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*Researching, Teaching,
Mobilizing, for the Name—
Serving Primarily African-
Americans*

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MediaWatch

- Evaluations of Bible study software at: www.swcp.com/~kfapa/Bible/
- www.ecola.com: access to magazines and newspapers globally
- The AfAm Experience in World Mission reader is published! ISBN: 0878086099
- The NewAfAm Missions Seminar is at www.rmni.org/afam/index.htm for downloading in PowerPoint format

The Black Church and Missions Education

Missions education is a need in all churches, but particularly in African American (AfAm) churches. Of 99 AfAm missionaries responding to a survey, 81% agreed that AfAm churches neglect the doctrine of missions¹.

Global missions curricula is a crucial component to the long-range missions mobilization of the AfAm church. In evangelical Anglo churches the annual missions conference highlights missions, as do visiting missionaries—rare occurrences in the Black community.

Forty-six percent of AfAms feel it their responsibility to share their “religious beliefs,” compared to 33% of whites. Forty-five percent of AfAms are born again, according to George Barna.² This unusual interest in sharing faith disconnects cross-culturally.

The ubiquitous uniform international Sunday School lessons used by perhaps 75-80% of Black churches hasn’t fostered missions interest. The

largest AfAm CE publisher—Urban Ministries, Inc.—uses it.

The AfAm pastor oversees the CE curriculum, as he does all major church activities. He approves the SS superintendent, who runs the SS program. If he doesn’t have global vision, the CE offerings probably won’t either.

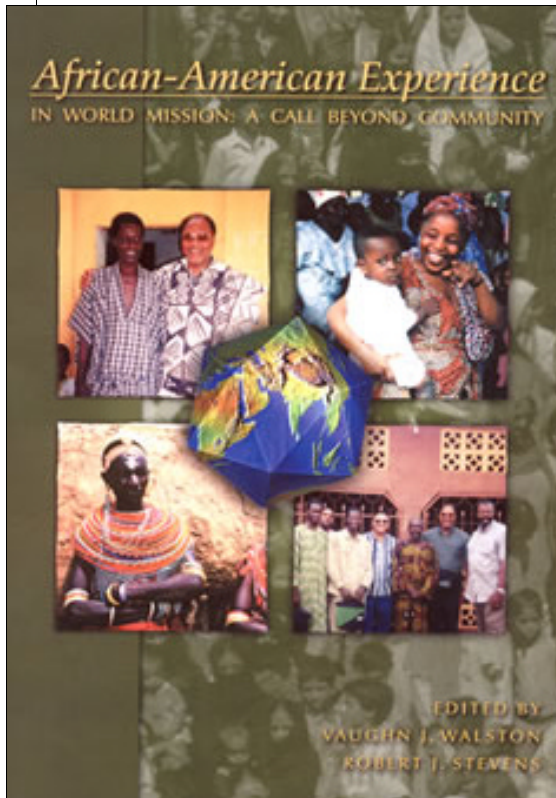
Charles Jackson often visits 2-3 Black churches in Chattanooga, TN on a Sunday. He notes that pastors under 40, founding pastors and those who have led the church for over 5 years are more likely to develop their own SS curriculum. Churches generally, and particularly AfAm churches need a 13-week contextualized SS module that can be used every 2 years. RMNI’s AfAm mission seminar in PowerPoint format is now available for use in a SS or seminar context.

Various annual AfAm CE conferences are held. The National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. has one, as does the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. The former has at least one cross-cultural workshop among the offerings, and the later has just one at its “Congress of Christian Education.” Among 68 workshops offered in Au-

helping people relate to family members and friends of other faiths. Other offerings: "Praise Dance Ministry," "The Purpose for Nurses," "Great Hymns of the Faith," and "Developing a Television and Radio Ministry." Global missions education was absent. Kevin Smith, who is pursuing a Ph.D. in church history, notes, "Unless the denomination is like-minded, that pastor won't be encouraged to pursue international missions."

The Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas publishes the "Junior Missionary Handbook." They defined a missionary as "An ambassador representing the heavenly King. That men of all nations

His praises may sing. Your missionary must be all things to all men, that they might know Christ and be born again." I agree! However the manual went on to minimize the global nature of missions. A goal was "To teach that "MISSION" includes our own land as well as foreign fields," and "To make clear the term "MISSIONARY" includes all Christians-not just those who actually go to foreign countries."³ The exact opposite needs to be taught in AfAm churches—that MISSION includes foreign lands, and that everyone is NOT a missionary. Christians are all to be witnesses to Christ and to evangelize, but not everyone is called to a cross-cultural ministry, which characterizes missions. As someone put it, if everyone is a missionary—no one is a missionary. We define them away. A crisis of definition exists in the AfAm church as to what missions and missionaries are exactly. Christian mission is bringing the message of salvation in Christ alone to all ethnic groups so that they will come to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and their neighbors as themselves. A Christian missionary is God's ambassador bringing the message of salvation in Christ alone to an ethnic group, so that members will come to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and their neighbors as themselves. Deaconal ministry, witnessing and ushering aren't "missions."



The best AfAm missions resource book, this just-released reader is a sequel to the *Perspectives* reader of the US Center for World Missions. To order call 1-800-647-7466.

The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) is something of an exception, promoting global missions at the highest level. Their global missions budget for 2002(?) is \$866,000.⁴ But even this sum comes to less than 50 cents per member per year, if COGIC has 2 million members.

The evangelical parachurch organization The Urban Alternative has an annual Church Development Conference, primarily for Black churches. Less than 1% of their 123 workshops dealt with cross-cultural ministry in 2002, similar to 2001.⁵

CE Resources

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) offers unusual resources to her teachers.⁶ These include offering online mission opportunities to teachers so that classes can become involved in global missions. The SBC offers a "Missions Innovation Conference," presenting global missions, women's ministry and the church as innovator. Probably the second most valuable conference for AfAm missions is the Black Church Leadership Week, sponsored by the SBC. Of their 159 workshops in 2002, 11 (7%) concerned global missions. Most valuable is the annual COMINAD (Cooperative Mission Network of Africans of the Dispersion) conference, bringing together not only missions mobilizers, but pastors, missionaries, laity and researchers to brainstorm on how to awaken the AfAm church to global missions. Their next conference is scheduled for August 26-28, 2003 in Norfolk, VA.

The “International Children’s Expo 2002,” sponsored by the Caleb Project, aims at “discipling, mobilizing and equipping kids for the world,” through over 50 workshops. Among them are “Kids on Missions Trips!,” “Integrating the Biblical Basis for Missions in Your Curriculum,” and “Mission Education Training for Your Church.”⁷ They target the precise need in the AfAm church. Children are most likely to accept Christ as saviour. Children between 5 and 13 have a 32% likelihood of accepting Christ. Those over 18 years have a 6% probability, according to Barna.⁸ Children are most receptive to the Gospel. That is the time to expose them to the possibility of going globally to serve Christ.

ACMC (Advancing Churches in Missions Commitment) is another premium resource through books and annual conferences to mobilize any church for missions.⁹ Slowly the AfAm church is awakening to see mission to other ethnic groups. Shelves of CE resources need to be developed to both speed the full shaking off of sleep and to equip her as she faces the challenges of the peoples. [This article comes from a presentation made at the COMINAD

- 1 www.RMNI.org/dissertation/default.htm p. 233.
- 2 Www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PageCategory.asp?CategoryID=1, accessed 9/4/02
- 3 www.fbhchurch.org/jbook1.html, accessed 8/21/02
- 4 www..cogicmissions.org/s_o_s.htm , accessed 8/21/02
- 5 www.tonyevans.org/conf/savedate.cfm
- 6 www.sbc.net/teachers/Default.asp
- 7 www.calebproject.org/KidsExpo.htm accessed 8/23/02
- 8 www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PageCategory.asp?CategoryID-18, accessed 9/4/02
- 9 www.ACMC.org

Uganda Prayer Guide

Please pray for:

1. God’s anointing upon us to bring glory to Him and edification to Ugandans
2. Safety and no sickness in the Team
3. That our ministry will be acceptable
4. For love, unity and grace among the Team and with Ugandans
5. For protection upon families of Team members
6. That the Team will be fully prepared and walk in the Spirit
7. For lasting fruit in Uganda and in supporting churches
8. That the medical team won’t become infected

↑ God encouraged us through those who attended the Milwaukee Family Conference (marriage, parenting and finances), although

Prayer and Praise

numbers were small. The marriage and parenting seminar is now available. Jim was interviewed on “Crosstalk” on 98 stations on racial reconciliation, while there.



↑ Please pray for God’s grace to overflow as Judi and Jim teach at Northwest Baptist Church in Milwaukee on August 10-11.

↑ Judi still needs prayer against mi-

graines, although they are less frequent and intense.

↑ Susanna began a Masters degree at UT-Knoxville in environmental science. Ethan and Tim return to Letourneau, balancing work with studies. Please pray for a successful year for them all.

↑ Good progress is being made on 2 ministry

projects. The Presbyterian Church of Uganda is asking for 17 acres of land for their first graduate – lveel seminary and negotiations proceed for Christian schools in southern Sudan.

↑ Pray for wisdom, the binding of Satan, openness to the Gospel and the ability to disciple at the Westside street ministry.