can help us to accomplish any task set before us. Through the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit, we can grow in effectiveness and efficiency. When this is discerned it becomes possible that those in leadership will have more value in themselves because of God’s value in them. Psalm 139 (KJV) attest to God’s value of us:

> ....I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

It is clear from the Psalmist account that God thinks very highly of humanity, His creation. Leaders must see themselves as God does. It will help to secure their overall confidence and ability to use and develop the knowledge and wisdom needed to guide others. Humanity, God’s greatest creation, but always strives to reflect God in all that we say and do. God created leaders for a purpose and that is to lead God’s people toward their destiny.
The Gullah community has its origin in Africa. God is at the core of who they are and how they survive the shadows of insecurity of their white slave masters. There were those within the Gullah community with broken spirits because of the harshness of their realities. In addition to the racial climate of the time in which they lived, their own personal doubts and fears from time to time called for them to rely on their relationship with a sovereign God to see them through. Their relationship with God is foundation in keeping them mindful of who they are, from whence they came and where they are to go. It is clear they came to America with an understanding of the source and ground of all life – God. Faith in a supreme being was not afforded to them on the grounds of America, but rather was a part of their very fabric before reaching the soils of a new country.

Scholars have always agreed that religion permeates every dimension of African life. In spite of the many and varied religious systems among Africans, there remain a constant religious consciousness among African peoples that constituted their single most important common characteristic. In Peter Paris book (1995, 28), *The Spirituality of African Peoples*, he notes John S. Mbiti’s claim that “secularity has no reality in the African experience.” This is affirmed by scholars of African religion which is to include Mbiti:

Wherever the African is, there is his religion; he carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university; if he is a politician he takes it to the house of parliament. Although many African languages do not have a word for religion as such, it nevertheless accompanies the individual from long before his birth to long after his physical death. (Paris 1995, 28)

The Gullah community isn’t any different. Their spirituality is where they draw their strength to make it from day to day. Like the Gullah community who did not have a model
to follow when brought to America, so must the leadership of Abundant Life. They must follow the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit that lives on the inside of them. The Holy Spirit that called them into existence and have all power to sustain them as they fulfill their God gave purpose.

Psalm 8 below can be considered a hymn of praise or rather more accurately a hymn of creation praise. Therefore the praise is not an expression of joy in creation apart from the Creator but looks at God as the good Creator Ruler, and Sustainer of the world.

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens? Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! (Psalm 8)

It is in this psalm that God expresses his interest in humanity. We are God’s workmanship crowned with glory and honor is what is expressed. The Creator, God, according to Genesis 1 has established two spheres of rule: heaven and earth.

Then God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. (Genesis 1:16-18)

God has established the celestial bodies in the firmament and has given them the rule
over day and night (Gen.1:17-18), whereas later in the creation narrative it states that God appointed humankind to govern the earth (Gen. 1:28). “The heavenly bodies all have their appointed place. In relation to the vastness of space, the order and the importance of the heavenly bodies, “what is man”? The word “man” is a poetic word for a human being in his frail human existence, whereas “son of man” is contrasted with “God” (“heavenly beings”). Human beings are by nature earthlings, and yet they are the particular objects of God’s attention. The Creator has invested glory and honor on them.” (Baker & Kohlenberger 1994, 37)

It is in the context of the black church that affirmation is received. It is in the black church where black women and men gain affirmation, status, and certain privileges – all of which are denied to them in wider society because of their racial identity. Douglas and Hopson draws an illustration that says,

For instance, the janitor in a white office building can be the respected head of the deacon board at church. The domestic worker can be the Sunday school superintendent. The black church essentially creates its own independent hierarchies and networks of power, which become avenues for people to garner ecclesiastical privilege and, thus, to vicariously realize the social and political privileges denied them. (Douglas & Hopson 2001, 99)

They, Douglas and Hopson (2001), further exclaim in their article that as a nation within a nation, the black church provides the kind of social benefits that are de facto racially distributed within wider society. “The Black Church became a resource center meeting the needs of her community. For instance, the church has historically rendered banking, legal, educational, health, and other services to its people. It has also established schools, banks, insurance companies, credit unions, health clinics, low-income housing, and so forth.”
The black church has further been a launch pad for black involvement in the wider social and political arena. Historically, local and national black leaders often develop their leadership skills within the black church. It is not rare for a black minister to hold some type of civic or political office with the blessing and support of his or her congregation. There is characteristically frequent interplay between the black church and the social and political arena.

**Biblical Literature**

Throughout the Bible it is clear how God has affirmed the worth and value of God’s people. Black people must see themselves as God does. It is through the eyes of God those who lead God’s people will view themselves in a positive manner. A positive self-image will assure them confidence to accomplish their goals and objectives in being successful at leading others. The Black Church and her leaders have been actively involved in building the self-esteem and self-awareness of the black community.

Yet the Bible gives hope to the wounded leader who has been bruised by the past. It speaks of God being a loving God who wants to “do a new thing” and the giving of one’s life (Christ) as “a ransom for many (lives).” It is the Bible that we can turn to find hope and support in the building of shattered self-image. Our God is viewed in Biblical history also as one who wants to put us back together again. Our God is a potter, always at the wheel molding and mending the broken pieces of our lives. Through the Biblical lens, God is viewed as a God of restoration and of liberation.

Bosch (1991) notes in *Transforming Mission* that liberation theology has helped those who embrace it to see that God is present. God is a God of righteousness and justice...
who stands on behalf of the weak and the oppressed. Liberation theology helps share the message that the Holy Spirit has the ability to change conditions, "to bring people back from death to life, to empower the weak, and to recognize the Spirit's presence not only in people's hearts but also in the workaday world of history and culture." (Bosch 1991, 442)

In the local ministry setting of Abundant Life, many believe that it is God's will for them (God's people) to be broken, yet many do not recognize God's desire to make them whole. It is when individuals look beyond religion and tap in the well spring of spirituality that they can truly be liberated from the past and embark into a future where they may feel secure and possess the necessary confidence to tell their story. It is a story that has the power to liberate others as they position themselves at the mercy of God.

**Cultural Literature**

The surrounding culture helps to shape the values and give meaning in the lives of the people. "We live in a diverse, multicultural society. It is not a melting pot, as some would assume. Nor should it be. We have our own particularities, in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, and religion." (Dash, Rasor & Jackson 1998, 113) Those particularities play a very significant role in how we view others and ourselves. Intellectual knowledge is filtered through the influence of the surrounding culture. Individual self-worth, psychological awareness, social awareness, economic awareness, and political awareness are shaped according to their surrounding culture.

Also, when considering the issue of the ministry through the lens of surrounding culture, we are mindful of how the self-esteem and confidence of individuals in leadership is conveyed through their symbols of culture, such as language, music, art, and dress.
Through music, it is possible to hear the condition of an individual or community’s state of being. The constant evolution of God’s will for His people may be clearly heard. The Minister of Christian Education, Sally Brown, was asked to give the history of Abundant Life on their third year, and she concluded:

Since the gathering of God’s people in March of 1998, God has been blessing. We have experienced the manifestation of the Holy Spirit: souls have been saved, sinners and backsliders have been redeemed; blinded eyes have been opened; deaf ears have been made to hear; and the lame have been made able to walk. Truly we can say as in the words of the Negro Spirituals – ‘Look what the Lord has done. Just look what the Lord has done. Look where God has brought us. He’s brought us out of darkness, now we are walking in the Light. Look where He’s brought us. We have come from a mighty long way.’ (2001)

Many of the songs expressed in the ministry are known as Spirituals. Spirituals began as sublimated expressions of the desire for freedom. History has confirmed the use of these songs as the music of the antebellum invisible church. Wyatt Tee Walker states that “the Spiritual music form…developed as an integral part of worship in these ‘invisible churches’. In the preliterate era of slavery, the fuel of the ‘invisible church’ was the musical expression constantly fed by the oral tradition. From the beginning of religious expression among the slaves …preaching on the part of the leader was important. This preaching consisted of singing sacred songs which have come to be known as the Spirituals.” (Frazier 1974, 74)

The occasion itself is irrelevant; whether sung at marriages, births, deaths, work, or play, the spirituals that are sung help to provide a sense of belonging that may foster a positive self-image. The music expressed in Abundant Life is one form of the congregation expressing who they are. Music is a large part of how African Americans, although not
exclusively, convey their understanding of culture. In the words of the songs they sing, it is apparent that their relationship with God has been the glue that kept them together and it is that which is to be passed on for the future.

Identity for Black Americans has always been fluid. Blacks in America were forced to bleed two distinct cultures, becoming what is now known as African American. It became obvious that the healthy fusion of these cultures largely depended upon the character of those involved in the shaping and making of something that never existed. Countless stories have been told of what life was like prior to the modern day civil rights era. The previous generations of the author, his grandparents, great-grandparents and their peers have shared their experiences. The common denominator was the self-worth and self-actualization that was maintained because of their relationship with one another and God, the Higher Being. It was not their position in society that gave them confidence in who they were, but their history of survival. As a people, they have survived many challenges and continue to persevere.

As a native of Charleston, South Carolina, the author is knowledgeable of two centuries of survival. His grandmother, a native of Colleton County, South Carolina who is presently in her 80’s, recalls the words of her grandmother, Nancy Simmons, born in 1873, a native Gullah. She stressed the importance of knowing who you are and not who the “white man” says you are.

The Gullahs represent a distinctive group of African Americans living primarily in the Sea Islands and coastal regions of our southeastern United States. The Sea Islands extend from a northern point of Georgetown, South Carolina, near Myrtle Beach, through

The Gullah homeland is a coastal strip two hundred fifty miles long and forty miles wide where low, flat islands, separated from the mainland by salt-water rivulets, feel the tides twice a day. Swampy grass-covered marshlands alternate with palmetto trees, pines, and live oaks overhung with gray moss. (Pollitzer 1999, 4)

The author is a descendent of the Gullah people, from whom he has learned how to build and establish life beyond the circumstances that may try to oppress, depress and/or suppress progress. The Gullahs have survived the shadows of difficulty for centuries. It is their story of survival that enables him to be who he is and to be able to provide leadership as a pastor of a newly formed congregation. The difficulties include any negative perceptions of self, others and community, i.e. lack of education, ignorance, and the shadow of various forms of genocide such as institutional slavery, crime, poverty, and black-on-black crime. The African-American community should always remember that they are descendants of a people who have forged a new culture from nothing.

In the foreword of Pollitzer’s (1994) book, David Moltke-Hansen wrote, “the Gullah people of the Georgia and South Carolina coast are among the most studied populations in the United States. They continue to attract attention for several reasons:

- They show more African influences in their self-expression, behavior, and beliefs than any other long-established large American population group.
- They are genetically less mixed with whites and Native Americans than most other African Americans.
• They built and survived the forced labors of one of the richest agricultural societies in the Americas.

• Their music, dance, basketry, and other arts are powerful, beautiful, and evocative.

• Their traditional lives contrast tellingly with the modern world that encroaches upon their society.

• Until a generation ago, theirs was the largest overwhelmingly African-American area of the United States.

• Sullivan’s Island, off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina, is often called the Ellis Island of Black America. (Pollitzer 1994, xii)

The very history of such a people and their myriad of contributions to society speak to their high achievements and ability to thrive despite difficulties. It is their story, a story of survival, that can help others benefit and excel through their endeavors and challenges in life as their self-esteem is strengthened.

It is no secret that Blacks in America are forced to struggle through the crisis of identity. The task of dealing with their dual identity is a tremendous undertaking that leaves many confused as to who they are. Being both African and American presents a challenge as to whose history gives them their true heritage of identity. Mitchell and Thomas, in *Preaching for Black Self-Esteem*, note,

For people of color, however, the prospect of assimilation and therefore acceptance into mainstream American society has proved difficult at best and impossible at worst. The Europeans who colonized this country brought with them a legacy of racism that was woven into the warp and woof of the society. Hundreds of years of chattel slavery were not easily erased by emancipation in the 1860’s. (Mitchell & Thomas 1994, 16)

The results of such a history have left blacks with esteem issues. There was an
ignorance of the greatness of African history they lived with, while being ever reminded that they were different and were not received with favor by the ruling race. How does one evaluate low self-esteem and the confidence levels of leaders? There is little research or literature available on the impact of low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in church leaders, especially those of African descent. However, Mitchell and Thomas (1994, 22) have identified five axes under which issues of racial self-esteem may be examined:

| Axis I: Black Caste |
| Axis II: Black Characteristics |
| Axis III: Black Continent |
| Axis IV: Black Capacity |
| Axis V: Black Culture |

Mitchell and Thomas are not suggesting that these five axes are an exhaustive list of the causes or symptoms of low ethnic self-esteem in any given context or community. These examples provide a manageable starting point for any church’s ministry with low ethnic self-esteem.

The first axis, Black Caste, deals with what being Black in America entails. “It is to be born under the insignia of inferiority. Caste is the social status prescribed for people at birth because of the group to which they were born.” (Mitchell & Thomas 1994, 23) Many Blacks seek to escape from the stigma of their origins. Axis II: Black Characteristics is “the tendency among some Black Americans to de-emphasize, modify, or attempt to escape altogether some of the physical features and characteristics that identify their African ancestry.” (Mitchell & Thomas 1994, 24) Black Continent, the third axis shared by Mitchell and Thomas, points to the fact “that every ethnic group in America speaks proudly of a homeland, a country of origin.” (Mitchell & Thomas 1994, 23) Black Americans, because
of the institution of slavery, have been denied the ability to bask in the greatness of their history and glorious accomplishments. Very few Blacks are sharing the story in a manner that can aid to high levels of self-esteem for Black Americans. *Axis IV: Black Capacity*, Blacks are led to believe that they are more physically talented than mentally gifted. This leads to a lack of confidence in Black capacity to excel in any given area. The final caste, *Black Culture*, shows how Black people in this country have “created a beautiful culture, a network of art, language, values, and religion that is authentically African, yet uniquely American.” (Mitchell & Thomas 1994, 24) However, Blacks are conditioned to feel that something is wrong with not quite fitting in and avoid fitting into a culture that speaks to their differences. There is a need for the church to address the issues of esteem and culture in hopes of helping African Americans develop a healthy sense of self.

After reflecting theologically on the Abundant Life Ministry, it became advantageous to embark in a study exploring the spirituality of African-Americans and their heritage and culture. It is clear that the African-Americans’ culture and spirituality are inextricably linked and helped to shape what they take to be their religion. Questions about the meaning of their African heritage have long circulated among the African-American people. The sociologist E. Franklin Frazier argued that Africa had no meaning for this people, all traces of African heritage having been blotted out by the experience of American slavery. Contemporary scholars, however, have demonstrated that the history and the heritage of the African-American people does not begin or end with slavery. It goes far back into ancient Africa, back to the origins of all humankind and the rise of civilization.

To help alleviate low self-esteem and lack of confidence, the author decided that
more education was needed in the area of African and African-American history and the role the church has always played, but, most importantly, how the spirituality of African-Americans bridged the gap. Even if it appeared that the church failed, the spirituality of African-Americans held true.

Mitchell and Thomas’ book, *Preaching for Black Self-Esteem*, sets forth the premise that self-esteem can be positively affected when the following occurs:

(1) people receive more information about themselves, and (2) people begin appropriately to celebrate their God-given worth. It is in receiving and understanding more of whom God has created you to be that will help one celebrate. In celebrating, one acknowledges God’s ever abiding presence in one’s life and how God has created a people that too are worth celebrating. (Mitchell & Thomas 1994, 151)

Many of those engaged in ministry at the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center have personally been involved in the life of “church” for years proceeding the civil rights era. Many can recall when church was the only place that the ‘black voice’ could be heard. The Black church played a very significant role in the life of the community. It was their “center of hope.” There, the church, the voice crying out in the wilderness, would be heard by a loving and caring God who comes to the aid of the downtrodden. God would speak and give not only hope to the hopeless but instructions to the lost. God is seen for many in the words of James Weldon Johnson’s Lift Every Voice and Sing:

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, 
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way; 
Thou who hast by thy might, led us into the light, 
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Stony the road we trod, Bitter the chat’ning rod, 
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died; 
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet, 
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
The religious tradition of the people engaged in ministry at Abundant Life acknowledges God as a liberator. God, who is on the side of the oppressed and downtrodden, is always willing to help save and deliver. Many still see themselves as the children of Israelites, in need of a Moses to lead them out of bondage. They need a leader to lead them to a better land, a land of better days, prosperous days as promised by the almighty God. As God spoke to Moses, many feel that the vision given for the formation of the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Inc. was God’s divine will for their lives.

“Perhaps the most important institution of civil society for black families and for their communities as a whole is the black church.” (Cahill 2000, 121) Members of the Abundant Life family agreed that the church has always played a vital role in their lives. Their views of the church have helped to shape and to develop many of their daily decisions and helped to foster how they perceive themselves. Through their relationship with the church, a sense of community has been the catalyst that has helped to overcome many of the obstacles faced as an African American in today’s society. They are able to feel more comfortable with themselves when it appears as if they are not “going through” their troubles alone. The church family contributes to one’s self-esteem by helping them to feel less isolated and that God is always present.

The lack of confidence and low self-esteem that the author believed many experienced and share in Abundant Life is a result of 60% of the founding members of Abundant Life coming from a church with strong family ties. Those ties and other relationships were present during many of the life changes one experienced: from the cradle
to the grave of many of their loved ones. Now that Abundant Life is the beginning of a new chapter in their lives, many are still groping with identifying with the newness of having a past from which they may now have to disconnect, as well as the need to create a new future and identity for themselves.

Dash, Jackson and Rasor (1998) allude to the fact that one’s self esteem is shaped largely because of their connection or lack of to their past. “A clichéd idea holds that every human being is a product of his or her past. This is historically as well as psychologically true. It is no less true spiritually. There is a connection between God’s dealings with each person and each person’s past.” (Dash, Jackson & Rasor 1998, 20). Not having the tradition of the mainline denomination to give them their support for identity has caused many to weaken in their self confidence and helps to foster their sense of insecurity concerning the brightness of their unknown future. The religious traditions once embraced are no longer, and a new identity must now be established.

At the hem of every Black Church is the pastor. It is the job of the black clergy to give hope to their community. The Gullah community depended on their religious leadership to help shape their understanding of who they are and how to view not only themselves but also others. The author believes that W.E.B. DuBois was the first African-American scholar to discern that the origins of African-American religious leadership are deeply embedded in traditional African culture.

Among freed African Americans, the spirit of African kingship was transmitted to the clergy, whom the community viewed as their primary leaders imbued with charismatic powers. Traditionally the latter always exercised enormous authority and influence, although their powers were always considerable more limited in scope than those of African kings. Yet from the earliest times up to the present day African-American clergy have
been acknowledged as the titular heads of their local communities and have enjoyed the highest respect and loyalty of their people, who care for their material needs and often bestow lavish gifts on them and their families. (Parish 1995, 60)

With clergy being highly regarded, it became possible for the researcher to share the lessons taught of the history of African Americans. African-American history is one of greatest that begins with the many accomplishments accredited to them prior to coming to America. They are a people of greatness. As the researcher shared the greatness of the ancestors of Africans and African Americans, a sense of identity and purpose was transmitted. It became clear that the task of creating a new congregation and having any denominational heritage to draw upon would require extracting from the greatness that lies within. With God’s help, the leadership was able to value the history lessons and history of the Gullah’s as a source of identity to help secure their sense of purpose and possibilities.

The Gullah pastors, as like many of the African-American pastors, provided leadership. They were indeed important figures in the lives of African and African Americans. Throughout history it has been noted that leadership was made available to the black community. Leaders in the black community were evident from being stripped and forced to leave their native land and made to be slaves in America. Black leadership help to sustain a sense of belonging to the community in a world where hatred reigned and there was a need to be kept through it all. The black clergy provided leadership in sustaining the black community through time of bondage to the present. Though strenuous, leadership was provided. W.E.B. DuBois stated:

The preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil. A leader, a politician, an orator, a “boss,” an intriguer, an idealist, --all these he is, and ever, too, the center of a
group of men, now twenty, now a thousand in number. The combination of certain adroitness with deep-seated earnestness, of tact with consummate ability, gave him his preeminence, and helps him maintain it. (DuBois 1903, 142)

The leadership provided by the black clergy in the Gullah community was the leadership that black leadership provided across America. There was a need for leadership that reflected the spirit of the people. A people that proved to be unconquerable and resilient regardless of the climate of the time in which they live. Lincoln (1974) reiterated the stance of DuBois’ belief. “The Black pastor is more than leader and pastor, he is the projection of the people themselves, coping with adversity, symbolizing their success, and denouncing their oppressors.” (Lincoln 1974, 82)

In studying the Gullah culture it was clear that leadership was not developed on the sands of America, but the early Africans that originally made up the Gullah community had a spirit of leadership that made it possible to provide the people with the guidance needed to sustain through their difficulties. Those who endured after being stolen from their native soil, tortured and raped during the middle passage, enslaved in their “new world,” disenfranchised shortly after their emancipation, and not to mention being denied access to mainstream America, are the ones who passed the torched of leadership from their generation to the present. Leadership is a spirit of determination and survival; hope and encouragement; faith and loyalty to each other. They provided that for each other as a source of strength to make it from day by day.

As part of the Literature Review, the researcher attended a one day conference sponsored by Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia giving an overview of the Gullah culture where Dr. Akinyele Umoja, Sallie Ann Robinson and Queen Quet (Marquetta
Goodwine) were the presenters. The amazing journey of the Gullah people was
unmistakably expressed with great joy and enthusiasm. The history of the Gullah people
notes the cultural carry over from Africa to America. As African people in America, their
lives did not begin once coming to America however; it was because of their special skills
and strength gleaned while in their native land that made them well sought after. The very
infrastructure of America was built on the skills of the people who survived the middle
passage. Cotton, rice and indigo were the cash crops of America, especially South Carolina.
Economically there was a need for the Gullah people’s knowledge of how to successfully
produce the crops that would create wealth for the plantation owners. The Gullah people
were considered “black gold” or “black cargo” because of their agricultural knowledge and
skills, their physical aptitude of being able within stand the hot and moist climate of the low
country area they were being carried and lastly they ability to adapt to changes.

The presentation highlighted the unique characteristics of the Gullah people that
specifically set them apart. Their language is not the only distinguishing feature, though
distinct because of having to fuse the languages of their homeland with that of their new
language here in America, they created a language that made it possible to communicate
with American natives. The Gullah’s through their language bridged a system of
communication. The Gullah people successfully maintain much of their original language
and begin to fuse the language taught to them with their own to provide understanding to the
Americans. Their plantation owners would not understand them had it not been for their
ability to quickly create systems of communications. A unique culture which is called the
Gullah culture is what evolved because of how they lived their lives. Their languages,
practices and values are not just to be preserved but rather continued. There are still people who are the descendants of the early Gullahs that would love to educate others of their traditions and customs – their way of life.

The Gullah language, the spirituality of the Gullah people, the Gullah cuisine and their land are all characteristics that attributes to the Gullah culture. It is a culture worth celebrating. The Gullah people operated as a nation within a nation. Those who do not understand the unique community that has been formed in the Sea Islands by the Gullahs and Geechees often regard its members as ignorant, barbaric, and backwards in their speech and practices. Only recently through the work of scholars, researchers, linguists, and folklorists are people realizing the value of the Gullah language and culture. As a result of the respect that has begun to grow for this culture, more interest is gradually growing in other aspects of southern African-American culture. People are beginning to realize that there were many things that were overlooked that can now be drawn upon to change present negative trends in our society.

Gullah is a living breathing culture of a people. A people who successful survive the ridicule and scorn of being unique can be attributed to their strong spirituality. It is largely because they have the strength of God in them. Their strong sense of community, strong family ties and values are evident in the Gullah nation that stretches from the coast of Jacksonville, NC to Jacksonville, Florida and where ever descendants may reside.

This conference confirmed the importance and significance of the researcher's desire to bridge the gap between cultural awareness and spirituality. The presenters acknowledged that the Gullah spirituality undergirds the Gullah culture but did not fully present the
implications of spirituality that is present throughout the Gullah culture and how it help to shape their understanding of God, the church and leadership.

The Black church has always provided leadership for her people. “The Black church in America has made a lasting impression upon Blacks everywhere, including Africa” (Wilmore 1992, 5). “The reason for this permanent etching lies in the premise that Blacks in America have not used Christianity as it was delivered to them by racist White churches, but as its truth was authenticated to them by the experience of suffering and struggle that reinforced an acculturated religious orientation.” (Brown-Haywood 1998, 21) As result the faith that is transmitted from the leadership is that of an indigenous faith. It is a faith that makes it possible for the black community to survive shadows of insecurity. Dignity, freedom and human welfare are all important agents that are extracted from the faith that is transmitted from the leaders of black communities.

The “invisible institution”, as the church was called in its early days, produced leadership that helps to shape a community that had no model to follow. From this “invisible institution” preachers and leaders were birthed for the purpose of providing guidance and direction as to how to reach an unknown destiny called survival. Licensed or unlicensed with or without permission, wrote Raboteau (2001), these pastors held prayer meetings, preached and ministered in a very difficult situation. Brown-Haywood (1998) state,

It was only through the leadership provided from those who dared to accept the challenge of imparting a spirit of tenacity and endurance that would be needed to keep the hopes of the community from falling into a state of utter despair. The slave pastor became an indispensable part of the slaves’ living experience. The privileged status of the Black slave pastor engendered respect and a sense of authority within the community. (22)
Barna and Jackson (2004) says, "true leaders are individuals who are called by God to give direction to His people and who have character that reflects His nature and standards as well as competencies that facilitate the accomplishment of progress for the Kingdom." It is important that these individuals are able to motivate people to rise above their circumstances and limitations. The need is for individuals to focus on "what really matters, to mobilize people around a set of desired outcomes, to help people accumulate the human, physical and financial resources required to accomplish the designated tasks, and to direct people toward the compelling and unique vision that God has reserved for that group of believers." (Barna & Jackson 2004, 111)

As like any black clergy in America, the leadership of the Gullah preachers helps to make sense out of life. It is the duty of good leaders to help people make sense of the existing reality. It is then they can alter that reality to come into close alignment with the reality that most honors and blesses God. God conveys that different reality through the vision He imparts to His leaders for His people. The community of the Gullah's depended upon the leaders to help them understand their realities and give direction for better times.

**Elements Of Leadership**

As stated earlier, leadership is not an option but rather a must. African Americans have always depended upon good leaders. The black church has always had at their helm leaders that had what it takes to motivate and mobilize their community to "better days ahead." In Barna and Jackson's book, *High Impact African-American Churches*, they have identified nine specific strategies that they say enable pastors to direct a life-changing ministry. From those nine strategies, the Abundant Life Leadership Team has extracted
elements of leadership that can be claimed by other leaders to help them lead effectively.

Barna and Jackson (2004) identify nine strategies as:

1. Pastor as an Agent of Change
2. Communication That Inspires
3. Leadership in a Team Context
4. Refusal to Micromanage the Ministry
5. Investment in Developing Effective Followers
6. Impact Through Collaboration
7. The Significance of Longevity
8. Always Leading, Always Growing
9. Building the Adaptable Model (42)

The researcher will briefly discuss the nine strategies and its practical application to the ministry setting. These nine was discussed in greater details during the leadership training of the Leadership Team of Abundant Life. These strategies help to reinforce that leadership can be effective when all are aware of their responsibilities to the team. Ministry has been defined as a meeting of needs. Leaders are to clearly identify what needs are to be meet according to the present condition of those they are leading. The primary change agent in the black church is the pastor. The pastor carries the respect and honor in the role as ultimate leader. Just as the president of the United States has the power to implement policy-making and exercise veto power, the pastor in the black church does the same. And while the pastor’s role as the primary vision caster and leader in the church is seldom challenged, he is not allowed to operate as a tyrant. “Black people want their church to be a place of safety from the oppressive ways of tyrants; the community of faith is designed to be an alternative to the untenable structures that have caused suffering and hardship for black people outside of the church.” (Barna & Jackson 2004, 75)

Although pastors have influence as the ultimate leader, it is still important that they
follow the model set forth by the Holy Scriptures. A godly model makes it possible that
pastors may go forth and be effective in their leading. The advice the apostle Paul gave to
Timothy is often referred to as the model for others to follow:

> Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Timothy 4:12, 14)

The black clergy in the Gullah community was seen as the model for others to follow. They walked with respect and gave evidence of heeding to a Godly model of leadership. The Abundant Life Ministry Team understands that true leadership is leading as Christ has done. Biblical principles must be followed; first by the leaders to encourage and motivate others to do so. This strategy has been proven over the years. The church must have confidence in their leadership. The leadership provided by the pastor of Abundant Life helps to convey this as a leadership team. Abundant Life is secured to reach their ministry’s goals and objectives.

The second strategy that is employed is to use communication that inspires. “Black pastors have honed their speaking skills, recognizing the need to lift up the downtrodden as well as the responsibility to represent their people eloquently to non-black audiences and influencers.” (Barna & Jackson 2004, 76) Many Black leaders are known usually for being superb orators that can express quite fluently their convictions. With passion and persuasion they make their convictions known. “The ability to motivate black people to see themselves as God sees them and to get them to reach for the dreams that God has for them has long been a vital dimension of black leadership.” (Barna & Jackson 2004, 78)

To make a difference, a leader in the black community must be a compelling
advocate of a better life to the extent that people who have nothing left to give are willing to reach deep into their souls. In reaching deep into the souls of those who are oppressed there is a will to persevere and to prevail. That is the type of leadership that has flourished over the years in the black community. Leaders who were able to communicate in a relative manner that helps to bring to pass the mission of the people. Leaders must know how to say what needs to be said and inspire others while saying it so that the listeners may grab hold of what is being said and they would begin to live it.

Success has always been the efforts of not any individual alone when you are focused on being a community but rather the entire team. A team who has followed the lead of the coach and utilizes their gifts and graces properly for the team’s benefit will always reach their goal. It was the role of the black leaders to serve as coaches and inspire their team to reach their goal of always to do their best being the best. As a body of people that share common struggles and goals, African Americans are known for operating as a close-knit community. This closeness exist among African Americans that has always kept them operating as a team. The team concept or rather tribal concept is largely apart of whom they are by nature. It is an understanding that came with them from their native land.

As leadership is performed in a team context, the leader is responsible for not allowing their ego to control but rather what is good for the community as a whole. Barna and Jackson says,

The strength of teams is found in their blending of leaders who have complementary gifts and skills, their mutual passion for the same vision, a desire to give the credit to God rather than seek it for themselves and the ability to work within the parameters set for their team by the senior pastor, who typically serves as a super leader overseeing all leadership activity within the ministry. (2004, 89)
With a team concept there is much respect for one another. Respect, authority and responsibility is earned through the performances and services rendered. Floyd Massey, Jr. and Samuel McKinney (1991) in *Church Administration in the Black Perspective* asserts that black Baptist churches of the United States were influenced by African tribal traditions whereby once a leader was enthroned, he was able to rule with great authority but that freedom to wield power was severely reduced when a series of unwise decisions shattered the confidence of the tribe. (Massey & McKinney 1991)

The team concept is important for leaders to embody. It has made differences in the black community for years. Barna and Jackson (2004) shares:

In some ways, this team-orientation may be one of the greatest legacies of black leadership: the desire to form coalitions of like-minded people who will use their gifts to labor side by side and foster positive outcomes, without regard to personal acclaim. In spite of living in an environment in which image and reputation are primary, numerous black leaders have toiled in anonymity, working behind the scenes to introduce serious change in the families, neighborhoods, communities or regions in which they minister. Black pastors generally feel at ease with the omnipotent and omniscient ruler of a nation. The respect they get from their congregants and the unity of focus that results compensation for any absence of public applause received. That, in fact, is one of many indicators that these are pastors involved in ministry for the right reasons. (214)

Historically those ministries that have been effective in reaching their mission have been those whose leaders refuse to micromanage. The Gullah community having their roots in the rural south, and much like many of the current black church leadership structures with roots in the rural, southern, post-Civil War environment in which the black church flourished, could not afford a full time pastor. Part-time leaders were needed to carry out the day-to-day affairs of the church. Those part-time leaders were often strong laity. In many cases, it was the deacons or what was known in many non-Baptist churches, as the
Leader. The deacon or the leader had a healthy relationship with the pastor and the members.

The priesthood of all believers was manifested through the deeds and words of those who leadership was called upon. “It has assisted the laity in enjoying the freedom to minister while permitting the pastor to focus on clarifying, communicating, protecting and advancing the primary vision for the ministry.” (Barna & Jackson 2004, 108) It is extremely important to make clear the vision and mission of the ministry so that those in leadership positions would be able to carry out their duties without being constantly supervised.

“Stay in your lane” is a phrase that is often heard in the walls of Abundant Life Ministry. It is imperative if there is to be effectiveness in ministry everyone involved must carry out their share of responsibilities. No one has anytime to worry about the other person’s job. We work together yet independent from each other. Leaders need great followers. Great followers are those who accept responsibility and run with it. Barna and Jackson suggest the growing great followers take the five T’s:

• Time – There are no shortcuts; plan on allocating many hours each week to rising up world-class followers.

• Training – Encouragement, instruction, feedback and supervised participation are part of the process.

• Tracks – Routines and practices that become part of the continuity make following possible and efficient.

• Truth – Honest feedback and godly wisdom are dispensed by someone who loves them and the Master whom they serve.

• Trust – mutual respect and honor enable the relationship to grow constantly. (2004, 97)

They further say,
Eliminating or muting any of these effectively shortchanges the follower and limits his or her ability to add value through contributing to the congregation as a follower. A leader must always recognize that he or she is only as good as those who are following enables them to be. There is a need to invest ample resources in the followers for they are the lifeblood of the ministry and must be handled appropriately. Developing a culture of growth and respect for everyone brings about a ministry that is invulnerable because it has the two indispensable ingredients for effectiveness: vision-driven servant-leaders and vision-driven servant-followers. (Barna & Jackson 2004, 108)

The sixth strategy is Impact through Collaboration. The black church has always partnered with civic and social organizations to help promote the overall mission of black people. Black leadership has largely been a leadership where the social-Gospel was preached. Historically Black Fraternities and Sororities, Masonic Affiliations, NAACP, other civil right groups and many others have always worked along side the church in caring for the people. Black churches have worked together often sharing pastors because of the distance between congregations. That same spirit of partnership has enabled a relatively small and underfinanced population – blacks – to make huge gains through cooperative, church-based efforts. Black pastors rely upon such coalitions in order to see tangible progress.

The Significance of Longevity is another strategy suggested by Barna and Jackson (2004). One of the important ministry lessons we have learned through our research is that a leader needs longevity and continuity to introduce significant and lasting change (Barna & Jackson 2004). Studies have proven that the first years of a person’s leadership are invested in developing relationships and trust, selling the vision, structuring for efficiency, evaluating current processes and future opportunities, and establishing a foundation for momentum. Black leadership is patiently waiting for change to occur.
“Always Leading, Always Growing” is a call for relevance (Barna & Jackson 2004, 177). The black leader, especially the black pastor, must remain relevant. In conjunction with the ninth strategy, Building the Adaptable Model, these two models are evident in how the pastor/leader positions oneself to grow and learn more as they are fulfilling their job requirements. “The flexibility and growth potential are more common in black churches because of the clergy-laity partnership and the time-honored tradition of experimentation with new approaches to ministry.” (Barna & Jackson 2004, 180) The leadership over the years within the black community has taught that as a community of faith we must be willing to change and adapt to changes. Many of the changes may at times be beyond our control. Black leaders in the church and community can be heard praying as they lead:

God grant me the serenity to
Accept the things that I can not change;
Courage to change the things that I can;
And the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as He did, this sinful world
As it is, not as I would have it;

Trusting that He will make all things
Right if I surrender to His will;

That I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with Him forever in the next. –Reinhold Niebuhr

Summary

A nation within a nation clearly defines the black church. “The black church is a cauldron and preserver of black culture. Lincoln and Mamiya (1990, 8) have asserted, The
black church has no challenger as the cultural womb of the black community.” Through the “preaching, the music, and the frenzy” and other rituals of worship, the black church serves as the major reservoir of the black community’s cultural heritage. Noting its crucial role in preserving black culture, Lincoln and Mamiya (1990, 9) argue that “a demise of the black religious tradition would have profound implication for the preservation of culture.” Thus the role of the black church in the Gullah community and thus the role of Abundant Life must be fulfilled. Leaders must step forward and carry out the plan if a people are to continue to make positive impacts in the world. They must see themselves as God does, fearfully and wonderfully made by the hands of God with the capacity to accomplish their God given duties and responsibilities to lead others to their destiny.

Lincoln and Mamiya (1990, 13) also point out that much of black culture is heavily indebted to the black religious tradition, including most forms of black music, drama, literature, storytelling, and even humor. Abundant Life must continue in the tradition of the black church of providing leadership to others through its various expressions of faith. Douglas and Hopson (2001) further state that just as the church has nurtured black leaders, it has done the same for black musicians, actors, and artists of other kinds. The black church serves a vital role in maintaining their position in America’s society. The leadership of the black church is in essence preserving not just the heritage of black people but the very heritage of America.

In the chapter to follow, the researcher will further assert the project findings. The Gullah culture will be closely viewed as a culture where the black church and black leadership bridged the gap of cultural awareness and spirituality. The early Gullahs knew
their history and shared it with their children. Their children were responsible for sharing the strong legacy of their ancestors to maintain the Gullah life. Abundant Life will continue to flourish as she remains mindful of others who were once new to a new world and created a lasting impact on the world.
CHAPTER IV

THE MINISTRY PROJECT

Chapter four gives a full account of the Doctor of Ministry project objectives, people with whom the researcher worked, evaluation results and research results of the Doctoral project.

The Ministry Project Objectives

An important objective of this dissertation was to present a case study of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise, and Worship Center, Inc. (ALPPWC). ALPPWC is a ministry that does not have a denominational affiliation, thus there is no known heritage or history to draw upon for denominational identity. Abundant Life is located in Camden, South Carolina with a small membership of approximately 160. ALPPWC empowers and educates a particular African-American community to develop a greater sense of awareness and assurance of who they are created to be through a leadership development program incorporating holistic perspectives of the Gullah culture. ALPPWC relies on the God of history for its understanding of who it is and God’s plan and His purpose for its meaning. For ALPPWC, there is a need to reflect on God’s activities in the life of a people that was called to discover their identity and further develop their identity. It is a story that helps to express their faith in God.

The overall goal for this doctoral project was twofold. (1) The researcher proposed to build the confidence and self-esteem of those in leadership at ALPPWC by utilizing the
history and culture of the Gullah culture within a Kwanzaa framework. (2) The researcher developed a leadership-training manual to be used at ALPPWC to help the congregation’s members to define who they are, both as individuals and in relation to God’s plan for them.

The Ministry Project Group

The researcher addressed the ministry issue with Quality Unlimited (QU), a non-profit community organization that has been established to improve the quality of life among those of African and African-American descent. Quality Unlimited is committed to empowering, equipping, elevating and educating those not only in their respective community but with all they are blessed to share their gifts, talents, and knowledge through cultural celebrations throughout the calendar year. Some to include: Juneteenth, Kwanzaa and Black History Celebrations.

The researcher believed that Quality Unlimited was best suited in helping the researcher in the following ways: 1) provided access to members of their organization; 2) functioned as a think tank; 3) collaborated with the researcher to disseminate findings; and 4) evaluated the ministry project. Additionally, there were members of QU who were also members of Abundant Life’s Leadership Team. These members were able to look at themselves objectively and hear first how the Leadership Team is viewed from an outsider’s perspective. QU was able to give both positive and critical feedback as part of their evaluation. The information shared by the researcher served as a reference for QU and helped to further shape and develop QU’s organization in accomplishing its mission.

In addition to QU, most of the work and conversations held concerning the findings of this project were with the Leadership Team of Abundant Life. Although the researcher
spent much time securing information about the Gullah community, the true lesson learned came in always identifying the context in which leadership is being or is to be currently provided and the need to always keep ministry in context. People are the common denominator in providing ministry, however; people change, as does their culture. The present culture must always be a consideration of the type of leadership being provided.

Overall the researcher’s aim was to experience a change in the overall confidence and self esteem of the leadership of the 12-Fold Ministry of the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise & Worship Center. The 12-Fold Ministry consists of the twelve leaders who are responsible for leading the church and community in fulfilling the mission of the church. Prior to the project, the ministry’s lack of connection to a denominational body influenced its leadership approach. The project helped in bridging the gap between the ministry’s own understanding of spirituality and African-American cultural awareness, especially the Gullah community of the low country of South Carolina. As a result, a rise in the collective self-esteem and confidence level has inspired the ministry to lead more effectively.

**Research Results**

The results of the research reflect descriptive summaries of questions asked by the researcher during one-on-one interviews, small focus group interviews and the field observations. This was done over a period of eighteen months during the field experience in the Sea Islands (Low Country) of South Carolina, specifically Charleston and Colleton Counties.

The research findings have been organized via responses to the three open-ended questions (below) asked by the researcher during interviews. Because of the researcher’s
kindred connection to the communities where the interviews were held, the researcher was able to schedule interviews and opportunities to observe events held in the Gullah community. Interviews were not only held with known individuals, but also those who served as a good resource for the project.

**Interview Questions**

**Question #1. What are the important aspects of Gullah culture?**

Identifying the aspects of Gullah culture was important to get to the heart of what makes them unique in who they are and why they (the Gullah people) require leadership development. It was the researcher's goal to identify the elements of the Gullah culture that demonstrates clearly their distinction from any other African-American subcultures. A culture consists of material and nonmaterial aspects of a way of life, which are shared and transmitted among members of a society. Culture can be considered a way of life by which members of a community exchange and transmit their values and views. Culture is the production and consumption of everyday life—how everyday life is accounted for—through verbal exchanges, nonverbal performances, and group practices. The Gullah ‘way of life’ can be understood by providing aspects of their culture as responses to what material and nonmaterial aspects are of value.

The primary aspect of Gullah culture that identifies their uniqueness is their language. It remains an oral tradition; the emphasis is not placed on written text. It is the foundation of Gullah culture. The Gullah language resonates with the rhythms of the islands, forming an instrument of interaction among Gullah people. Gullah language represents a connection with African roots and ancestral traditions. The language is African
by definition, for its operates as a “code of the spirit,” a method by which cultural traditions are passed from one generation to another. Gullah people are self-expressive, and the language provides a sense of community, belonging and continuity with the past.

From Angola, Senegal, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the ‘Gold Coast,’ and the ‘Windward Coast’ of Africa, the Gullah population is made up of former slaves. Those enslaved ancestors of Gullah people who came from Africa were bilingual, and in some cases trilingual. Linguistic sources of Gullah sounds and grammar represent a diversity of African languages including Gola, Gidzi, Kissee, Ewe, Yoruba, Igbo, Twi, Efik, Fanti and Kongo. Vocabulary sources originate from Kongo, Yoruba, Mende, Ewe, and Bambara languages. The importance of the Gullah language may be interpreted from statements cited below from interviews:

“We talk de wey we do ‘cause its who we is.”

“It sounds strange to others because they not from here, but I understand.”

“If you wanna know who we is and why we is, ya gotta walk the walk and talk the talk with us.”

“The uniqueness of the Gullah language, my language, is because it is what has been passed down by our ancestors. It’s not what it use to be, but it is still what sets us apart.”

“If you really wanna understand, you gotta be here to see how we live and not just talk. How we talk is only one way to see who we are. We talk and live Gullah.”

“….how ya mean? We aint talkin’ no Gullah, we is who we is. Dey white man can’t make us talk like him ‘cause we ain’t him. We is who we is and that’s that.”

For many, it is considered a form of broken English. However, the language is clearly evidence of their intellect. It is evidence of their ability to survive the shadows of slavery. It is evidence of their ability to create a channel of communication and of survival.
The Gullah language brings many backgrounds together and creates an oneness among them that no other community can deny. It was once an Anglo-centric viewpoint that the Gullah language should not be spoken in public settings. By implying that it is not a language only forced many to lead double lives. In public there was pressure to speak what was considered Standard English. In the presence of the people of the Gullah community, it was acceptable to speak the language that had been passed down from one generation to the next.

It is not a language that is broken, but rather an art that should be treasured. It is a heritage and a history that speaks to the strength of a people who endured hardships and yet survived. It is a culture that should be passed along to the younger generation as a means of education and preservation of a community.

Gullah people are famous for the quality of their hand made baskets and other items that can be bought along Low Country roads. In addition to their hand made baskets, other handcrafted materials include quilts, casting nets, and fishing boats. The Gullah people believe that God gave them the ability to create whatever was necessary for survival, as they would have nothing handed to them. Handmade clothing stitched together without the assistance of a sewing machine is highly valued by the Gullah. To the Gullah, anything made by hand or grown on their soil is better than purchasing from merchants.

The crafting of sweet grass baskets forms a visible link to the African heritage of Gullah people. The baskets that are made serve a functional purpose, i.e., production of rice, cotton and indigo. Men usually made larger baskets for vegetables and stables, while women made smaller baskets for domestic needs. Baskets were often crafted from indigenous materials such as long leaf pine needles, palmetto leaves, bulrushes, and, of
course, sweet grass. These baskets are one of the aspects of their culture that speaks to their uniqueness and creativity. It is a tradition that was passed on from one generation to the next and is quickly fading in our present culture.

Red rice and fish on Friday, hoppin’ john, collard greens, and pig’s feet on New Year’s Day are some well-known Gullah dishes. Also included in Gullah cuisine is okra, lima beans, and Low Country seafood. It cannot be denied that food is one of the important aspects of Gullah culture. Food for the Gullah is not just for human sustenance, but it is often the reason for coming together and staying together. Food is used as a means for family gatherings and celebrations. Much time is spent preparing the meals. The presentation is just as important as the preparation of the food. Food acts as an expression of love and concern. Food is not just to be eaten, but also to be celebrated. It provides healing and restoration for the soul. The Gullah community believes in the sharing of food. Many homes in the Gullah community will make sure that a meal has been prepared just in case company stops by. It is customary for the Gullah people to apologize for not having food to offer you if none is available.

Another extremely important aspect of the Gullah culture is family. The Gullah culture has high regards for kindred connection. The Gullah people believe that the way you treat your family indicates whether you will survive outside its bonds. Aunts, uncles, cousins, distant relatives and non-blood people may be considered family. The bonds of connection and loyalty and love are voiced through how well you treat one another. When asked about family:

“All we got is family. We is one big happy family.”
“Blood is thicker than water. You gotta support those w’id (with) your blood in them.”

“Friends may come and friends may go, but your family is their for life.”

“We believes in building our family up. Keepin’ each other close. For when de trouble come, you know who you got to depend on.”

The Gullah community has taken the mindset that all people should be valued and respected. It is the family’s job to teach authority and submission. The Gullah community believes it is their job to care for one another. There is a literally interpretation of the Biblical passage “love thy neighbor as thyself.” Gullah homes and families can be found living in close proximity to one another. Children within the Gullah family may marry and seek residence even on the same property of their parents.

An extremely important aspect of the Gullah culture born of family relationships is the appreciation of other people—good old-fashioned respect. They believe in the spiritually of the “Golden Rule”. The values of the Gullah people are centered on issues of religion, family and community. Their culture is one that lifts them up in how well they embrace one another and support each other. In times of crisis, the Gullah community rallies together to support those in need.

**Question #2: What makes Gullah spirituality/religion distinct?**

Gullah spiritual life operates as a central ethos and foundation in their culture. The Almighty God is at the center of who they are. Their connection to the Creator is deep. All that they say and do is guided by the spiritual powers, beliefs and personal values that are reflective of their understanding of who God is and works in their lives. Religious beliefs and teachings guide the Gullah sense of justice, equity, kinship, social awareness, and
community relations. Religion provides the Gullah with a basic philosophy from which life becomes directed, a ‘divine order’. The tradition of the Gullah sits on the foundation of their belief in God. All that is done in their lives promotes ‘walking with God’. Below are some statements extracted from interviews with regard to the Gullah people’s relationship with God.

“If it had not been for the Lawd, I don’t know where I be.”

“De Lawd is first in all we do and is in everything we do. We ain’t going to do or be wit out de Lawd by us.”

“Church! Oh yeah, I live in church. In church I get me my Jesus to make it through the week. Can’t live without Jesus.”

“Faith in the Almighty God gets us by.”

“If you put God first and man next, and yourself last – God will bless you to make it from day to day. You say Gullah religion, we say, it’s who we are -God in us is who we are.”

“We let Jesus fix it for us. No need not to worry ‘bout it. God will fix it. Trust in the Lord all the time and He’ll make everything alright.”

“Our soul is edified when we go to church. We getting ready to leave this place one day and we got to go to the church house to make sure we straight when it is time to go.”

In the Gullah culture there is little distinction, if any, among churches. Most of the churches in the Gullah community are Baptist or Methodist. However, what is expressed and experienced in their church does not set them apart from one another. Church for the Gullah community is not an activity but a way of life. Attending church is their expression of spiritually. Church is considered one of their meeting places where the relationship with God is strengthened and constantly affirmed. It is in their church service that there is a liberty to express their joys, frustrations, disappointments, appreciations and the like. They
believe you should ‘take your burdens to the Lord (church) and leave them there’. Church is where they receive their healing from the cares of the world. Their connection with God is regenerated after church attendance. Church is not optional, but a must for growth.

A major characteristic of the Gullah is their understanding of ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’. The Gullahs believe that their work on earth is their preparation to go to Heaven. They believe that when one does pass on, his soul departs from him and goes to heaven, while the spirit may remain on earth to serve as guardian angel to the living descendants. Funeral services for the Gullahs have toned down considerably. However, the culture once required mourners to decorate graves with prized possessions of their dead in memory of them. The ‘dressing’ of graves, legends and accounts of visitations and substantive Gullah folklore add significant dimension to this one specific concept – family members who have passed “are still with us now.”

Gullah people believe their ancestors maintain presence in their daily lives. They believe strongly in the living dead. It has been said on several visits with the Gullah people that they feel the presence of their ancestors, especially when something is going on in their family – a celebration or distress. They believe strongly that their ancestors still communicate to them through dreams and visions. Guidance is given through the spirits of their ancestors. The souls of their dead are believe to be their spiritual anchors.

Existing literature does not adequately reflect the resilience of Gullah people, nor does it accurately describe current strategies being implemented to preserve and protect Gullah culture. Gullah language and culture have not yet been made complete victims of the impact of land development, resort tourism, or assimilation with mainlanders. It is the
attitude of the Gullah people that they must educate their children concerning the rich culture that survive the shadows of slavery and the civil rights era. They strongly believe that in telling their story to the younger it will empower them to live and lead in a manner that reflects the strength of their ancestors. The Gullah people strongly believe that they have been created to sustain any obstacles and challenges that may come their way. Their faith in God is passed on from generation to generation. Their God has kept them alive from generation to generation.

The foundation of Gullah culture is one of a deep and abiding faith in the Almighty God. They strongly believe that God will provide them with direction and guidance to retain the strength needed to survive as their culture is being infuriated with mainstream America. Once all they had and depended upon was themselves; now, because of the obstacles presented by a value system based on materialism, their culture has changed. More and more are pursuing lives outside of once was their tightly secure community of faith.

Their respect for God is evident in their daily lives. They believe respect is to be given to all and desire to have respect of their culture – language, faith, history, heritage, traditions. Because of academic and scientific intrusions, the Gullah people feel exploited. As a result, the Gullah people have become distrustful of outsiders and less willing to share information about their culture. They have witnessed how others have made telling their story lucrative. They deserve to be recognized as the people they are – children of God who survived the times of difficulty and kept their faith in the God who made them.

**Question #3: How are spiritual leaders of the Gullah culture selected and identified?**

In the Gullah culture, it is clearly understood that leaders are made in heaven and sent
down from God. They do not believe that a leader can be self-made or created by simply studying books. Many expressed that it happens has a result of those already in leadership ‘having an eye’ to identify other leaders or those who will carry on when their work is done. The Gullah culture is rich in the tradition of passing the torch. They believe that a leader must be able to identify his or her successor so that the people will not perish, but continued to be pointed in the ‘right direction’. Leadership provides guidance to the community and is always in tune with God’s will for God’s people. Leadership passes on the richness of their history and heritage and encourages their community to maintain its values.

Leadership in the Gullah community is passed on from the older generation to the younger. The challenge of preserving Gullah language and culture rests squarely on the shoulders of the younger generations. The Gullah culture is largely an oral tradition that depends on their story being told for survival. It must be shared in a manner that reflects the reality of their survival through times less favorable for people of color. It is a story of how greatness runs through their blood because of the tenacity, intellect and perseverance of their ancestors. It is a story that speaks of how God shaped their circumstances not to keep them from excelling, but rather to build them to be people of strong character and integrity.

Leaders in the Gullah community were those who God called and placed His spirit in them to help the community to stay alive and vibrant. The researcher documented some of the sentiments of the Gullah people concerning leadership:

“Us leaders must encourage one another and never forget our job is to teach others to lead.”

“Leaders got to study under bigger leaders. So when the bigger leader’s time is up, they can then fill their shoes and say it the way the big leaders use to say it. They then are the big leaders.”
"The leaders are those who God gave the gift of sight to. They can see what the people can’t see and tell them what they need to do. They got to stay close to God to hear God."

“We got leaders in the church, family, community – all about. But the one thing is that they got to be right. And to be right, they know the Lord and make sure that others know the Lord too. Can’t lead without the Lord’s help.”

“To lead ya gotta know w’ay you goin’ and w’ay you comes from. Gotta know the whole story. Can’t lead telling half d’ tru’t.”

The Gullah community believes that their leaders are equipped to tell their story. They believe that if you know the story, it makes you strong and makes it possible to help others be who God wants them to be. Leaders in the Gullah community are people of remarkable faith in God, their ancestors, the people (community) and themselves. Leaders must be able to hear from God and be directed by God and their ancestors to lead the Gullah community through their lives.

**Project Evaluation**

Project evaluation was conducted in two ways. First, the researcher conducted an ethnographic analysis of the ministry project. Secondly, Quality Unlimited conducted a formal evaluation of materials used in the two courses taught and evaluated a manual the researcher developed.

**Ethnographic Research Results**

In conducting the case study of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Inc., the researcher identified that there was a need to build positive self esteem of the leaders of the 12-fold ministry (ALPPWC) and provide them with a ministry manual that communicated the purposes and expectations of each of the 12 ministries. Prior to providing
the manual, the leadership team participated in two leadership courses developed and taught
by the researcher. At the conclusion of each course, the researcher had participants complete
an evaluation of the course. QU used the Participant Course Evaluation reports (see
Appendix B) as part of QU’s evaluation. This evaluation was used to measure how well they
understood the course information. The results the researcher uncovered are as follows:

Evaluation of such a task largely depended on the project group and leadership team
of Abundant Life’s desire to share their true sentiments concerning the knowledge being
shared with them and how they believe it has influenced their ability to lead. The researcher
based the overall effectiveness of the project on the accomplishment of short-term goals and
objectives of the ministry. It was not the intent of the researcher to determine how well the
Abundant Life Leadership Team retained the information shared concerning the Gullah
community, but rather it helped to build their confidence in themselves so that they could
survive challenging times and develop a greater sense of community. The researcher
expected to see a more cohesive community among leaders who empower and support each
other in carrying out the vision and mission of the Church.

The researcher developed The Ministry and Administration Leadership Manual (see
Appendix A) as a result of the researcher’s analysis regarding the lack of confidence the
Gullah participants had in themselves to survive challenging times and develop a greater
sense of community. The researcher had expected to see a more cohesive community among
leaders who empower and support each other in carrying out the vision and mission of the
Church.
Quality Unlimited Evaluations

Quality Unlimited (QU) evaluated this project in several ways. First, they gave the 12-fold leaders a copy of The Ministry and Administration Leadership Manual (see Appendix A) and had them set goals and objectives for the upcoming ministry year. Secondly, at the end of the year the leaders were asked to prepare an End of the Year Report (see Appendix C) reflecting their ability to communicate effectively to their respective ministry team the mission of their ministry and establish goals and objectives that would secure their success. This report reflects their understanding of the mission of their respective ministry and gave them the opportunity to assess rather or not they accomplish their goals and objectives for the year. This was done in the form of creating a manual that would help in the overall administration and ministry of Abundant Life. The Ministry and Administration Leadership Manual (see Appendix A) are both the results of the project and the ongoing tool of evaluation of the leadership of the ministry. QU used these two tools to conduct their evaluation.

Results and Conclusions of Quality Unlimited Evaluations

Quality Unlimited found that the researcher’s intent of this project would serve to affirm the identity of those in leadership at the newly formed congregation. The project was administered properly, the individuals engaged in leadership and ministries of this interdenominational body, and have now tapped into the larger African-American culture, specifically through the awareness of the Gullah people. The Gullah people remain a community of faith that is strongly connected to God for support, strength and directions—through the challenges of their lives and they maintained their commitment to build and
express their faith. A sense of community makes it possible to look forward to what lies ahead. In the words of one of the spiritually shared by the Gullah community:

“Keep looking up!
Better days are coming, bye and bye
When I see that city, far beyond the skies
Trouble be over, I’ll be home at last
Better days are coming, bye and bye”

Abundant Life’s Purpose

The conditions of society warrant a concerted effort by Christians to help rid individuals of the ills of society. Abundant Life Ministry was established to reach individuals of all ages and conditions. The mission is as follows:

1). promote spiritual growth;
2). offer assistance to the downtrodden;
3). help prevent the further decay of the family unit; and
4). bring hope to the hopeless through the Christian experience.

The leadership of Abundant Life did indeed take hold of the vision and began to respond differently because of the knowledge acquired from the project. In the words of the chairman of the administrative council, “We learned how those of African descent – the Gullah people of the Low Country - successfully created harmonious relationships and provided an atmosphere for spiritual growth and understanding of the Word and Will of God. An atmosphere of community that strengthens them through their difficulties and led them into their God given purpose – that purpose is to love and make lives better for those you touch.”

It is clear that all will benefit from learning how our (African American with faith
in God) activities, from town meetings to sporting events, have spiritual overtones that speak to who we are and from where and who we come. History is telling this story. As the story of survival and existence is told, a greater sense of awareness and confidence will be acquired. A spirit of leadership will be embodied, and faith will be transmitted.

The church, Abundant Life, embraced the Ministry and Administrative Leadership Manual (see Appendix A) with excitement. Those engaged in the ministry’s leadership team helped with the documentation of the policies and procedures. It has been witnessed since the conclusion of the project that the leadership team operates with more confidence, as the manual serves as a source of information on how to maintain the effectiveness of ministry.

**Specific Ethnographic Findings**

It is the researchers theory that when individuals have a sense of history to draw upon for identity, they are able to feel more secure with themselves and their ability to lead. In researching the Gullah people, a sense of history was experienced. It was the opinion of the researcher that the legacy of the Gullahs would help to motivate and encourage leaders in the Abundant Life ministry with low self-esteem and self-worth to become more effective leaders. It became apparent through the project the importance to depend on their personal relationship with God in doing what has never been done before by them. The legacy of the Gullah spoke to how their dependence on God and their self awareness and cultural awareness can help to cultivate a sense of self-worth that leads to positive self-esteem and greater effectiveness in leadership.

It is clear that the presence of God in the lives of the Gullah people reflect the ability
of God to sustain his people through difficult situations. The song writer wrote, “if it had not been for the Lord on my side, where would I be?” which reflects the need to be cognizant of God’s presence and leading in our lives. With God, all things are possible. It is possible to know where you came from and where it is that you are going.

Benjamin Elijah Mays, born 1895 to former slave, became a Baptist minister, earned a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, served as Dean of the Howard University School of Religion, was an advisor to several United States presidents, served as a member and as President of the Atlanta Board of Education, and was President of Morehouse College for 27 years. Mays says, “there is no dichotomy between what we believe and what we do. We do what we believe. If an atheistic communist can act on his belief, a Christian can act on his.” (Mays 1983) It is believe that through the awareness of God’s calling and commission on our lives, we are able to perform the impossible and leave an impression that others will benefit. We must ‘act out’ the faith we say that we have. We must be living testimonies of what it is we say we believe when we say that we have faith in the Almighty God. Our God has proven to be one of liberation, restoration and redemption.

It is clear that religion has been a powerful force in the Gullah culture. It is through their relationship with God that they have endured the challenges of life. The final chapter of this dissertation is the result of the community of believers at Abundant Life recognizing God’s ability to equip them for effective ministry. It resulted in the development of their first Ministry and Administrative Leadership Manual (see Appendix A).
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

One of the project’s primary objectives was to give information of the Gullah community and how the Gullah community’s faith in the Almighty God helps to sustain them through the challenges of life. In doing so, the researcher’s theory that those engaged in the project would be able to claim and reclaim the history and heritage of African Americans as a testimony that leadership goals and objectives can be clearly developed and also fulfilled. The project’s overarching goal was to strengthen the self-esteem and confidence of the Leadership Team of Abundant Life. The leadership team’s task was to lead the newly formed congregation into a particular fulfillment of purpose. As a result of sharing the incredible faith of the Gullah people, the Leadership Team of Abundant Life experienced a boost in moral and began to fulfill the objective of developing a Ministry and Administrative Leadership Manual (see Appendix A) that would help them in the manifestation of the vision/mission of ALPPWC.

The research project was a labor of love. It was truly a win/win situation. Both the researcher and those who participated in the project were winners. However, they are not the only winners; the entire congregation and community of the Abundant Life Ministry were winners. As a result of the success of the project, leadership was not only explored but also manifested through the men and women who are providing leadership and will provide leadership in the future. True leaders seek to work both effectively and efficiently. In the
context of leadership, Abundant Life Leadership Team must continue to provide effective and efficient leadership, they (the leaders and followers) must be clear concerning who called them to provide leadership, who are they leading, how are they to carry out their assigned duties and responsibilities, what are the characteristics of a leader, and for what purpose are they leading?

**Project Results**

At the beginning of this research, the issue identified was the lack of confidence among the leaders of the Abundant Life Ministry because of no concrete information that specifically outlined the duties and responsibilities of those engaged in ministry leadership. The goal was to educate and train the leadership of their duties and as a result the leaders would gain positive self esteem making it them more secure in their abilities to accomplish the goals and objectives of their respective ministry. One of the primary goals was for individuals to become educated and trained for leadership. Effective leadership is when leaders are comfortable with their skills and the knowledge needed for effectiveness in their assigned area. It was important that leaders do not allow their insecurities and ignorance to affect their work. A leader is more effective at leading others and performing necessary tasks when he or she is comfortable and knowledgeable in the workplace.

Without confidence, it is impossible for a leader to fulfill his potential. The greater usefulness is when one is successfully accomplishing that which has been assigned to him or her. Being confident and having a positive self-image are necessary for carrying out God’s vision and mission.

The overall goal for this doctoral project was twofold and was successfully
accomplished. (1) The researcher built the confidence and self-esteem of those in leadership at ALPPWC by utilizing the history and culture of the Gullah culture. (2) The researcher developed a leadership-training manual to be used at ALPPWC to help the congregation's members to define who they are, both as individuals and in relation to God's plan for them.

The researcher believes that all people learn by precepts, examples and/or experiences. Precepts are instructions or rules that may guide one's actions. Learning by examples is close observation of another that may serve as a model to determine one's actions. Experience has been said to be the best teacher of all. It is when one is actively involved over a period of time where as knowledge and skills may be acquired. Other congregations will be able to do as the researcher has done by identifying a culture that reflects who they are or striving to become, identify the elements of the particular culture that can be used to help strengthen the leadership of that congregation and employ them as they are manifesting their vision.

To build the confidence and self-esteem of the ALPPWC Ministry Leadership Team, the spirituality of the Gullah people was explored. In studying this distinctive group of Black Americans from South Carolina and Georgia, the leadership team recognized that it is more than possible to provide ministry to a body of believers who have not denominational heritage or history to draw from. The strength and the fortitude of the Gullahs have encouraged them to depend deeply on God's presence and power in their lives to accomplish goals and objectives set for ministry.

The purpose of this study bridged the gap between cultural awareness and spirituality. This was based on cultural theory that the more African Americans learn how
they are descendants of people with unconquerable spirits and a deep sense of spiritual connection to the Almighty God, the more confidence they (African Americans) will have in themselves. The Gullahs’ spiritual life operates as a central ethos and foundation for their culture, and now the leaders of ALLPWC allow their spiritual life to reflect the same. The project proved that the spiritual overtones in the African-American culture makes them who they are and helps to affirm their spirituality and connection with God.

The development of an ALPPWC Ministry and Administrative Leadership Manual provided a tool by which congregational leaders can became clearer in identifying their respective ministry calling. The manual contains policies and procedures for effective leadership utilizing Gullah cultural perspectives and a Kwanzaa framework. It is important for leadership to know the parameters they are to work within in order for the overall mission to be accomplished.

With the development of the Ministry and Administrative Leadership Manual (see Appendix A) the researcher finds that ministry is able to be more effective and efficient. The entire congregation is able to share in holding leaders accountable to their roles as leaders. The leaders have learned the value of not only being responsible but also being held accountable. The manual is a major asset to the ministry. Although it is being tested and tried, it provides a foundation on which to build upon. The manual also serves as a source of pride among the leaders for the role in helping the researcher fulfill the requirements of the doctoral project.

Summary

The Project involved three activities: First, the creation and teaching two leadership
courses (seven three-hour classes) developed by the researcher; second, a series of sermons on “Black Self-Esteem” delivered by the researcher, and third, the execution of a Leadership Conference: L.I.F.E. (Leadership in Fellowship & Enrichment). The doctoral project also included several meetings over two years between the pastor and the ministry leaders. It was through those meetings that each of ALPPWCs twelve-member ministries defined what they were called to do and how they were to accomplish their assigned duties within the church.

From those meetings the contents of the manual was developed and used to help shape ministry for the newly formed congregation. The activities of the project proved to be very resourceful in developing the identity of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Inc.

One of the lessons learned from the project was to not assume that individuals who may hold leadership positions on their jobs or in the community will make good church leaders without properly training and developing them as such. Church leadership requires extensive training and discipline. It can not be done without assuring that all in leadership are equipped with the knowledge and awareness of the vision and mission of the ministry they have been called to provide service.

The creation and teaching of the two courses by the researcher served to be very useful in not only providing a greater sense and awareness of African-American history and culture for the ministry leaders but also a good way to begin conditioning the minds to discovery new opportunities to lead when there is not a predecessor to serve as a role model in the position they are currently providing leadership.

The first course, Heritage & History of the Gullah People, focused on the history and
cultural aspects of language, religion, family and social relationships of the Gullah people. Overcoming the threats to their survival inflicted upon the Gullah people largely depended on their sense of self worth and God’s affirmation of their worth and value. This course explored how the Gullah positioned themselves to survive and achieve through the various shadows of slavery, civil rights and various forms of genocide, i.e., black-on-black crime, institutional racism, sexism, crime, mis-education, under-education and poverty.

This class fostered an understanding and appreciation of the Gullah people. It provided the leaders of the ministry with a point of reference. Using it, they could survive any shadows that may try to hinder progress and carry out the vision and mission of their ministry. They too can be survivors and conquerors, like the Gullah people themselves.

The second course, *Leadership: Passion, Purpose & Power* is where the leaders extracted the qualities of leadership needed to lead others. Through a theological, biblical, and social/psychological lens, this study helped to affirm the importance of individuals recognizing and utilizing leadership abilities within themselves. Practical application and evaluation of leadership skills and abilities was exercised throughout this three-month course. Goals and objectives were identified and executed accordingly.

Developing an understanding of Gullah culture helped the congregational leaders to develop a leadership that gave meaning to what they were called to do. Development of this course was instrumental in the creation of the leadership manual which outlines the policies and procedures necessary for effective congregational leadership utilizing an indigenous culture.

The ministry project served as a reminder of the need to rid leaders of any possible
insecurity prior to placing them in leadership position. When leaders are not confident, it
hinders growth and productivity. Insecure leaders may spend more time trying to prove to
themselves that they are leaders. They may find themselves engaged in conversations and
activities to mask their lack of knowledge and skills. They may take their position of
leadership in the ministry as an opportunity to exert authority that they do not feel they have
anywhere else. It is for this reason that training and development cannot be over
emphasized. Written communication is very valuable in maintaining order. Written
communication provides the necessary tools for accountability. It is almost impossible to
hold leadership accountable if there is not a clear understanding of what is being asked of
them and from them. A well-written document that communicates expectations helps in
minimizing misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

More can be accomplished when there is certainty that the task of doing ministry will
be completed because of a sense of confidence about one's calling. A more effective leader
is one who is secure with his ability to perform ministry. It is important to know that God
has given you the necessary tools to do His work. It became clear to the researcher that it
was the researcher's responsibility to help secure the success of ministry by providing a tool
that helps to articulate the ultimate goal from the newly developed congregation that was
formed to carry out the mission and purpose of the church.

As pastor, the researcher can attest to the fact that if a leader has insecurities,
leadership is often ineffective. Usually there are insecurities with leaders when they lack
knowledge of the position and spend more time meeting the expectation of others and not
God. The researcher can now attest that when leaders are secure more can be accomplish.
Task will not go left undone, but rather will be accomplished.

In addressing the ministry issue, it is important to note the importance of not adding to the insecurities that already exist. Avoid exacerbating existing feelings of uncertainty in others. If possible, show the insecure leaders that their view of themselves may not be lining up with God’s view of them and one must see himself as God does. God requires order. A part of understanding God’s order is not only have the leaders feel good about the abilities to lead but provide all involved with the opportunity to read it for themselves.

**Future Implications for Ministry**

The Discovery and Development of Identity for Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Inc. has proven the any Christian church that is greatly concerned about its welfare and future must be willing to carefully evaluate and analyze their governing documents that provide the bases and understanding for their ministry. What was discovered was the importance of knowing who you are and why you were created. It is important to always bear in mind the intent of a creation. Abundant Life is not able to make differences among themselves and others unless it is constantly reminded of why it was created. The organizational structure of a ministry provides a ministry with the means of manifesting their purpose for being. It is necessary to make sure that all involved in providing leadership grasp a working understanding of how to carry out the work of the church.

The leadership of the Abundant Life discovered that the original mission of the Church as ordained by Jesus the Christ has not changed because of it being a newly formed congregation. The history of others can help to shape a greater understanding of who you are. ALPPWC leaders discovered that the original mission of the church is to offer salvation
to persons in need and to create an environment where salvation can be expressed and embraced in liberty. ALPPWC discovered that its mission is to build people through exalting Christ. Everyone should be made to feel good about the person God created them to be.

An awareness of history, culture, current status and future possibilities will help others tap into God’s power and presence in their lives and they will be able to accomplish the greatest task of all: leading others into a deeper relationship with God. It is clear that times will change and with the changing of times, the needs of people may change or at least how to meet their needs. It is for that reason that the manual being offered serves merely as a model for others to help develop a sense of identity for their respective ministry.

ALLPWC is committed to preserving the integrity of the gospel message by maintaining a level of order and commitment to the task before them. This project has proven that ministry indeed is work. However, it is a work that comes with great rewards when others step forward and begin to lead others.
APPENDIX A

MINISTRY AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP MANUAL

Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

Church History
The Birth of
Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Inc.

Then the Lord answered me and said:
“Write the vision and make it plain on tablets,
That he may run whom reads it.
For the vision is yet for an appointed time;
But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.
Though it taries, wait for it;
Because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” Habakkuk 2:2-3

Having been called by God and chosen to do ministry under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, A. DuPriest Givens Little was given a vision by God to organize and establish a ministry that will promote life, as God desires for us to live. A ministry that will promote living life in the fullness of God’s abundance of blessings and security for God’s people is what God was calling for. As God spoke, this God fearing man, A. DuPriest Givens Little, was reminded that although the devil comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy; God sent Christ Jesus to give us life and to give us life more abundantly. The Abundant Life Ministries is what was birthed.

Minister Little continued in prayer and supplications before the Lord, seeking guidance and direction of how to walk in obedience concerning the vision of God for God’s people. In 1994, he was led to further the vision and initiated a Prayer, Praise and Worship Clinic. This Spiritual Clinic has been held throughout South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia, with Minister Little serving as the chief facilitator and clinician. It is considered as the foundation of the Abundant Life Fellowship Ministries, and has been held annually since the ministry’s conception. The clinic is usually a three-day session with workshops and classes on the topics of prayer, praise and worship. It concludes with a Gospel Music Extravaganza that features those who attended the Gospel Music Workshop segment of the clinic. From the concept of this Clinic, there has been an Abundant Life Fellowship Chorale that minister’s through music.

At the close of 1997, God led Pastor Little to plant the Abundant Life Fellowship Ministries by seeking membership to function as a church congregation; a congregation that would further enhance individuals’ overall relationship with God. In March 1998, the Abundant Life Ministries began weekly Bible Study and Spiritual Enrichment Classes on Thursdays at the Cooke Memorial Chapel, Camden, South Carolina. With the attendance being as large as it was, there was a need to secure a larger facility. We began to seek such a place and soon after began leasing our present location, One Commerce Alley, to house the ministry: The Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Incorporated. With the expansion of the ministry, the Visionary, A. DuPriest Givens Little, now serves as Pastor and Executive Director. God blessed and shortly after arriving at One Commerce Alley, land was acquired on Highway 97 for the possibility of erecting an edifice for the Abundant Life Ministries.
"Every Member in Ministry B Feeding the Fire that Burns Within" is the official motto of the ministry. With the birth of the Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, attendance began to increase and various ministries developed. Abundant Life has seen an average weekly attendance at the Sunday Worship Service of 100 and on Thursdays for Bible Study and Spiritual Enrichment an average attendance of 30. The mission of the ministry is to involve members in ministry by having them to actively participate in the life of the church. We are engaged in exhorting the Savior, evangelizing the sinners, equipping the saints and elevating society by meeting the needs of those less fortunate. Through sound teaching and preaching of God’s Holy Word and the fellowshipping of like-minded individuals, the vision is unfolding.

The vision of a twelve-fold ministry presented by Pastor Little has been embraced by the members of the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Inc. in order to help express our mission and ministry both to others and ourselves. The Twelve-Fold Ministry includes Shepherding, Christian Education, Deacons, Trustees, Music and Arts, Capital Campaigns, Stewardess, Helps and Hospitality, Fellowship Awareness, Evangelism, Angelic, and Transportation Ministries. This Twelve-fold Ministry has been formed in order to inspire individuals to seek the abundance of spiritual, emotional, and mental liberation from the daily ills of society and to form a more perfect union among brothers and sisters in Christ. This Twelve-fold Ministry will: promote the growth of Spirituality; offer assistance to the downtrodden; help prevents the further decay of the family unit; and bring hope to the hopeless through the Christian experience.

In the fall of 1999, Pastor Little, through inspiration from God, was led to organize a Ministers in Training (MIT) class. The purpose of the MIT Institute is to train those whom God has called and who have a desire to walk boldly in their calling to carry out the mission of the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center. Leadership training is provided, under the able tutelage of our pastor, to those who would be commissioned as Elders, Ministers, Deacons, and Missionaries. These individuals are dually equipped to do the work that God has placed for His servants to do-the work of an evangelist; preaching in season and out of season: Exhorting, rebuking, convincing with all longsuffering. Since the initial class, two elders, five Deacons eight Missionaries and four ministers have been consecrated to the services of God and His people.

Since the gathering of God’s people in March 1998, God has been blessing. We have experienced the manifestation of the Holy Spirit: souls have been saved, sinners and backsliders have been redeemed; blinded eyes have been opened; deaf ears have been made to hear; and the lame have been made able to walk. Truly we can say, “Look what the Lord has done. Look where God has brought us. He’s brought us out of darkness, now we are walking in the Light. Look where He’s brought us.”

“As we continue under the auspicious of the Almighty Holy Spirit and the leadership of Pastor Little, we will be vigilant in prayer; we will remain faithful and committed to that
which God has entrusted to us. With much praise and thanksgiving, we will celebrate God’s mighty acts. We will worship His Deity as we press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. But as it is written. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that live him.”

I Corinthians 2:9
The Believers Proclamation
Believer’s Proclamation

We are positive proclaimers and executors of the Principles and promises of God the Father.

We believe that our lives are transformed as we are Sanctified by God’s Holy Word.

We are convinced that habits, family curses, and Problems of all sorts are conquered and eradicated By the name of Jesus the Christ

We walk in total authority over the plots, Schemes, and spirit of our adversary-Satan.

We are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, sojourning toward wholeness.

We are the heirs of God and joint-heirs With Christ, inheritants of the promises of God.

We are chosen, royal, holy, peculiar, And powerful people...

We are living our lives Abundantly!
Constitution & By-Laws
ARTICLE 1  

NAME

The Name of the Corporation is: Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Incorporated. The duration of the corporation is perpetual. The office shall be located at 1 Commerce Alley, Camden, South Carolina.

ARTICLE 2  

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND PURPOSE

ABUNDANT LIFE PRAYER, PRAISE AND WORSHIP CENTER, INCORPORATED shall adhere to the following statement of faith:

Believer’s Proclamation

We are positive proclaimers and executors of the Principles and promises of God the Father.

We believe that our lives are transformed as we are Sanctified by God’s Holy Word.

We are convinced that habits, family curses, and Problems of all sorts are conquered and eradicated By the name of Jesus the Christ

We walk in total authority over the plots, Schemes, and spirit of our adversary-Satan.

We are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, sojourning toward wholeness.

We are the heirs of God and joint-heirs With Christ, inheritants of the promises of God.

We are chosen, royal, holy, peculiar, And powerful people...

We are living our lives Abundantly!

The purposes for which the corporation is organized are:

To operate exclusively for religious, educational and distinct ecclesiastical purposes with the meaning of Section 5018(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended, or any superseding status thereto, and such purposes shall include the following:

(a) Religious

(b) To conduct a local church by the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ and under the leadership of Holy Spirit in accordance with all the Commandments and provisions
as set forth in the Holy Bible, the irrevocable Word of God. Pursuant thereto, the following activities and guidelines shall be established:

i. A recognized Creed, Code of Doctrine, discipline and form of worship shall be established.

ii. An ecclesiastical form of government shall be established.

iii. Ordination of ministers upon; completion of the prescribed course of study, designated by this church ministry.

iv. An organization of ministers shall be established to minister to congregation of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Inc.

v. Establishment of Church membership based upon acceptance of recognized creed and belief and support of the church.

vi. Spread the Word of the Gospel through seminars, radio, television establishment of church literature and other forms of the mass media for the purpose of educating the individual in the word of God.

vii. Establishment of various religious services pursuant to the recognized Creed, form of worship, code of doctrine and discipline of the Church and the establishment of Sunday Schools and religious Schools for Christians and educational instruction to the young and old to aid in the development of Christian character.

viii. Establishing a Bible Training School or School of Theology (not considered secondary educational institutions) for the preparation of ministers who minister to: Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Incorporated.

(c) Minister the Word of God to the faithful.

(d) Promote and encourage, through the ministry of the Organization, cooperation with other Organizations, ministering within the community.

(e) To acquire and hold such property, either real or personal, for church purposes, as may be necessary for its membership and the worship of God.

ARTICLE 3  MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Membership: Any person who subscribes to the Believer’s Proclamation and who agrees to comply with all the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws (and any amendments thereto), may become a member of the congregation of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Incorporated. Also those individuals attending Church
Worship Services at the Church facilities, camp meetings, crusades and religious seminars, supporters of the radio and television ministry, and those individuals who contribute to the ministry of the Church (however, contributing to the Abundant Life Pray, Praise and Worship Center, Incorporated) may become a member of the Congregation. Said members shall constitute the congregation of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Incorporated.

To become a voting member, qualified to elect the Board of Trustees at each meeting, such members shall have subscribed to the Believers Proclamation and have been approved unanimously by the Board of Trustees. The voting members of the Corporation shall consist of the persons, as of the adoption of these Bylaws, designated as the Board of Trustees in the corporate minutes of the church. The right of a member to vote, and all of his rights, title, and interest in or to the corporation, shall cease on the termination of his membership. No member shall be entitled to share in the distribution of the corporation assets upon the dissolution of the church. Members shall not receive any stated salary for their services as such, but by resolution of the Board of Trustees, a fixed reasonable sum or expenses of attendance, if any or both, may be allowed for attendance at each regular or special meeting. The Board of Trustees shall have power, in its discretion, to contract for compensation appropriate to the value of such services.

Section 2. Annual Meeting: The annual meeting of the voting members of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Incorporated, shall be held during October or February of each year at a time and place as the trustees may determine. At such meeting the voting members shall elect, by majority vote, the Board of Trustees for the ensuing year.

Section 3. Special Meetings: Special meetings of voting members may be called and held at any time and place by the President of Trustees and shall be so called and upon the written request of not less than 10 percent (10%) of the members entitled to vote, stating the time, place and purpose of the meeting.

Section 4. Notice of Meetings: Notice of annual and special meetings, together with a statement of the purposes thereof, shall be sent to all members, voting and otherwise, to their residence at least five (5) days prior thereto.

Section 5. Voting Voting: At every such meeting, each such voting member shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote.

Section 6. Voting by Mail. The board of Trustees may permit voting by mail provided a ballot setting forth the exact proposals is mailed to all members.

Section 7. Quorum: A majority of those voting members present at any meeting shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE 4 TRUSTEES
Section 1: The number of Trustees shall be 8. Trustees need not be residents of the State of South Carolina or members of the Church. The Trustees, other than the first Board of Trustees, and except as provided in any Article of these Bylaws, shall be elected at the annual meeting of the voting members, and each Trustee elected shall serve until the next succeeding annual meeting and until his successors shall have been elected and qualified. The board of Trustees shall be authorized to increase their number by unanimous consent.

Section 2: Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Trustees may be filled by the affirmative vote of the majority of the remaining Trustees but less than a quorum of the Board of Trustees. A Trustee elected to fill a vacancy shall be elected for the unexpired portion of the term of his predecessor in office.

Any office of Trustee to be filled by reason of an increase in the number of Trustees shall be filled by election at an annual meeting or at a special meeting of voting members and until his successor shall have been elected and qualified.

Section 3. Its Board of Trustees, which may exercise all such powers of the Church and do all such lawful acts, shall manage the affairs of the Church and things as are not by statute or by the Articles of Incorporation or by these Bylaws directed or required to be exercised or done by the voting members.

Section 4. The Trustees may keep the books of the Church, except such as required by law to be kept within the state, outside the State of South Carolina at such place or places as they may from time to time determine.

Section 5. The Board of Trustees, together with the Board of Advisors by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Trustees and Advisors then in office, shall have the authority to establish reasonable compensation of all Trustees for services to the corporation as Trustees, officers or otherwise.

ARTICLE 5 MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Section 1. Meetings of Board of Trustees, regular or special, may be held either within or outside of the state of South Carolina.

Section 2. The first meeting of each newly elected Board of Trustees shall be held at such time and place as shall be fixed by the vote of the voting members at the annual meeting, and no notice of such meeting shall be necessary to the newly elected Trustees in order to legally constitute the meeting, provided a quorum is present or it may convene at such time and place as may be fixed by the consent in writing of all the Trustees.

Section 3. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees may be held upon such notice, or without notice, at such time and such place as shall from time to time be determined by the Board.
Section 4. Special meeting of the Board of Trustees may be called by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees or by the President on three days' notice to each Trustee, either personally, or by mail or by telecommunications; special meeting shall be called by the Secretary in like manner and on like notice on the written request of two (2) Trustees.

Section 5. Attendance of a Trustee at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice at such meeting, except where a Trustee attends for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted at nor the purpose of any regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting.

Section 6. A majority of the Trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business unless a greater number is required by law or by the Articles of Incorporation. The active majority of the Trustees present at any meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Trustees, unless the act of a greater number is required by statutes or by the Articles of Incorporation. If a quorum shall not be present at any meeting of Trustees, the Trustees present at such meeting may adjourn the meeting without notice, other than an announcement at the meeting, until a quorum shall be present.

Section 7. Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Trustees may be taken without a meeting of a consent in writing, setting forth the actions taken, shall be signed by all of the trustees entitled to vote with respect to the subject matter thereof.

ARTICLE 6 ADVISORY BOARD

Section 1. Advisory Board members will be responsible for promoting and advancing the image, purposes and objectives of the corporation throughout the state of South Carolina and elsewhere as appropriate. A majority objective in designating an advisory board member is to encourage prospective nominees for the Board of Trustees and others to become better informed concerning the programs and activities of the corporation. Advisory Board members will generally be expected to attend meetings of the Board of Trustees, but will serve in this capacity without vote or other formal authority over church affairs. The Chairman of the board of Trustees will be responsible for inviting advisory board members to attend Board of Trustees meeting, as well as for calling any of the meeting involving advisory board members.

Section 2. A maximum of twelve (12) persons may be elected as advisory directors by action of the Board of Trustees. Each shall serve without compensation. Advisory Board members shall be elected for three (3) year terms, ending on the date of the annual board of Trustees meeting. The Board of Trustees may fill whenever a position is vacated prior to completion of the prescribed term the vacancy.

ARTICLE 7 INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 1. This is for ministries in other countries
ARTICLE 8  OFFICERS

Section 1. The Board of Trustees, at its first meeting after its annual meeting of voting members, shall choose a President form among the Trustees, and shall choose a Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, none of them need be a member of the Board of Trustees.

Section 2. The Board of Trustees may appoint such other officers and agents, as it shall be deemed necessary. They shall hold their offices for such terms and shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as shall be determined from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

Section 3. The Board of Trustees shall fix the salaries of all officers, other than trustees of the Church. Salaries of officers who are trustees shall be set in accordance with Article 4, Section 5 of these Bylaws.

Section 4. The officers of the Church shall hold office until their successors are chosen and qualified. Any officer elected or appointed by the Board of Trustees may be removed at any time by the affirmative vote of the majority of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall fill any vacancy occurring in any office of the church.

Section 5. President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Church and, subject to the Board of Trustees, shall have general and direct supervision of the management and operation of the affairs of the Church, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him by the Board of Trustees. President shall preside at all meeting of the members and of Board of Trustees.

He shall execute bonds, mortgages, and other contracts requiring a seal under the seal of the Church, except where required or permitted by law to be otherwise signed and executed and except where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Board of Trustees to some other officers or agent of the Church.

Section 6. Vice President. If appointed by the Board of Trustees, the Vice President or if there shall be more than one, shall in the absence or disability of the President, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President and shall perform such other duties and have such other powers as the Board of Trustees may from time to time prescribe.

Section 7. The Secretary and Assistant Secretaries. The Secretary shall attend all meeting of the Board of Trustees and all meeting of the voting members, shall record all the proceedings of the meetings of the Church and the Board of Trustees in a book to be kept for the purpose and shall perform like duties for standing committees when required. The Secretary shall give or cause to be given, notice of all meeting of the members, Board of Trustees, Advisory Board and International Board, and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Trustees or President under whose supervision the Secretary shall be. The Secretary shall have custody of the corporate seal of the Church and the Secretary of Assistant Secretary, shall have authority to affix the same to any instrument
requiring it and, when so affixed, may be attested by the Secretary's signature or by the signature of such Assistant Secretary. The Board of Trustees may give general authority to any other officer to affix the seal of the Church and to attest the affixing of the Secretary's signature.

The Assistant Secretary, or if there be more than one, the Assistant Secretaries, in the order determined by the board of Trustees, shall in, in the absence or disability of the secretary, perform the duties and exceeds the powers of the Secretary and shall perform such other duties and have such other powers as the Board of Trustees may form time to time prescribe.

Section 8. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have the custody of the Church funds and securities and shall keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Church and shall deposit all monies and other valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the Church in such depositories as may be designated by the Board of Trustees.

The Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the Church as may be ordered by the Board of Trustees, taking proper vouchers for such disbursements, and shall render to the President and Board of Trustees at its regular meetings, or when the Board of Trustees so requires, an account of all the Treasurer's transactions as Treasurer and of financial condition of the church.

If required by the Board of Trustees, the Treasurer shall give the Church a bond in such sum and with such surety or sureties as shall be satisfactory to the Board of Trustees for the faithful performance of the duties of the Treasurer's office and, in the event of the Treasurer's death, resignation, retirement or removal from office, for the restoration to the Church of all books, papers, vouchers, money and other property of whatever kind in the Treasurer's possession or under the Treasurer's control belonging to the Church.

The Assistant Treasurer, or, if there shall be more than one, the Assistant Treasurers, in order determined by the Board of Trustees shall, in the absence or disability of the Treasurer perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Treasurer and shall perform such other duties and have such other powers as the Board of Trustees may from time to time prescribe.

ARTICLE 9

IDEMINIFICATION OF TRUSTEES, OFFICERS & EMPLOYEES

Section 1. The Church shall indemnify any Trustee, officer or employee or former Trustee, officer or employee of the Church, or any person who may have served at its request as Trustee, officer of another church organization in which it owns shares of stock, or of which it is a creditor, against expenses actually and necessarily incurred by him in connection with the defense of any action, suit or proceeding in which he or she is made party by reason of being or having been such Trustee, officer or employee, except in relation to matters as to which he shall be judged in such action, suit or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty. The Church may also reimburse to any Trustee,
officer or employee the reasonable costs of settlement of any such action, suit or proceeding if it shall be found by a majority of committee composed of the Trustees not involved in the matter in controversy (whether or not a quorum) that it was to the interest of the Church that such settlement be made and that such Trustee, Officer or employee was not guilty of negligence or misconduct. Such rights of indemnification and reimbursement shall not be deemed exclusive of any other right to which such Trustee, officer or employee may be entitled under any bylaws, agreement, vote of members or otherwise.

ARTICLE 10  CONTRACTS
Section 1. The Board of Trustees, except as in these Bylaws otherwise provided, may authorize any officer or agent to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church, and such authority may be general or confined to a specific instance; unless so authorized by the Board of Trustees, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power of authority or bind the Church by any contract or engagement, or to pledge its credit or render it liable for any purpose or for any amount.

ARTICLE 11  PROHIBITION AGAINST SHARING CORPORATE EARNING
Section 1. No member, Trustee, Officer, employee, committee member or person connected with the Church, or any other private individual shall receive at any time the net earnings or pecuniary profit from the operations of the church, provided that this shall not prevent the payment to any such person of such reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for the Church in effecting any of its purposes as shall be fixed by the Board of Trustees and / or the combined Board of Trustees and Advisors; and no such person or persons shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the Church assets upon the dissolution of the Church. All members of the Church shall be deemed to have expressly consented and agreed that upon such dissolution or winding up of the affairs of the Church, whether voluntary or involuntary, the assets of the Church after all debts have been satisfied, then remaining in the hands of the Board of Trustees shall be distributed, transferred, conveyed, delivered and paid over, in such amounts as the Board of Trustees, may determine or as may be determined by a court of competent jurisdiction upon application of the Board of Trustees, exclusively to charitable, religious, scientific, testing for public safety, literary or educational organizations which would then qualify under the provisions of Section 501 (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its Regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

ARTICLE 12  EXEMPT ACTIVITIES
Section 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, no member, Trustee, officer, employee or representative of this Church shall take any action or carry on any activity by or on behalf of the Church not permitted to be taken or carried on by an organization exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its Regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended, or by an organization contributions to which are now deductible under Section 170 (c) (2) of such Code and Regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.
ARTICLE 13    ECCLESIASTICAL GOVERNMENT

Section 1. The ecclesiastical and sacerdotal control and function of the corporation shall be governed under the dictates of the Board of Trustees. It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to prepare guidelines with respect to the worship services of the church, teaching the Gospel, and ministering to the congregation of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Incorporated.

Section 2. The Board of Trustees may appoint elders and deacons to administer said guidelines prepared by the Board of Trustees and to see that the ecclesiastical and sacerdotal functions of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Incorporated, are properly and correctly carried forth. The duties of elders and deacons shall be as set forth from time to time by the Board of Trustees. Said elders and deacons shall be nominated and elected on an annual basis to coincide with the annual election of the Board of Trustees, voting members and officers.

Section 3. The Board of Trustees, elders, and deacons shall establish a regular place of worship. It is understood that for a period of time that said Church has conducted religious services and functions in the City of Camden, State of South Carolina.
Categories of Membership
Categories of Membership

I. Active Member
An individual that has expressed to the pastor his or her desires to be a member of the local assembly of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise & Worship Center, Inc. and has completed New Member Training. This training is done by the Christian Education Ministry. At the conclusion of this training, the said individual(s) will be presented a Membership Certificate.

An Active Member is one who attends and supports the ministries (Christian Character Development, Worship & Celebration Services, Bible Study & Spiritual Enrichment, Special Services, etc.) of Abundant Life.

His or her stewardship (time, talent & treasure) is visible and consistent. This is a must for active membership. Failing to maintain visible/measurable stewardship may result in becoming a Probationary Member and/or Delinquent Member. He/She participates in the membership of the ministries and committees of Abundant Life.

II. Non-Active Member
An individual that attends services on a non-regular basis and does not support the Ministry efforts in building the Local Assembly and the Kingdom of God.

He/She has been away from service for three months or more and does not have any visible signs of consistency in their stewardship. After a year’s absence this individual will be dropped from Abundant Life’s Membership Roll and considered delinquent.

If there is not a valid reason for this person’s continued absence (i.e., sickness), this person is no longer a non-active member. Sickness and extreme hardships are the only reasons one may maintain membership in the Ministry.

III. Probationary Member
An individual who may have expressed a desire to fellowship with the Abundant Life Family for a particular time or season in their life. This person may not hold an office but is welcome to participate with various ministries as approved by the Shepherding Ministry. He/She shows some visible signs of consistency to the Ministry but lacks total commitment to the mission of Abundant Life. College students not from the area.

IV. Delinquent Membership/Non-Member
An individual that has been away from the Ministry for more than a year without valid reasons. He/She may or may not have expressed their desire to no longer fellowship with Abundant Life, but due to a lack of stewardship will be considered a Non-Member.
Twelve-Fold Ministry
SHEPHERDING

A. Pastor
B. Ruling Elder
C. Ministerial Staff
   1. Ordained Clergy
   2. Ministers in Training
   3. Minister (Director) of Christian Education
   4. Minister of Music & Arts
   5. Minister (Director) of Youth & Children
   6. Administrative Assistants

The Shepherding Ministry will provide spiritual leadership to the body of Christ. These individuals are anointed, appointed and approved for servant leadership by God through the pastor. They are to meet regularly to stay abreast of ministry concerns. They are to be lead by the Holy Spirit in caring for the flock. They must lead by Godly example and successfully complete an annual ministers training in order to operate as a member of this ministry.

Ministry Responsibilities:
- Regular Worship Services
- Baptisms, Communion, Weddings & Funerals
- Holy Convocation
- School of Ministry
- L.I.F.E. Support
- Ministry of Restoration & Deliverance

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A. Minister (Director) of Christian Education
B. Assistant Director
C. Teachers

The Christian Education Ministry is that ministry that undergirds and supports all the other ministries of the church. The CEM is responsible for the training and equipping of the saints for successful execution of ministry. This ministry is to provide leadership and staffing where Christian education is the focus of ministry. It is responsible for providing leadership to enhance the knowledge of every believer. Careful training and planning is a must in order to carry out the duties of ministry, the purpose of God.

Ministry Responsibilities:
- Bible Study & Spiritual Enrichment
- Christian Character Development
- New Members/Discipleship Orientation
- Vacation Bible School
- Church Library/Book Store
• Officers Training & Membership Development Institute

**DIACONAL**

A. Deacons  
B. Junior Deacons  
C. Missionaries

This ministry is to provide assistance to the shepherding leadership as necessary in caring for the body of Christ. All members of the congregation will be divided into shepherding tribes which are lead and guide by a deacon. The deacon is responsible for providing nurture and care for their respective tribe. They are to keep their tribe properly informed of the workings of the ministry. They are to serve as a spiritual leader as they encourage and support their tribe. They are to keep the pastor abreast of the welfare of each of their tribe members.

Ministry Responsibilities:

• Weekly prayer services

**CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS**

A. Chairperson  
B. Financial Secretary  
C. Treasurer  
D. Director of Properties  
E. Minister of Music  
F. Minister of Christian Education  
G. Layperson

This ministry is responsible for keeping accurate records of all funds and proceeds of the ministry. They will lead the body in securing funds to operate. Also they are responsible for maintaining an operating budget to help in the flow of operations.

Ministry Responsibilities:

• 2 major capital campaigns per year  
• Oversight of fundraising efforts of church ministries

**TRUSTEES**

A. Trustees  
B. Junior Trustees  
C. Coordinator of Transportation Services

The Trustee Ministry is responsible for providing leadership in making sound decisions in caring for the property of the ministry. They must adequately, secure upkeep and care for as necessary. They must submit yearly to the Administrative Council a complete inventory of
Ministry property. They are responsible for the opening and closing of church facilities when being occupied. They must maintain a master calendar of events and work along with the Administrative staff to keep from over-booking facilities. They are also to provide leadership in securing transportation for members of the body who desire and may be in need of assistance. They are to work out all travel arrangements when necessary.

Ministry Responsibilities

- Upkeep of Ministry property
- Meeting the transportation needs of the Ministry

MUSIC & ARTS

A. Minister of Music & Arts
B. Minister of Performing Arts
C. Associate(s) Minister (Director) of M & A
D. Choir Directors
E. Musicians
F. Choirs
G. Praise Team
H. Liturgical Dancers

This ministry is responsible for providing appropriate music and performing arts that promote spirituality and edification for the body of Christ.

Ministry Responsibilities:

- Prayer, Praise & Worship Clinic
- Thomas A. Dorsey Mid-Night Musical
- Youth Explosion
- Kwanzaa Celebration
- Tape/Broadcast/Video

YOUTH AND CHILDREN

A. Minister (Director) of Youth & Children
B. Youth Advisors
C. Children’s Advisors
D. Youth for Christ
E. Nursery

This ministry is responsible for promoting Christian Living for the youth and children in the body of Christ.

Ministry Responsibilities:

- Children’s Day
- Children’s Church
• Youth Activities

HELPS AND HOSPITALITY
A. Chairperson
B. Ushers
C. Greeters
D. Stewardess
E. Food Service
F. Acolytes
G. Nurses Guild

This ministry is responsible for securing necessary personnel for all services. They provide refreshments and meals when necessary. This ministry is also responsible for providing refreshments / beverages for pulpit and guests. They will make sure that the pulpit is properly adorned. (Floral arrangements, etc.)

Ministry Responsibility:

• Annual Thanksgiving and/or Christmas Services
• Sacraments of the Church (Stewardess)

EVANGELISM
A. Chairperson

This ministry is to get the WORD out. Keeping the church community informed of opportunities to witness. They will represent the ministry in their Visitation of sick, shut-in and distressed members and their family.

Ministry Responsibilities:

• Spiritual Renewal Services
• Lent Services (Ash Wednesday)
• Pentecost Service
• End of the Year Service (Watch Night)

ANGELIC
A. Chairperson
B. Committee

This ministry chief responsibility is to care for the shepherding ministry.

Ministry Responsibilities:

• Vacation
• Appreciation
• Birthday
• Holidays

FELLOWSHIP AWARENESS
A. Men’s Fellowship
B. Women’s Fellowship
C. Young Adult Fellowship
D. Athletic Department

This ministry is to keep the entire body abreast and aware of matters that will aid them in fulfilling Romans 12:1.

Ministry Responsibilities:
• Annual Family Fun Day
• Hallelujah Festival
• Men’s Day
• Women’s Day
• Friends and Family Celebration

NEHEMIAH PROJECT
A. Chairperson
B. Committee

This ministry is responsible for leading the ministry in their building and renovation projects.
• Securing, building, renovating ministry properties
• Soliciting funding for ministry building an/or expansion projects
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

Shepherding
SHEPHERDING MINISTRY

Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. (Matthew 13:53-55)

And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. (Eze. 34:12)

WHO ARE WE?

The Shepherding Ministry provides spiritual leadership to the body of Christ. These individuals are anointed, appointed and approved for servant leadership by God through the pastor. They are to meet regularly to stay abreast of ministry concerns. They are to be led by the Holy Spirit in caring for the flock. They must lead by Godly example and successfully complete an annual ministers training in order to operate as a member of this ministry.

WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

The primary mission of the Shepherding Ministry is to protect, nurture and grow the spiritual life of the flock. As the Good Shepherd cares for His flock, can we do any less? This ministry is charged with the awesome task of providing nourishment that maintains not only the body, but the very soul, breath and life of every individual who desires to sit under the tutelage of Pastor Little.

WHO DO WE SERVE?

The Shepherding Ministry serves the body of Christ. The ministry seeks to fulfill its stated mission of meeting the needs of God’s children by serving them where they are and thru God’s help and guidance, elevating them to where He intends for them to be. Service is not confined to the walls of the church; it extends to the surrounding community and to all with whom the Word of God can be shared.

WHAT ARE OUR LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS?

The Shepherding Ministry is comprised of the following:

- Pastor
- Ruling Elder
- Ministerial Staff
  1. Ordained Clergy
  2. Ministers in Training
  3. Minister (Director) of Christian Education
  4. Minister of Music & Arts
5. Minister (Director) of Youth & Children
   • Administrative Assistants

WHAT ARE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

• Ministry Responsibilities:
• Regular Worship Services
• Baptisms, Communion, Weddings & Funerals
• Holy Convocation
• School of Ministry
• L.I.F.E. Support
• Ministry of Restoration & Deliverance

The Shepherding Ministry is responsible for the flock.

SCHEDULED MEETINGS

The Shepherding Ministry shall meet according to the schedule posted in the church calendar. Call meetings will be scheduled as needed. Minutes will be taken at all meetings and provided to Pastor and the Chairperson of the Administrative Council.
Christian Education
Christian Education Ministry

“Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants.” (Deuteronomy 32:2)

Who are we?

The Christian Education Ministry (CEM) is the ministry that supports and under girds all of the ministries of the Abundant Life Prayer Praise and Worship Center. The Christian Education Ministry adheres to the fivefold purposes of the church as outlined in Scripture: worship, evangelism, service, discipleship and fellowship and seeks to equip the saints of God with the offensive weapon of spiritual warfare, the Word of God.

What is our Mission?

The Abundant Life Ministry is a living organism; a valued member of the body of Christ, having been birthed and given life by God. The CEM is responsible for providing nourishment to promote the growth of the member(ship), to ensure life and growth in the body. The CEM shall be responsible for the planning and general supervision of the education ministries of the church. The goal is to provide unified direction to those educational ministries so that each person in the body is being admonished and taught with all wisdom in order to present everyone complete in Christ (Col. 1:28).

What are our Leadership Functions?
The CEM shall be formed with representatives from all phases of the church’s educational ministries.

★ A chairman shall be appointed by the Pastor to provide guidance and accountability to the Ministry.

★ An assistant chairperson shall be appointed to share in providing day to day guidance to the Ministry and act in the Chairperson’s stead.

★ Representatives shall be sought from the four major educational divisions: adult, youth, children, and support to act as liaison with the respective areas of the Ministry.

Those selected should share the vision of the Ministry and possess a desire to be taught as well as to teach others. Each leader is a spiritual leader and as such must demonstrate spiritual maturity and self discipline. “Studying to show oneself approved” is a necessity and prayer is a must.

Who do we serve?
The CEM serves the body of the Ministry, as well as the community as the opportunity is presented by God.
What are our Responsibilities?

General Areas

(1) Development of a Total Education Program. The general education policy of the church will be established by the Ministry. The Ministry is responsible for implementing its policies through a constructive, cohesive, Christ-centered Christian education program. It shall set the direction and spiritual quality of the Christian education program through prayer, study of the Word, example and guidance.

(2) Regular Evaluations of Church Educational Needs. The Ministry will periodically make a careful survey of the educational program, facilities, equipment, budget, leadership, and curriculum to discover strengths and weaknesses. After reviewing their findings, the Ministry will then recommend changes and improvements in the educational program.

(3) Oversight of Objectives for Christian Education. Clear-cut objectives or goals encourage accomplishment. The Ministry will assist other ministries in defining objectives and developing people and programs to meet them. It seeks to keep the entire educational program established on the Word of God. It also seeks to maintain an atmosphere of educational awareness in the body by constantly communicating important developments and opportunities for service.

Specific Areas

(1) Selection and Approval of Educational Curriculum. The Ministry, through consultation with the educational leadership, recommends curricula for use in the church. Where a published curriculum is not used or is unavailable, guidelines shall be established by the Ministry for the creative work of teachers and leaders.

(2) Selection of Educational Personnel. Surveying workers needed, listing available workers, setting standards for workers, developing a plan for recruitment, and approving workers represent the major duties of the Ministry. It also seeks to unify worker recruitment, protecting church members from becoming overloaded, and giving aid in securing personnel when necessary.

(3) Training of Education Leadership. An adequate and continuous program of teacher and leader education will be a high priority of the Ministry. This should include a standard of certification for all teachers and workers in the church educational ministry.
Financial Policies and Administration of the Educational Budget
The CEM will be responsible for providing information to the Finance Committee based on their established guidelines to ensure adequate budgeting of funds for educational programs.

Provision of Adequate Facilities and Equipment
The Ministry shall foster educational awareness and understanding in the body of the Abundant Life PPWC by utilizing methods such as displays and reports to the congregation. It will also coordinate the use of available classroom space for education.

Coordination of Educational Activities
As leaders supervise and administer the work, the Ministry shall receive regular reports and observe programs in action. It shall serve as a clearing house for schedules and activities to coordinate the total educational ministry. Communication with the church calendar planner for all Ministry related events is important.

Study of Trends
Educational needs will be studied in the light of newer developments and changing conditions. The Ministry will be alert to the trends in Christian education and to activities and programs, equipment and materials that can be profitably utilized in the local church.

Evaluation and Reporting
The Ministry will constantly evaluate all the educational work of the church to assure that it is scripturally sound and spiritually motivated. The Ministry will prepare a report of the year's accomplishments in Christian education to be presented as part of the church's Annual Report.

Areas of Responsibility

Children’s Ministries
In cooperation with the Chairperson of the Children’s and Youth Ministry, be responsible for the educational activities of children's programs from nursery through elementary school age. Current examples include Christian Character Development, Vacation Bible School, Children's Programs, training conferences, and any other children's activities and special events.

Youth Ministries
In cooperation with the Chairperson of the Children’s and Youth Ministry, be responsible for the youth ministries from junior high through the college age. Examples include Christian Character Development classes, Bible studies, and other activities that occur during the week.

Adult Ministries
Be responsible for adult education ministries. Current examples include Christian Character
Development, Bible classes, Officers' Training Institute and any other special training ministries and other activities that occur during the week.

**Publicity of Events**

Be responsible to see that announcements of upcoming events provided for the bulletin and newsletter as deemed appropriate.

Areas Needing Approval by the Administrative Council and/or Capital Campaigns Ministry:

1. New programs or major expansion of existing ones.
2. Annual Christian Education budget
3. Expenditures outside of approved budget
4. Program leadership and leadership standards
5. Relationship with other ministries within the Church:
   - (i.e., Elders, Pastoral Staff, Discipleship/Evangelism Ministries)

**Scheduled meetings**

The CEM shall meet the third Saturday of the first month of each quarter. Call meetings will be scheduled as needed. Minutes will be taken at all meetings and provided to Pastor and the Chairperson of the Administrative Council.
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center
Diaconal
The Deacons’ Ministry

“Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.” (Acts 6:2-3)

Who are we?

The Deacon’s Ministry shall consist of a group of lay men who have been called forth from the active membership of the congregation and consecrated in service to the body of Christ. The term which is translated "deacon" is from an original word which means "servant." It is defined as "one who executes the commands of another... a servant, attendant, or minister" (Thayer). Deacons must have a clear understanding of the faith (1 Tim. 3:9) and their faithfulness must already be proven (1 Tim. 3:10).

What is our Mission?

Deacons shall assist the Pastor and the congregation in the spiritual nurture and growth of the congregation. Missionaries shall minister to the needs, both spiritual and physical, of the membership, their families and those needing help in the community.

What are our Leadership Functions?

Deacons shall meet the demonstrated qualifications of scripture (Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-12) as well as the proven ability to minister to and serve the needs of the local church body after having been Abundant Life members for a minimum of one year. Each Deacon must be consecrated to this service by the laying on of hands and presentation to the congregation.

Who do we serve?

Every deacon needs to submit himself and his ideas to other mature believers who shall hold him accountable. Deacons shall be immediately accountable to their Tribe who shall be immediately accountable to both the Administrative Council and Pastor who shall be immediately accountable to the Body, the Church. This function shall be maintained in the spirit of the scripture (Matt. 18:15-17). Deacons who do not maintain these standards of conduct and accountability can be dismissed from the Deaconate by the Administrative Council upon the recommendation of the Pastor.

What are our Responsibilities?

Each deacon’s first responsibility is to live a Godly life and secondly to serve as the Pastors eyes, ears and direct contact to the congregation. He shall be delegated responsibilities which are clearly understood by the deacon, the elders, and the congregation. Deacons may
assist the elders by performing assignments in all scriptural works, particularly material, physical, benevolent, and mission areas.

- Deacons shall provide spiritual guidance, support, and leadership to an assigned portion of the congregation (tribe).
- Deacons shall serve as the Pastor’s representative on visitations to those who are sick, shut-in, bereaved or in need of general assistance; thereby relieving the Pastor, Elder(s) or Ministers to attend to other spiritual matters affecting the body.

In addition, Deacons are charged with the following specific duties that shall be carried out primarily through leadership and/or attendance and significant involvement in the life of a Tribe.

(a) Shall sustain a strong prayer ministry
(b) Shall support the pastoral ministry of the word;
(c) Shall assist the Pastor in matters relating to membership discipline, counseling and grievances.
(d) Shall administer and establish policies for any Benevolence Fund.
(e) Shall assist the Pastor in shepherding the congregation and shall oversee the spiritual needs of the church membership, and shall establish ministries for the spiritual care of individual members.
(f) Shall provide the Administrative Assistant with information regarding the church rolls, and maintain regular contact with all members of the church.
(g) Shall strive for the unity of the body in all matters including discipline.
(h) Shall with the Pastor and staff develop and be responsible for the observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Scheduled meetings

The Deacon’s Ministry shall meet the second Tuesday of the month. Call meetings will be scheduled as needed. Minutes will be taken at all meetings and provided to Pastor and the Chairperson of the Administrative Council.
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

Capital Campaigns
Capital Campaigns Ministry

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by [your] letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.” (I Corinthians 16:1-3)

Who are we?

The Capital Campaigns Ministry seeks to provide oversight through Godly direction and guidance to the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center family, being ever mindful of the call upon each member.

What is our Mission?

This ministry will be dedicated to keeping accurate records of all funds and proceeds of the Ministry. Throughout bible history, we see that recorders were selected for this specific purpose (II Samuel 8:16; 20:24; II Kings 18:18; Isaiah 36:3, 22; II Chronicles 34:8). In I Corinthians the 16th Chapter, Paul instructs the church in Corinth on how to handle the collections. Those active in this ministry shall be approved to handle the funds of the Ministry based on the principle found in I Corinthians 16:3.

This Ministry will lead the body in securing funds to function. And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter (II Chronicles 24:5). The Capital Campaigns Ministry will be responsible for keeping an operating budget to help in the flow of operations.

Who do we serve?

The CCM serves to meet the financial needs and responsibilities of the ALPPWC, Inc.

What are our Leadership Functions?

The Capital Campaign Ministry membership shall consist of:

- The Pastor
- CCM Chairperson
- Director of Stewardship
- Financial Secretary
- Treasurer
- Minister of Music
- Chairperson of the Christian Education Ministry
- Chairperson of the Nehemiah Project
- 2 Lay Persons
What are our Responsibilities?

Chairperson of Finance

The duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson of Finance are as follows:

- Keep accurate records of all funds pertain to the Ministry.
- Maintain a staff of capable counters at all times.
- Acquire and install software that protect and maintain financial records.
- Implement a system of checks and balances.
- Ensure that all financial obligations are being met on time.
- Assist in establishing an operating budget for the Ministry.
- Project future expenses the Ministry may incur.
- Hold the Chairperson of Stewardship and the Financial Secretary accountable for his/her duties and responsibilities by implementing a quarterly internal audit.

PRAYER IS REQUIRED BEFORE COUNTING ALL PROCEEDS
"If a man gives his neighbor money or goods to keep {for him} and it is stolen from the man's house, if the thief is caught, he shall pay double.”

22:8 -

"If the thief is not caught, then the owner of the house shall appear before the judges, {to} determine whether he laid his hands on his neighbor's property.

22:9 - "For every breach of trust, {whether it is} for ox, for donkey, for sheep, for clothing, {or} for any lost thing about which one says, 'This is it,' the case of both parties shall come before the judges; he whom the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor.

22:10 - "If a man gives his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep {for him}, and it dies or is hurt or is driven away while no one is looking, (Exodus 22:7-10ff)

Who are we?

The Trustee Ministry seeks to ensure a safe, secure and adequate structural environment to meet the needs of a growing body of believers who worship and fellowship together. The Ministry is committed to providing surroundings that are conducive to the worship experience and inviting to those who enter to serve or to visit. God fearing and dedicated to the up-building of the Kingdom, the trustees of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center are consistent in their commitment and persistent in their efforts to serve.

What is our Mission?

The Trustee Ministry is responsible for providing leadership in making sound decisions in caring for the property of the ministry. They must adequately, secure upkeep and care for all property, as necessary.

Who do we serve?

The Trustee Ministry serves the body of the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center as well as all who fellowship with the congregation. In addition, the community at large is served through the transportation component of the Ministry.

What are our Leadership Functions?

The Trustees Ministry is comprised of men, women and youth who lead by example. They are as comfortable with cleaning chores as they are with spreading the Word. The chairperson of the Ministry is selected by Pastor and serves with 8 members, which includes members of the Deacons Ministry.
What are our responsibilities?

The Trustees Ministry is charged with the following responsibilities:

• Annual submission of a complete inventory of ministry property to the Administrative Council.
• The opening and closing of church facilities when being occupied.
• Maintenance of a master calendar of events.
• Work along with the Administrative staff to ensure facilities are not overbooked.
• Provide leadership in securing transportation for members of the body who desire and may be in need of assistance.
• Work out travel arrangements when necessary.
• Train and equip Junior trustees to assume full duties as an integral part of the Ministry
• Provide upkeep of Ministry properties

Scheduled Meetings
The Trustees Ministry meets quarterly in January, April, July and October of each year.
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

Music & Arts
Music and Arts Ministry

Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD! (Psalms 150:1-6)

Who are we?
An active member of the Music and Arts Ministry must first be a member of The Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center, Inc. and be dedicated, committed and consistent in the Ministry. To be dedicated, means supporting the Ministry in all of its endeavors and not put anything outside of emergencies before your ministry. To be committed, means that being in place when called upon to do so and share the good news (witness) of the ministry to others.

To be consistent, means that being present for all scheduled rehearsals and attending functions as it relates to the music ministry.

In addition, any Member of the Music and Arts Ministry is:
- Under the direction of the Holy Spirit;
- Under the guidance of and reports to the Minister of Music;
- Expected to be on time for all rehearsals, services and concerts;
- To strive to promote and enhance the spiritual well-being and morale of those involved in the Music Ministry;
- Expected to conduct themselves and their private affairs in a manner consistent with the doctrines of the Holy Word;
- Moreover, responsible for the maintenance of a flourishing Music and Arts program.

What is our Mission?
The Music and Arts Ministry seeks to invoke the Holy Spirit to be present in our lives and to worship and praise Him in that spirit (truth) so that it will be evident in our daily living and through our ministry to others. We strive to do this awesome work of God through song, dance and the dramatic arts.

Who do we serve?
The Music and Arts Ministry serves the body of Christ in the fulfillment of one of the goals of the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center; that is involving EVERY member in ministry! The ministry reaches beyond the walls of the sanctuary into the surrounding community, neighboring counties and states, and thru the video and CD ministry, throughout the nation. Christ commanded us to “go ye therefore; into all nations” and spread the Good News of the Gospel. In its own way, Music and Arts seek to be obedient to His command.
What are our Leadership Functions?
Music and Arts staff consists of:
• Minister of Music
• Director of Performing Arts
• Associate Director of Performing Arts
• Associate Musicians
• Musician Associate

What are our Responsibilities?
The following Services are necessary for members of The Music and Arts Ministry:
Sunday services
• Intercessory Prayer - 8:00 a.m.
• Christian Character Development - 9:15 a.m.
• Celebration and Worship Service - 10:30 a.m.
• Wednesdays- Prayer @ 6:00 p.m.
• Thursdays- Bible Study and Spiritual Enrichment @ 7:00 p.m.

Ministries of Music:

Children for Christ- This choir ministry is for children up to the age of 13. The Children for Christ is responsible for leading in worship services on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Rehearsals are usually held on Fridays.

Youth for Christ- This choir ministry is for youth from age 13-18. The Youth for Christ is responsible for leading in worship services on the 4th Sunday of the month. Rehearsals are usually held on Wednesdays.

The Abundant Life Fellowship Chorale- This choir ministry is for adults from age 18 and above. The Abundant Life Fellowship Chorale is responsible for leading in Worship on the 1st Sunday and as needed. The Abundant Life Fellowship Chorale is also the accompanying choir to the Pastor. Rehearsals are held on Mondays.

The Men’s Ensemble- This choir ministry is open to all men of the church who have a desire to ‘sing unto the Lord a new song and make a joyful noise’. The Men’s Ensemble is responsible for leading in worship services on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Rehearsals are usually on the Monday preceding the 3rd Sunday.

The Angelic Ensemble- This newly formed music ministry is for young adults between the ages of 18 and 25, who desire to lift up the name of Jesus among their peers. This ensemble will sing at special events and assist the music ministry as needed.
Ministries of the Performing Arts:

**Praise Dance**- The Praise Dance Ministry enhances the worship experience by using body movement as a way of expressing God’s presence on their lives. The Praise Dance ministry is open to both male and females.

**The Mime Ministry**- This awesome ministry, requires a special anointing in that you are interpreting God’s presence through silence as you tell the story about the difference God can and will make in your life.

**The Dramatic Arts**- This ministry allows you to express yourself through live theatre. There are many ways you can participate in the Dramatic Arts. This is a ministry where everyone can participate to produce something great. The goal of the Dramatic Arts is to Perform one production per year.

**Scheduled Meetings**

**The Music and Arts Council** - The Music and Arts Council is composed of 9 members: 7, from the Music and Arts Ministry and 2, non-Music and Arts. The Council meets quarterly in January, April, July and October of each year.
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center
Youth & Children
Youth and Children

But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt 19:14). "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Mark 10:15)

Who are we?

The Youth and Children’s Ministry is that ministry that is concerned with “training up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Prov. 22:6). The Ministry is committed to furthering the building of God’s kingdom by joining with children and youth in that wonderful adventure that leads to adulthood and through God’s love and guidance, maturity. Children and Youth Ministry is a process through which our young people can reach a deeper relationship with Christ. Children’s Ministry is the avenue used by Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center to break down the vision and the word spoken in the house at an age-appropriate level for children ages 4-12.

What is our Mission?

Our purpose is to instill the character, biblical foundations and principles of Christ into the hearts and minds of all children. Our mission is to equip children at their present age to develop an understanding of Christ that would allow them to begin to build a personal relationship with Him. Our goal is to partner with Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center parents as we together raise children who whole-heartedly serve Christ through obedience, worship, and Godly character. The prayer of the Ministry is to plant the seed in the children and youth who sit under the tutelage of our Pastor and watch it flourish and spread throughout the community as a positive influence. Building self esteem in the children and youth through knowledge of Christ’s love for all of us as well as our personal heritage will enrich family lives and form a firm foundation for future generations. Children are often the under-served and ignored population in the congregation and thereby develop feelings of disenfranchisement. This ministry seeks to eliminate the tradition of assuming that they are not interested in spiritual matters nor ready to learn to be leaders in their own right.

Who do we serve?

The Children and Youth Ministry serves all children through 17 years of age. To be effective in our efforts requires involvement of all family members, to the extent possible. The Children and Youth Ministry must solicit the aid and assistance of each of the 12 Fold Ministries to ensure our approach is holistic and all encompassing. This ministry, as with others, is by, with and for all of our children.
What are our Leadership Functions?

The Ministry consists of a Chairperson appointed by the Pastor and 6 energetic and committed members in good standing from the congregation. In addition, the following qualifications are necessary.

- The leadership must strive to lead by example, in the house and in their everyday lives.
- There must be a strong level of commitment to the children and youth. Consistency is a must in nurturing young minds.
- Prayer warriors. Our children and youth are under constant attack from all sides. The must be nurtured in the value (worth) of prayer.

What are our Responsibilities?

Responsibilities of the Children and Youth Ministries include:

- Serving as liaison between the children/youth, other ministries and the church family.
- Developing guidelines for participation in activities of the ministry.
- Helping the children/youth to understand their roles as well as their value in the body of Christ.
- Incorporating children/youth in all of the activities of the church (worship, music and arts, helps and hospitality, cleaning, etc).
- Helping to plan and carry out various age appropriate programs for the children and youth.
- Serving as role models and mentors.
- Determining what resources are required to ensure that the needs of the ministry are met. This may require coordination with the Administrative Council as well as Capital Campaigns.
- Involving the parents and the children/youth in activities and exercises designed to promote the mission of the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center.
- Mentoring children and youth to develop to their full potential as future leaders, both in the world and the kingdom of God.
- Keeping records of youth participation.
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

Helps & Hospitality
HELPS AND HOSPITALITY MINISTRY
(Scripture)

Who are we?
The ministry of helps and hospitality helps to set the atmosphere in the Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center. From the parking lot to the pulpit, their presence and good works can be seen. This Ministry is the first that one meets upon entering the grounds to assisting visitors and friends as they depart.

What is our Mission?
The mission of the Helps and Hospitality Ministry is to ensure the immediate needs of those fellowshipping with the Abundant Life family are met.

Who do we serve?
The Ministry serves all those with whom we have contact. There is an effort to reach out to the surrounding community to assist as needed and be available to serve when called upon to do so.

What are our Leadership Functions?
The Ministry is composed of a chairperson appointed by the Pastor and chairpersons of the following sub-ministries:

A. Ushers
B. Greeters
C. Stewardess
D. Armor Bearers
E. Food Service
F. Acolytes
G. Nurses Guild

What are our Responsibilities?
This ministry is responsible for securing necessary personnel for all services. They provide refreshments and meals when necessary. This ministry is also responsible for providing refreshments / beverages for pulpit and guests. They will ensure that the pulpit is properly adorned. (Floral arrangements, etc.)

Ministry responsibilities also include:

• Annual Thanksgiving and/or Christmas Services
• Sacraments of the Church (Stewardess)

Meeting Schedule
The Helps and Hospitality Ministry will meet monthly. Call meetings will be held as needed.
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

Evangelism
EVANGELISM MINISTRY

“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (II Timothy 4:5)

Who are we?

We are to get the WORD OUT. Members of the Evangelism Ministry are to adhere to Matthew 20:28 where Jesus said, “even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”. This ministry will be responsible for keeping the community informed of Ministry activities. It requires members to Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled (Luke 14:23). Knowing that Jesus commissioned us to Go ye therefore, this ministry will be as Phillip, the evangelist, always ready to reach out to the lost-be it a crowd or an individual joyfully.

What is our Mission?

The Evangelism Ministry and Missionaries are to assist the pastor in spreading the gospel and compelling those who are not saved to accept the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. We are to joyously witness of God’s redeeming love, which urges repentance and reconciliation to God and each other through faith in Jesus Christ—who lived, died and was raised from the dead.

Who do we serve?

The Evangelism Ministry serves the saved and the unsaved; the churched and the un-churched. Although salvation is free, the cost of true discipleship is great. We are called upon to give up the world in order to save the world for Christ. Evangelism Ministry members are servants, first and foremost and slaves to the Gospel.

What are our Leadership Functions?

• Members are appointed by our pastor.
• The chairperson is appointed by our pastor and can only serve a maximum of 3 years, but does not have to serve three years.
• The secretary is elected by the group.
• The secretary can serve as the contact person for those in need of services.
• The members will choose a meeting date.
• At the end of the fiscal year those members who are inactive should be replaced by our pastor (this list can be provided by the chairperson).
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

Angelic
Angelic Ministry

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10)

Who are we?

The Angelic Ministry seeks to meet the needs of those who care for the spiritual well being of the body of the church. Men and women of the Angelic Ministry understand that the Shepherding Ministry must be uplifted and comforted and given the opportunity for restoration of mind, body and spirit as their virtue is poured out in ministering to the congregation.

What is our Mission?

This ministry’s chief responsibility is to care for the shepherding ministry.

Who do we serve?

By serving the Shepherding Ministry, the whole body is served.

What are our Leadership Functions?

The Angelic Ministry is comprised of a Chairperson appointed by the Pastor and 6 committee members, who are selected from active members of the congregation. These members must be members in good standing, who understand and embrace the vision of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center. They must also recognize the importance of caring for those who labor before God on our behalf.

What are our Responsibilities?

The Angelic Ministry is primarily responsible for the well being and comfort of our Pastor. Other responsibilities include:

- Vacation
- Appreciation
- Birthday celebration
- Holiday remembrances

Scheduled Meetings

The Angelic Ministry will meet monthly.
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

Fellowship
FELLOWSHIP AWARENESS MINISTRY

With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Who are WE?
The Fellowship Awareness Ministry is designated as the entity to keep the body unified by providing information and opportunity to come together in different settings and situations.

What is our Mission?
This ministry is to keep the entire body abreast and aware of matters that will aid them in fulfilling Romans 12:1.

Who do we serve?
The Fellowship Awareness Ministry serves the congregation as well as the community. How can we walk together as Christians unless we touch and agree? Agreement is fostered by understanding and understanding comes as a result of knowledge shared through fellowshipping opportunities.

What are our Leadership Functions?
The Fellowship Awareness Ministry is comprised of a chairperson appointed by the Pastor as well as chairpersons of the following fellowship groups:

- Men’s Fellowship
- Women’s Fellowship
- Young Adult Fellowship
- Athletic Department

What are Our Responsibilities?
Ministry responsibilities include:

- Annual Family Fun Day
- Hallelujah Festival
- Men’s Day
- Women’s Day
- Friends and Family Celebration

Meeting Schedule
The Fellowship Awareness Ministry will meet monthly. Call meeting will be held as needed.
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

Nehemiah Project
NEHEMIAH MINISTRY

And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king’s words that he had spoken to me. So they said, “Let us rise up and build.” Then they set their hands to this good work. (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

Who are we?

The Nehemiah Ministry is dedicated to providing leadership through God’s guidance in securing funding to meet the Ministry’s need for safe and appropriate buildings and other properties.

What is our Mission?

The mission of the Nehemiah Ministry is to build God’s kingdom on earth by providing physical structures for spiritual needs as well as the worldly needs.

Who do we serve?

The Ministry serves the body of Christ and all in need.

What are our Leadership Functions?

The Ministry consists of a chairperson appointed by the Pastor and a committee of 6 members in good standing. Although a background or experience in real estate or funding is not required, these attributes in a God led member would be welcomed.

What are our responsibilities?

This ministry is responsible for leading the ministry in their building and renovation projects.

• Securing, building, renovating ministry properties
• Soliciting funding for ministry building an/or expansion projects

Meeting Schedule

The Nehemiah Ministry will meet monthly or more often, if needed.
Abundant Life
Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

Job Descriptions
### Abundant Life Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

The Pastor / Executive Director Job Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title:</th>
<th>PASTOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reports to:</td>
<td>Church Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>Pastor / Executive Director</td>
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#### General Description: *(Duties to include, but are not limited too.)*

The Pastor / Executive Director is:

- Provide a solid Biblically-based preaching and teaching ministry to meet the needs of the congregation and attract new members.
- Lead in worship and administer the sacraments.
- Encourage and nurture the spiritual development and beliefs of the congregation through regular teaching of the Bible.
- Lead and inspire the church board(s) and congregation in the development and effective operation of a wide range of program activities.
- Recruit, motivate and train youth and adult leadership.
- Administer the programs of the church by leading volunteers and paid staff members and conducting regular staff meetings for planning and informational purposes.
- Provide pastoral counseling in times of crisis and minister to the sick, dying and bereaved.
- Conduct weddings and funerals, providing appropriate preparation and support.
- Instruct classes of new members at least twice a year.
- Moderate the church board(s) in developing reasonable goals, communicating a clear sense of direction and equipping the leadership for ministry.
- Develop and administer the budget and lead financial drives and giving programs as needed.
- Work with the Personnel Committee in developing job descriptions, personnel policies and procedures and performance evaluations.
- Represent the church by serving on appropriate committees of the denomination and organizations in the community.
- Schedule necessary time for study, preparation and planning in order to develop and maintain a deep level of spiritual growth.

#### Knowledge Skills and Abilities

- Leadership skills
- Preaching Skills
- Ability to delegate tasks
- Mentoring Skills
- Strong spiritual background

#### Educational Experience

- Based on churches needs
Abundant Life Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

The Ruling Elder Job Description

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<tr>
<th>Department:</th>
<th>Shepherding Ministry</th>
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<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Camden, SC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
<td>Ruling Elder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reports to:</td>
<td>A. DuPriest Givens Little</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>Pastor/Executive Director</td>
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**General Description:** *(Duties to include, but are not limited too.)*

The Ruling Elder is:
- To fulfill the duties of the pastor in his absence or when requested to do so by the pastor, which is to include the teaching and preaching duties;
- To preside over worship services and/or appoint one of the other elders or ministers to do so with the approval of the pastor;
- To preside over LIFE Support. Receive ministries and committees reports and submit to the pastor in a timely fashion;
- To encourage the membership, especially 12-Fold Ministry Leadership, to be consistent in their duties and stewardship;
- Addresses any problems or concerns that may arise among the body of believers and settle them as necessary. Taking only the necessary concerns to the pastor;
- Take lead in the training of those answering the call to ministry;
- Present those who are to be consecrated and ordained to the body at Convocation and holding them accountable for their actions;
- Take leadership in the planning and implementation of Holy Convocation;
- Assist in the pastor with the sacraments of the church (communion, baptism and foot washing);
- Meet regular with the pastor and other elders and ministers; and
- To lighten the load of the pastor by doing whatever is necessary to assist.

**Competencies Needed:**
- Active member of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center
- Minimum of 5 years faithful service as Elder at Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship
### Abundant Life Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

#### Minister of Music Job Description

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<tr>
<th>Job title:</th>
<th>Minister of Music</th>
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<td>Pastor / Executive Director</td>
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<th>Hours X /week</th>
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#### General Description: *(Duties to include, but are not limited too.)*
The Minister of Music is to:

- Consult with the Pastor/Executive Director regarding theme of each service of worship, special programs, selection of hymns and choral music.
- Trains choirs in choral techniques, appreciation of sacred music, leadership and participation in worship.
- Organize and supervise recruitment of church members into the music program.
- Supervise all musicians.
- Organize and direct instrumental groups.
- Select and purchase music, worship and music resources, services of outside instrumentalists and orchestras.
- Coordinate purchasing of musical instruments and equipment.
- Schedule and rehearse soloists.
- Develop seasonal musical programs.
- Prepare appropriate music for special services.
- Organize and maintain music library of musical instruments.
- Supervise the maintenance of musical instruments.
- Participate with other professional organizations to gain new ideas and to share expertise in music.

#### Knowledge Skills and Abilities
- Ability to read music
- Ability to direct vocal as well as instrumental groups
- Leadership Ability
- A good understanding of the religious music industry
- Knowledge of sound systems
- Strong Leadership ability

#### Educational Experience
- Minimum of 5 years of experience as music director preferred
- Understand church culture.
# Associate Musician Job Description

**Job title:** Music and Arts Ministry  
**Location:** Camden, SC  
**Reports to:** Sam Dennis  
**Title:** Minister of Music

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**General Description:** *(Duties to include, but are not limited to.)*

The Associate of Music is:

- Under the direction of the Holy Spirit;
- Under the guidance of and reports to the Minister of Music;
- Responsible for securing of musicians for all services, if and when a backup musician will need to be in place;
- Expected to be on time for each scheduled rehearsal, service and concert;
- To act as a liaison between the Pastor and the entire Music Department;
- To assist with the purchasing of major music equipment in consultation with the Pastor;
- To strive to promote and enhance the spiritual well-being and morale of those involved in the Music Ministry;
- Expected to attend regular administrative meetings and other planning sessions involved in the Music Ministry;
- To conduct themselves and their private affairs in a manner consistent with the doctrines of the Holy Word;
- Moreover, responsible for the maintenance of flourishing music program.

**Competencies Needed:**

- Active member of Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center
- Ability to work with trained and untrained musicians.
- Strong music skills: strong keyboard skills; general understanding of guitar chords and tablature; ability to transpose, improvise, create instrumental and vocal parts, and organize scores.
- Strong organizational and office skills
### Abundant Life Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

#### Administrative Assistant Job Description

**Department:** Administration / Clerical  
**Location:** Camden, SC  
**Job Title:** Administrative Assistant  
**Reports to:** A. D. Givens Little  
**Title:** Executive Director/ Pastor

<table>
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<th>Hours___/week</th>
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<td>X Nonexempt</td>
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**Summary:**  
Provide administrative support to the Pastor/Executive Director. Duties include general clerical, receptionist, and project-based work. Project a professional image through in-person and phone interaction.

**Detailed Description:** *(Duties to include, but are not limited too.)*

Schedule appointments, gives information to callers, take dictations and otherwise. Responsible for handling and managing of mail. Locates and attaches appropriate file to correspondence to be answered by the Church Officials. Compose and attaches routine correspondence and reports. Files correspondence and other records. Answer telephone and gives information to caller and place outgoing calls when needed. Keep Master Calendar and Schedule of events, keeping Pastor, Administrative members and church member abreast of happenings. Responsible for the publication of the church newsletter. Arrange travel schedule and reservations when assigned. Responsible for maintaining adequate record-keeping, and the recording and filing of minutes. Send correspondence to visitors within 48 hours of visit. Call visitors and potential members on behalf of the Pastor and ministry. Maintain membership records. Create and maintain a talent and interest file concerning each member of the congregation and make this information available to the various ministries and the pastor. Maintain contact with the sick, shut-in, bereaved, military service, and college students. Maintain a working role of the members of the congregation and develop a membership profile for each individual containing name, address, job, telephone numbers, family relationship, committees and church affiliations, birthday and anniversary, etc.

**Competencies Needed:**

- 2-3 years administrative/clerical experience preferred
- High School Diploma or GED.
- Excellent computer skills in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, Access not required but preferred.
- Must be highly organized, detail-oriented with the ability to multi-task.
- Must have excellent written and verbal skills.
### Abundant Life Prayer, Praise & Worship Center

**Youth and Children Minister Job Description**

| Job title: | Youth & Children Minister |
| Reports to: | Pastor / Executive Director |

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<th>Position Type: Full-time</th>
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<th>Nonexempt</th>
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**General Description:** *(Duties to include, but are not limited too.)*

The Youth & Children Minister is to:

- Plan and develop a creative program for youth and children.
- Review and develop curriculum to meet the educational needs of youth and children, through group and mentoring programs.
- Develop one-on-one relationships with youth and children by being a friend and positive role model.
- Plan and coordinate programs with other staff members, committee and boards to provide a well-rounded program for spiritual growth through teaching, music and recreation.
- Recruit, train and equip essential people to work as youth advisors.
- Meet regularly with lay leadership for team building and planning purposes.
- Oversee the youth and children Sunday school.
- Develop service and international mission projects for youth to grow in service to the Lord.
- Plan and coordinate camps, conferences, retreats, and trips.
- Attend staff meetings and any committee or board meetings necessary to carry out the youth and children ministries of the church.
- Cooperate with the Pastor/Executive Director, Administrative Council, and Administrative Assistant by performing any other duties when asked to do so.

**Knowledge Skills and Abilities**

- Strong biblical background
- Public Speaker
- Leadership Ability
- Youth Appeal
- Biblical Counseling skills

**Educational Experience:**

- Based on Church’s needs
Abundant Life Prayer, Praise and Worship Center Organizational Chart

Chief Executive Officer/Presiding Prelate

Executive Pastor

Advisory Council

Director of Theocratic Affairs
  - Shepherding
  - Diocesan

Director of Financial Affairs
  - Capital Campaigns
  - Nehemiah

Director of Administrative Affairs
  - Helps & Hospitality
  - Angelic

Director of Operations
  - Fellowship Awareness
  - Trustees

Director of Public Relations & Marketing
  - Music & Arts
  - Evangelism

Director of Leadership & Development
  - Christian Education
  - Youth & Children
A Description of Leadership Responsibilities

Presiding Prelate/CEO
- Provides Spiritual Leadership to the Prayer, Praise and Worship Centers of America
- Cast vision and direction to the Ministry at Large
- Serves the Chief Executive Officer of the Church
- Serves as an oracle of God’s Word through the teaching, preaching and prophetic ministries
- Appoints leadership on a regular bases to secure the overall effectiveness and manifestation of the vision
- Provides and delegates pastoral care and counseling as necessary

Pastor/Executive Director
- Subject to the leadership of to the Presiding Prelate
- Performs all other duties as assigned by the CEO
- Presides at the Annual Meeting of the membership
- Serves as the chair of the Advisory Council
- Receives and reports recommendations of the Advisory Council
- Serves as the spiritual leader of the Church
- Serves as an oracle of God’s Word through the teaching, preaching, and prophetic ministries
- Leads and directs the Board of Directors in faithful stewardship of their purpose
- Accountable to the CEO/Presiding Prelate

Director of Theocratic Affairs (Ruling Elder)
- Provides guidance to ensure the church’s purpose and mission lines up with God’s Word
- Encourages officers and members to commit their lives to prayer and meditation
- Coordinates church prayer, installations, marriage, and dedication services
- Provides leadership in the Sacraments of the Church: Communion, Baptism, and Foot Washing.
- Provide oversight to the Shepherding and Deaconal Ministries
- Accountable to Executive Pastor

Director of Financial Affairs
- Responsible for faithful stewardship of the church’s resources (finances)
- Make sure that church is adhering to budget
- Take lead in financial planning for the ministry
- Provide cost analysis on future projects
- Take lead in preparing an annual audit of the financial records
- Lead in developing strategic plans to generate capital
• Provides oversight to the Capital Campaigns and Nehemiah Ministries
• Accountable to the Executive Pastor

**Director of Administration**

• Manages the day to day functions of the ministry
• Coordinate and oversee the duties of employees
• Responsible for the efficient and accurate operations of the church’s office
• Developing job descriptions for hired staff
• Hiring and supervision of staff
• Maintain important records
• Take lead in negotiating contracts along with CEO or designee
• Scheduling of staff retreats
• Responsible for communication materials
• Provides oversight to the Helps and Hospitality and Angelic Ministries
• Accountable to the Executive Pastor

**Director of Operations**

• Responsible for maintaining a system of accountability
• Strategic and tactical short term planning
• Responsible for the design, operations and improvements of ministries
• Responsible for evaluating the overall operations of the church
• Creates DARCI model to maximize productivity
• Provides oversight to the Fellowship Awareness and Trustees Ministries
• Accountable to the Executive Pastor

**Director of Public Relations & Marketing**

• Creating and maintaining an image that is attractive to the public
• Assuring that all publications with church’s name promotes a positive image of the church
• Creating and maintaining of the church’s website
• Developing a plan to better market the church and its programs
• Publicizing all of the church’s events, programs and activities
• Providing oversight to the Music and Arts and Evangelism Ministries
• Accountable to the Executive Pastor
**Director of Leadership & Development**

- Equipping and educating the leadership to carry out the vision, mission and purpose of the church;
- Working directly with the pastor in creating a curriculum for building church leaders
- Providing classes to help strengthen the understanding of the Vision and how it is fulfilled
- Developing the congregations characters as believers by offering weekly Spiritual enrichment opportunities
- Providing oversight to the Christian Education and Youth and Children Ministries
Advisory Board

Advisory Board members will be responsible for promoting and advancing the image, purposes and objectives of the corporation throughout the state of South Carolina and elsewhere as appropriate. A majority objective in designating an advisory board member is to encourage prospective nominees for the Board of Trustees and others to become better informed concerning the programs and activities of the corporation. Advisory Board members will generally be expected to attend meetings of the Board of Trustees, but will serve in this capacity without vote or other formal authority over church affairs. The Chairman of the board of Trustees will be responsible for inviting advisory board members to attend Board of Trustees meeting, as well as for calling any of the meeting involving advisory board members.

A maximum of twelve (12) persons may be elected as advisory directors by action of the Board of Trustees. Each shall serve without compensation. Advisory Board members shall be elected for three (3) year terms, ending on the date of the annual board of Trustees meeting. The Board of Trustees may fill whenever a position is vacated prior to completion of the prescribed term the vacancy.
## APPENDIX B

### Participant Course Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unable to Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The course was what I expected and more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Were the course objectives clearly defined?</td>
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<tr>
<td>The overall quality of the instructor was excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>The overall quality of the course was excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>The overall quality of the materials was excellent</td>
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<td>Were the examples used meaningful and helpful?</td>
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<td>Was the pace of the course reasonable</td>
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<tr>
<td>The level of interaction enhanced my ability to learn</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The lesson activities, content, and procedures motivated me to learn

Will you recommend this course to others?

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<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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</table>

**Participant Self Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>25%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>75%</th>
<th>exceptional</th>
<th>neither</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class</td>
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<td>Completed Homework</td>
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<td>Completed Papers</td>
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<td>Exam Results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
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</table>

Please list any ideas or suggestions for the course?
APPENDIX C

End of the Year Report

Abundant Life Prayer Praise and Worship Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Evaluation</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unable to Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate overall quality of the manual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructions for using the manual were clearly stated</td>
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<tr>
<td>The manual’s instructions were relative to the church office</td>
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<td>Manual content totally supported the goals and objectives of church</td>
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<tr>
<td>The manual’s instructional sequence was easy to follow</td>
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<tr>
<td>The manual is clear concerning expectations of the users?</td>
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<td>Important terms, concepts, and information were provided effectively</td>
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<td>The manual was consistent with other related materials?</td>
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<td>Did the materials offer flexibility in how they can be implemented?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you occasionally use the manual as a reference to ensure you perform your duties with excellence and in order.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please list any improvements or suggestions for the manual:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
REFERENCE LIST


Garson, G. David. 2006. Ethnographic Research Class Syllabus North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC. (http://www2.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/pA765/garson.htm)


