Educating African-American pentecostal church leaders regarding the prospect of sponsoring charter schools for inner-city youth

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EDUCATING AFRICAN-AMERICAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCH LEADERS REGARDING THE PROSPECT OF SPONSORING CHARTER SCHOOLS FOR INNER-CITY YOUTH

by

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at
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2008
ABSTRACT

EDUCATING AFRICAN-AMERICAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCH LEADERS REGARDING THE PROSPECT OF SPONSORING CHARTER SCHOOLS FOR INNER-CITY YOUTH

by
Lawrence E. Williams, Sr.
2008
180 pages

This study expanded the concept of church-sponsored schools by including charter schools in the definition of church-sponsored schools. Some denominations embraced the idea of local congregations supporting and sponsoring church schools while others had not. Scripture and theologians supported and give value to churches providing appropriate learning environments and educational experiences for children who were members of churches as well as children who were not members. Though history prior to the institution of democracy in America indicated joint church-state support of schools for children, the secular mindset of America increasingly separated church and state in public education. This study suggested a new meeting place for the church to join the state in sponsoring schools for children. The new meeting place was charter schools. The argument was presented that Christian churches had a responsibility to educate children through sponsoring church schools. Given the secular mindset of American society, Christian churches had an even greater challenge to establish proper learning environments for children. Middle to high-income Christian families had a greater ability
to provide church schools for their children. This study examined how the Christian church, particularly in the inner-city, could provide schools for children from low-income families who traditionally were not served by church-sponsored schools. Focus was given to examining a congregation that was part of a denomination that traditionally had given little support to church-sponsored schools.
DEDICATION

“Intelligence plus character . . . that is the goal of true education.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I dedicate this dissertation first to my parents. I dedicate this work to the memory of my mother, Leota Brewer Williams who had been an inspiration and driving force behind my ventures in life. Without her push, support, and desire for me to achieve, I may not have developed the love for learning that I possess. Then to my father, Lawrence Williams, who will be 100 years old on August 2, 2008, you have been my model of how God expects us to love others. The loving spirit that I possess comes from you. This is my gift to you. I thank you for being an awesome example of a rock.

From the depths of my heart, this is a labor of love for my two children who are gifts from God to their mother, Gwendolyn, and me. Lawrence E. Williams, Jr. and Lauren Denise Williams, this is for you to let you know that when you set your mind to it, you can achieve it. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:13).
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I want to acknowledge and thank the chairperson of my doctoral committee, Dr. Harold V. Bennett, who has encouraged as well as challenged me throughout this process. Though there were times, his copious written remarks on my revisions angered me, it was those same remarks that sharpened my thinking and provided further focus for the paper. Thank you for not allowing me to accept mediocrity. Also, serving on my doctoral committee were two persons who have provided guidance and support throughout this whole process. I owe thanks to both Dr. Steve Rasor and Dr. Quintin Robertson for your commitment of time to critique my writing.

Thank you, Pastor Arthur Mosley for your support. Your openness to new ideas allowed me the opportunity to conduct my project with the leaders of Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ. The kind and encouraging words you spoke helped me to know I could make it to the end of the D. Min. journey. In addition, your consistency in preaching provided me with spiritual sustenance on a weekly basis so I could stand.

Barry and Kea Watson, thank you for agreeing to partner with me in this venture to start a charter school. It is one thing to have an idea dancing in your head but it takes on a life when the idea is brought before others. It is so very meaningful when others stand with you and agree with your dream.
Dr. Valerie Bennett, thank you for your agreement with the dream. You shared your time and place of work to enhance the idea by providing a different perspective on educating children.

Fred Sutton, how can I say thank you for saving me untold stress with your computer knowledge. When I thought I had lost the computer file, you saved me countless hours of retyping the paper.

Chaplain Pekola Roberts has been a true friend who has been supportive and complementary of my efforts. Pekola as a colleague throughout this journey has been priceless and provided endless motivation as we continually encouraged each other.

There are so many who have contributed to the fulfillment of this dream. So to all the friends who have encouraged and supported my efforts throughout this process, thank you.
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Glossary

**charter school.** A charter school is a recent phenomenon in the United States as of the early 1990’s. It is an innovative educational institution serving students in kindergarten through twelfth grades. This type of school is a public school that operates according to the terms of a charter, or contract that has been approved by the agencies designated in the legislation of individual states. The contract for each school is defined by the individual(s) or group(s) that petition for the charter school. Once approved the contract is for a specified period of time which is usually five years and the school is accountable for meeting the performance objectives delineated in the charter.

**Christian school.** Usually a private educational institution that is sponsored by a protestant church whether a collective effort of churches or a local congregation. These types of schools tend to be nonprofit entities serving students in kindergarten through twelfth grades.

**gentrification.** Usually in an effort to achieve urban renewal objectives, low-income housing in physically deteriorated neighborhoods and housing projects are razed or renovated in an attempt to increase property values. In turn, the renewed neighborhoods attract wealthier residents who displace the previous low-income residents.
secular. A philosophy that lifts the individual person (rather than God) as the ultimate authority for humans to lead good lives. By implication, it specifically rejects the supernatural and the spiritual as legitimate means for people to make decisions or establish standards for morality.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this dissertation, entitled "Educating African-American Pentecostal Church Leaders Regarding the Prospect of Sponsoring Charter Schools for Inner City Youth," was on educating the leadership of one particular local African-American Pentecostal congregation, Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ, which was situated in the West End area of Atlanta, Georgia. The purpose for educating the group of leaders in this congregation was to provide them with new information that would help church leaders place a higher value on financially supporting an educational institution. More specifically, the higher value would allow the church to accept the responsibility of sponsoring a charter school to educate elementary age children in the community in which the church was located.

If church leaders expected to develop growing ministries that would be relevant and address the needs of people, they must be willing to do something different. In order to do something different, people must be presented with different and new information. New action is generated out of new ideas and new ways of thinking. New ways of thinking about things gives rise to creative actions that push churches towards new goals allowing them to sail unchartered waters. After all, leaders lead people where they have never gone. If all a leader did was maintain the status quo, then that person would merely manage and not lead.
Without very much change, many children who grew up in African-American Pentecostal churches along with those children who grew up in the surrounding communities did not receive the level of attention they deserved from the educational ministries of the church. In light of this, church leaders should examine how the ministries of the church could better address meeting the educational needs of children. It was imperative that churches and Christian parents assured that appropriate learning environments were provided for children where they received quality educational experiences in environments that supported and cared for them.

African-American Pentecostal churches were a vital part of the community in which they were located. As a part of the community, the church should be sensitized to the needs in that particular community. It was good to have a heart for missions in foreign countries but support for needs in foreign countries should not be provided while the needs that exist in our immediate surroundings are ignored. Being that there were some critical needs in the communities surrounding inner-city churches, the church being the caring institution that it was, should have taken the lead in addressing needs in the community.

In the secular society in which we live, the African-American Pentecostal church must be mindful of ensuring that children had appropriate, caring, and even challenging educational environments in which they learned. With this in mind, the researcher approached the Pastor of Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ and involved church leadership in the doctor of ministry project conducted by the researcher. The intent of the project was to challenge church leaders to think outside of the traditional Pentecostal ministry box and towards partnerships in ministry with other community organizations to
develop a charter school. Partnerships with other community organizations to actually establish a charter school will follow the completion of this doctoral project.

**The Larger Ministry Setting**

Concern for the proper learning environment in educational institutions was not just for the children of committed Christians but for all children. This did not leave out anybody but was inclusive of all persons. The West End community of Atlanta, Georgia was composed of many types of families that included children. Most were low-income which was verified by the fact that neighborhood public schools were Title I schools. Schools categorized as Title I had a high percentage of low-income families. According to Robert Franklin, the West End area was a village; a village was a community in which the majority of residents were African-American.¹ Use of the term village implied the need for people in the village to become responsible for making changes in the best interest of the village.

The West End community was located southwest of downtown Atlanta and was once labeled an Empowerment Zone, a major federal initiative to revitalize economically distressed areas of the country; Atlanta was selected as one of six major cities in the nation to improve impoverished areas. According to research, there were severe problems. The Atlanta Project, an endorsed arm of the Empowerment Zone Program, conducted a study in 1996 that indicated a mere 44% of its residents finished high school. Over half of its residents received public assistance at one time or another. The area had the greatest concentration of poverty within the city of Atlanta; as demonstrated by the

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fact that most households were headed by women with children. Those employed tended to work in low paying job categories that earned less than $10,000 per year.²

Crime was also high in this area. Citing the 2004 crime statistics for the City of Atlanta, crime far exceeded the national average in every category. Categories included murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft, and motor vehicle theft.³

Youth in Atlanta, and more particularly in the West End neighborhood, experienced layers of problems as identified by Covenant House. Covenant House, which originated in New York in 1973, was part of an international network that served homeless, runaway, and “throwaway” youth under the age of twenty-one. Young people that they served in Atlanta came from “...seriously dysfunctional families where substance abuse is common. Many have experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse, and have substance abuse issues of their own. Many are malnourished and lack proper hygiene, while nearly all are sexually active, and psychiatric problems are prevalent.”⁴

The issues that confronted families in the West End required action to effectuate positive change in the lives of the children to assure a better future. The time to do something for these children was while they were young. The church should have taken the initiative to effectuate change.

However, there were certain realities that must be faced. There were many Christian churches located in the West End community. The area had a large number of children, some of which attend churches in the area while many did not. These same children were members of families that had problems and needs that varied. Some of the problems that these families faced were defined as dysfunctions such as poverty, high crime, high illiteracy rate, teen pregnancy concerns, throwaway youth, substance abuse, sexual abuse, and psychiatric problems. Not only were these problems for the families residing in the West End community but some families within the church that did not live in the area also faced these same problems.

Statistically, public schools in low-income areas were low performing schools with discipline problems. Statistics for schools in the West End area confirmed this statement (see appendices P-U). The public schools in the area included four elementary, one middle, and one high school. All of these schools were Title I schools which meant that the majority of children who attended were eligible for free or reduced meals which was determined by family income. At least once during the last three years, according to the guidelines set forth in the No Child Left Behind legislation, three of these six schools did not meet Adequately Yearly Progress. One of the factors that determined this designation was low test scores. This led one to question whether children in the West End community, who were mostly poor, received a quality education.
Across America there was a movement called gentrification that also occurred in Atlanta including the West End. Older and poorer neighborhoods were torn down and replaced with new homes, apartments, condominiums, and lofts at a higher cost which attracted high-income families. Though gentrification occurred, there were still a large number of low-income families that lived in the area.

West End Mall was the focal point of the community and had been established for at least thirty years. It was also one of three predominantly African-American malls in the Atlanta area. The other two were Greenbriar Mall and South DeKalb Mall. The West End Mall’s patrons were predominantly African-American. What was once a thriving small mall was now a collection of a few small stores with no large anchor store. The immediate area surrounding West End Mall included other commercial properties housing small businesses and churches in strip malls and stand alone units.

Bringing added value to the West End area was the historic Atlanta University Center, which was home to several historically black colleges, namely Clark Atlanta University, Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse College, Morris Brown College, and Spelman College. Uniquely, each of these institutions was a stand-alone unit that voluntarily came together under the umbrella of the Atlanta University Center. This partnership allowed the institutions to offer services at a higher level than otherwise possible to students such as a library and master computer system.
The larger context for the project was the West End area of Atlanta. This mostly low-income area was a prime area for the project considering there were no identified Christian churches that sponsored any type of school. Families in the West End area had little to no choice about the type of schools to which they could send their children. School selection was limited to traditional public schools or a few charter schools (that were sponsored by non-sectarian organizations).

**The Smaller Ministry Setting**

There were several places within the West End area that had historic value. Of great significance was the Atlanta University Center, located on the northern edge of the area. Among the many churches in the area the researcher identified Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ (Cathedral of Faith), an African-American Pentecostal church positioned on the southern side of West End. The researcher selected Cathedral of Faith as the organization with which to conduct the doctor of ministry project based upon several reasons. The Cathedral of Faith congregation was the largest Pentecostal body in the West End area. In context, the Church of God in Christ was part of the classical Pentecostal movement that had its roots in the Azusa Street Revival that occurred in Los Angeles, California from 1904 to 1906. There were approximately 11,000 different Pentecostal denominations in the world. The classical Pentecostal movement was distinguished from the Neo-Pentecostal movement that began in the 1950s and 1960s. The classical Pentecostal movement created separate denominations while the Neo-Pentecostal movement desired to revitalize mainline denominations with the vitality and experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ was a small representation of the Pentecostal movement. Other denominations within the Pentecostal tradition were represented such as the Church of God, Assemblies
of God, and Pentecostal Assemblies of the world, just to name a few. The Church of God in Christ did not even represent the totality of even African-American Pentecostal denominations. The researcher acknowledges that choosing to educate church leaders of only one local African-American Pentecostal church was a limitation of the doctoral project.

African-American Pentecostal churches traditionally had not been involved in supporting education and literacy. It was the African-American Methodists in America who had a legacy of "...promoting a culture of educational excellence and literacy." In an effort to change that trend and expand the scope of ministry in an African-American Pentecostal church, the researcher considered the Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ.

Another reason that the researcher selected Cathedral of Faith was its historic value. Cathedral of Faith has been a member of the West End community since 1972. Not only had the church resided in the community for over three decades but its interest in community concerns gave reason to believe that leaders would be receptive to being involved in another community-related ministry. Cathedral of Faith operated a homeless shelter for men, a child care center, a food pantry, and sponsored efforts that provided clothing for families and individuals in need. Traditionally, Pentecostal denominations had reduced the scope of the Gospel to the salvation and empowerment of the individual to the neglect of the outward-looking kingdom perspective. The Cathedral of Faith congregation had been an anomaly within the Pentecostal tradition in regards to its involvement in community-related ministries. For this reason Cathedral of Faith congregation was of interest for this doctoral project.

5 Franklin, 144.
Cathedral of Faith was organized July 2, 1940 and its first building was located on Jones Avenue, which was near the intersection of Northside Drive in the northwest section of Atlanta. The location gave inspiration for the name of the church, Jones Avenue Church of God in Christ. It was founded by the late Deacon Herbert and Mother Laura Willis. Since he was a deacon, he could not serve as the pastor. A series of pastors served from 1940 to 1946. In 1946 the Elder George Briley, who later became Bishop Briley, was appointed pastor and served until his death in 1975. Under his leadership the church outgrew the Jones Avenue facility and in April of 1972 the Jones Avenue Church moved to 1137 Avon Avenue where it still resides.

After Bishop Briley’s death the church was without a pastor for two years. In 1977 Elder Jonathan Greer was appointed pastor. During his tenure membership grew exponentially and the church changed its name to Cathedral of Faith. Eventually members became disgruntled with Elder Greer’s leadership; consequently, a shift in leadership occurred and trustees took the leadership role. Using the process prescribed by the denomination, trustees sought the assistance of the national denominational leadership and succeeded in having Elder Greer removed.

From May 1998 to October 1998, denominational leadership placed Bishop Chandler Owens as the interim pastor of Cathedral of Faith. Also, at that time Bishop Owens served as the Presiding Bishop of the entire denomination and pastor of another local assembly. These other duties did not allow him to serve the congregation well. However, Bishop Owens assumed leadership of the church and utilized elders, deacons, and trustees of the local assembly to maintain operations of the ministry. For a brief period in 1998, Elder Felton Smith served as pastor. In October 1998, Bishop Owens
appointed Elder Martin Johnson as pastor of the church. Once again the church experienced growth. Even with the new growth, trustees sought and won the removal of Elder Johnson in November 2000.

Once again, Bishop Owens assumed the position of interim pastor. In 2001, Bishop Owens placed Elder Charles Quillen as pastor. Elder Quillen served for a brief period. In April 2002, Elder Arthur Mosley was installed as pastor. The membership was smaller than its once four thousand congregants under Elder Greer. Though smaller in size at approximately one thousand the congregation was stabilized. On an average Sunday morning attendance was approximately four hundred.

Structurally, the Church of God in Christ was typified as episcopal. This meant that power flowed from persons at the top to those at the bottom: bishop—superintendent—pastor—congregant. The church embraced the ideology that authority was invested in the leader of the organization at all levels of the church (national, jurisdictional, district, local church). There was the unwritten expectation that the leader’s authority was to go unquestioned with the assumption that all would embrace it and give their unwavering support.

At the local church level, the same episcopal concept was in place. The pastor was leader of the local assembly appointed by the jurisdictional bishop. Conventionally, most pastors in the Church of God in Christ were autocratic leaders who operated their churches as though they had absolute power. Very rarely were pastors challenged in the exercise of their power. This resulted from the fact that the greater majority of churches were founded by individuals rather than by the actions of a connectional body. As a

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result, founding personalities used their own financial resources to build the local church. Founding pastors tended to operate the church like a family business where every allowance to ensure family members held key positions. Upon the death of a pastor, appeals could be made for one of his sons to succeed him. In recent years, some widows have begun to assume pastorate of the church left by their deceased husbands. Incidentally, the church did not allow for retirement. Normally, a pastor and any other person that held a position in ministry would maintain that position until death. Exceptions to this unwritten rule were persons serving at the national church level who were elected officials such as General Board members.

The history of the Church of God in Christ denomination spanned one hundred years. The church was officially organized in 1907 in Memphis, Tennessee by Charles Harrison Mason who was once a Baptist minister. After being disfellowshipped from the Baptist church in 1897 because of his belief in sanctification, Charles Mason along with a group of like-minded individuals formed a new fellowship. Then in 1907 Charles Mason started the Church of God in Christ after being disfellowshipped from the group that formed in 1897. The newer group Charles Mason started in 1907 was due to his experience and belief in the baptism of the Holy Ghost as evidenced by speaking in tongues. Controversy over speaking in tongues was based on the belief that Mason’s actions differed from the speaking in tongues in Acts 2:4. After starting the Church of God in Christ, Charles Mason’s title changed to Elder. Later he became the General Overseer of the national body that grew exponentially in its formative years. It was not until later in his life that the term Bishop replaced the position of General Overseer.
Since the denomination was young, most churches were either in their first or second generation of leadership. This was to say that either churches had the founding pastor still active or the first successor to the founding pastor presently served. A small number of churches had moved into its third (and even fourth) generation of leadership. Traditionally a leadership period was long due to the fact that a pastor served one local congregation until death. Pastors were not moved from one congregation to another as in other denominations that had an episcopal structure.

The Cathedral of Faith congregation was an atypical assembly within the Church of God in Christ. For one, the congregation had more than two pastors in its history; it was in its third generation of leadership. Secondly, most Church of God in Christ congregations had a ceremonial trustee board which allowed the pastor to rule as an autocrat. People that served on these trustee boards were usually appointed by the pastor. However, Cathedral of Faith had a functioning trustee board elected by church membership. Annually a third of the trustee seats were vacated which allowed for these seats to be filled by a church membership vote. This system was instrumental in bringing accountability to the operation of the ministry. A third justification for naming the church as atypical was because it took the lead among Church of God in Christ congregations in the region when it recognized and promoted women as ministers. Under the leadership of Dr. Greer, tradition was defied when he intentionally allowed women to sit in the pulpit and take positions in the leadership structure of the local congregation.
Unlike the trustee boards of other Church of God in Christ congregations, this board had a voice that was heard. During the time of Dr. Jonathan Greer, who was the congregation’s second pastor, the trustee board became vocal. The board took the lead when it expressed disagreement with some of Dr. Greer’s beliefs and practices. Their organized efforts led to Dr. Greer being removed as pastor of the church. Because the denomination taught members to have unquestioning allegiance to a leader, this kind of responsible action taken by the board of trustees was courageous. Even while Bishop Chandler Owens was interim pastor the trustee board, which was comprised mostly of deacons, was responsible for the operation of the ministry. The main task of Bishop Owens during his tenure was to make sure there was a preacher in place every Sunday. The trustee board had a voice not only within the congregation but outside the congregation.

Again, the trustee board took the lead when it confronted a problem with Elder Felton Smith who served as pastor for a brief period but was removed due to the congregation’s request. Following Elder Smith, Elder Martin Johnson was appointed pastor following the interim pastorate of Bishop Owens. Elder Johnson experienced personal difficulties that eventually led to his dismissal. The trustee board utilized the approved process designed by the national church when it raised concerns about its pastor. This led to the removal of Elder Johnson from the position as pastor. Without a permanent pastor in place, the trustee board assumed reigns of leadership. Elder Quillen was placed as pastor but the trustee board discerned that he was not a match for the congregation and within a short period voiced their concerns. He was also relieved of his duties as pastor.
In 2002, Bishop Owens appointed Elder Arthur Mosley as pastor. During his first three years as pastor, Arthur Mosley also served as the interim president-dean of the Charles Harrison Mason Theological Seminary at Interdenominational Theological Center. In regards to the pastoral ministry, Elder Mosley previously founded two smaller sized Church of God in Christ congregations. His training, experience and personal attributes made him a suitable match for the Cathedral of Faith congregation.

There was a healthy leadership tension that existed at Cathedral that was unlike the reality of other Church of God in Christ congregations. Normally, the pastor of Cathedral of Faith had his program approved by the trustee board that then created a budget that supported the program of the church. This tension was healthy. In most Church of God in Christ congregations the pastor had carte blanche privileges in putting forth a church-wide program. What this meant was that other pastors did not have their programs approved by any board. In other words, they had unchecked powers.

Cathedral of Faith was a viable force in the community. Many people that lived in the community were once members of the church. Community members supported the many church sponsored programs. During the time of this project the number of people that lived in the community who were members declined. Likewise, community participation in the programming of the church dwindled. What happened to Cathedral of Faith Church membership was not uncommon; it was a familiar trend among African-American churches located in urban areas. Despite what was happening, Cathedral of Faith Church was still a viable force in the community.
In regards to the church sponsoring schools, Cathedral of Faith had not sponsored any religious school. At one time, Cathedral of Faith operated a child care center but it had not been operational since 1980. Cathedral of Faith was a local assembly of the Church of God in Christ. The history of the denomination had little reference to its endorsement of church schools for kindergarten through twelfth grade other than the school in Lexington, Mississippi that was supported by the national church. This school was no longer in operation and only seemed to receive attention when it was a ministry concern of the person who served as Presiding Bishop of the denomination. Only a small number of individual Church of God in Christ congregations sponsored church schools. Knowledge of this matter grounded itself in two developments. One factor was the personal involvement of the researcher and the other was a continuing survey conducted by the National Department of Education on private schools.

The personal involvement of the researcher was as the chair of an organization within the national structure of the Church of God in Christ sponsored by the Auxiliaries In Ministry Convention. The Auxiliaries In Ministry Convention was held annually and brought together five departments of the church: Sunday School, youth, music, evangelism, and missions. Other subgroups were created at the Auxiliaries In Ministry Convention chairperson’s discretion. One of those subgroups was the National Association of Choice Schools. This was the group chaired by the researcher. The group’s purpose was to provide education in support of expanding church-sponsored schools and the professional development of church school administrators and teachers. Through the researcher’s work with this group, they found that only a small number of local congregations sponsored church schools. For instance, in Georgia there were no
local churches that sponsored a church school. In California, the group found two local churches that operated church schools. In Chicago, they identified three locally sponsored church schools. In Philadelphia, there were two local churches that sponsored church schools. In Louisiana, the group identified one locally sponsored church school. Milwaukee, Wisconsin only had one church-sponsored school. The group assumed there were other church schools in operation but they were unable to determine a definite number.

The National Center for Education Statistics conducted a survey on private schools in the 1995-1996 school year (see Appendix H); the Church of God in Christ was not named in the survey. Twenty-four denominations (groups) were identified and listed the number of schools sponsored by each denominational group (see Appendix H). The few Church of God in Christ sponsored schools were probably embedded in figures for Pentecostals or under the designation Other. The Pentecostal designation covered many subgroups and it was difficult to determine how many of the 563 Pentecostal church schools were Church of God in Christ. The same was true of the category designated Other. In total, the survey found that there were 21,329 religious schools in the United States. Of that total, 563 were Pentecostal schools. Again, from that statistic, the number of Church of God in Christ schools was unknown.

From the personal involvement of the researcher with the National Association of Choice Schools with the Church of God in Christ and the survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, it was determined that there were few Church of God in Christ congregations that sponsored schools for children in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Cathedral of Faith was part of a denomination that had given little
ministry emphasis to church sponsored schools. As a local congregation, Cathedral of Faith had given little emphasis to supporting church sponsored schools other than its operation of a child care center for a period of time (the child care center targeted children from six-months to five-years old).

**Theological Reflection on Cathedral of Faith Church**

Cathedral of Faith served a diverse population. There were many people in the community who were unchurched and needed to hear the gospel message in such a way that they responded affirmatively to it. According to Karl Barth’s definition, Cathedral of Faith was doing ministry. He stated that in order for something to be ministry, “...it has to be light to those who in some way are still in darkness.”

Further Barth lifted the ministry of witness. Cathedral of Faith was a ministry of witness. Barth stated, “...ministry means active subordination to God from whom it derives and therefore to man to whom it turns and whom it is to serve if it serves God.”

The church was in existence to provide service to the community. This was what God had set Cathedral of Faith there to do. The church taught and declared the saving gospel message about Jesus Christ contained in scripture. Barth was clear about the fact that anyone doing ministry should not be concerned with supporting or defending any particular Christian view of the world that someone created. Additionally, what Cathedral of Faith did was ministry of witness because its practices matched Barth’s description in that what

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8 Ibid., 833.
9 Ibid.
it did was proclamation (declaration), explication (explanation), and application (personalizing the message to self).\textsuperscript{10}

What Cathedral of Faith did was missio dei.\textsuperscript{11} Bosch described Barth’s concept of missio dei as the mission of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit sending the church into the world. Emphasis was not on the church but the fact that mission was an attribute of God. It was seen as movement from God to the world. In essence, we as believers were the church. This was not to be confused with the organized institutional church but the body of believers. We as believers were moved by God to go into the world. Bosch helped us understand that this was labor motivated by love. Being that God was love, what we did in His name for other people was to be done in the spirit of love.\textsuperscript{12} When mission was done in love the sense of mandate and command was removed. This helped us understand as Bosch did that mission was something “...in which the church is privileged to participate.”\textsuperscript{13}

As on organization, Cathedral of Faith found itself responding and acting but not always in a focused manner. The organization must be clear about the purpose of its ministries. For instance, the church conducted weekly Bible study sessions and there should have been a clear understanding of its purpose. Was it just for the purpose of imparting knowledge? Bosch put it into perspective when he discussed the “soteriological motif.”\textsuperscript{14} Every religion was concerned with soteriology. Soteriology concerned a denominations understanding of salvation that determined the shape of its’

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 843.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 393.
mission effort. Cathedral of Faith was concerned with imparting knowledge about God (proclamation, explication, and application) so that members, community persons, and visitors accepted salvation as an ongoing process that occurred for the remainder of their lives. Salvation for Cathedral of Faith meant taking the scales off people's eyes about religious superstitions and meaningless traditions and emphasized the need of others along with improving the morality of self and others.\(^{15}\) This was confirmed by actions the church took to break with denominational tradition when it permitted women to operate in ministry.

Taking time to reflect on Cathedral of Faith leadership was a challenging task. What seemed to take precedence was management of the day-to-day ministry operations. Because most of the administration’s energy was involved with day-to-day operational concerns, there was no long-range plan in place for ministry. Along with a long-range plan there should have been a vision for the ministry. Although there may have been a vision in the mind of the pastor, it was not communicated to other leaders or congregants. If the vision of the ministry was not communicated, then in actuality there was no vision and no definitive direction for the ministry.

For instance, top administration of the church sought to have a two-story dilapidated residential structure demolished that the church owned for one year. All of that happened secretly. Congregation members only learned of it when a television news team was sent to cover demolition of the home. When the building was torn down there was no apparent plan for any future development of the property.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 395.
Mentioning top administration of the church was intentional. Top administration included the pastor, church administrator, and trustees. These were the people who made decisions for the operation of the church and its ministries. However, two of these positions only represented the business side of the church. Also, there were top-level administrators for the ministry side of the church. There were five directors for major arms of ministry: worship, leadership, fellowship, Christian education, and outreach. For the sake of communicating and understanding a comprehensive plan for the church, there was no formal means of communication between the business side and the ministry side of the church. As a result, the church at best limped along when it could have galloped.

There seemed to be a fear of revisiting at what were some dark years for the local church. These were years that the church split due to disruptions brought first by the death of its first pastor, Bishop Briley. A second split occurred when the second pastor, Dr. Greer was removed. The third split was when another pastor, Elder Johnson was dismissed. It was very difficult for the administration and congregation to reflect on these years. The researcher came face-to-face with this when he asked for the church history. For a church that had been in existence as long as it had, the history should have been fuller. Yet the document given to the researcher was a sketchy one-page outline that failed to include all the names of former pastors.

In order for the church’s future potential to be realized, it had to reckon with its past. The church needed to be more intentional in creating an infrastructure that provided a firm foundation for growth. Although there was a structure on paper it was not fully operative. It was not fully operative because the separate entities within the structure did
not communicate with one another. The structure would only function properly when there was a process in place for regular communication amongst the varying entities.

Since January 2006, the researcher served as the director of worship. This position was part of the ministry side of the church. Up to this time, there had been no opportunity for the researcher to communicate formally with the business side of the church. Although the researcher was the director of worship, the researcher planned the doctoral ministry project as a means to initiate communication with the business side of the church even though it was a Christian education issue.

**Ministry Issue**

In the West End of Atlanta there was a need for a distinct, quality full-time educational institution for children in kindergarten through twelfth grades that would integrate a secular and a religious entity in its sponsorship namely the public school system and a church organization. Though there were schools and churches in the West End, there was no school sponsored by a church in the area that served children in kindergarten through twelfth grades. For Christian parents, it was a real dilemma to decide whether to send their children to a public, private, or church sponsored school. Foundational beliefs that underlie public schools, its curriculum, and its operations were factors that parents seriously considered for it affected the thinking, morals, and behavior of the children. Though there were a variety of public, private, and religious schools very few adequately met the needs of many inner-city youth. A bold new type of educational institution in the West End was needed, namely a charter school, that brought church and state together in the public educational arena and served as a model for other faith-based organizations and local education agencies.
Motivation for Addressing the Ministry Issue

The researcher had a call to administrate a Christian school. To fulfill this call, the researcher gained experience in the public sector as a special education teacher, assistant principal, and principal. In accepting the call to ministry, the researcher completed the Masters of Divinity degree at Interdenominational Theological Center. The researcher blended the call, preparation, and experience, when he co-founded a child care center and private Christian elementary school. The researcher served as the principal at the Christian school. While in this capacity, the researcher found it increasingly difficult to operate a tuition-based elementary school in a low-income urban area. Also, it became apparent that operating as a small proprietary business without the benefit of a functioning board of directors limited growth of the school. In search of a different method of fulfilling the call to administrate a Christian school, the researcher enrolled in the doctor of ministry program at Interdenominational Theological Center. The selected readings and class discussions reshaped the researcher’s paradigm for ministry. The researcher found that ministry could not be accomplished alone. In order for God’s call in our lives to be achieved, people in ministry work with others. For the researcher, this meant moving beyond proprietary operation of the private Christian school and partnering with others. Investigating the appropriate school type to fit the context led the researcher to the idea of a charter school. A project focused on informing leaders of one local Pentecostal congregation about their responsibility to educate children became the idea and action that was ripe for this time and context. Though starting a charter school was a long range goal, the more immediate objective, which was
the focus of this project, was the education of Pentecostal church leaders regarding sponsoring a charter school for inner-city youth.

**Existential Motivation for Addressing the Ministry Issue**

The general impression in the United States was that children in inner-city public schools received a less than adequate education. Coupled with this was the increase in crime, large numbers of children born out of wedlock, high percentage of low-income families, high number of school drop-outs, and blatant disrespect for authority, just to name a few. The characteristics listed above generally were attributed to students in inner-city neighborhoods such as the West End and these descriptors were usually accompanied by low test scores in the schools these students attend. There was a link between the problems and behaviors exhibited in a community and the academic performance of those students in school. In general, the characteristics listed above indicated a shift in the morals and values of young people. This shift was viewed as decay in moral shift.

It was the researcher's contention that public schools, in general, and more particularly in the inner-city lacked a curriculum that was intentional in addressing character development concerns. There were a few public schools that emphasized character development in their curriculum. It was a choice of the building administrator to have character development as part of its curricular offerings. When public schools were intentional about providing instruction in regards to moral conduct and character development, it could result in standards of behavior that were more acceptable to wider society. When no deliberate attention was given in the home or school to developing moral conduct, society invited the negative behaviors that were all too common.
The West End area was defined by Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive on the north, Cascade Road on the west, Route 166 on the south and Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority rail tracks to the east. For the most part, the West End was a low-to-moderate income area located southwest of downtown Atlanta. The West End was composed of mixed communities. As a well established area of Atlanta there were older homes and apartments. Most of the older apartments were home to predominately African-American low-income families. For the most part, this area was considered to be low-income and inner-city. There were quite a few older single family residences, some of which had not been refurbished and had a worn appearance. For the most part, these homes were occupied by African-American families. Some of the older homes had been renovated and mixed in with these refurbished homes were newly constructed homes with early twentieth century architecture. The majority of these homes were where European Americans live. These homes were higher in value and attracted middle-income families. In recent years the number of newly constructed condominiums and single detached homes rose which attracted both European and African-American middle-income families.

The West End was home to a number of churches but only two of these congregations took on the task of sponsoring a church school; however, both schools had been closed. Clearly the Bible mandated that adults in the body of Christ properly train children. In the modern context, most Christian adults shared this responsibility with formal schools. The majority of adults shared this responsibility with traditional public schools. However, during the last few decades the conventional public school, intentionally, took a laissez-faire approach to providing a structured program that
addressed morals, values, and character development. Schools that provided academic instruction as well as emphasized morals and values education were traditional church sponsored schools. Ideally the possibility of children developing a (Christian) moral foundation increased as well as students received a quality academic experience in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade when a greater numbers of churches sponsored traditional church schools. This in turn helped churches fulfill God's mandate that children be trained with a religious emphasis. Though this was the ideal a more realistic goal was realized. In light of the inability of religious organizations to maintain traditional kindergarten through twelfth grade religious schools in the inner-city, churches must be more innovative and create charter schools that provide high quality academic instruction and a structured program that emphasized morals and values.

Traditional public schools were settings in which the majority of America's children were educated. Some committed Christians had concerns about educating their children in traditional public schools. One of their concerns was the removal of any reference to or acknowledgement of God within the context of public schools. The public school became an institution that by nature reflected the society of which it was a part. In the formative years of the United States, the American public was mainly Christian in its orientation and practices. As a result, the public schools were able to be reflective of that inclination. However, the more recent history of the United States depicted a nation that was culturally and religiously diverse. This diversity in the nation was mirrored in the schools and became the new reality. No longer was the traditional public school able to pass on the Christian morals and values to students through direct or indirect practices.
However, in this modern society conventional public schools became much more influential and even authoritative. Schools, along with the home, determined and shaped the way children thought and what they believed. Seemingly, schools had more influence than did the home in shaping the development of moral conduct and character. If this was the case, then the Christian church should become involved in sponsoring schools so that the Christian church had direct influence in shaping children. This did not mean that the involvement of the Christian church in education was a push for teaching religion in the schools. It did mean that the Christian church should be involved in providing wholesome, quality educational environments for the training of children that was intentional in providing instruction to develop character. This instruction on moral and character development could not be based on religion rather universal non-religious morals and values. For this reason, the charter school that results from this project would strive to fulfill the goal of education as stated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

Traditional public schools became one of the arenas in which the dynamics between church and state were played out. The separation of church and state resulted in a “wall of separation” that stemmed from *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947) United States Supreme Court decision. This ruling became the law of the land. With the decision of the court, the roots of a secular society were firmly in place bringing about the eradication of God from the public school system to the point that any reference to

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religion and God was removed from textbooks which in essence neutralized God. This had a negative effect on children’s ability to properly place God in relationship to the world and truth.

This argument traced back to when the Constitution of the United States was adopted. Separation of church and state was a legal principle based upon the First Amendment of the Constitution which reads, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” With that document, the separation of church and state concept became a part of the American fiber and way of life. Though it was a part of the American way of living, it was not as pronounced as it was since 1963 when Madeline Murray O’Hare single-handedly petitioned and ensured federal legislation was passed that excluded prayer and eventually Bible reading in all public schools.

The gulf between the state and church increasingly widened. Today, even Christians in America accepted the division of church and state when they affirmed that God was not allowed in public schools. However, in a political sense, there was separation of church and state to prevent the government from exercising preference to any particular religion or prohibiting the practice of any religion. Yet the interpretation of separation of church and state was taken to the extreme where even the ‘public’ God of the nation was no longer acceptable.

It seemed that Christians became schizophrenic in belief and practice when such thinking became part of the practices of living. Even though this was the present reality and even though traditional public schools were what they were, there yet remained a hope invested in the Christian church that it would create the kind of educational

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19 Toews, 54.
institution that could bridge the gap between church and state. By broadening the concept of a church sponsored school, a charter school could be the new meeting place between church and state.

Jon Meacham presented an argument concerning separation of church and state that supported the division. His argument was based on ideals of this nation’s founding fathers who believed in faith and freedom. In Meacham’s words, “...faith and freedom are inextricably linked: it is not for priests or pastors or presidents or kings to compel belief, for to do so trespasses on each individual’s God-given liberty of mind and heart. If the Lord chose not to force obedience from those He created, then who are men to try?”

For the founding fathers, the idea of separation of church and state protected the beliefs and practices of all religions from government interference. It would not be as it was with monarchs who used church and state to lord over people under the guise that only kings had sole prominence with God. In the United States, the founders sought to build a nation wherein people would have the liberty to practice the religion of their choice without fear of governmental reprisal or intrusion.

Although there was separation of church and state, Meacham indicated that there was a place for religion in the nation. For the founders, religion served as an institution that provided the foundation “…for a people’s moral conduct, for America’s ideas about justice, decency, duty, and responsibility.” However, in the contemporary context, America had taken away a means that perpetuated the standards of moral conduct in society. It was the guilt and shame of our present day society, that children in many

21 Ibid., 27.
traditional public schools are being educated without a structured curriculum that addressed morals, values, and character development.

Without the combined instructional efforts of the home, school, and religious organizations in regards to teaching morals and values that formerly existed in this country, children now had academic information but a decreasing possibility of adopting a common set of acceptable values. For instance, there was a lower regard for life as evidenced by some of today’s youth who seemed to have little remorse for killing people over trivial matters. In the not so distant past, it was virtuous for a young woman to be a virgin. However, today, the young virgin was laughed at and considered an oddity.

Dilution of religious influence in American traditional public schools had given place to youth that had little regard for authority. This resulted from having no place for God in schools or the lives of youth. With the displacement of God, came the breakdown of the authority-subordinate system. Parents, teachers, nor police were highly respected by some of today’s youth. Even in this highly technologically advanced society the value of an education diminished as we experienced high numbers of youth failing to graduate from high school. All the above were examples of what occurred with our youth. The shame of their plight pointed back to adults allowing this decay to occur.

Though the argument can be made for morals and values being determined by God, this paper asserted that ethical standards could be set without the ultimate authority being God. There were a common set of morals and values upon which the church could help communities agree. The morals and values did not have to be based upon religious beliefs. There was a sense of what was right and what was good that people could identify without referencing any particular religious sense of goodness. The church could
take the lead in bringing communities together to discuss and determine what those common morals and values were. A set of morals and values could be identified that would not be of offense to any group of people. There were values such as honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect for self and others, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, and courage. This was not an exhaustive list but only an example of a set of values upon which religious organizations could help the community to agree. Once a set of morals and values were determined they then could can be organized and systematically taught to children in a charter school.

It was regretful that Christian adults cowered to pressure and idly sat by allowing society to silence their voice when God was expelled from the schoolhouse. Accepting the separation of church and state in America's public schools caused this nation to defy time proven models of education that existed prior to the founding of democracy in the United States of America. After the Reformation in Europe, public schools were a product of the church-state. Being that most European countries supported one religion, public schools were operated by church and government. In earlier years of the United States of America, public schools permitted 'public' religion to determine morals and values that were transmitted along with academic curriculum. In more recent years, the interpretation of separation of church and state equated to taking references to God out of textbooks and the name of God was not mentioned at all. This progression of practice took the reference of God out of places in society where God formerly was referenced.
The waning religious influence that was our present reality contributed to the profane condition of American society. It was this sense of the profane that was synonymous with moral decay. Moral decadence was one of the ways that any great society could and would fall. Though we were guilty of allowing this reality to exist, we as Christians could bring action that changed this negative situation with our youth. Believing that Christians should be involved in educating children was the reason this project focused on informing African-American Pentecostal church leaders regarding their responsibility in sponsoring charter schools.

Realizing the negative affect that traditional public schools had on children, a major church convention responded to the issue. The Southern Baptist Convention, a voluntary organization of 16,270,315 members of 43,699 congregations across the United States, met in its annual convention June 13-14, 2006 in Greensboro, North Carolina.\(^\text{22}\) One of its actions formulated Resolution No. 10 entitled, On Engaging the Direction of the Public School System. The resolution referenced the December 2005 ruling of a federal judge that favored public schools “…indoctrinating children with dogmatic Darwinism (Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District), which radically influences their view of origins.” The conclusion of the resolution was “That we encourage all Southern Baptist churches to solicit individuals from their membership to engage the culture of our public school systems nationwide by running for election to their local school boards and exerting their godly influence upon these school systems.”\(^\text{23}\) In essence, this action reflected the response of conservative Christians to an educational system that taught


\(^{23}\)Ibid.
from a secular perspective that by its nature neutralized and left out God.24 From the words of Horace Bushnell, Christian parents wanted their children to grow up Christian. The more devout Christian parents were the greater their desire was to have the children grow up Christian.25

Persons who had first-hand knowledge of the negative effects that traditional public schools had on children were professionals who worked in those institutions. One of the greatest statements about how public schools adversely affected children was made in how some public school professionals responded. When common characteristics of students who attended Christian schools were identified, one was that the highest numbers of children that attended Christian schools came from homes where there was a public school teacher or administrator.26 The rationale these professionals used when they choose to send their children to Christian schools was their knowledge of the "...lowered academic standards and lack of discipline in the public schools."27 This lack of good discipline attributed to the hands-off approach taken by public schools regarding instruction on morals and behavior.

A more fundamental problem that Christians faced was the new secular mindset of American society.28 It was not so much that the new secular mindset of American society was the problem but the underlying concern was the affect that this secular mindset had on Christians. Systematically secular society effectively rejected God as the ultimate authority for humans to lead a good life. It became difficult for Christians to

26 Ibid., 297.
27 Ibid.
comprehend the concept of Christian education because in our society education was secularized and many Christians did not understand the effects secularization had on a child. The secular mind said that God was no longer the ultimate authority. Secular thinking created an environment in which it was acceptable to disregard Christianity and even be irreligious. The false sense of separation of the secular and the religious contradicted the belief that God was involved in human affairs. For the Christian, God should be involved in every aspect of life, even in the educational institutions in which children learned.

Children who were brought up in Christian homes were given a world view in which God was the authority and in control. When Christian children attended public schools they encountered a system that eliminated the God that Christian families embraced in their belief systems. This was a situation that children encountered to which the church must respond.

For the most part, Christian churches and Christian parents quietly accepted the secular mindset that separated God from the secular which in this case separated God from education. Christian churches and Christian parents, more specifically those who were African-American Pentecostals, must more fully recognize the linkage between the secular viewpoint that was the foundational philosophical stance of traditional public schools and how this eliminated the idea that God was the authority and should be involved in the affairs of humans. In essence, secular thinking not only removed God from being involved in the affairs of people but put the individual in the place of authority. Be reminded that this was the secular mindset but not the reality for

30 Pike, 150.
Christians. With the elimination of God as the ultimate authority in the public arena, it was apparent that the prophetic voice of the church was not as operative in this arena as it should have been. For it was the prophetic voice that would "...bring into the open the assumptions and values that are in question and to subject them to public scrutiny." Prophetic religion called into question the environments that educational institutions set for children. Not only must the church be engaged in the prophetic in this regard but parents must be empowered to call into question the environments that educational institutions set for children since it was parents who ultimately were responsible for training their own children.

The term church-sponsored school usually meant a private school funded and operated by a particular religious body. This type of school normally charged tuition. However, a hybrid school existed that this paper included in the definition of church-sponsored schools. In the state of Georgia a charter school, though public, could be co-sponsored by any individual or agency. Laws in each of the individual states determined who or what agencies could sponsor a charter school. In Georgia, any religious agency was permitted to co-sponsor a charter school. In essence, a charter school could be a school sponsored by a church or group of churches (religious organizations). This rendered the charter school sponsored by a church, a church-sponsored school. However, this would be a hybrid of a traditional church-sponsored school mainly because the church-sponsored charter school could not embrace God or the religious beliefs of that church.

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31 Francis, 360.
Currently in the United States, there were few local congregations that co-sponsored charter schools. The Rev. Dr. Floyd Flake, former U.S. Congressman, president of Wilburforce University, and pastor of the Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral in Jamaica, Queens, New York and the congregation operated a charter school. Also, Dr. Flake was president of Edison Charter Schools which was the largest school management enterprise in the United States. Faith Chapel Church of God in Christ pastored by Bishop Roy Dixon sponsored the Holly Drive Leadership Academy in San Diego, California. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the Holy Redeemer Institutional Church of God in Christ, pastored by Bishop Sedgwick Daniels of Milwaukee, Wisconsin sponsored a charter school as a ministry of the church.

According to laws passed in some states, churches could co-sponsor charter schools. Being that churches could co-sponsor charter schools more churches should become involved in sponsoring charter schools. Since charter school legislation in some states permitted a charter school to be sponsored by a church then that school would be considered a church-sponsored school. Again, the caution was that the school must honor the separation of church and state in not teaching the religious beliefs of the church.

The church was an instrument of education to train children. Though the church had a responsibility to train children there were only two Christian churches in the West End area of Atlanta that operated a church school and those schools were now closed. It appeared that a church-sponsored school was not high on the agenda of ministry concerns of most African-American Pentecostal churches. If a church-sponsored school was high

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on the priority list of ministry concerns then it would have caused them to sponsor a school. There were no church-sponsored schools in the West End except for the two that existed for many years (Mt. Vernon Baptist Church School and St. Anthony’s Catholic School which were closed).

Even though the traditional church-sponsored school seemed like the ideal choice for educating inner-city youth, there was a hindrance that kept it from being realized. Most traditional church-sponsored schools were no longer located in the inner-city, they were in suburban areas. One reason for the shift of traditional church sponsored schools from the inner-city to the suburbs was economics. Traditional church-sponsored schools charged tuition. A large percentage of families in the inner-city were low-income and unable to pay tuition. Being that church schools once located in the inner-city were unable to maintain a large mass of students due to shifting demographics of the inner-city family, traditional church schools packed up and moved to the suburbs.

Another reason for the demise of religious schools in the inner-city pointed to economics. Religious schools in the inner-city were located in low-income neighborhoods which allowed them to receive federal funding for remedial instruction under Chapter I. In July 1985, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered a decision that stopped remedial instruction under Chapter I federal funding in the facilities of private religious schools.33 With this funding source no longer available to private religious schools in the inner-city, budgets of these schools were negatively affected. The decrease in federal funding and inability of families to pay tuition forced church schools to leave the inner-city.

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The term inner-city generally referred to low-income minorities (mainly African-American and Hispanic). As gentrification occurred in urban areas across America, the inner-city was populated with middle-income families (African-American and European). Gentrification changed the inner-city demographics. For the purposes of this paper, inner-city referred to low-income African-Americans.

So for the inner-city family, the traditional church sponsored school was no longer a viable choice. What was needed was a new non-tuition-based educational institution that brought together the church, private organizations (philanthropic, fraternities, sororities, small businesses), and the state (public sector) to meet the educational needs of inner-city youth in a qualitative manner. Charter schools, a recent phenomenon in education, were institutions that could be the new meeting place of church and state that provided an innovative approach to educating children.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE SEARCH

Christian schools had a unique place in society. They fulfilled a role that could only be filled by the church school. As discussed by Toews, Christian schools constantly changed their identity. In other words they "...respond to existential relativism by including revealed information in education." Toews expressed that Christian schools were not static but ever-changing. As society changed so did the Christian school. Yet as they existed and changed they did so based on truths found in scripture, where applicable, revealed information expressed in the Christian school through curriculum.

Leslie J. Francis similarly developed an idea about existential relativism. Francis was the director of Welsh National Centre for Religious Education and professor of practical theology in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Wales, Bangor 2 defined this concept by naming it the theology of education. 3 The theology of education when used in reference to church schools necessarily embraced “...the historical context through which the church school evolved, the contemporary philosophical climate of educational debate, and empirical research data about the current functioning of church schools.” 4 Francis’ research in the areas of empirical theology,

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1 Toews, 54.
3 Francis, 349.
4 Ibid.
religious education, and the psychology of religion brought further clarity when he lifted the theologies of nurture, service, and prophecy. The theology of nurture focused on Christian training. More specifically, it was the area of knowledge that centered on how Christian parents wanted their children to be raised utilizing Christian faith as its measure.⁵

For Francis the concept of nurture was coupled with the “...fundamental notion of critical openness.”⁶ This line of thinking required that the student have an appreciation for ‘critical autonomy.’ In this context “...nurture can be distinguished from good education on the one hand and from indoctrination on the other. Therefore, Christian educators should develop an environment of self-critique in which the learner enquired in order that Christian education was other than indoctrination.”⁷

Also, there was the theology of service. This addressed church thinking in terms of others. It focused on the church’s sense of duty to persons who were not members of the church. The church school took a stance when it determined whether it would be exclusive and provide training just for members or whether it would be inclusive and extend schooling to those outside the defined membership. From a historical context, churches sponsored Christian schools because they saw public schools as an effort that faltered. Initially the mission was not to save souls but that the general educational needs of the nation be served.⁸ Actually Christian schooling was not an either-or situation; saving souls and educational excellence had equal importance.

⁵ Ibid., 356.
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid., 358.
The theology of prophecy helped establish a Christian school’s relevance. Prophecy took one’s understanding of God’s word and applied it to the contemporary context. This allowed the Christian school to stand outside of the social practice or situation and pointed to the implications and consequences of behaviors and brought to the learners’ attention implicit values and beliefs that underlied these behaviors.\(^9\) The prophetic tradition brought these behaviors into an open arena and subjected them to “public scrutiny.”\(^10\)

Francis’ ideas were germane to the development of this project. It was the responsibility of the Christian church to create schools that were mindful of the context. For Francis, it was not a question of whether the Christian church should provide education institutions for children but rather that relevant meaningful schools were created and dictated by context that met the academic and spiritual needs of children as well as the church as they developed.

**History of Christian Schools**

In order that the Gospel be promoted, instruction on Christian life became part of the fabric for which the Church was responsible for operating.\(^11\) Initially, instruction in Christian living was targeted at adults. It was not until the Reformation that the recognition and importance of children became important enough that schools were created for them.\(^12\) The roots of Christian schooling traced back to the Reformation. Also during this time, the ignorance of the masses to the Christian message was recognized. In order to win souls to Christ ways were developed to provide a foundation

\(^9\) Ibid., 359.  
\(^10\) Ibid., 360.  
in the basics of the faith. Martin Luther, a major contributor to Reformation Theology, saw children as being important in the area of evangelism.\textsuperscript{13} He responded by writing two catechisms, which were still used in Lutheran homes, schools, and churches.\textsuperscript{14}

A French Protestant Reformation theologian, John Calvin, who saw the void and ignorance among the masses was compelled to write the Institutes. The Institutes were designed for the masses that had little to no knowledge of scripture. As a result, the Institutes were written in a simplistic manner and subscribed to an elementary form of teaching used for children as well as adults. In specific response to schools that existed in the city Calvin wrote \textit{Ordo et Ratio Docendi} in 1538 and \textit{Leges Academiae} in 1559. Although its intended use was for schools it helped pastors understand the foundations for teaching within the church. An additional work, entitled Articles, was a catechism for training children.\textsuperscript{15}

During the 18th century, John Wesley contributed to church schooling. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, developed teaching materials as well as methods for his preachers to follow to “…fulfill their responsibilities as teachers of the faith.”\textsuperscript{16} Additionally, John Wesley founded many day and boarding schools.

In the United States, certain denominational churches dominated in providing church schools. Lutheran, Adventist, and Catholic churches took the lead in sponsoring church schools.\textsuperscript{17} For the purposes of this study attention was given to the recent history of the United States of America (United States). Mueller reported that in 1967 there were

\begin{itemize}
\item Ibid., 168.
\end{itemize}
34 million children enrolled in schools in the United States. Of that total 15% were enrolled in religious schools. Of that total 15% were enrolled in religious schools. The greater number of these parochial schools were sponsored by Roman Catholics and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Of that 15%, 4.5 million were in Catholic elementary schools while 160,000 were in Lutheran-Missouri Synod elementary schools.

According to Mueller it simply was not enough for a church to sponsor a school based purely on the condition of society and/or the poor. In Mueller’s thinking, there were reasons that provided their own push for motivating a church to start a school. These reasons were: (1) that orthodoxy was preserved; (2) to ensure that children were taught in accordance with scripture; and (3) that children were prepared for life and work in the church.

In the 1990s, changes occurred in church school attendance. Evangelical church schools appeared more widespread. While enrollment rose in Evangelical schools, attendance declined in Roman Catholic schools according to data from the United States Department of Education. This was confirmed by the 1995-1996 survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (Table 1, Appendix H). While this pattern occurred in the United States, a similar phenomenon took place in Britain. Evangelical church schools rose in number in the 1990s. Even though enrollment was down in Catholic schools, “...children in Catholic schools still made up nearly half of all private

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20 Ibid.
school students.24 While the percentage of students in Catholic schools dropped by approximately 6%, enrollment in Evangelical schools increased from 12% to 15.4% (823,000).25 By 2003, the decline of Catholic schools slowed down. When these statistics were examined closer, most of the school closings occurred in urban areas that served low-income families.26

The past decades saw another shift within church schools. The financial burden shifted. Whereas the church used to bear a large portion of the cost of schools, it was now carried by parents. This meant that more and more church schools were beyond the reach of low-income families. Added to this was a poor economy accompanied by rising costs of operating a Christian school. This led to a slowdown in sponsoring Christian schools.27 On the other hand Christian schools sought support from entities such as foundations and businesses.28

With the plight of education being what it was in most urban cities, many parents desired alternatives. This was true more so at the middle school level. By the time children reached the middle grades (sixth through eighth grades), many students had developed poor academic skills and study habits which caused their parents to seek help from the more disciplined environments of Christian schools.29 Also, parents sought to enroll their children in Christian schools “...not to complement or supplement what is going on in the home and church but with the attempt to fill the void or vacuum.”30

24 Zehr, “Evangelical Christians,” 1.
25 Zehr, “Evangelical Christians,” 1; Reid, 5.
27 Ibid., 1.
28 Zehr, “Evangelical Christians,” 6; Reid, 5; Chadwick, 298.
29 Chadwick, 298.
30 Ibid.
When public schools decided to no longer teach values reflective of Christian homes in the 1980s and 1990s evangelical schools created an alternative choice.

Interestingly, the majority of children that attended Christian schools were from families of public school teachers and administrators. Familiarity with lowered standards and poor discipline in the public schools, parents opted to send their own children to Christian schools. Typically, students that attended church schools were white, middle-class, and lived in suburbia. However, the number of African-American families that sent their children to church schools sponsored by African-American churches and organizations rose.

In the 1980s, the number of African-American church schools grew. This phenomenon was called “Black flight academies” and represented the disillusionment African-American parents experienced with public education. According to Joseph D’Agostino, “…there is no urban school district that educates minorities well.” As a result African-American sponsored church schools grew. These new African-American schools were theologically conservative and resembled predominantly white evangelical schools started in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of school desegregation. The term evangelical was synonymous with conservative Christian or born-again Christian. Due to the growth of Christian schools, the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) came into existence.

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31 Ibid., 297.
32 Ibid., 299.
34 Ibid.
In more recent years, there were more fundamental reasons for Christian parents being dissatisfied with public schools. Public schools were built upon a philosophy of complete religious neutrality.37 “From the Christian perspective this could be questionable, for any education that leaves out God is an education that is unacceptable for Christians.”38 Christians who knew the God that was revealed in scripture must have that God present and in control.

According to Chadwick there were themes that united all Christian schools together. The dominating factor and common thread that united sponsoring church groups was a strong commitment and strict adherence to the authority of God’s word.39 They were tied by a belief in a sovereign God whose commands and principles were still relevant and true today. A second theme was an uncompromising adherence to the word of God. This meant the authority of God was recognized in the school house and God’s word as contained in scripture was adhered. The third theme was personal dedication and commitment to Jesus Christ which was accomplished when home, church, and school were tied together. A fourth theme was academic and spiritual excellence. The fifth and final theme was that the Christian school was a means to develop young people who demonstrated character that was Christ-like.

Mark Pike brought a compelling argument that focused on fundamental principles for Christians as it regarded schooling. He said:

“we have trouble grasping the concept of Christian education because in our liberal environment education is education. Indeed the liberal environment exerts such a pervasive influence, even upon Christians that many find it hard to articulate what a biblically-based model of education means. The problem is that the culture of a liberal and largely secular

37 Toews, 54.
38 Chadwick, 303.
39 Ibid., 304.
society exerts a pervasive influence on the way many think about everyday matters like schooling and education. Education is secularized and yet even many Christians do not object because they do not appear to understand the influence such secularization can have on a child. We hardly need more evidence of a profoundly secular worldview than the widespread belief that life can be neatly divided into separate spheres of spiritual and secular, sacred and mundane. In contrast, for many committed Christians, every aspect of life, including a child’s time at school is spiritually significant. The tyranny of a liberal, secular mindset is apparent when it is taken for granted that faith should have nothing to do with the curriculum and that Christian beliefs have nothing to do with learning. The artificial separation of faith and learning is utterly incomprehensible to those Christians who regard their commitment to Christ as an all-embracing lifestyle and wish their children to be educated in a way that is congruent with the values of the Christian home.⁴⁰

The secular mindset emphasized individual rights, even the rights of children, was one of the philosophical viewpoints of broader society. Also the worldview of modernism contained elements contrary to the Christian viewpoint. Toews advanced this discussion when he lifted three points. (1) In modernism thinking, truth was based on empirical knowledge derived from scientific research. Modernism adopted the secular-humanism philosophy which got its authority from rational empiricism. (2) This line of thinking disregarded biblical revelation. (3) Truth made the individual the center of the universe, and secularism had no external absolute for determining truth, goodness, and beauty.⁴¹ Therefore for the secular humanist, God was an external force to the individual. God was not the ultimate source of truth as Christians supposed. God did not determine truth, goodness, or beauty but these were determined by the individual. Since truth, goodness, and beauty were determined by the individual, the individual became the center of the universe, not God. Because of this modern worldview and its wide

⁴⁰ Pike, 150.
⁴¹ Toews, 52.
acceptance, inclusion of the Christian heritage was prohibited and removed from textbooks.

The United States became what was termed a post-Christian society. It was not a society in which Christianity had been thrust out, "...but one in which it has become marginal. It is a society where to be irreligious is to be normal, to think and to act in secular terms is to be conventional, where neither status nor responsibility depends on the practice or profession of religious faith." 

On the other hand, unexpected support for church sponsored schools came from Rod Paige, a former Secretary of State. Paige expressed his support for public schools while at the same time praising the strong value system in Christian schools. In a speech, Paige stated that in a religious environment the value system was set. That was not the case in a public school where there were so many different sets of values. Though this stretched the point, it could be concluded that some of the values represented in public schools were different from those of conservative Christians.

Churches in this modern context should be convinced to sponsor schools. Kennedy expressed that the church must reach and teach children while they were young. By the time children were thirteen, their lifelong moral views were in place and were most likely the same ones they would die believing. This provided further rationale for the advocacy and support of church sponsored schools which included church sponsored charter schools.

42 Francis, 353.
43 Ibid.
Morality

One of the benefits of education in the context of traditional Christian schools was that spreading the Gospel message was emphasized. However, that should not be the only purpose for sponsoring a church school. The church must be mindful of the times and culture in which it was a part. One constant in life was change. The church-sponsored school should not be a fixed entity but should adapt itself to the context of the society as it changed.

As we discerned the times, it called for a broadened concept of church-sponsored schools. A church-sponsored school could be a school sponsored by the church that met the intellectual and moral community needs at that particular time. Ministry was designed to meet needs. Indeed, a church-sponsored school was a ministry and because of that present needs would be met, even if the church-sponsored school did not spread the gospel message.

In present society, young people suffered from the lack of a structured program of study that addressed morals and values in schools they attended. This lack was evidenced by the variety of negative behaviors prevalent among young people. A church-sponsored school would minister to needs of society when it sponsored a school that intentionally taught morals and values as well as provided a quality academic education.

The founding fathers of America understood the role of religion in the life of the nation. As Jon Meacham stated, "...religion shapes the life of the nation."\(^{46}\) For the founding fathers, religion was necessary in shaping the nation’s moral conduct. It was religion’s influence in schools that helped determine morals and values that were passed

\(^{46}\) Meacham, 5.
on to youth such as honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, and courage. It was without question that God was an important part of the fiber of the country. Even with this understanding, religion was a matter of choice and not forced on people. Faith and freedom were properly balanced. One religion was not enforced nor was any religion prohibited.

The founding fathers desired a nation in which different religions were not only tolerated but respected. Though tolerance and respect of different religions was the ideal it was not always practiced (i.e. the practice of publicly burning witches). Belief in God was a private matter protected by the First Amendment. It was commonly thought that America was founded on the belief in the Christian God. Even though there was a heavy Christian influence, god in the public arena was not the Christian God but more a reference to a universal being that applied to all religions. They even maintained the idea that there was a 'public religion' in which all shared common belief in a god called creator.\footnote{Ibid., 22.} This god in the public arena made all humankind and they had sacred rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. According to this public religion, these rights could not be taken away by governmental authority.

Barbara McGraw contemporized discussion of the founding fathers' ideals. The founding fathers established the groundwork that determined public religion with its universal god and accompanying values. Yet in this twenty-first century, culture changed. This was the age of multiculturalism and globalization. Along with multiculturalism that emerged came the push to embrace moral relativism. Moral relativism suggested that the moral claim of any group had no greater validity than the moral claim of another group. This stance implied there was no one fundamental moral
core in America. In spite of that line of thinking somehow, America must establish and decide that there was some common sacred ground for all Americans. There must have been some common morals, values, standards of conduct to which all Americans subscribed.

As Kai Nielsen suggested, there was a way to have a standard of conduct even if we did not have the same religious beliefs. Nielsen pushed this argument when he stated that people could have a good set of morals and not believe in God. Many atheists operated with integrity and had a good sense of morality. This did not imply that religion has not played a significant role in maintaining order in the society. However, it strongly suggested that it was not necessary to believe in God to be an ethical and moral person.

This was an important statement for the sake of this project. The statement pointed to the concern of separation of church and state. For the most part, morality was viewed as a function of religion. With this strong attachment of morality and religion, public schools took a hands-off approach when it addressed morality. According to Nielsen, morality did not have to be taught from a religious perspective. The sense of what was right or wrong does not come from religious grounding but more from the way we had been nurtured. Nielsen summed it up when he stated:

“If we were fortunate enough to have good moral role models, that is, kind, tolerably wise, and understanding parents, and to have lived in conditions of security where our basic needs were stably met, the chances are reasonably good that we will have those desirable moral characteristics ourselves. Our very basic moral character is importantly structured by those things. Secular beliefs, or for that matter religious beliefs, are not going to undermine these psychological foundations of moral belief. Even

50 Ibid., 17.
in a Godless world we would have good reason not to torture the innocent, not to be cruel to our children, not to betray our friends and the like. There are many reasons for not doing such things, and none of them have anything to do with belief in God.\(^{51}\)

Churches could have initiated sponsorship of a school that intentionally taught morality and values. Instruction on morality did not have to be religiously based because it was established that right or wrong was not founded necessarily upon religious beliefs but more from the way we were nurtured. Certainly, this was arguable dependent upon one’s perspective. The religious person could retort, as did St. Thomas Aquinas, that the ultimate foundation for moral law necessarily had to be in God. This was based on the belief that no law existed in and of itself without a law-giver.\(^{52}\) Based on the belief that morality was not religiously based, churches could sponsor a school that taught morality without having violated the separation of church and state clause. This could occur in a charter school.

It was not a question of whether schools should have taught values but more which values should have been taught. The argument was raised whether schools should teach values but the truth was that schools could not avoid teaching values and morals. As an institution, a school regulated behavior and that behavior was moral. Schools expected teachers and administrators to be obeyed by students; fighting was not allowed and cheating strictly forbade. Adults in the schools were expected to be examples to students of fairness and respect. But during the 1970s, schools decided they should not force any set of values on students and as a result values and morals were no longer a planned. It became part of the hidden curriculum and left to the discretion of the

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\(^{51}\) Ibid.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 25.
individual educator, without the benefit of dialogue about what and how values and morals should be taught.\footnote{Thomas Lickona, \textit{Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility} (New York, NY: Bantam Books 1991), 9.}

In this pluralistic society, since values and morals were taught with or without a planned approach, there ought to have been an agreed upon set of values and morals that should be taught which helped develop character in children. Schools should not only have taught values but helped students understand, internalize, and act upon these values.\footnote{Ibid., 38.} In order that a credible job be done when character development was taught, schools should recognize that there were two kinds of values: moral and non-moral.\footnote{Ibid.} Moral values, for example, were honesty, responsibility, and fairness. They implied a sense of obligation. This was to say we felt a sense of obligation to keep a promise, pay our bills, and be fair in our dealings with other people. Our sense and moral values informed us about what we ought to have done. On the other hand, non-moral values implied no sense of obligation. They merely communicated what we liked or desired to have done. As an individual the author may have valued listening to country music but he was not obligated to do so.

There were two categories of moral values that schools should understand: universal and non-universal. An example of a universal value was treating all people with respect because this affirmed each person’s fundamental human worth and dignity. Then there were non-universal moral values that did not imply a universal moral obligation. Examples of this were things such as worshipping, and observing holy days.
A person may have felt a personal obligation to do these things but could not force one's sense of obligation to do these things on others.

Knowing that there were moral values to be taught, schools should have approached the task by agreeing upon a common set of values. There were values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, fairness, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, courage, pardon, and a number of democratic values. This suggested list of values was not exhaustive. Churches could initiate and within the context of individual schools teachers, administrators, parents, and community entities should decide values to be taught. Importantly, the list of values was not the end of the task. Schools needed a concept of how values created character and how character developed in students.

**Charter Schools**

In 1983 the report titled *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education was issued. As cited by Jubal Yennie, this monumental report spurred a movement to restructure schools. Its findings indicated that American schools failed and implied that this put America sorely behind other technologically advanced societies. Many Americans concluded that public schools had outlived their usefulness. Public schools once served the United States well, but as we were thrust further into an information-driven society, America needed schools that were fundamentally different from those of former years. If America was even to keep par

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56 Ibid., 45.
57 Ibid., 49.
with other like nations, the performance levels of its public schools must be radically improved. Thus, we saw the beginning of the 1980s reform movement.

On the heels of the 1980s reform movement, came yet another phase, of this same movement, charter schools. As envisioned by its fathers, the purpose of charter schools was to break the mold of a large urban school through restructuring from within those organizations. In other words, there was a well established system of schools that were stuck in overpowering bureaucratic structures perpetuating processes that demanded uniformity. The resulting product was stagnation and no meaningful innovation for the sake of protecting uniformity and regulations. Urban schools bore the brunt of this stalemate. There was no doubt that schooling in America had to change. This thinking gave rise to the charter school movement which originated in the early 1990s. Since the first charter school law passed in 1991, charter schools increased tremendously in number.

State legislators crafted varied statues that governed charter school creation. Variances were to the degree that no two states had the same laws. The language of the statues for charter schools tended to be general as they relaxed some of the rules and regulations to which traditional public schools were mandated to adhere. There were no concrete, specific, spelled-out expectations for a charter school. As well, because the spirit of the movement sought uniqueness and innovation, most charters/contracts were different. The one clear general expectation was that a charter school would be accountable for improved performance in exchange for waivers from some regulations.

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61 Yennie, 3.
History bore out the fact that school boards had been the providers of public education. Since the inception of charter schools the school boards role was challenged and changed, which forced public school boards to redefine their roles. In their reemerging role boards had the opportunity to become purchasers of educational services on behalf of their communities. One of the ways boards purchased services was through sanctioning charter schools.

As roles changed new questions surfaced. It was almost without question that the school board owned the learning program. Now that the board engaged in purchasing services, the question arose as to ownership of the learning program. This newer educational reform labeled charter schools purchased by public school boards by definition as public schools that delivered public education and used public dollars to do so. Charter schools were organized by individuals or groups, not schools boards, as private non-profit organizations. They were chartered by educational authorities to operate, for the most part, autonomously.

There were a variety of groups that became responsible for organizing charter schools. Primarily, they were parents, teachers, or community members. Any charter school was created around the concept of a charter or contract between the group that organized the school and its sponsor, which was a designated governing body.

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Governing bodies were not solely public school boards. Though these governing bodies mainly were public local school boards, some states designated other public bodies such as institutions of higher learning as sponsoring agencies. For example, the state of Missouri allowed public colleges and universities to be sponsors. In several states, for instance Arizona, the organizing group petitioned the state school board for permission rather than the local school board.67

The charter around which the school was based outlined the school’s education plan, outcomes, and assessment measures. Charters were generally granted for three to five years. Arizona was the only exception, it designated fifteen years.68 At the end of the charter period, the charter school was reviewed before it could be re-chartered.

In exchange for this agreement of accountability, the sponsoring governing group granted the charter. What was actually granted was the autonomy to operate free from many bureaucratic regulations that governed public schools. The approved charter entity made its own decisions regarding budget, personnel, curriculum, teaching methods, day-to-day management, and other matters as delineated in the specific agreement.69 The intent of the charter school’s autonomous governance was to increase student achievement, expand choices available to children and families, as well as encourage continuous empowerment in public education.70 This arrangement essentially rendered

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66 Greenawalt II, 7.
67 Fuller, 32.
69 Smith, 1.
70 Russo, 490.
the charter school self-governing.\textsuperscript{71} As a self-governing agency, a charter school could be a separate legal entity or a part of a local school district.\textsuperscript{72}

There was no single method that established a charter school. However, there were a few common ways that charter schools came into existence. A study by the Department of Education indicated 56.4\% of charter schools were newly created entities, 32.5\% were converted public schools, while 11.1\% were pre-existing private schools. Joe Schneider collapsed these groupings into two categories: newly created or converted.\textsuperscript{73}

In regards to organizational type, there was no unified form. The freedom existed for charter schools to choose any form of organization available under state laws. As a separate legal entity, a charter school had its own board and was governed by that board.

Ted Kolderie was noted for being one of the fathers of the charter school movement. He was the director of the Center for Policy Studies and a knowledgeable national expert and advocate for charter schools. Kolderie stated, "...charter schools can relieve two serious inequities in American education: first it can empower people who don't have time to serve on school or district committees, or who don't get the chance. Second, it can give us a much more just system of choice than the one we have today. Choice does exist for the fortunate... all it takes is money."\textsuperscript{74}

In 1991, Minnesota was the first state to pass charter legislation. After that, charter schools developed rapidly throughout the nation. By December 1993, charter laws were passed in Georgia, New Mexico, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, and

\textsuperscript{71} Hagerty, 168.
\textsuperscript{72} Russo, 490.
\textsuperscript{73} Joe Schneider, "Five Prevailing Charter Types," \textit{School Administrator} 56, no. 7 (1999): 29.
\textsuperscript{74} Greenawalt II, 257.
Wisconsin. Also, they were under discussion in Illinois and several other states.\textsuperscript{75} Within eight years, thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia passed charter legislation.\textsuperscript{76} By the spring of 1999, over 1500 charter schools had been approved to open or opened.\textsuperscript{77} By the fall of 2000, more than 1600 operated across the nation.

Minnesota’s passage of charter legislation ushered in an historical change. For the first time, it allowed a church sponsored school to be eligible to receive public funds for education. The sectarian school petitioned to educate high school dropouts and those at risk of dropping out of high school. It was approved with the caution that the sectarian school could not exclude students on religious grounds and that they provided “nonsectarian” educational services.\textsuperscript{78}

There were other welcomed changes that came with the Minnesota charter legislation; the opportunity to create more caring and favorable learning environments through small alternative schools that students elected. Hope was generated for teachers to be the initiators of these small schools. With many rules and regulations lifted from charter schools, the schools would be better postured to be more responsive to student and family needs.\textsuperscript{79}

Laws across the states varied greatly.\textsuperscript{80} Some state laws wanted to raise student achievement, while others targeted education innovation. Yet others lifted the ideal of specialized curricula. Generally, lawmakers held fast to the thinking that decentralized

\textsuperscript{75} Hagerty, 32.
\textsuperscript{76} Fuller, 32
\textsuperscript{77} Smith, 18.
\textsuperscript{78} Greenawalt, 257.
\textsuperscript{80} Fuller, 32.
decision-making delegated to the local school building level was the best way to expect accountability for higher performance. Being that bureaucracy and its insensitivity to individual groups of students had continually made decisions from distant ivory offices, the way to make a difference was to cut schools from its tyranny and radically decentralized management.\(^81\)

Advocates for charter schools felt it was the parents and immediate community that should be involved in day-to-day decisions. The community and its parents were the ones knowledgeable about needs of the students and how to shape their educational experiences to assure a higher level of readiness for the twenty-first century. In this kind of setting, rather than the public-square conception of civil society, an individual school could be more responsive.\(^82\)

In 1993, charter school legislation passed in Georgia. Two years later, in 1995, three charter schools opened. Since that time, the number of charter schools steadily increased. Forty-eight charter schools operated during the 2005-2006 school year. During the 2006-2007 school year, fifty-seven charter schools functioned.\(^83\) As of the time of the Georgia Annual Report on Charter Schools, the State Board of Education approved eight additional schools to open in the fall of 2007. In terms of enrollment for the 2005-2006 school year, this equated to more than 21,000 students compared to 1,559,828 students in traditional public schools.\(^84\)

\(^{81}\) Ibid., 19.
\(^{82}\) Ibid., 17.
\(^{84}\) Ibid., 5.
The goal of the Georgia State Department of Education in regards to charter schools was to provide high-quality, innovative educational opportunities for students, not mere growth. The expectation was that there would be measurable student achievement gains. As long as there was continued growth in student achievement then the number of charter schools would likewise increase.

During the first years since the passage of charter school legislation in Georgia, the State Board of Education approved only conversion schools. A conversion school was one that operated as a traditional public school prior to becoming a charter school. It was not until 1998, when charter school legislation was amended that start-up schools were approved. During the 2005-2006 school year, the number of start-up schools equaled 63% of the total number of charter schools.

An interesting feature of charter schools was that they tended to be smaller in enrollment than traditional public schools. Most charter schools had less than 500 students with the larger number having fewer than 100 students. This usually allowed the charter school to have smaller class sizes which became an attractive incentive for parents to choose a charter school. Smaller class size became a rallying point along with smaller learning academies for large philanthropic organizations and foundations as a means of positively changing public education.

Almost half of the forty-eight charter schools that operated during the 2005-2006 school year were in the metropolitan Atlanta area. Twenty-three of the forty-eight schools operated in three school districts. Eight of the forty-eight were in Atlanta Public

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85 Ibid.
86 Ibid., 6.
87 Ibid., 6.
Schools, eight were in DeKalb County School System, while seven were in Fulton County School System.\textsuperscript{88}

**Charter Schools and Churches**

The search of literature as it related to the involvement of churches with charter schools yielded little results. There were few examples in the field of churches that sponsored charter schools. To put this concept in a historical context, the separation of church and state was relatively a new concept. Since the Reformation, churches have long sponsored schools. It was not until the beginnings of modern democracy that church became separated from state. Until that time, the church was bound to the government.\textsuperscript{89} With the formation of the United States, the founding fathers recalled the experiences of religious persecution which they sought to escape when they came to a new land. The experiences of the founding fathers caused them to include freedom of religion in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

What resulted in the United States was a near monopoly of the education enterprise by public schools. This monopoly of education was criticized in the 1983 report, “A Nation at Risk” as a cause of the deteriorated public school system. It was the contention of some that school performance could be improved by the free-market place idea that already existed in America.\textsuperscript{90} As a result, the privatization of education took root and grew.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 5.
The privatization of education brought about the creation of charter schools. Realizing that charter schools could be started by any person or group, a few churches recognized a window of opportunity and sponsored charter schools. Once the state of New York adopted charter legislation, a few church leaders prepared to start charter schools. Rev. Floyd Flake, pastor of the Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral in New York City, was a pioneer in church sponsored charter schools. In the formulation of the idea for a charter school, Rev. Flake thought the church could “...skirt the constitutional barrier between church and state by offering religious instruction outside school hours.” Rev. Flake thought that by creatively structuring the time when religious instruction would occur, would honor the separation of church and state clause of the Constitution.

In the city of Chicago, a Catholic priest, Father Michael Pfleger planned to close the parish school and convert it to a charter school. It was not certain whether the charter school would be governed by a board linked to the parish or Catholic archdiocese. In Michigan, the ACLU along with some parents sued the National Heritage Academics which was a for-profit management company. They sued the company for promoting religion in a charter school in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Every state passed its own laws that regulated charter schools. So there were variations in regulations that governed the operation of charter schools when state laws were examined. Although it was allowed in some states, Connecticut was a state that did not allow churches to sponsor

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92 Ibid., 19.
charter schools. The state regulation summarized that since charter schools were public schools then church related charter schools would not be permitted. ⁹³

In states where it was permitted, churches became involved with sponsoring charter schools based on the idea of partnering with other agencies in the community. These partnerships recognized that charter schools could be operated more efficiently when the building space to be occupied by a charter school was rethought. Rather than large expenditures into building new facilities, one way to decrease expenses was to locate and share existing facilities. In New York City, the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice was located in a low-income neighborhood and shared a building that was once a church with a social service agency. ⁹⁴

There were other church sponsored charter schools in existence and partnerships are yet being created. However, literature related to charter schools and churches in the search of literature yielded little results. This was a new area of research that needed to be developed. Though there was little known literature available, the researcher was aware of three other Church of God in Christ congregations that sponsored charter schools. One was the Holly Drive Leadership Academy in San Diego. The sponsoring church was the Faith Chapel Church of God in Christ pastored by Bishop Roy Dixon. Another church sponsored charter school was governed by Holy Redeemer Institutional Church of God in Christ in Milwaukee, Wisconsin pastored by Bishop Sedgwick Daniels. The third church sponsored charter school was in St. Louis, Missouri, operated by

Williams Temple Church of God in Christ which was pastored by Bishop Lawrence Wooten.

A fourth congregation, St. Stephens Cathedral Church of God in Christ, had an association with a charter school. Located in San Diego, California and pastored by Bishop George McKinney, St. Stephens housed a charter school on its premises. The charter school was operated by an outside agency that leased building space from the church. This arrangement ceased in 2004.

In regards to churches sponsoring charter schools, the model was created and operated in other states as already cited. There were few examples in the literature that addressed the new partnership of church and state as it related to charter schools. The laws of Georgia did permit churches to sponsor charter schools. As of this writing, there were no churches in the state of Georgia that sponsored a charter school. With this being the case, Cathedral of Faith Church could become a leader in the state of Georgia in sponsoring a charter school. There were no churches or places of worship of any denomination or faith that sponsored a charter school in Georgia. This would make Cathedral of Faith Church a leader of churches in general (not just within the Church of God in Christ denomination).
In searching for alternative means of educating children, Paulo Freire offered a refreshing approach that could be applied to children. Freire, in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, presented a model of education that involved more than a presentation of a method for instructing but was a process that opened the minds of students to critically think about any information that was shared.¹ Though Freire’s instructional environment was designed for adults in third world countries it had great value in transforming classrooms for school age children in the United States. This was particularly true when the targeted population of students was African-American children. Freire felt it was irresponsible to ignore the reality of different economic classes in society. Yet he felt that these classes should be eradicated.² One way that class in a class-based society could be eliminated was through transforming the educational process. In a class-based society their mere existence was an indication of difference. These differences created the thinking of one class being dominant while the other was inferior. In other words, the dominant class used its influence to oppress the “inferior” class and this “inferior” class eventually became silent.³ According to Freire,

² Ibid., 13.
³ Ibid., 30.
he felt it necessary “...that we know from the outset the identity of the “oppressed” and their “oppressors.” Identifying the oppressors and the oppressed was conceived not as an open question that teachers and students might disagree about, but as a given of Freirean pedagogy.1

Freire lifted the idea that usually the dominant class decided what was taught to everyone in that society. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* shifted that paradigm. Instead of the oppressor dictating what was to be taught, the teaching process should be dialogical in which the normal teacher-student relationship became teacher-student and student-teacher. This indicated that the oppressed had something of value to share in the teaching process and that the teacher was just as much a student as the student was a teacher. Instead of education maintaining the status quo, education was a tool that aided those who learn “...to read and write come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves.” It was at this point that these students “...take the initiative in acting to transform the society that has denied them this opportunity of participation.”2

The important feature in the pedagogy of Freire was the dialogical process. Participants first must be committed to freedom for all persons. Everyone in the process, the oppressors and the oppressed, must be in communion with one another.3 The dialogue engaged participants in critical thinking by posing problems that involved human beings in their relationship to the world.4

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2 Freire, 29.
3 Ibid., 61.
4 Ibid., 79.
Even though Freire’s model of education was used for adult learners, parts of it could be applied to revolutionize the American classroom for school-age children. There was another model for educating children other than the traditional “banking model” in which only the teacher was presumed able to make deposits of knowledge for the sake of the learner. The problem-posing model assumed that every participant was a learner—each shared and learned something from the dialogue. Then the whole idea of learning was for learners to discover new ways of relating to the world in which they lived, including the teacher.

Freire’s model was directly applicable to this project. The traditional decision-making authority within the Church of God in Christ rested with the pastor of the local assembly. Pastors made decisions about what was to be taught to parishioners and their children with very little input from parishioners. In Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ, this decision-making authority was shared with the Trustee Board. All decisions regarding direction of the ministry and its operation came from this small group. In an effort to broaden the base of decision-making authority this project brought together other entities within the church to influence and decide matters concerning the church.

Likewise, Freire’s model could be used with the Cathedral of Faith’s efforts following the conclusion of this project. Adult leaders of Cathedral of Faith Church were like the general oppressed population when they allowed the oppressor to make decisions for the oppressed. Using Freire’s model, leaders of Cathedral of Faith Church along with others in the community could enter into dialogue with the Atlanta Board of Education and share in making decisions about what would be taught to young children in the inner city. Rather than waiting for an invitation, leaders of Cathedral would take responsibility
and initiate the conversation to share control of the educational process where formerly their paradigm had no place for participation in the educational process.

**Theological Reflection**

In relation to this doctoral project, the understanding of the omnipresence of God was germane. One perspective on the omnipresent God was discussed by Philip L. Quinn and Charles Taliaferro. They discussed omnipresence in terms of immediate knowledge. Quinn and Taliaferro stated that God had immediate knowledge of "the entire cosmos.⁵ Whatever God had knowledge of implied His power over it. Since God had knowledge of everything in the universe meant that God had power over everything in the universe. By virtue of God’s knowledge and power over everything spoke to God being present everywhere.

The statement that God had power over everything suggested that in order to have power over something that the entity with the power had involvement with that something. With God having power over everything in the universe, it stood to reason that God was involved with everything in the universe. Then by transference, God was involved in all human affairs. Being that God was involved in all the affairs of humans was indication that He knew about all the affairs of humans. Therefore, everything in which humans were involved likewise God was involved.

Secularism asserted that certain areas of life, certain institutions should exist separately from religion and even religious belief. In other words, secularism promoted the idea that religion and its beliefs had no place in public life. In essence, there was no place for God in certain places and institutions. It was this line of thinking that helped

maintain the separation of church and state. On one hand secularism embraced freedom of religion as well as freedom from government infringement upon religion. Yet in another sense, secularism lifted the belief that human knowledge, activities, and decisions were based on fact instead of religious influence. For the secularist, there was no room for religious influence or revelation knowledge. Yet religion espoused the belief in revelatory knowledge. For Christians, revelation knowledge from the deity was reality. So even though secularism seemingly embraced freedom it preverted the belief that God could impart knowledge or had influence in the lives of humans.

In the United States, secularism was firmly in place. The democratic ideals of individual rights and religious freedom certainly supported its existence. It could not be ignored that secularism was a movement that shifted America away from traditional religious values. Alternatively, the omnipresence of God was a concept that stood in opposition to secularism. The God who knew about everything in the universe, was involved in all the affairs of humans, and was in control of all things was incapable of being absent in the places in which there were humans. The secularist movement was defined and confined where God could be and in which places God could be acknowledged. This was in opposition to the idea of the God who was involved in all the affairs of humans which left no activity in which humans were involved outside the presence, knowledge, or control of God. Though the American secular society created a separation between God and government, in reality God was present, knowledgeable of, and in control of even government and its activities. Being that schools were an activity of the government then God was present, knowledgeable of, and in control of schools. In
every place and activity in which humans were involved God was there whether a person acknowledged it or not.

The education of children was an activity of humans that was mandated by God (Deuteronomy 6). 6 Most of history recorded that the education of children was supported by both church and government. It was not until the democratic form of government in the United States that there was a clear separation of church and state. With this separation the education of children was an activity that was not jointly supported by church and government. The separation increased the divide between God and education, church and state. Though this was the secular view this was not the theology supported by the researcher. In the thinking of the researcher, God was involved in all the affairs of humans including the education of children. This represented a challenge for the modern day American church. The secular society with legislation to support it ousted God and religious influence from its schools. The church which symbolized God in the world must stand as representatives of the influence and power of God in American schools. With that belief, Christian churches should be involved in the education of children.

A further question to be raised in relation to God and the Diety’s involvement in education involved God and ethics. Schools had the responsibility not only to provide a setting that promoted intellectual growth but also encouraged ethical and moral development. Did God and religion have anything to do with ethical development? Kai Nielsen in his book Ethics Without God presented what seemed to be an argument that negated the influence of God in morality.

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6 Toews, 49.
Nielsen’s telling statement was that “Christianity cannot perfect human beings . . . but it can control the wolf in us. Christianity cannot perfect man but it can make us better than we would otherwise be (and Christianity can do this in a way no Godless creed or any other religion can).”\(^7\) It was noticeable that there were large numbers of atheists and agnostics in this society who claimed to have no belief in God. Yet these persons had integrity and moral kindness. There was no reason to believe that people without a belief in God could not be moral or ethical.

Nielsen stated that what shaped moral and ethical thinking and behavior was how people were nurtured from the early stages of development rather than a reliance on belief systems whether they were religious or secular.\(^8\) Through a natural consciousness people identified what was good and what was evil. This knowledge was in place prior to a person becoming acquainted with the knowledge of God. Furthermore, there could have been no comprehension of the statement “God is good” without first an understanding of what good was separate from the knowledge of God.\(^9\) So the human understanding of goodness may not have had its origins in God.

Christian’s believed and trusted that God was involved in the educational arena. Though this was truth for Christians, it could not be forced upon others. Just because the Christian believed God was involved in the educational enterprise did not change the way mathematics was taught. There were empirical rational truths that would be taught the same regardless of one’s belief in God. It did however leave open the thinking that Christians could and should be involved in educational enterprise because of the responsibility Christians had for training children. The training of children was not

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\(^7\) Nielsen, 13.
\(^8\) Ibid., 17.
\(^9\) Ibid., 59.
always for the sake of evangelizing or passing on the faith but for the reason that Christians had a basic responsibility to train children. Training of the intellect was not sufficient. To provide intellectual instruction devoid of character development made for schools that fell short of their true mission. Education must train the intellect and provide guided structured opportunities to develop character in children.

God as the ultimate authority in the life of Christians was a factor in the thoughts and beliefs of Christians. Those who did not believe in God would be guided by their identified belief source. In this pluralistic society, any given community should tolerate and respect different beliefs. Whatever differences in belief that existed, should not affect the way academic subjects were taught for empirical facts remain such. On the other hand, the content for character education was of a different nature. Even though there were differences in belief, there was a common set of values and morals that a community could decide should be taught to children. There were universal morals and values that worked for the good of all people. Though the Christian church had its own set of morals and values, it could not force them on anyone. Yet, the Christian church could help bring the community together. The Christian church could take the lead in creating a dialogue among people in the community about what should be taught to community children.

**Biblical Reflection**

Because the researcher’s view was theocentric, the cornerstone scripture for this project was Deuteronomy 6:1-9, which was classically labeled as the foundational scripture for Christian Education. This scripture was a foundation in that it addressed parents and it was parents who had the responsibility to train their children. As a book,
Deuteronomy spoke to the spirit of a people, Israel, who were triumphant. The main emphasis of the book was on the grace, power, and jealousy of God which was designed to elicit from Israel the response of love, obedience, and fear (in the sense of holy reverence). There was an assumption in Deuteronomy that Israel was a specially chosen people, an elect nation. This was an intentional act of God who had a righteous plan which brought with it no sense of special privilege for the designated group of people. God’s choice was a mysterious one that rested on love. The election as a chosen people was not for privilege but for responsible participation in the covenant so that Israel would be a holy nation.

The first two words in Deut. 6:4 were Shema Yis’ræl, “Hear (0) Israel. Shema was translated hear. In its original form the Shema was only the one verse (6:4) but has now been extended to Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and Numbers 15:37-41. This extended form of the Shema was repeated twice daily as a prayer; once in the morning and then again in the evening. The Shema contained references to the Ten Commandments and since the Ten Commandments were no longer a part of the Jewish daily prayers the Shema honored the Ten Commandments. Even in the contemporary context, every Jewish parent was responsible for teaching the Shema to their children so they too could learn the concept of loving the one God with their whole being and the benefits that came with loving God.

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11 Ibid., 327.
For parents today, the same sense of responsibility to teach children existed. Parents must identify certain truths as salient elements of instruction. Once identified, parents should be intentional and consistent about passing on these truths to children. In order to maximize learning opportunities, proper learning environments should be set. Christian parents and leaders should take steps that assured the proper environment for teaching children existed in the home as well as in the schools where formal instruction took place.

It was not the intent of Deuteronomy to bring about formal legalism but for Israel to be drawn to God based on emotions likened to those which existed between devoted friends. This love for God was the complete devotion of one’s whole being. It was based on trust and gratitude, and should have been the main emphasis of one’s total existence (6:6-9). It should bring about an obedience that was cheerful and un-compelled. This same devotion should be magnified and spread to all Christians, their children, and all we have the responsibility to teach.

What was being addressed in Deuteronomy was a covenant being made not only with the generation that stood before Moses but that this covenant was always contemporary. It was bound on each successive generation. As Moses spoke, he spoke not only to that group but to their children and their children after them (6:1-2).

The intended audience of this scripture was parents. The mandate in this passage was extended to Christian parents of all times to teach diligently unto their children (6:7). This passage set the framework for a consistent environment for the education of children from the time they rose in the morning to the time they laid down at night. Throughout

13 Harper, **Interpreter's Bible**, 328.
14 Ibid., 363.
the day the same information should be repeated and reinforced. When you talked, sat, walked with or laid them down to sleep at night and got them up in the morning, parents were to teach children. This began to help us understand the term diligently which meant to be done with persevering, careful, steady effort. The environment for the contemporary child included school. If Christian parents were to be successful in teaching proper morals, values, and character then they must send their children to schools that supported this same concept.

A complementary scripture for the project was Proverbs 22:6, “Train a child in the way he should go” (NIV). This scripture was foundational to the study in that it too addressed parents. Verse 6 had to do with the morals that children learned. The scripture was in the form of a command indicating that teaching was something that parents must do. Parents must be intentional about teaching the morals and values that they wanted their children to possess. The emphasis in this scripture was on teaching children while they were young and impressionable. It was the people of God, the modern day church, who had the task of knowing the way a child should go in life. Once the content of what children should know was identified then the church and parents should teach it. The content of what children should be taught was not to be determined by government but by parents, community, and church.

Theoretical Reflection

Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* provided a theoretical base for this project. Freire’s theory was based on his work done in third world countries with oppressed people in situations in which adults were the learners. He believed that the oppressor should not make decisions about what oppressed peoples should be taught.

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Rather, the oppressor should work with the oppressed allowing the oppressed to decide what they needed to learn. The idea was that the oppressed had valuable input and have good ideas of what they needed to learn. In any given school, core subjects such as mathematics, sciences, and language arts would remain constant. However, there were subjects beyond these core subjects that decisions could be made about what would be appropriate for a given group of students. The teaching of morals, values, and character development would be content that the oppressed could have input into deciding whether and/or what should be taught.

Borrowing from Freire, the researcher's theory was that decisions about the educational needs of children could be jointly determined by the school system (public school authorities) and the people in individual communities. Churches and their members were part of the community and could take the lead in bringing people together to make decisions about the educational needs of children in that community. It was for this reason that this project was done. Church leaders needed to be informed about the church's responsibility to be involved with the full-time education of children rather than conveniently assigning the task to government schools. The church as part of the community could be in a continued dialogue with people in the community and the public school system in creating innovative schools for children.

Importantly, African-American Pentecostal church leaders must be informed regarding their responsibility to sponsor schools. According to the categories created by Freire, African-American Pentecostal church leaders along with church leaders in other denominations were the oppressed. It was the oppressed that must recognize that they were being oppressed by an oppressor. After realizing that one was oppressed then the
oppressed should take action to remove the arm of oppression. In regards to this project, the African-American Pentecostal church leaders should work along with the community to remove the oppressive arm of government in the area of education and begin a dialogue with them that enabled the church to partner with the school system in deciding how children should be educated. This was what Robert Franklin in *Crisis in the Village* referred to as “village-wide conversation.” In the “village-wide conversation,” entities in the community came together to obtain information and make decisions about what it needed.

By increasing their involvement in the life of the community, Cathedral of Faith and other Christian churches could embrace a larger view of ministry. The context of a church’s ministry included its specific geographical location, i.e. the community. Churches should help improve the quality of life for its members and the communities in which they were situated.

A second theory has already been implied which was Christian churches could effectively partner with public schools to provide full-time educational institutions for children. In the United States, it was an either-or situation. The government and churches had separately sponsored schools. Viewing history beyond the bounds of the United States we saw examples of the combined efforts of church and state in supporting education for children. Martin Luther was a proponent of public education. Within his context, public schools were supported by state or government structures. These government structures supported a particular religion and as a result the schools reflected the joint efforts of both church and state. Even in our modern pluralistic context where there was the separation of church and state, the church could bridge the divide and

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16 Franklin, 229.
partner with the state in order to have influence as well as co-sponsor educational institutions (charter schools) in which children and youth learned.

Also, Barthian theology spoke about the ministry of the community. In this discussion, speech was not narrowed to just verbalizations but action was also speech. If we believed that statement and said that training/education was part of the ministry of the church then our actions must speak to that belief. Also, the thinking of Barth embraced the idea that ministry did not happen alone. Ministry happened in conjunction with community. As a result, this project connected the researcher to a community as well as connected Cathedral of Faith Church with the community and through this union ministry occurred.
CHAPTER IV

THE PROJECT

Project Planning

In September 2006, the presenter gathered four persons together to form the nucleus group that would plan the doctoral project of educating African-American Pentecostal leaders regarding the prospect of sponsoring charter schools for inner city youth. The group consisted of the presenter who was a member of Cathedral of Faith Church and three other persons who were not members of the local congregation. This group was the think-tank and supporters of approaching church leaders as a ministry project. After September 2006, the nucleus group met regularly to refine plans for the doctoral project (and the larger goal of starting a charter school).

Another phase of the planning process entailed meeting with the Pastor of Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ. This meeting occurred in March 2007 with just the presenter/researcher and Pastor. In order to properly prepare for the project, the specific target group was identified. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the pastor of the intent to use church leadership as the target group for the doctoral project and secure the Pastor’s commitment. After giving consent, the Pastor identified the targeted leadership group to participate in the project as the Trustee Board and himself. To obtain the commitment of the Trustee Board, the Pastor directed the presenter/researcher to discuss the project with the Trustee Board chairperson. It was during the meeting between the Trustee Board chairperson and the presenter/researcher in August 2007 that
the target group was expanded to include ministry directors. The target group was composed of the Trustee Board executive committee, ministry directors, and pastor. It was decided that there would be three meetings. However, one week prior to the scheduled project meeting, the Trustee Board chairperson requested changes. The Trustee Board chairperson requested a change in meeting location and inclusion of the entire Trustee Board. Overnight the target group grew from nine to seventeen persons and the meeting moved to the church’s Fellowship Hall.

While the target group, place and date were being secured, the project format and materials were developed. The presenter worked collaboratively with the nucleus group of four persons to determine and shape project sessions. From the counsel of the nucleus group, the number of meetings with the target group was changed from five to one. The nucleus group thought it more effective to meet with the targeted project group once. It concluded that people’s lives were busy and the agendas of church leaders were full making it complicated to schedule five meetings for the execution of the project. As a result, one longer meeting with the entire target group was planned.

**Preparation**

There were three areas of concern to which the presenter gave attention to adequately prepare for the project. The three areas were materials, prepping observers, and preparing the environment. The focus of the project was to host a meeting with the target group. The purpose of the meeting and project was to educate the target group about the involvement of the church in charter schools with the objective of influencing the target group to financially support a charter school. The central guide for the project session was a PowerPoint presentation. Seventy-four slides containing the curriculum to
educate church leaders regarding sponsoring charter schools were created for the presentation (see Appendix B). Content for the slides was developed first by determining the objective for the presentation and then deciding content to achieve the objective. The objective was to educate the participants enabling them to make an informed decision about sponsoring a charter school. The specific content focus to achieve that objective included a foundational scripture, information on four school types, standardized test results, facts about charter schools, and a charter school projected budget.

Prior to attending the session, participants were given a syllabus containing readings to prepare them for the session (see Appendix A). Since this was such a new area of ministry, educating the leaders necessitated selecting particular readings to inform them. One month before the meeting the syllabus was given to participants with the expectation that they would complete the readings prior to attending the session.

So that participants would have something visual that they could handle and direct their attention to during the presentation, a three-ring binder was assembled for each participant. The three-ring binder included the following items: handouts of the PowerPoint presentation with space to take notes (see Appendix B); the pre-session listing form to indicate projected spending priorities of the church for 2008 based on current information (Appendix C); four selected reading passages (see Appendices D-G); a 1995-1996 survey of the K-12 religious schools in the United States (see Appendix H); a projected start-up budget (see Appendix I); a projected budget for the first year of operation (see Appendix J); a list of the existing charter schools in Atlanta Public Schools (see Appendix K); a list that detailed benefits of a charter school (see Appendix L); a post-session listing form to record the projected spending priorities of the church for
2008 based on existing information and insights gained from the presentation (Appendix M), and an evaluation form (see Appendix N).

Attention was given to prepping the observers to sit in the meeting room, silently observe the meeting, and take notes of what they observed. The presenter/researcher was intentional in selecting three persons who were not members of the Cathedral of Faith Church and who shared an interest in the project to serve as observers. Observers attended a training session to become familiar with expected tasks. The training session included showing and explanation the PowerPoint presentation. It was necessary to acquaint observers with the content during the training session so they would concentrate on observational tasks during the project session. The Observers’ Tasks form (see Appendix O) was prepared and reviewed during the training session so observers had a clear idea of what their responsibilities were during the project session.

Final attention was given to the arrangement of the meeting room. Focus of the session was a projection screen for the PowerPoint presentation. To assure that all persons could view the presentation with ease, the screen was placed in the front center of the meeting room. Since the presenter/researcher was to share information and lead the discussion, seats were arranged so all participants also could see the presenter. With planned group discussions, it was necessary for participants to be able to see one another as well as the presenter. As a result, tables were placed in a horseshoe formation with chairs along the outside edge of the tables. The presenter and the projection screen were positioned at the open end of the horseshoe. To make it easy for all participants to hear the presentation without straining, the presenter used a cordless microphone for voice amplification which helped maintain control of the meeting.
The Project

The project was conducted Tuesday, October 23, 2007, 6:00 P.M. at Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ in the Fellowship Hall. The group that assembled to participate in the project consisted of the Pastor, nine of twelve Trustee Board members, and four ministry directors. There were five directors but the presenter/researcher was one of the five so the presenter was not included in the count of four. Three other persons attended who were not members of Cathedral of Faith. These three persons were part of the research team that assisted the presenter. The purpose of these three persons was to observe and assist the presenter in analyzing the presentation. Tables were arranged in a horseshoe pattern with chairs along the outside of the horseshoe in which the participants sat. A screen was positioned at the open end of the horseshoe to display the PowerPoint presentation. The presenter stood at the opening of the horseshoe where participants easily saw the presenter and where the presenter/researcher controlled the advancement of each presentation slide. Each participant had a three-ring binder that contained handouts of the PowerPoint presentation, four selected reading passages, a pre-session listing form, a post-session listing form, an evaluation form, a list of the benefits of a charter school, a projected start-up budget, a projected budget for the first year of operation, a 1995-1996 survey of religious schools in the United States, a list of the existing charter schools in Atlanta, a list that detailed benefits of a charter school, and an evaluation form (see Appendices B-N).
At the beginning of the session, the presenter asked each participant to list the top ten projected spending priorities of Cathedral of Faith for the year 2008 based on current information. With the five minutes given to complete the task, participants had the choice of working in one large group, individually, or in small groups. The majority of participants chose to work individually while two people chose to work as a small group. At the end of five minutes, the presenter collected the forms. The group completed the list of spending priorities to determine whether the ensuing presentation on supporting a charter school educated Cathedral of Faith leaders to the point of accepting the responsibility to financially support a charter school. In other words, the pre-session listing established a baseline to assess whether the presentation made a difference in placing the support of a charter school on the church budget.

The planned methodology for the presentation was a dialogical lecture. To assure that there was dialogue, the presenter planned for segments of lecture in which the presenter shared concepts and statistical information mixed with opportunities for group participation. Participation from the group was achieved through silently reading selected reading passages and discussions. The PowerPoint presentation served as the guide for the entire session. Participants chose whether to focus on the projection screen or handouts which contained the same information as the projection screen.

Following the completion of the pre-session survey, the presenter displayed the slide containing Deut. 6:4-9 and read it citing it as the foundation scripture for supporting Christian education in the church. For the presenter, it was important to establish scripture as the beginning point of ministry. Citing the passage, the presenter highlighted the object of the address in modern context; the new children of Israel were the church
and Christian parents. In the text, the challenge was to set the appropriate learning environment for children in every area of their lives so there was consistency in teaching and reinforcing the beliefs of parents and their churches. Referencing Deut. 6:4-9, the group reflected on the extent to which Cathedral of Faith had faithfully educated children. The group consensus was that though Cathedral of Faith had educational programs for children there was a need for more quality church sponsored educational experiences that met the needs of children at Cathedral of Faith as well as children in the community. The Christian Education ministry director stated that at that time there were approximately five hours of church sponsored educational programs for children and youth per week.

Then the presenter led a discussion that focused on the definition of ministry for Cathedral of Faith. Being that Cathedral of Faith was a church, leadership needed to understand that sponsoring a full-time charter school was ministry. Church leaders found it understandable that a Christian school was ministry but embracing the idea of a charter school being ministry was challenging.

The next concept that the presenter introduced was secularism. The presenter presented it as a philosophy that was widely accepted in the United States. Human secularism was also introduced as a philosophy to which the United States public school system subscribed. Secularism rejected the supernatural/spiritual as a legitimate means for people to make decisions or establish standards of morality. The presenter then punctuated this statement by suggesting that Christians and the church should question whether they should subscribe to secularism and its practice.
Following a discussion on the responsibility of the church to properly train children, participants were asked to list five things that Cathedral of Faith should do to be faithful to Deut. 6:4-9. The group offered nine ideas:

- Invest in the Christian education of our children
- Create quality based Christian education programs with quality teachers
- A tool to measure how children learned
- Teach by example
- Sponsor field trips
- A rite of passage with age-appropriate mastery objectives
- Partner with schools (and evangelize teachers)
- Create curriculum guides to assure that all foundational beliefs are taught
- Sponsor a summer program for youth

This list was used as a spring board to challenge participants to think outside the box. To extend the thinking of the group, the presenter shifted the discussion to the different types of schools that existed and were available to children and families in the community.

For this part of the presentation, the presenter provided statistical information on testing scores of public schools in the West End area of Atlanta. The group analyzed aggregated data from the first and fifth grade Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests, End of the Course Tests for ninth grade, and results of the Georgia High School Graduation Test (first-time takers who are in the eleventh grade) (see Appendices P-W). Other than public schools, the group identified that private schools were non-existent in the West End. The Christian church sponsored schools disappeared from the area (it was at this point that the Universal Survey on Private Religious Schools was discussed) and traditional public schools in the area were in need of improvement. However, there was a new school type, the charter school that could offer hope to the community.
The presenter kept participants on-task by focusing on the Nation at Risk report and linked the creation of charter schools to the reform effort that was a result of this report. The final portion of the session highlighted the growth and development of charter schools in the United States with a particular focus on charter schools in Georgia and metropolitan Atlanta. In moving towards closing the session, the presenter led the group in a discussion about the pros and cons of charter schools. Further clarity about operating a charter school came with reviewing the projected start-up budget and the projected budget for the first year of operation. This discussion led to the close of the session in which participants were asked to decide whether Cathedral of Faith would sponsor a charter school. Each participant was asked to complete this task at the end of the session. The group did not make a decision but consented to review the idea and report their decision to the presenter in seven days. This was not part of the plan. The plan was for participants to record their newly formed ideas about spending priorities for the church on the Post-Session Projected Spending Priorities List (Appendix M).

**Post-Planning**

Two days following the project meeting, the research team met to review and analyze the events that occurred during the project meeting. Each of the observers brought the Observer’s Task form (see Appendix O) to the post-planning meeting. Though the observers recorded notes on their forms, they debriefed without the aid of the written notes. One aspect of the debriefing centered on the dynamics of the target group. The research team noted that participants were uninhibited by the presence of their Pastor and seemed comfortable with sharing what was on their minds. The observers noted that there was another person among the participants who seemed to exercise some authority
with the group. Despite the status of this person with the group, others spoke freely. Some participants had questions that expressed their reservation with the idea of sponsoring a charter school while others celebrated the thought of Cathedral of Faith daring to do something different to educate children. All of the questions that expressed caution were raised in a positive manner. A few of the participants were receptive to the charter school concept and were ready for the group to affirm support of the school. Overwhelmingly, the study group felt it needed more time to think through the matter and agreed to return a response to the presenter in seven days. Noticeably, charter schools were a concept of which the majority of participants had little knowledge. Participants who had some familiarity with charter schools were one public high school administrator (a Trustee Board member) and one public middle school teacher (a ministry director).

In regards to the presenter/researcher, observers noted the comfortable and controlled manner in which the presenter conducted the project meeting. Throughout the meeting, the presenter rotated his glance from the computer (containing the display of the PowerPoint slides), to projection screen, to participants. The observers noted that the presenter seemed to look for affirmation from the one group participant who seemingly acted as an authority figure (and this person was not the pastor).

Sensing some anger in observers, the presenter probed to determine what observers were feeling. The presenter ascertained that observers were angry with the participant who acted as an authority figure during the project meeting. At this point, the presenter shared personal knowledge about the history of the church with the intent of re-focusing observers’ responses. Observers felt that the authority figure was oppositional to the pastor and that this participant should not be in a church leadership position. The
presenter perceived that the angry responses from the observers were due to the paradigm about church leadership which the observers subscribed to and the presenter commented on that. In essence, observers were accustomed to churches that operated with pastors as autocratic leaders. When autocratic pastors spoke congregants supported the pastor’s view. The presenter/researcher wanted observers to understand the paradigm which supported the operation of Cathedral of Faith. Cathedral of Faith was an atypical Church of God in Christ congregation in that it had a functional Trustee Board that exercised power and authority. There was a healthy tension that existed between the pastor and Trustee Board which allowed board members to openly ask critical questions. From personal experience with the Trustee Board, the presenter learned that questions from this group were designed to flush out all perspectives and concerns that surrounded an issue rather than blindly accepting ideas. Before most programs of the church were given a green light, they must be approved by both the pastor and Trustee Board. So what the observers perceived as oppositional were attempts to gain clarity. Shedding light on the operational paradigm of Cathedral of Faith was essential to keeping the post-planning meeting on task.

Church culture was a concern to observers. During the project meeting, a participant asked whether saying yes to supporting the charter school meant that Cathedral of Faith would be the sole supporter of the school or whether yes meant that Cathedral of Faith would agree to work with other churches and organizations. Observers thought that this question emerged from the history of Cathedral of Faith which for the observers indicated that the congregation was accustomed to performing ministry alone. Also, this triggered concern about ownership of the project. Observers
conjectured that the participant who asked the question was more concerned with whether Cathedral of Faith would own the project or have little to no control. Implications raised by this question stemmed from a comment by the same participant who raised the initial question. The participant commented that the involvement of other churches there would raise the likelihood of confusion over different church beliefs and make it difficult to come to an agreement about how the school should be operated. This aided observers in identifying collaboration as a challenge for Cathedral of Faith leaders.

Another issue that surfaced was the concern whether Cathedral of Faith would benefit financially from the charter school. A participant questioned any possible financial gain during the project meeting to which the presenter explained that there would be no financial benefit to the church. To further clarify the issue, the presenter/researcher explained that for the few churches that did sponsor charter schools there was financial benefit. The financial gain was realized by local churches that leased their facilities to charter schools and the leasing fees were considered as income to the church. However, in this instance, Cathedral of Faith had no available dedicated building space so there was no opportunity for financial gain. The discussion both during the project meeting and the post-planning meeting turned to clarifying the motivation for doing ministry. Eventually, there was agreement that the motivation to do ministry was based on need and the ability of the church to address the need. The motivation to do ministry should not involve whether the church would receive a profit in return for their investment. In justification of the participant who posed the question, observers felt that this was a legitimate question from a person who served on the Trustee Board with the purpose of the protecting assets of the local congregation. This was a case in point why it
was good to have project meeting participants composed of persons that represented both the ministry side and business side of the church. Each side needed to be heard when decisions were made about programs of the church.

During the project meeting, participants were asked to list five things that Cathedral of Faith should do in response to Deut. 6:4-9. Observers viewed participant responses as safe. They recognized that participant responses were basically programs and ideas that they saw in operation at some time and in some place in the past. There were no new ideas. The charter school was a new idea and represented thinking outside the traditional box of ministry for Cathedral of Faith and it was difficult for all participants to fully embrace the idea. For the few participants who had some familiarity with the subject matter, they readily spoke in favor of the church sponsoring a charter school (these two persons were the two public school employees). Of the fifteen participants, nine people verbalized their thoughts during the project meeting. None of the comments were in opposition to the charter school but three persons spoke positively about Cathedral of Faith sponsoring a charter school.

In general, observers agreed that a lot of new information was provided during the project meeting. Not only was the information new but it caused participants to shift their thinking to new positions. With this shift, it was too ambitious to expect participants to make a decision about supporting a charter school after just one session. Distributing the Post-Session Projected Spending Priorities for 2008 form at the end of the one session and expecting them to complete it was unrealistic. Only seven of the fifteen forms were returned and a few of them indicated that they needed more time to make an informed response. Sensing that it was difficult for participants to shift their
thinking and make a decision about including a charter school in the church budget during the course of one session, the research team decided that follow-up meetings were necessary. The research team (observers and presenter) met with two key persons from the target group. Meetings with the two key persons were held separately. The purpose of the meetings was to answer questions that lingered and provide more detailed information not shared during the project meeting with the target group. These separate meetings preceded the time that the target group was to respond to the presenter with a decision as to whether Cathedral of Faith was committed to support a charter school. The decision served as additional information that assisted in determining whether the intervention of the project meeting was successful in educating participants about supporting a charter school.

Pre-Session Spending Priorities

Fifteen people participated in the project meeting. At the beginning of the session, the presenter asked everyone to detail pre-session spending priorities. The form, entitled Pre-Session Spending Priorities List (Appendix C) has ten blank lines. Each line was blank so participants could write the response of their choice. Five minutes was allotted to fulfill the task. The group could have completed the form as one large group, individually, or in small groups. While most people chose to work alone a few persons worked in a small group. Twelve forms were completed and given to the presenter. Being given very little information about the nature of the project, participants were asked to complete this form utilizing information they already possessed about Cathedral of Faith. Results of the Pre-Session form indicated that there seemed to be little agreement about the projected top ten spending priorities of Cathedral of Faith for 2008.
Participants were instructed that the first entry on the form represented the highest spending priority; a variety of answers were given. Three persons indicated missions as the top priority, another three listed renovations to the building, while single entries were made for the Youth House, evangelistic outreach ministry, Christian Education ministry to youth, prayer, salaries, and senior citizen ministry. For the second highest spending priority, four people listed building renovation, with single entries for helping the disabled to attend church, evangelism, Christian Education ministry to families, teaching, administrative expenses, evangelistic outreach, ministry to the youth within the church, and Sunday School. On the third highest spending priority, two participants listed facility renovations, front water fountain repair, investments, employees health insurance, resources, Christian education ministry to the elderly, finance, ministry to the youth and children, assistance to the public elementary school across the street from the church, community outreach, and internet ministry (streaming broadcast). The top three choices for the group are summarized as, six of the twelve forms listed facility/building renovation. For the group, facility/building renovation was an agreed upon high priority. The next high priority spending items were missions, outreach, and the youth each listed three times. The other priority identified was ministry to senior citizens (this was listed on two forms).

In the category for the fourth highest spending priority, four forms listed building renovations, three listed missions, with single entries for training, doing more to feed the hungry, working together, and advertising. Three forms had nothing listed past the top three spending priorities. For the fifth highest spending priority, two forms listed outreach ministry with single entries for youth education, marketing, unity, refurbish
pews and baptism pool, benevolence, salaries, and sound equipment. With the sixth entry, only six forms contained responses. There were single listings for sound equipment, training, facilities upkeep, pastoral appreciation and travel, community outreach, and life changing events. Only three forms contained a response for the seventh spending priority. The priority items were honorariums, training on family issues, and outreach. For the eighth, ninth, and tenth spending priority, only one form contained responses. The responses were advertisement, staff training, and upgrading equipment respectively.

In general, the Pre-Session Projected Spending Priorities List for 2008 showed there was little agreement among decision-makers about areas in which Cathedral of Faith planned to spend money. Though it was not the highest priority for all persons, the most agreement was on building renovations. Building renovations appeared on nine of the twelve forms. There was some idea that the church would spend money on missions, outreach, and youth. What was enlightening about this listing was what did not appear on the lists. There was no mention of expansion or anything new. The Pre-Session Projected Spending Priorities List for 2008 reflected maintenance of what already existed.

**Post-Session Projected Spending Priorities**

The Post-Session Projected Spending Priorities List for 2008 form was a similar form to the Pre-Session Spending Priorities List for 2008. The only difference was the title on the form indicating that it was post-session. Seven forms were returned. All seven forms were completed by individuals and were not the efforts of a group. Of the seven forms, one form had the word “same” written on it. One can surmise that the
respondent had no change from the Pre-Session listing. The other six forms had items that appeared from the pre-session listing. The one difference was that charter school appeared as the fourth priority on one form, and education as the first and second priority on two other different forms. Projects were listed as a third priority on one form. More encouraging was the comment on two forms that more research and time was needed before a response could be given.

With only seven incomplete forms returned, the presenter and observers were left with concerns and questions. After meeting with observers in the post-planning session, it was clear that participants were fatigued toward the end of the session. The post-planning group decided that one way to gain insight about the incompleteness of the post-session spending form was to conduct follow-up sessions. After further discussion, it was decided that follow-up meetings would be held with two key persons from the participant group.

The Post-Session Projected Priorities List for 2008 was planned as the only means that measured change in participant thinking. If utilized properly, the post-session form could be viewed as a tool that measured change. However, the form was not the only means that measured change. What was clear from the results of the post-session form was the frustration of participants from having to make a decision in such a short period of time. Though not intended in its design, the form did measure the willingness of the group to hear more information. Participant willingness was gauged as a positive change in the desire to support a charter school. Willingness to receive more information was also noticed by observers. Observers’ perception was based upon participant questions and body language.
Individual Follow-Up Meetings

Observers and the presenter collaboratively decided that follow-up meetings would be used to answer questions that lingered by designated participants. Meetings with the two participants were held separately. Both meetings were held at restaurants and within eleven days of the project meeting. For these meetings, the observers were vocal in addressing any areas of concern whether they were from the presenter or the participant.

One follow-up meeting was held with the Trustee Board chairperson. The meeting focused on bringing clarity to various issues. One issue focused on who would benefit financially from the charter school. The Trustee Board chairperson stated that several trustee members thought that the observers and presenter stood to benefit financially from operating the charter school. This misconception was quickly and effectively addressed. It was explained that all of the observers were business owners and had no intention of giving up their livelihood for the sake of the charter school. Being that the charter school would be organized as a non-profit entity no individual could reap any financial profits. Acceptable accounting practices would be in place and the governing board would hold management of the school accountable for expenditures. Another misconception that the Trustee Board chairperson had was that Cathedral of Faith Church would be required to give $50,000.00 during 2008. This was a real barrier for him and other Trustee Board members because this was too high a figure for the church to consider. This misconception was cleared when the timeline for opening the school and what was required financially to open the school in August of 2009 was explained. During 2008, only a minimal amount of approximately $5,000.00 would be
needed with a little more in 2009. Also, this would be predicated upon whether Cathedral of Faith chose to do this alone or work collaboratively with other churches and organizations. After clearing the misconceptions, the Trustee Board chairperson offered the opportunity for the trustees and Pastor to reassemble and discuss the sole issue of whether the church would commit to sponsor the charter school. The Trustee Board chairperson stated that with the Pastor’s approval, he would contact trustees and schedule the meeting.

In the meeting with the Pastor of Cathedral of Faith Church, the main concern was the flexibility of the commitment. Understanding the level of commitment that the process required, the pastor was willing to work collaboratively with other organizations. The Pastor explained the long range goal for Cathedral of Faith involved having its own school on the campus of the church. So, for Cathedral of Faith to be involved there would need to be an open ended relationship that allowed the church to terminate its relationship with the charter school when it desired. A second issue was the misconception about the $50,000.00 for 2008. Again, this was cleared in the same manner as the Trustee Board chairperson meeting. Feeling more comfortable, the pastor agreed to the meeting with the trustees to discuss the sole issue of whether the church would commit to sponsor the charter school.

Final Follow-Up Meeting

The final follow-up meeting was held and the Pastor, trustee board members, and presenter attended. The presenter provided the group with the additional information that was shared with the Pastor and the Trustee Board chairperson and explained the make-up of the governing board for the charter school, the timeline for opening the school by
August 2009, the initial amount of money expected of Cathedral of Faith, the benefits of collaborating with other churches and organizations, and the open-ended commitment linked with the flexibility of terminating the commitment. After the presented answered a few questions, he was dismissed from the meeting so the group could discuss their response. A few hours later, the Pastor notified the presenter with the results of the meeting. The Trustee Board and the Pastor agreed that Cathedral of Faith would financially support the charter school effort for 2008.

With the yes response from decision-makers, it was concluded that the intervention was successful in educating decision-makers of Cathedral of Faith to include the support of a charter school in 2008 spending priorities. The results from the Post-Session Projected Spending Priorities List for 2008 were inconclusive in determining whether the education intervention had an effect on changing the spending priorities of the decision-makers. To conclude that the post-session form was ineffective could not be supported. It was suggested that the post-session form be administered at the end of a second session rather than the end of the first session. The intervention was successful and helped decision-makers realize that children in the community had an educational need that could be addressed through the support of a full-time educational institution sponsored by the church. Through the intervention, decision-makers understood that addressing the educational needs of children was ministry. Importantly, decision-makers shifted their paradigm of ministry which allowed them to visualize and embrace a new way of doing ministry for children. Now, they looked forward to working collaboratively with other churches and organizations to partner with the public school system and provide a charter school for children in the West End area of Atlanta.
CHAPTER V

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The intent of the project was to educate leaders of Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ regarding the prospect of sponsoring and supporting a charter school for inner-city youth. As far as achieving the objective, the project was successful. Participants commented that the readings from the syllabus provided one month prior to the meeting opened new ways of thinking about ministry and redefined how God influenced the whole of society. However, the syllabus designed for independent reading prior to the project session deserved more attention. There was no time allotted during the project session for discussion of any of the four books assigned for independent reading. Some ideas were presented in the readings that may have been difficult for persons from the Pentecostal persuasion to digest. More specifically, Kai Nielsen’s *Ethics Without God* may have caused some problems for some Pentecostals as well as Christians of other denominations. People may have needed guidance to digest it. Opportunity to dialogue about the readings should have been provided. For future consideration, the presenter should have provided a means that assisted participants’ process independent readings. For suggestion, the presenter could have included an email address on the syllabus and invited people to dialogue about the readings through email. Additionally, the presenter could have provided the opportunity for a voluntary meeting that occurred prior to the presentation session. The voluntary meeting could have been used as a time in which any issues with the readings were discussed.
Prior to the project meeting with study participants, Cathedral of Faith had not spent monies nor emphasized supporting a full-time educational institution. This claim was supported by the Pre-Session Spending Priorities List for 2008 that project participants completed at the beginning of the project meeting. According to the forms that decision-makers of Cathedral of Faith completed, there was no projection for the church financially supporting a full-time educational institution (charter school) in 2008.

Participants were asked to complete the Pre-Session Projected Spending List for 2008 using the number one entry as the top spending priority through number ten as the least important spending priority. During the post-planning meeting, the research team recommended that future lists be used without regards to priority. Simply, the participants should list ten items that they projected would be on the church’s upcoming budget.

The project design entailed educating church decision-makers through selected independent readings followed by one meeting session with the expectation that a Post-Session Projected Spending Priority List for 2008 would be successfully completed at the conclusion of the meeting. It was reasonable and effective to have participants’ complete independent reading prior to the meeting and then educate decision-makers in one session. The PowerPoint presentation and corresponding materials provided to participants in three-ring binders assisted participants in rating the presentation as excellent. This was corroborated by evaluations completed by participants at the end of the session. Also, the evaluations indicated that the presenter used time in an excellent manner. At the end of the project presentation, participants were asked to complete the Post-Session Projected Spending Priorities List for 2008 and the Session Evaluation
form. Participants completed the Session Evaluation form but were not as diligent about completing the Post-Session Projected Spending Priorities list for 2008. Only seven post-session forms were returned while twelve pre-session forms were returned. The follow-up sessions conducted with the Pastor and Trustee Board chairperson revealed that participants had unanswered questions and misconceptions that caused hesitancy in completing the Post-Session Projected Spending Priorities List for 2008. As a result, the recommendation was to change the project design. The presentation should have been expanded to two sessions. The first session should have lasted ninety minutes and allotted time for educating participants. A second session should have been held on another date for the purpose of answering questions, filling in gaps of information and shedding new light on misconceptions. At the conclusion of the second session, participants should have been given the opportunity for discussion. The presenter and observers should be excluded from the discussion. Rather than using the Post-Session Projected Spending Priorities List for 2008, a decision should be rendered by participants as to whether the group would financially support a charter school in the upcoming year. It was of little significance in which position supporting a charter school appeared on a spending priority inventory. What was important was that supporting a charter appeared in the budget of the church.

Though participants gave a positive evaluation on the presentation, follow-up meetings with the Pastor and the Trustee Board chairperson identified some areas of concern. One concern was the need for the presenter to be clear about the financial contribution expected from the church. Some participants thought after the project meeting that the initial amount Cathedral of Faith was expected to give was $50,000.00.
This misconception was clarified by the presenter during the two individual follow-up meetings. Also, participants needed information about the terms of the expected commitment. More specifically, participants needed to know the length of time involved in the commitment to sponsor the charter school. As well, they needed to know the process of terminating the commitment once it was made.

In the post-planning meeting with the research team, a final item was discussed that was not considered in the planning phase of the project. The project was scheduled without any regard for the budget planning process of Cathedral of Faith. Fortunately the presentation was scheduled for a time during the budget planning period without any deliberate thought for the budget planning timetable. When further church presentations were scheduled planners need to be mindful of the budget planning cycle of the individual church. In other words, each church had a period in the calendar year when it prepared a projected budget for the upcoming year. The recommendation was to become knowledgeable of that period for the churches to which the presentation would be made so the presentation would coincide with the budget planning phase.
CHAPTER VI

LIMITATIONS

The project was limited in terms of the sample population that was studied. Subjects used as the project study group were selected by the presenter. The study group represented only a small percentage of the total Pentecostal and African-American Pentecostal movement. Being one local congregation, the study group was not representative of the entire Church of God in Christ denomination. In a larger context, the Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ congregation was not representative of all Christian churches. Being that the study group was selected in this manner indicated that the group was not a random sampling of churches. Since the group was not a random sampling of the Christian church population, there would be limitations in applying the results of the study to the whole Christian church population.

What further limited the study was that, again, all participants were from one congregation. The participants were not a random sampling of church decision-makers from a large number of churches. So again, results of the study could be applied to churches of the same type as Cathedral of Faith (inner city, African-American Pentecostal, Church of God in Christ). Further definition of the study group was that participants were members of the holiness-pentecostal denomination, the Church of God in Christ. As a fundamentalist group, traditionally the Church of God in Christ subscribed to a literal interpretation of scripture as it related to holy living that required its members to adhere to a strict moral and behavioral code. In its history, the Church of
God in Christ provided little support to educational institutions. The national level of the church sporadically supported Saints Academy (also known as Saints Literary and Industrial School or Saints Junior College) in Lexington, Mississippi and since 1970 had provided continuing financial support for Mason Seminary, a constituent member of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Given the fact that the participants of the study group were members of the Church of God in Christ, applications from the study could be made with limitations to decision-makers of other church denominations. This was not a random sampling of decision-makers from a cross section of Christian churches. Cathedral of Faith represented only one denomination of the many Pentecostal denominations that exist. Further, Cathedral of Faith was representative of only one denomination out of thousands of Christian denominations.

Cathedral of Faith was an African-American inner-city church in a low-income neighborhood. All participants were African-American. Participants represented only one ethnic group rather than a random sampling of people from a variety of ethnic groups. The implications gathered by the research could be applied to African-American churches in inner-city low-income areas. With limitations, application could be transferred to different racial/ethnic groups and churches that were in areas other than the inner-city.

Finally, the study group had a limited number of participants (fifteen people). This was a small sample size and did not represent the wider population. The small sample group limited the results of the study from being applicable to the entire population of church decision-makers. Though there were limitations to the study, the study yielded results that could be applied to the wider population of church decision-
makers. Though Cathedral of Faith was an African-American Pentecostal church in the inner-city, there were many things that were common to the experience of other congregations whether of other ethnicities, denominations, or neighborhood demographics.

The Private School Universe Survey, 1995-1996 (see Appendix H) revealed that there were few denominations that emphasized supporting church sponsored schools (Catholics, Lutherans, and Seven Day Adventists). The remaining denominations had either small numbers of church sponsored schools or no church sponsored schools (at least that was evidenced by the survey). Being that Cathedral of Faith belonged to the Church of God in Christ denomination which did not have a sufficient number of church schools to allow it to show up on the survey likened it to most church congregations and denominations that also did not have church sponsored schools. In regards to the inner-city location of the church, Cathedral of Faith was one of many churches with varying denominational ties that was located in the inner-city. Even though inner-city neighborhoods were described as low-income, there were other low-income neighborhoods in places other than the inner-city. Churches that were in these neighborhoods shared a similar experience as Cathedral of Faith. Being an African-American congregation did not limit the results of this study from being applicable to congregations of other ethnicities.
CHAPTER VII

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROJECT EXPANSION AND SUMMARY

This study occurred in an African-American Pentecostal congregation. This church was part of a denomination that had little history in supporting church sponsored schools. Church leaders experienced a paradigm shift that allowed them to embrace a new approach to training children. Salient features of the intervention focused on concepts that assisted in shaping a new way of thinking, which allowed leaders to adopt a new paradigm and take responsibility for sponsoring a full-time educational institution for children in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Cathedral of Faith leaders were like many other Christian church leaders in that their paradigm did not allow them to take responsibility for sponsoring full-time educational institutions for children. The model of intervention utilized in this project could be used with other Christian church leaders to educate them about their responsibility to sponsor church schools (charter schools). This model could be used in churches that belonged to other denominations as well as other Pentecostal congregations. It was reasonable to extend the use of this model to churches in middle-income neighborhoods. Charter schools are not unique to just low-income neighborhoods but are also located in middle-income neighborhoods. If a Christian church, regardless of the ethnicity of its members, or the average level of income of the neighborhood, had not seized the opportunity to sponsor a charter school or other type of
church sponsored school, then it could be a candidate for the model of intervention presented in this project.

Summary

The objective of this project was to educate the leaders of one African-American Pentecostal congregation in the West End area of Atlanta regarding the prospect of sponsoring a charter school for inner-city youth. The new information was an intervention designed to determine whether the presentation caused participants to change their thinking and priorities to financially support a charter school. Though the one session format was effective in communicating the new information to participants, it did not allow sufficient time for participants to come to a decision about supporting a charter school. By modifying the format and including follow-up sessions with key persons from the participant group, problem areas with the initial presentation were identified. Once the key persons had clarity on some issues, they were willing to have the participant group reassemble to discuss support of the charter school. Feeling more assured about the responsibility of the church to be involved in supporting a church sponsored school, church leaders committed to supporting the charter school in 2008. Though the change in priorities was not obtained from the Post-Session Projected Spending Priorities List for 2008, another means was devised to register change. Timing for obtaining the change in thinking was flawed. With the assistance of the observers and the post-planning session, a more effective means of measuring the change in thinking was devised. Follow-up sessions with key persons from the participant group proved to be effective in helping the entire group adopt a new priority in spending. Also, for future consideration, by giving
more attention to the independent readings, participants would have an opportunity to discuss any new information they encountered. The ability to channel any thoughts about the readings either to an email address or in a discussion group would help participants process the material. With these few modifications, this model of intervention could be used with other Christian congregations to assist them with changing their thinking and spending priorities so they would include the support of a charter school in the church budget.

Now that the doctor of ministry project was complete, the desired targeted result would be the creation of an alternative school of choice in the West End of Atlanta. More specifically, it would be a charter school. Again, the creation of the charter school was the aftermath of the doctor of ministry project and not the project itself. The focus of the project was on educating the leaders of a local African-American Pentecostal congregation about their responsibility to support schools. The school which was a result of the doctor of ministry project would be sponsored by both government and the church giving intentional emphasis to the development of moral conduct and character. This charter school would strive toward the fulfillment of the goal of education as stated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Intelligence plus character . . . that is the goal of true education.” For clarity, this doctoral project focused on educating the leaders of one African-American Pentecostal congregation about creating and supporting a charter school. The results of the project would assist the researcher in utilizing the project as a model to educate and involve other religious organizations to gain their support in starting a charter school.
Appendix A

Syllabus

Educating Church Leaders About Supporting Schools

INTRODUCTION:

The course of study is designed as an introduction to issues that will assist church leaders in widening the scope of ministries related. The readings will survey some of the issues related to the problems existing in our communities and how charter schools can be a ministry of the church to address some of the problems.

OBJECTIVES:

As a result of reading the selected books, readers should


2. Have ideas about how to provide healing for African-American communities.

3. Gain understanding of the relationship between religion, ethics, and morality.

4. Be informed about charter schools.

BOOKS & ARTICLES:


ASSIGNMENT:

Participants are to read the selections from above prior to attending the session. Information from the readings is important to your participation during the session and will assist in charting a new course for the ministry of the church.
FELLOWSHIP

• Pick a partner
• Share your high/low point

Deut. 6:4-9

• 4. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:
• 5. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.
• 6. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:
• 7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.
• 8. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.
• 9. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.
• Read Passage #1

What we will do:

• Reflect

• Cast a vision for future action
Reflection:

- What have we done in terms of training children?
  - Our own
  - Children in the church
  - Children in the community

- Does the church have any responsibility to train children?
• If so, then are we being responsible to children according to Deut. 6?

Slide 7

• Deut. 6:7-9
• And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.
• And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.
• And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Slide 8
To whom is God speaking?

What is God saying?
Who are the children?

What do we do to diligently teach?
Deut. 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.

- Modern context

- (many gods)

- Human secularism

Human Secularism

- The philosophy that lifts man, the individual (rather than God), as the ultimate authority for humans to lead good lives. It rejects the supernatural/spiritual as a legitimate means for people to make decisions or establish standards of morality.
Need to make a clear statement

- Deut. 6:4  The Lord our God is one Lord.

- A modern statement about God

- There is one God who is the authority in all the affairs of people.

• Are we creating the proper learning environments for our children?

• Are we diligently teaching children?
• Are we (the church) responsible for teaching children?

• List 5 things the church can do in response to Deut. 6.
School choice for K-12

- Traditional public schools
- Private nonsectarian schools
- Religious schools
- Charter schools
Public elementary schools in the community

- Cascade
- Finch
- M.A. Jones
- Ogelthorpe (closed)
- F.L. Stanton

Private schools

- ??????
Religious schools

- Mt. Vernon Christian Academy (closed)

Charter schools

- Kipp Ways
- University Community Academy
• Private schools are non-existent

• Religious schools have disappeared

• Traditional public schools are in need of improvement

• Charter schools are a new approach
Finch Elementary
CRCT Results

• (Does not meet)
M.A. Jones Elementary
CRCT Results

• (Does not meet)

M.A. Jones Elementary
CRCT Results

• (Does not meet)
M.A. Jones Elementary
CRCT Results

- (Does not meet)

Oglethorpe Elementary
CRCT Results

- (Does not meet)
F.L. Stanton Elementary
CRCT Results

- (Does not meet)

Brandon Elementary
CRCT Results

- (Does not meet)
Georgia End of Course Tests
9th Grade
(Failure)

Georgia High School Graduation Test
First Time Takers/11th Grade
(Failures)

Slide 32

Slide 33
• See Private School Survey
  • (handout)

Slide 34

• Read passage #2

Slide 35
1983

- A Nation at Risk Report
- (a blue ribbon commission appointed by the Reagan administration)

Purpose of charter schools

- Break the mold of the large urban school through restructuring within.
- (stuck in overpowering bureaucratic structures)
1991

• The first charter school law was passed in Minnesota

By 1993

• Charter laws were passed in:
  – Georgia
  – New Mexico
  – Colorado
  – Massachusetts
  – Michigan
  – Wisconsin
By the spring of 1999, there were over 1500 charter schools in the U.S.

By the fall of 2000, there were more than 1600.

Charter schools in Georgia

- 1995: 3 charter schools
- 2005: 48 charter schools
- 2006: 5 charter schools added
- 2007: 8 charter schools approved
Location of Georgia charter schools

- In 2005, over half of the 48 charter schools were in Metropolitan Atlanta
- 23 of the 48 were in three school districts
  - 8 were in the Atlanta Public School District
  - 8 were in the DeKalb County School District
  - 7 were in the Fulton County School District

Features of a charter school

- Operated by a charter/contract
- Self-governing
- Smaller schools
- Smaller class sizes
- Supported by public funds (boe)
- Supplemental funds needed
The relationship of charter schools to churches???

- Churches can partner with the local board of education to sponsor a charter school that will provide a wholistic education through intellectual and character development.

Is this a new model?

- New York (Rev. Floyd Flake)
- Wisconsin (Bis. Cedric Daniels)
- California (Bis. Roy Dixon)
- Missouri (Bis. Lawrence Wooten)
Discussion

- Given the context, identify the best school type for a church to sponsor in the designated geographical area.

- Concept for a new charter school
• "Intellect and character . . . That is the goal of true education."

• By Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

• Read passage #3
Vision

• Establish a school in the West End of Atlanta that will properly integrate the secular and the religious that is sponsored by faith-based organizations and the Atlanta Public Schools.

In other words:

• Marriage of church and state
• Religion and morality
• Morality being the standards of behavior
• Our morals come from the Bible
• Without referencing the Bible, the new school can teach common rules of behavior without violating the separation of church and state clause
Mission

- Create a stimulating environment for learning that provides for measured mastery in academic achievement, demands high moral and ethical behavior, and to utilize entrepreneurship education as the framework to develop critical thinking skills.

Target Population

- Children K-5th
- Residents of Atlanta (particularly in the West End area)
- Open enrollment
Community-based School

- Community having a say in the education of children
- Religious organizations taking the lead to empower the community for the sake of improving education
- Determine the moral and ethical standards to be taught to children

What will it take to establish the charter school?

- Set-up a non-profit organization
- Create a governing board
- Petition the Atlanta Board of Education
- Commitment:
  - Time
  - Finances
**Important Dates**

- November 2, 2007 – Letter of Intent
- December 1, 2007 – Submit application for a planning grant
- March 15, 2008 – Submit petition to APS
- August 2008 – Apply for implementation grant ($400,000)
- August 2009 – School opens

---

**Financial commitment**

- 2008
  - From sponsoring churches
  - From grants
- 2009
  - From APS (approx. $11,000 per student)
  - From sponsoring churches
Discussion

- List/discuss the pros and cons of sponsoring a charter school.

• Read passage #4
Timeline

February – April 2007

• Hold an initial and successive meeting with the decision-maker(s) of the faith-based organizations and businesses in the community to discuss the charter school and their anticipated involvement. This includes fully discussing the financial support needed from each sponsoring organization.
• Submit the application for a planning grant.
• Begin visiting other charter schools.

May–July 2007

• Secure commitments for participation from the faith-based organizations and businesses.
• Form the governing board
• Begin formulating the business plan (include a start-up budget and an operational budget).
• Meet with other charter schools to form a mentoring relationship.
• **August-October 2007**
  • Meet with the Atlanta Board of Education to share plans of the charter school.
  • Meet with Morris Brown College to continue negotiation of space.
  • The governing board shall begin to develop the by-laws
  • The governing board shall begin to develop the charter petition.

Slide 62

• **November 2007-January 2008**
  • Continue to develop and refine the charter petition.
  • Submit letter of intent to the Atlanta Board of Education and Georgia Charter School Office.
  • Submit application to incorporate as a nonprofit organization.
  • The board will research the different educational material that can support the program goals.
  • Continue to negotiate with Morris Brown College concerning preparation of space.
  • Review progress of the business plan.

Slide 63
• **February-April 2008**
  - Submit charter petition to the Atlanta Board of Education.
  - Begin to seek other funding sources.
  - Obtain estimates for preparing marketing materials.

---

• **May-July 2008**
  - Submit the charter petition to the Georgia Charter School Office.
  - The board will discuss employee policies, related forms, and handbook.
  - The board shall hold community meetings to share information about the charter school and to determine feedback.
  - Finalize plans with Morris Brown College to prepare the facility.
  - Review progress of the business plan.
• **August-October 2008**
  - Apply for the charter implementation grant ($400,000).
  - Obtain competitive estimates for facility preparation.
  - Secure the lease for the facility at Morris Brown College.
  - The board will discuss recruitment of staff.
  - The board will discuss student policies, related forms, and handbook.
  - Meet with the Atlanta Board of Education to share feedback from the community.

• **November 2008-January 2009**
  - Determine school calendar for 2009-2010.
  - Distribute marketing materials for the school.
  - Hold community information meetings.
  - Begin the process to hire an administrator.
  - Review progress of the business plan.
  - Produce employee handbooks.
- **February-April 2009**
  - Begin enrollment process for new students.
  - Begin process to hire new teachers.
  - Finalize the operational budget.
  - Consider and finalize property and liability insurance.
  - Decide on employee benefits.
  - Decide how payroll will be handled.
  - Begin purchasing furniture and supplies.
  - Begin to purchase educational textbooks and related materials.
  - Determine instructional and student assessment program

- **May-July 2009**
  - Hold an open house for new students and their parents.
  - Finalize enrollment.
  - Hire a bookkeeper.
  - Hire an accountant.
  - Hire facility maintenance staff.
  - Train the new faculty.
  - Establish procedures for filing student records.
  - Establish procedures for doing reports from student records.
  - Review progress of the business plan.
  - Produce student handbooks.
August 2009
  • School starts.

Location
  • Plan A: Morris Brown College Campus
  • Plan B: Ogelthorpe Elementary
    (now the Coretta Scott King Leadership Academy for Girls)
    (will have new facility in 2009)
Start-up Costs

- Attorney
- CPA
- Facility usage
- Educational consultant (petition writer)
- Setting up the non-profit organization
- Membership fees (GCSA)
- Travel and conference expenses
- Facility preparation
- Marketing
- Purchase curriculum materials
- Office supplies
- Salaries

Sources of Income

Start-up Phase
- Planning Grant $5,000.00
- Implementation Grant $400,000.00
- Sponsors

Operational Phase
- APS (only after August 2009) $11,000.00
  (approx. per pupil)
- Sponsors
- Fundraising
Decision-making

- Will the church commit to partnering with other churches to develop a charter school in the West End area of Atlanta?
Appendix C

Pre-Session Spending Priorities Listing

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Appendix D

Selected Reading 1

It was not the intent of Deuteronomy to bring about formal legalism but for Israel to be drawn to God based on emotions likened to those which exist between devoted friends. This love for God is the complete devotion of one’s whole being. It is based on trust and gratitude, and should be the main emphasis of one’s total existence (6:6-9). It should bring about an obedience that is cheerful and uncompelled. This same devotion should be magnified and spread to all Christians, their children, and all we have the responsibility to teach.

What is being addressed in Deuteronomy is a covenant being made not only with the generation that stood before Moses but this covenant is always contemporary. It is binding on each successive generation. As Moses spoke, he spoke not only to that group but to their children and their children after them (6:1-2).

The intended audience of this scripture is parents. The mandate in this passage is extended to Christian parents of all times to teach the commandments diligently unto their children (6:7). This passage sets the framework for a consistent environment for the education of children from the time they rise in the morning to the time they lie down at night. Throughout the day the same information should be repeated and reinforced. When you are talking, when sitting, when walking, laying them down to sleep at night, and getting them up in the morning you are to teach them. This begins to help us understand the term diligently which means to be done with persevering, careful, steady effort. The environment for the contemporary child includes the school. If Christian
parents are to be successful in teaching the proper attitude toward God then they must
send their children to schools that support this same concept.
Appendix E

Selected Reading 2

Christian education was born out of the scriptural mandate given by Jesus in the Great Commission when He told his Disciples to “Go ye into all the world and teach.” From this the teaching ministry of the church grew. Instruction on the Christian life became part of the fabric that the church was responsible for operating.

The roots of Christian schooling can be traced back to the Reformation. It was not until the Reformation that the recognition and importance of educating the masses of children became a priority. Since the Reformation, certain denominational churches dominated in providing church schools. The Lutheran, Adventist, and Catholic churches took the lead in sponsoring Christian schools. In the 1990’s, evangelical church schools began appearing.

The past decades have seen another shift within church schools. The financial burden has shifted. Whereas the church used to bear a large portion of the cost of the schools, it is now being carried by parents. This means that more and more church schools are beyond the reach of low-income families. With the plight of education being what it is in most urban cities, many parents are desirous of alternatives.

The year was 1983 when the report titled *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education was issued. Its findings indicated that American schools were failing with the implication being that this put America sorely behind other technologically advanced societies. Many Americans concluded that public schools had outlived their usefulness. Public schools once served the United States well, but as we are thrust further into an information-driven society, America needs schools that are
fundamentally different from those of former years. If America is even to keep par with other like nations, it must radically improve the performance levels of particularly its public schools. Thus, we see the start of the reform movement of the 1980's. On the heels of the reform movement came charter schools.
Appendix F

Selected Reading 3

Traditional public schools are settings in which the majority of America's children are educated. For committed Christians, this should raise some concern. The public school has become a creature that must by nature reflect the society of which it is a part. In the formative years of the United States, the American public was mainly Christian in its orientation and practices. As a result, the public schools were able to be reflective of that inclination.

The more recent history of the United States depicts a nation that is culturally and religiously diverse. With this diversity the schools have become mirror images of this new reality. No longer is the traditional public school able to pass on the Christian orientation it was able to do formerly.

This may be due in part to the concept of the separation of church and state that is based in the Constitution of the United States. With that document, the separation of church and state became a part of the American fiber and way of life. Though it has been a part of the American way of living, it has not been as pronounced as it has become since 1963 when Madeline Murray O'Hare single-handedly petitioned and had federal legislation passed to have prayer and eventually Bible reading taken out of all public schools. Increasingly, the gulf between the secular and the sacred keeps widening. The concern with the separation between the sacred and the secular is whether there should be any separation at all. From the perspective of a Christian, all life is sacred. With the idea that God the Creator is omnipresent (God is involved in all the affairs of humankind),
there is no place/situation where God is not there. To accept that God is not involved in the public schools is contradictory to the belief that God is omnipresent.

The separation of church and state has resulted in a false division of the secular and the religious and it is evidenced in the public schools with the decline in religious influences. The eradication of God from the public school system is to the point that any references to religion and God have been removed from the textbooks. This is having a negative effect on children being able to properly place God in relationship to the world and truth.

Even though this is the present reality and even though traditional public schools are what they are, there yet remains a hope invested in the Christian church to create the kind of educational institution that can bridge the gap between the sacred and the secular, the church and the state. Without the Christian influence in the public schools that formerly existed in this country, children now have academic information but lack the morals and values of former generations. For instance, there is a lowered regard for life that is evidenced by some of today’s youth who seem to have little remorse in killing other people over trivial matters. It used to be virtuous for a young woman to be a virgin. However, today, the young virgin is laughed at and considered an oddity. The dilution of the Christian influence in the American traditional public schools has given place to youth having little regard for authority. This, in part, is a result of having no place for God in the schools, nor in their lives. With the displacement of God, comes the breakdown of the authority-subordinate system. For today’s youth, parents nor teachers, not even the police are highly respected.
The separation of the secular and the sacred defies time proven models of education that existed prior to this present time. This false separation of the secular and the religious that we have allowed is contributing to the profane condition of the American society. It is this sense of the profane that is synonymous with moral decay. And the moral decadence of any great society can and will lead to the fall of that same society.

A more fundamental problem that Christians face is the new secular mindset of the American society. It is not so much that the new secular mindset of the American society is the problem but I suspect that the underlying concern is the effect that this secular mindset is having on Christians. The thinking of the society says that education is just education. Systematically this secular society has effectively divided the secular from the religious so that even Christians accept the idea that religion can be separated from education. It has become difficult for Christians to comprehend the concept of Christian education because in our society education is secularized and many Christians do not take issue with it due to the fact that they do not understand the effects secularization can have on a child. The secular mind says that the religious has nothing to do with academics. Secular thinking has created an environment in which it is acceptable to disregard Christianity and even be irreligious. The false sense of separation of the secular and the religious is contradictory to the centeredness of God in the universe of the Christian belief system and should not be embraced in the educational institutions in which children learn.
For the most part, Christian churches and Christian parents have quietly accepted the liberal mindset that separates God from the secular which in this case separates God from education. These entities must more fully recognize the linkage between the human secular viewpoint that is the foundational philosophical stance of traditional public schools and how this eliminates the idea and reality that God is involved in all the affairs of humankind. With the elimination of God as the ultimate authority in the public arena, it is apparent that the prophetic voice of the church is not as operative in this arena as it ought to be. For it is the prophetic voice that will “bring into the open the assumptions and values that are in question and to subject them to public scrutiny.” The church which is prophetic must call into question the environments that educational institutions are setting for children. No only must the church be engaged in the prophetic in this regard but it must empower parents to call into question the environments that educational institutions are setting for children since it is parents who ultimately are responsible for training their own children. Though we are guilty of allowing this reality to exist, we as Christians can bring action to change this negative situation with our youth.

Appendix G

Selected Reading 4

In the West End of Atlanta there is a need for a quality full-time educational institution for children in kindergarten through twelfth grade that will properly integrate the secular and the religious that is sponsored by the public school system and a church organization(s). This ministry effort of the church will be for the purpose of improving the educational performance of children as well as focusing on the holistic needs of children. Though there are schools and churches in the West End of Atlanta, there is no church sponsored school in the area that serves children in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The families in this community deserve the opportunity to have choices about the schools their children will attend.

To fulfill the biblical mandate to train children, churches must seriously consider supporting church sponsored schools. It has become impossible for traditional public schools to address the religious or morality. To be politically correct, traditional public schools must respect all religions by not embracing any religion.

For Christian parents, it is a real dilemma to decide whether to send their children to a traditional public school, private school, a church sponsored school, or now a charter school. However, for parents in the West End of Atlanta that choice is not there. Families in the West End deserve the opportunity to have a choice about what type of school their children will attend. To give these parents that choice, we can take the lead in creating a new charter school. This new type of educational institution will combine the secular and the sacred in providing a quality educational environment. In addition, it will give the community an opportunity to make decisions about what children will learn.
rather than for all the decisions to be made by the district and state level boards of education.
Appendix H


Statistical Analysis Report

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<th>Denomination</th>
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<td>Amish</td>
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<td>Assembly of God</td>
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<td>Baptist</td>
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<td>Friends</td>
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<td>Greek Orthodox</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islamic</td>
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<td>Jewish</td>
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<td>Latter Day Saints</td>
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<td>Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod</td>
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<td>Mennonite</td>
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<td>Pentecostal</td>
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<td>Presbyterian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seventh Day Adventist</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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(National Center for Educational Statistics)
Appendix I

Projected Start-Up Budget
2009

Facility Renovation .................................................. $50,000
Furniture ........................................................................ 20,000
Curriculum materials ..................................................... 40,000
Office Supplies ............................................................. 10,000
Facility lease ................................................................. 90,000
Utilities ........................................................................... 36,000
Insurances ....................................................................... 10,000
Advertising .................................................................... 10,000
Legal/Professional fees .................................................. 9,000
Bank charges ................................................................. 1,500
Postage ........................................................................ 3,000
Salaries ......................................................................... 57,750
  Principal (4 months) ................................................. $33,333
  Teachers (5) (3 weeks) .............................................. 18,750
  Paraprofessionals (2) (2 wks) ................................. 1,667
  Custodian (4 months) ............................................... 4,000
TOTAL ........................................................................... $337,250
# Appendix J

## First Year Projected Operating Budget

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<td>Teachers (5 @ $60,000)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,000,000</strong></td>
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Appendix K

Atlanta Public Schools’ Charter Schools

Atlanta Charter Middle School (Middle) 820 Essie Ave., SE
Charles Drew Charter School (K-8) 301 East Lake Blvd, SE
International Academy (K-6) 1049 Custer Ave., SE
Kipp Achieve Academy (Middle) 1757 Mary Dell Dr., SE
Kipp West Atlanta Young Scholars Academy (Middle) 80 Joseph Lowery Blvd., SW
Neighborhood Charter School (K-5) 688 Grant St., SE
Tech High School (9-11) 1043 Memorial Dr., SE
University Community Academy (K-8) 2050 Tiger Flowers Dr., NW
Appendix L

Benefits of a Charter School

- Providing ministry to the children in the community
- Positively affecting the lives of inner city children and their families
- Helping to improve education for inner city children
- Establish good will in the community
- A position on the governing board of the charter school
- Name of church will be on school literature as a sponsor
- Plaque in prominent place in the school with name of church as a sponsor
- Leader among churches in Georgia in sponsoring a charter school
- Likelihood of news media coverage
- Access to the school facilities and equipment
- Possible employment for church members
- Possibility of drawing new families to the church
Appendix M

Post-Session Spending Priorities Listing

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### Session Evaluation

Rating Scale: 1=excellent, 2=good, 3=fair, 4=poor, 5=unsatisfactory

<table>
<thead>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Instructor’s ability to maintain group’s attention</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Instructor’s voice level</td>
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<td>3. Instructor’s voice tones</td>
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<td>4. Instructor’s eye contact</td>
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<td>5. Instructor’s familiarity of subject matter</td>
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<td>6. Instructor’s ability to engage the group</td>
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<td>7. Instructor’s enthusiasm</td>
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<td>8. Effectiveness of materials</td>
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<td>9. Instructor’s use of time</td>
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<td>10. Physical setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Appropriateness of having a meal with the meeting</td>
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<td>12. Overall effectiveness of the session(s)</td>
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<td>13. Usefulness of the session(s)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:

_________________________________________________________________________
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_________________________________________________________________________
Appendix O

Observer’s Tasks

Identify the group leader

- Notice the amount of control this person has with group
- Does the group leader change during the session
- What kind of affect does leader have on group

Instructor’s ability to get the groups’ attention

- Projection
- Voice level
- Voice tone
- Eye contact

Instructor’s knowledge/familiarity of subject matter

Instructor’s ability to engage the group

Observe body language

Was timing good?

- After meal
- Length of sessions

Familiarity of the instructor with the group

Enthusiasm/passion of the instructor

Effectiveness of the introduction

Effectiveness of each segment

- Lectures
- Silent readings
- Discussions
Appendix P

Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT)
2005-2006
Cascade Elementary First & Fifth Grades
Individual School Reports (Does not meet)

(predominantly black student population)
Appendix Q

Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT)  
2005-2006  
Finch Elementary First & Fifth Grades  
Individual School Reports (Does not meet)  

(predominantly black student population)
Appendix R

Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) 2005-2006
M. A. Jones Elementary First & Fifth Grades
Individual School Reports (Does not meet)

(predominantly black student population)
Appendix S

Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT)
2005-2006
Oglethorpe Elementary First & Fifth Grades
Individual School Reports (Does not meet)

(predominantly black student population)
Appendix T

Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT)
2005-2006
F. L. Stanton Elementary First & Fifth Grades
Individual School Reports (Does not meet)

(predominantly black student population)
Appendix U

Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) 2005-2006
Brandon Elementary First & Fifth Grades
Individual School Reports (Does not meet)

(not in the immediate neighborhood)
(87% white student population)
Appendix V

Georgia End of Course Tests
2005-2006
Ninth Grade (Failures)
Appendix W

Georgia High School Graduation Test
First Time Takers
2005-2006
Eleventh Grade
(Failures)

State Black White
Average Students Students

- Language Arts
- Math
- Social Studies
- Science

![Graph showing failure rates by subject and ethnicity for Georgia High School Graduation Test, 2005-2006, Eleventh Grade.](image-url)
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


