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Date

Standing in the Gap:  
Informing Advocates for African American Male Youth in Underdeveloped Communities

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Doctor of Ministry

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## **Abstract**

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Within the discipline of practical theology there exists a need for the “Black Church” and other churches that have a significant young African American male presence either as members, attendees, or in the surrounding community to seek ways to improve addressing the specific needs of such groups as collectively marginalized members of society stigmatized by race and its accompanying conditions of relative deprivation. Drawing from the wisdom and experiences of informing advocates such as a parent, educator, coach, neighbor, and legal practitioner, the given study indicates that groups provide vital knowledge for clergy, officers, and others who occupy leadership positions. The respondent’s findings provide insight for the church to identify its shortcomings in reaching adolescent and pre-adolescent African males through the various practical ministries. Although Porter Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in a rural and underdeveloped community serves as the context of the given study, there exists some applicability beyond the given local church which includes urban underdeveloped congregations and communities where persistent poverty prevails. Communal wisdom provides the church with a glimpse of missing elements needed for effective preaching, teaching, pastoral and lay consulting with the subjects of study within and beyond the congregation as cultural characteristics tend to continuously evolve intergenerationally. Young African American men from rural and underdeveloped communities face distinct challenges that requires an understanding of the generational divide rather than a reliance on assumptions and common sense. The “street codes” which have been historically associated with inner cities also apply to rural communities requiring subjects to appropriately switch codes. Institutional objectives of the “Black Church” with a social justice agenda entails equipping its congregants to become agents of antiviolence often within the context of a contrary code with structural barriers combined, safeguarding the prophetic tradition, and youth empowerment for that which elders’ sense lies ahead. The Civil Rights Movement has provided a template for latter social movements which embrace some aspect of antiviolence and a frame for the prophetic voice for educational and mentoring purposes along with appropriate biblical proclamation.

Standing in the Gap:  
Informing Advocates for African American Male Youth in Underdeveloped Communities

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## Introduction

Inspired by *Ferguson and Faith* (2015) by Leah Gunning Francis, the objective of the given study entails the production of a resource to help cultivate courageous leaders to bridge the perceived disconnect between the Black Church and marginalized African American males primarily between the ages of twelve and eighteen. In response to the 2014 uprising in Ferguson, Missouri, faith in God was put into action as suggested by the title of the given study, “clergy stood in the gap of this perceived chasm between protesters and police.”<sup>1</sup> The book’s central theme of calling clergy, officers, and laity to be attentive to the voices outside the church and ultimately to respond accordingly serves as the basis for constructing the interview questions that were given to the participants.

The project’s focus consists of the following three interrelated areas: First, the appropriation of a social justice ministry relevant to the real and imagined disadvantages experienced by the male, African American adolescent population in the congregation and the community. Recognizing the existence of other fringed populations, the findings have potential applicability beyond the study’s target group. The “informing advocates” have a unique position to function as liaisons between the church and the affected population. Meeting natural and spiritual needs of the target group entails having the information from people who have frequent and meaningful contacts with the given subjects of study.

The second theme entails addressing the complications of “the code of the street” as a part of the subject’s environment. In simplest terms, “the code of the street” termed by Elijah Anderson refers to the unwritten rules of conduct which govern individual behavior beyond the constraints

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<sup>1</sup> Leah Gunning Francis, forward by Jim Wallis, *Ferguson & Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2015), 140.

of regulating institutions such as the family, law enforcement, and the church. The “code” rewards those who attain “street-level respect” and penalizes those who violate such rules. Such a code regulates all aspects of overt conduct, modes of interaction, and accompanies a host of reinforcing sanctions ranging from existence as persistent “prey” to premature death by direct violence.

Although the congregation and surrounding community of Porter Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Dobbin, Texas lies in a relatively remote area, a significant number of church members live either in high violent crime ridden communities or impoverished rural settings within the vicinity of “trap houses” which innately impacts ministry outside the church. As the pastor, knowledge of the “code” becomes essential to exist as one actively engaged in the communities in which many of the members reside. Nevertheless, the congregation and community of this study can potentially provide a unique perspective on Biblical implications of concepts such as positive peace, negative peace, justice, and equity as they relate to the Christian life with respect to “the code of the street.” Within the context of “the code of the street” there exists a value system which requires a sufficient amount of street-level “respect” to navigate through the unavoidable challenges and chronic threats of harm against one’s wellbeing or life. Street-level “respect” is acquired through public displays of violence, avoiding cowardice during eminent danger, a willingness to kill, hyper-sexual behavior, intimidating modes of speech, wearing expensive and highly envied clothes or accessories all of which indicates the presence of “nerve”.

In such environments, a significant portion of youth and young adults in such environments become tested by the “code” on a regular basis. Furthermore, the Preamble of the *Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church* (AMEZ) contains the phrase

“transform society” as part of the purpose of the church. Young African American adults and adolescents roughly ages 12-18 of Porter Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church and their sister church Walls Chapel A.M.E. Zion collectively live in violent crime ridden communities. For a complex set of reasons, people within such demographic groups, especially men, have historically been vulnerable to becoming victims of such violence. In addition, whether they live in rural communities like Porter Chapel or urban communities such as Walls Chapel, these men live under “the code of the street.” Under such conditions, children become socialized “to choose between an abstract code of justice and a practical code geared toward survival.”<sup>2</sup> The Wesleyan concept of justification grace and sanctification grace does not provide exemption from “the code of the street”.

The third theme focuses on cultural capital to explain the role of power and identify as a means for empowerment. “Cultural capital is not just inherited or possessed by the middle class, but rather it refers to an accumulation of specific forms of knowledge, skills and abilities that are valued by privileged groups in society.”<sup>3</sup> Understanding power affects social justice ministry with anti-violence as a spiritual discipline, and the quality of theological reflection. The project aims to address how linguistic capital, familial capital, and resistance capital can mutually equip the church and the community’s youth to live the “Christian life” within their context, and become active in transforming the perils of their environment with the intent to transform the milder and extreme elements of “the code of the street” without compromising one’s morals or Christian faith.

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<sup>2</sup> Elijah Anderson, *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1999), 324.

<sup>3</sup> Tara Yosso, “Whose Culture has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth,” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8, no. 2 (March 2005): 76.

Some of Porter Chapel's adolescent members have a family member who have recently died from gun violence. All members of Porter Chapter with school-aged children are single parents with concerns about their offspring successfully navigating their way through such challenges within the context of the "code." If the subjects of the given study live in fear due to potential consequences which accompany "the code," the church can begin the process of addressing such concerns beyond meaningless "pastor-speak" or empty rhetoric or suggesting to literally "turn the other cheek."<sup>4</sup> The project will attempt to provide a resource which bridges spiritual and practical approaches for teaching how the church and its community can assist youth and young adults in terms of utilizing "street sense" and Christian faith for self-target hardening purposes and to play a contributing role in promoting peace through countering the coercive effects of "the code."

### **Literature Review**

*The Code of the Street* (2000) by Elijah Anderson is based on an ethnographic study in Philadelphia. This text serves the project as a primary text which described how "the code" functions as a dominating force in inner cities whether one comes from a "decent" or "street" household. Knowing the code and how to adequately deal with the code functions as a means for survival. Anderson's book informs the project's general theme of saving one's life without losing one's soul.

*The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching* (2011) by Kenyatta Gilbert stresses the need for preachers to use what he calls a "trivocal approach" such that their Biblical witness

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew 5:39 (New Revised Standard Version)



contains a balance between the prophetic voice, the priestly voice, and the sagely voice rather than simply skewed towards one at the expense of the others. The book argues that a holistic approach to preaching can become applicable, towards teaching active peacemaking in the midst of “street culture.”

The book entitled *A Child Shall Lead Them* (2014) by Rufus Burrow presents African American youth as exemplifying collective strength despite legal segregation and being subjected to violence which is aimed to discourage activism. Nevertheless, such youth played a prominent role during the Civil Rights Movement. Burrow highlights the public display of courage that children displayed in the forefront of a blood battle for social progress and basic human rights as they confronted violence with nonviolence. Such children were not deterred by beatings nor death. “While there was mutual love and respect between King and black youths, there were also generational, cultural, and even geographical differences that led to tension and division between them.”<sup>5</sup> Although some cross-generational dissent appears inevitable, both sides of the generation divide can mutually benefit from mediating groups of informing advocates to facilitate communication and collaborative efforts.

*Beyond Civil Rights* (2015) by Daniel Geary responds to the Civil Rights Movement, the emergence of a new black middle class, and the masses of African American families who remain in poverty. Geary critiques the Moynihan Report which implied that race has become less significant than class in terms of African American life chances. The report equated black self-determination as qualitatively like white supremacy. “Moynihan defined ‘racism’ solely as bigotry and dismissed out of hand concepts of unconscious or institutional racism.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Rufus Burrow, Rufus Jr., *A Child Shall Lead Them: Martin Luther King Jr., Young People, and the Movement* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Geary, *Beyond Civil Rights: The Moynihan Report and Its Legacy* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 176.

*Blue Note Preaching* (2015) by Otis Moss III derived from a recent Lyman Beecher Lecture at Yale Divinity School. The book's content focuses on preaching that takes risks and abandons the confines of acceptability so that the work of God can become proclaimed in immediate perils. The author is currently a pastor in Chicago, IL which ranks among the leading U.S. cities in terms of homicide rates. Parts of Chicago and surrounding cities such as East Chicago, IN and Gary, IN have a gang culture. The author challenges the reader to stand outside the church and look in (in metaphorical terms) and attempt to see the church through external lenses to raise questions with regards to root causes behind the "code" such as deindustrialization, joblessness, complacency, and being stuck in nostalgia.

Although the book entitled *Civil Resistance, Comparative Perspectives on Nonviolent Struggle* (2015) by Kurt Schock focuses on state repression, the book provides information on how to encourage mobilization among members of the church and community, how to overcome demoralization through the promotion of fearlessness, and how to identify and sever the sources of power which reinforce "the code of the street."

In the book entitled *The Ground Has Shifted* (2016), the author Walter Earl Fluker addresses the idea that millennial African Americans lack a clear distinction between the traditional Black church that was once the pillar of the Black community, a hub for mobilization, and sacred space from the apolitical Black church that has embraced the "prosperity gospel" within a post-racial frame. As the prosperity gospel plays a role in shaping some sectors of black ecclesiastical leadership, such churches partially play a contributing role in provoking suspicion and mistrust among marginal members of the Black community when public displays of disparity become evident when contrasted with reality. "The debate over the 'politics of respectability' has been

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raised from academics, ministers, and journalists regarding the boisterous and rude ‘take-no-prisoners’ approach of many young activists”<sup>7</sup> Such old debates within African American community activists remain evident with movements such as Black Live’s Matter to other socially progressive forms of activism.

*Black Participatory Research* (2016) by editors Elizabeth R. Drame and Decoteau Irby (2016) draws from extensive research covering the relationships between schools and communities within a predominately African American context. The findings provide a model for churches to emulate in terms of having opportunities for meaningful interactions between the two institutions. Part of the book focuses on critical race theory which applies to the given study because it aims to demystify subtle racism and expose its hidden features, how it reproduces, its persistence, and how it has infiltrated laws.

*Becoming Critical* (2016) edited by Felecia Briscoe and Muhammad A. Khalifa informs the given study because it focuses on how to turn social disadvantages into advantages. The edited book describes black survival tactics which parallel Tarra Yosso’s concept of navigational capital. The book critiques the prevalence of abstract liberalism as a “discourse that attempts to rationalize racial unfairness with notions of equality, meritocracy, opportunity, and choice.”<sup>8</sup> According to Briscoe and Khalifa, African American males learn during their formative years that they have restricted socially accepted identities. As Black males they could either be a professionally bound athlete or a hypersexual gangster. Intellectual pursuits or crafts that require long term commitments and deferred gratification entail a breach in the confinement of the

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<sup>7</sup>Walter Earl Fluker, *The Ground Has Shifted: The Future of the Black Church in Post-Racial America* (New York, NY: New York University Press. 2016), 173.

<sup>8</sup>Joy Howard, “Unbecoming...Responding to Colorblindness: An Autoethnography,” in *Becoming Critical: The Emergence of Social Justice Scholars* ed. Felecia M. Khalifa Briscoe and Muhammad A. Khalifa (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2016), 98.

externally constructed identity. Therefore, a significant portion of African American boys face the challenge of defying the rules of acceptability but must also overcome the pressure from which Elijah Anderson calls the “street code.”

*Race, Riots and the Police* (2016) by Howard Rahtz provides a historical account between the relationship between law enforcement and intergroup relationships in the U.S. Rahtz argues that practices of differential justice and victim discounting have made the U.S. essentially a caste system. “Police racism from police-sanctioned violence against black citizens to neglect of crime problems in black neighborhoods is one of the most shameful chapters in U.S. policing history.”<sup>9</sup> Rahtz makes a compelling case that African American males of all ages exist with a heightened sense of vulnerability to extrajudicial abuse and insufficient protection. The relationship between the police and community can become easily destroyed by the actions of a few, however difficult to rebuild.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The given project which addresses a practical theological need uses critical race theorists Tara Yosso’s theory of cultural capital to inform the literature review and the research process. Although Yosso does not use theological terms, the given project appropriates her theory to describe the cycle of God’s self-disclosure from biblical proclamation to human action.

Within the context of the given study, the term “aspirational capital” describes the needed form of cultural wealth which functions as faith put into practice despite harsh realities which could potentially drive young African American males into a state of hopelessness. “Aspirational capital” refers to “the ability to maintain hopes and dream for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers.”<sup>10</sup> Informing advocates can provide insight to clergy and officers on

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<sup>9</sup> Howard Rahtz, *Race, Riots and the Police* (Boulder, CO and London, UK: Lynne Rienner, 2016), 76.

<sup>10</sup> Yosso, “Whose Culture has Capital?”, 79.

means to play a role in empowering young African American males to utilize their current condition to cultivate their faith in such a way that they can embrace God's peace as the ultimate source of eschatological hope. "In the second decade of the twenty-first century, far too many blacks seem to just passively exist from day to day. Indeed, as far back as 1958, King named apathy as one of the great challenges that blacks had to overcome."<sup>11</sup> Apathy is a symptom of a truncated vision and limited aspirations. However, apathy can be overcome through embracing a glimpse of God's vision acquired through a combination of biblical proclamation and proper nurturing that considers the subject's state of existence. "Familial capital engages a commitment to community well being and expands the concept of family to include a more broad understanding of kinship."<sup>12</sup> The informing advocates collectively support the idea that the subjects of the given study need healthy connections to a nurturing and caring assembly

Faith can become cultivated when individuals and groups experience prolonged subjection to deprivation and injustice. "Resistant capital refers to knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior."<sup>13</sup> The informing advocates have collectively acknowledged the importance of meeting the subjects of the study in their current situation. Resistant capital corresponds to the Biblical concept of becoming fit through endurance.<sup>14</sup>

### **Methods**

The goal of the given exploratory and theoretical approach entails providing the church with a resource that leads to some form of informed action. This project used qualitative data through open ended interviews of five informing advocates and three congregation members for a total of

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<sup>11</sup> Burrow, *A Child Shall Lead Them*, 264.

<sup>12</sup> Yosso, "Whose Culture has Capital ?", 79.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>14</sup> Romans 5:35 (New Revised Standard Version)

eight participants. Despite the lack of a systematic approach towards selecting the participants, considering factors for identifying the interviewees entailed availability, prior rapport, and perceived honesty to minimize interviewer bias. The informing advocates consisted of an African American male veteran middle school teacher and coach who serves a relatively deprived community, an African American male parent of two adult sons, an African American female attorney who specializes in criminal law and juvenile justice whose clients consist mostly of sub-middle class racial minorities, an African American male teacher with mostly male students in an impoverished community, and a Hispanic male neighbor who has displayed rapport with the children, youth, and young adults in the given community.

The church members who participated in the study functioned as an equivalent to a control group for comparative purposes with the external informing advocates. The church members consisted of one elderly female officer, and two middle-aged single mothers with two sons each, all African American.

The eight participants received ten similar, but not identical open-ended appropriately phrased questions based on their social location and the statuses they occupy. In the absence of appropriate technology, the responses were recorded by hand written fieldnotes. Although the participants functioned as primary sources for the study, their opinions and experiences are theirs only such that further study would be needed to make broad implications regarding the relationship between informing advocates, the congregation, and its respective community.

The responses from the five informing advocates and the three church members varied but were consistent. Collectively the data provides insight for potential ways to implement an effective social justice ministry in the context, to become attuned to the specific root correlations

that fortify the “street code” into the lives of the subjects of study, and identification of areas of cultural capital deficiencies.

### **Introduction to the Informing Advocates**

Coach Johnson, a Houston, Texas metropolitan area secondary level coach and veteran teacher of a core subject works with a population that he described as approximately ninety percent below poverty and roughly three-fourths lack a male role model in their home. The coach describes the students and athletes as collectively not accustomed to instructions from a man. He stated that such students are conditioned to having women in positions of authority as wanting young African American boys to “sit down and be quiet”<sup>15</sup> which accompanies an “emotional flying off the handle”<sup>16</sup> when they do not respond accordingly. Whereas the same students never became used to the firmness of a man. Through direct and frequent contact with the given population, he claimed that “you can tell who has a dad in the home.”<sup>17</sup> Rather than assessing gender roles with respect to the given population, Coach Johnson stressed that one of the challenges that African American boys coming of age collectively lack lies in their deficiency in having gender balance in terms of authoritative figures and approaches.

Attorney Larissa Washington describes most of her clients as African American and Hispanic either low income or unemployed. Many of her clients have trouble paying the legal fees. Her specializations include: criminal law and juvenile justice. She has described a significant number of her juvenile clients as lacking a support system at home and turning to “the wrong crowd” for companionship. Ms. Washington said that in addition to clients with mental health issues “you see a lot of weird things as a lawyer.”<sup>18</sup> Such weird things include clients with multiple diseases

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<sup>15</sup> Coach Johnson [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Larissa Washington [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

and prospective clients that nobody wants. She expressed thanks for the Sandra Bland Act. Furthermore, she lamented that many lawyers don't understand their clients but rather learn the system instead. According to Washington, the shortcoming to approaching law through focusing on learning the system entails the fact that judges change and when such changes occur one must adjust accordingly. Such conduct pertains mainly to those who don't focus on their client. Most of her clients are African American and Latino.

As a parent, Mr. Dinkins has reared three children including two sons who are now adults. He described his children's peers as ranging from poor to rich. Some are products of single parents whereas others have both parents in the home. Mr. Dinkins described the children's peers as overall well-mannered in his presence.

Pedro Alejandro, a Mexican American respected neighbor in a racially diverse neighborhood, is the father of four with African American family members due to mixed marriages among siblings. He describes his children as having middle class friends or average kids from multiple races. As a neighbor Mr. Alejandro expressed joy teaching kids to be respectful to the elderly and others around them. He values the need to help children in the neighborhood learn right from wrong and what to do when they engage in wrong activity in his presence. Such scenarios become teaching moments to help them notice the wrong that was committed. In terms of teenagers and adolescents who attempt to test the boundaries, Mr. Alejandro confronts them about "cussing" and "fighting" and encourages them to discuss the issues without having an attitude. Pedro acknowledges that effective communication with neighborhood youth in the correct way and at the appropriate way poses a challenge.

Curtis McCoy teaches public school in a nearby district to Porter Chapel. His students range in ages from nine through twelve, all African American and approximately eighty percent boys.



The reason why he has a greater proportion of male students was by his personal request being honored since he is the only male regular education teacher in the school who teaches the core subjects. Mr. McCoy expressed that the boys needed male role models.

### **The Informing Advocated and Social Justice**

An initial requisite for the church to become effective in terms of social justice begins with becoming aware of its perception and how the church's overall impression impacts its relationship between the community and especially the subjects of the given study. According to the coach, young African American males perceive the church as "a group of old people who don't understand what they are dealing with."<sup>19</sup> The lawyer indicated that generally young African American boys "believe in God, but don't believe in religion."<sup>20</sup> She describes them as "spiritual but not religious, and not sound in their beliefs. However, there are some who say they love the Lord."<sup>21</sup> According to the lawyer, the young African American boys with firm beliefs tend to have more stable home environments more so than those who move from house to house. Family plays a significant role in influencing the child's religious orientation. However, children with firm religious beliefs are prone to wander a bit.

According to the parent, the church has become undisciplined. "Adults are doing things what they shouldn't be doing, spewing do as I say."<sup>22</sup> He claims that young African American males see something different from what the church think it portrays. The parent stated that they see different types of relationships, adulterous relationships, arguments, hypocrisy, and children act according to what they see, that's what they know. Children are a product of their environment. He claims that they do not see anything positive and that finding the right church for those who

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<sup>19</sup> Coach Johnson [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Larissa Washington [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Mr. Dinkins [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

are seeking becomes a challenge. The church should not be surprised by the idea that by the time these children become adults, there will be a generation that does not go to church. When the neighbor was asked about how he believes that young African American males perceive the church, his response was “I don’t think they even care about it. They don’t care about the Word, the Bible. Church to them is a waste of time. They only go when desperate or when they are really in trouble.”<sup>23</sup> The teacher describes the church being perceived as “something that is forced, a way to change them, and not really a want.”<sup>24</sup>

A second requisite for the church to improve its level of effectiveness in terms of social justice ministry entails assessing the challenges that informing advocates face which puts the church’s challenges in proper perspective. Coach Johnson describes “trust” and “buy in” as the greatest challenge coaches face when it comes to working with the study population. Among his students and athletes, most of the men have left the home of the children either voluntarily or have been taken away by incarceration. Trust requires time, effort, the right intention, and “space to air conflicts as well as to build reconciliation instead of resentment.”<sup>25</sup> The coach emphasized that African American boys need love despite living under such conditions. “They are not used to someone being there for real when it does not work out.”<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the coach emphasized the need for the study population to have “a godly man” as a role model because, “the world is showing them something different.”<sup>27</sup> The lawyer describes that greatest challenge that she faces as a lawyer is “getting paid.” She expressed that working with her distinct population one must empathize with what most typical lawyers would deem as an excuse such as

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<sup>23</sup> Mr. Dinkins [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Curtis McCoy [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth Porter, *Connecting Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2015), 151.

<sup>26</sup> Coach Johnson [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

delinquent rent, women with babies and limited resources. Ms. Washington provided a negative critique towards those who enter the profession caring more about the money than the client. She also mentioned that in her field one must command respect so that others will listen.

According to the parent, the greatest challenge of rearing African American boys in the twenty-first century is “getting them educated in the backdrop of racism.”<sup>28</sup> Such children cannot afford to have poor parenting especially in the context of a relative lack of opportunity and peer pressure. “Peer pressure is a function of lack of parenting, and accountability. Peer pressure can be positive and negative, it goes both ways.”<sup>29</sup> The neighbor emphasizes rapport building as an essential for connecting with the subjects of the given study; and “having to get to their level to have a conversation about right from wrong.”<sup>30</sup> According to the neighbor, one must communicate with the given subjects in the right way. The teacher indicated that working with other adults and administrators, and the having to prove self to others, does pose a challenge when one attempts to meet real needs in his setting. “The black church was born fighting for freedom.”<sup>31</sup> The present quest for freedom begins with building a broad understanding of present hinderances with an intent to act through faith.

### **The Informing Advocates and the Code of the Street**

Informing advocates function as a liaison between the church and the community within the context of the “code of the street.” With a few exceptions, typically church seminars, workshops, or conferences do not equip clergy or laity for “street wise” ministry. However, an effective informing advocate can assist the church in terms of meeting the needs of sub-middle class

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<sup>28</sup> Mr. Dinkins [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Pedro Alejandro [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Raphael G. Warnock, *The Divided Mind of the Black Church: Theology, Piety and Public Witness* (New York, NY and London, UK: New York University Press, 2014), 13.

African American boys within such a context. According to Elijah Anderson, those who have not embraced the “street code” still know the code and how best to follow its rules. “Knowledge of the code is thus largely defensive, and it is literally necessary for operating in public.”<sup>32</sup>

Due to the real and ambiance of aggression and risk of victimization in spaces that have been deemed as regulated by the code, people are inclined to avoid such areas and the associated people. When Coach Johnson was asked why he decided to remain teaching in a school in an underdeveloped community ridden with high crime, substandard living conditions, and limited resources his response was as follow: “Number one, I consider myself to be a good teacher, my evaluators consider me to be a good teacher, and the students deserve a good teacher number. I have been sent by the Holy Spirit to impact lives, God has people on his team.”<sup>33</sup>

The lawyer was inspired to pursue criminal law with a specialization in juveniles when she was a young girl accompanying her father, a Black Panther, and a mother who was active in the S.H.A.P.E. Community Center in Houston, Texas. At an early age, the lawyer’s mother exposed her to the legal system through the Gary Graham case who was executed though he claimed innocence. Furthermore, the lawyer did attend Gary Lee Graham’s funeral. According to the lawyer, the experience had a lasting effect. She claimed that it never resonated with her how a governor could kill someone when many said that he was innocent. If a mistake was made, the consequences of execution remain irreversible.

Mr. Dinkins, claimed that there were some choices he made as a parent due to their children’s status as black and male. He stated that he put them in a structured environment by starting them out in martial arts early, the children participated in activities at the YMCA and other related educational activities. His sons had both parents in the household and as parents were able to

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<sup>32</sup> Anderson, *Code of the Street*, 33.

<sup>33</sup> Coach Johnson [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

adjust their schedules so at least one parent was always home with the children. Elijah Anderson refers to such nuclear families as “decent families.” The parent emphasized the importance of teaching them discipline and structure early. According to Anderson, a significant portion of children from “decent families” employ “code-switching” tactics when appropriate. “Decent families tend to accept mainstream values more fully than street families, and they attempt to instill them in their children.”<sup>34</sup> There exist fewer obstacles in terms of connecting the church with “decent families” of the community in comparison to “street families.” Decent parents are much more able and willing than street-oriented ones to ally themselves with outside institutions such as schools and churches.”<sup>35</sup> Pedro, the neighbor views what Elijah Anderson would consider as “street oriented” children as rather good people who have hit bad times. He stresses the importance of “getting to know them one on one, talk to them straight forward, have an open heart and an open mind instead of judging people from the outside, accept people for who they are.”<sup>36</sup> Curtis McCoy the teacher stated that he feels obligated to teach black students with institutional labels because they need someone to look up to. He also stated that when he was their age he did not have that.

### **Informing Advocates and Cultural Capital**

Each of the informing advocates have addressed the problem of cultural capital deficiencies and present relevant remedies for the subjects of the given study. Coach Johnson stated that the three greatest obstacles that African American male youth face in the twenty-first century include: lack of opportunity, survival, and prejudice based on perception. The coach stated that one of the things that society has misunderstood about the population of the given study is their

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<sup>34</sup> Anderson, *Code of the Street*, 38.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Pedro Alejandro [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

collective “lack of success which is based on a lack of persistent and consist effort.”<sup>37</sup> He clarifies the preceding claim by stating that there lies a deficiency of external effort. Individuals and institutions have historically been quick to give up prematurely on such members of population. He concludes by stating that “education is the key to their future.”<sup>38</sup> According to the coach, the given population would benefit from being taught how to learn and having an expansive vocabulary early in life. Tara Yosso supports such claims with what she describes as linguistic capital.

According to the lawyer, African American boys collectively face the following challenges: being understood, being loved and care about, and being secure in themselves feeling that they are equal. For the same issue, Mr. Dinkins suggested that African American boys are challenged by a lack of opportunity, and a lack of education. He stated that “if you lose the kid by the third grade then he is lost, stuck in low wage jobs, then turn to selling drugs to make more money, and giving in to peer pressure.”<sup>39</sup> Mr. McCoy, the teacher provided a consistent response by stating that the subjects of the given study have a lack of guidance, lack of positive role models, and lack of support.

Despite the challenges of his position, the coach stresses that the reward is apparent in the long run when he sees former students as adults who have become productive citizens. Some of his former student athletes have become coaches. Coach Johnson has seen them use phrases and expressions he had previously used. Furthermore, the coach has observed the former students as having the ability to effectively communicate with their athletes without using profanity. Above all, the coach expressed that the greatest reward entailed knowing that he had a part in what he

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<sup>37</sup> Coach Johnson [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Coach Johnson [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> Mr. Dinkins [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

observed from his former students. According to Coach Johnson, coaches have a unique position which empowers them to “stand in the gap” between the church and community when it comes to meeting challenges that African American male youth face. He suggested that coaches can play an active role in youth Sunday at local churches along with family to encourage a dialogue so that one could become a true liaison rather than giving power to ungodly figures.

Coach Johnson suggested that clergy and officers would potentially become more effective by knowing the importance of meeting African American male youth where they are while realizing that some have heard of God while others have grown accustomed to “living a godless existence.”<sup>40</sup> He suggests that clergy and church officers need to do more listening than talking before trying to give them advice. “Some will be receptive, some have been so hurt that they need to be loved through their mistakes.”<sup>41</sup> Such youth require adults to avoid the temptation of easing up but to remain firm and supportive while attempting to identify their specific struggles and hear from them how their needs can be met rather than based on habits or assumptions. Such help does not have to be money.

Ms. Washington stated that what the given study’s subjects display is not an accurate depiction of who they are. She claims that “they are looking for something, they may not even know what they are looking for.”<sup>42</sup> From her experiences, she has learned that the subjects of the study “need to be shown that they matter. People need to be a little more patient.”<sup>43</sup> As one who grew up in the church and is currently a member but attends occasionally, she stressed that clergy and laity need to “get out of the church” and into the community. She acknowledged that the church does serve the community but mostly at arm’s length. She claims that the church does

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<sup>40</sup> Coach Johnson [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Larissa Washington [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

not adequately venture out. The lawyer's advice to clergy consists of refraining from fear of getting a door slammed in one's face, possibly being cursed out, or having one's religion denounced. Ms. Washington said that there is a parallel between the lack trust in law enforcement and the lack of trust of the church. People in the church tend to do "photo op" surface level help, persisting beyond Christmas. According to Ms. Washington, the subjects need someone to call besides 911. "Churches need to become the community. People no longer believe in anything especially the new generation."<sup>44</sup> She also said that lawyers are positioned to "take the role of the pastor and go over and above and beyond, to build up trust, help them keep up the faith, and be the hope giver, and uplifter. Trust has to be earned."<sup>45</sup>

Coach Johnson emphatically expressed that broken homes are often attributable to attributed to the idea that "parents simply 'being caught up.'"<sup>46</sup> By caught up, he explains as attributed to a host of reasons for families to break up or a parent removed from the home by what he called "the system." His final words of advice as an informing advocate were fourfold: "introduce the children to Jesus, pray for them, pray with them, and plant the seeds."<sup>47</sup> Coach Johnson closed the conversation by quoting the given verse: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."<sup>48</sup>

According to Mr. Dinkins, society has no substantive misunderstanding of African American boys. He stated that the unfavorable characteristics of their collective condition is strategic and by design. "The Black man is the lowest paid in terms of being the head of the household, and the most disrespected. He must work twice as hard to achieve what others have. We have to

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<sup>44</sup> Larissa Washington [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Coach Johnson [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Proverbs 22:6 (King James Version)



inject that truth into them, so they don't get surprised."<sup>49</sup> As a father and college graduate, Mr. Dinkins insisted that "graduating college, having the acquired knowledge and educational discipline instilled in the subjects of the given study are a key to them having the opportunity to live a decent life."<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, he does acknowledge that structural barriers function as part of the struggle for social and economic upward mobility. Such barriers partially explain why the subjects must work twice as hard.

Mr. Dinkins suggests that parents can play a part in filling a void from the gap between the church and community. He stated the following as essential: "rear your children in the church, provide structure, discipline, and sets limits. Build the child's emotional characteristics to handle life disciplines."<sup>51</sup> Also, "the church has to want to do it."<sup>52</sup> Children can perceive false pretense. "At the end of the day, strategic improvements can be made. Grown folks must find better ways to communicate with our children and communicate with each other. We have to do a better job as grown folks and stop lying to each other, hiding truth."<sup>53</sup>

According to Mr. McCoy, when it comes to African American boys, "society sees aggressive, angry, don't have any direction and count them off from the beginning."<sup>54</sup> The teacher does go above and beyond the call of duty for the subjects of the given study through activities outside of the classroom. He said that about once a month he exposes them to things they normally do not get, with the intent to broaden their horizons, and have them discover things they never thought they could do. "A critical lens suggests schools serve those in power to maintain the status quo and perpetuate a class system where people of color and the poor are educated to meet the needs

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<sup>49</sup> Mr. Dinkins [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> Mr. Dinkins [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Curtis McCoy [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

of society and those in power.”<sup>55</sup> Mr. McCoy’s willingness to exceed the expectations of being a teacher aims to provide the children with the necessary aspirational capital so that they can think critically, overcome challenges, and envision real possibilities for their lives besides supporting existing power structures.

Pedro Alejandro stated that he personally enjoys teaching the kids to be respectful to elderly and others around them and helping them know right from wrong. When kids do wrong he mentioned how he will have them notice what was wrong. In his description of a typical encounter with children in the neighborhood, he used the expression, “don’t be cussing yelling and fighting, come to me and discuss the issue without an attitude.”<sup>56</sup> Pedro also explained that youth in general need to be confronted, shown respect, and learn respect. The assertive approach of such confrontations must occur in a civil manner so that adult neighbors, the church, and young people can understand each other rather than concluding without prior knowledge. He describes that music, especially “today’s music” can become a means to find common ground and establish rapport. Pedro stressed that the Bible has verses that are good for not only teaching but for relating to the subjects of the given study. “The assertiveness of Jesus is often played-down in one-sided portrayals of him that highlights his meekness, gentleness, and pacifism.”<sup>57</sup> Pedro recommends that the church get in touch with the neighborhood. Having a one-on-one relationship with others sometimes falls short of the ideal because people can hide their real self. Pedro emphasized that adults can easily forget that young people are dealing with peer pressure, intimidation, and need direction. Furthermore, he advises that the church should get to know

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<sup>55</sup> Dana L. Bickmore, “I Need to Check with Corporate,” in *The Assault on Communities of Color: Exploring the Realities of Race-Based Violence*, ed. Kenneth Fasching-Vamer and Nicholas Daniel Hartlep (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 39.

<sup>56</sup> Pedro Alejandro [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>57</sup> John Neafsy, *Crucified People: The Suffering of the Tortured in Today’s World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014), 13.

people before they judge them. “God is love and not hate. Underneath our color we are all the same.”<sup>58</sup>

### **Introduction to the Control Group**

Conducting three interviews of congregation members functions as a control group with the intent of finding patterns and points of contrast between the church and the community.

Although some of the informing advocates have ties with their respective local church, their position with the subjects of the given study provides input regarding the challenges and potential triumphs of African American boys. The three members of the control group consist of women from three different age groups, with Ms. Guidry in her early fifties, Monica Brown in her early forties, and Ms. Jones in her seventies. The significance in knowing the approximate ages informs the given study by highlighting a variety of generational perspectives.

As a longtime member of Porter Chapel and its surrounding community, Elaine Guidry, a single mother of two adult sons, had recently moved away from the church’s vicinity for employment purposes. She describes her current mixed neighborhood as highly populated with racial minorities with no apparent race as numerically dominant. The socio-economics of her community at the time of the interview was described as mostly working class, with no middle-class residents or a visible presence of the extremely poor. She became a single mother through divorce while her sons were children. Both adult sons did spend a portion of their childhood without their father in the home, but their father was involved in their lives. Ms. Brown, a commuting member of Porter Chapel is currently a single mother of four children, three of whom are adults with the youngest two being males. She describes the most typical young African American males in her area of residence as “uneducated, who assume that everyone is against

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<sup>58</sup> Pedro Alejandro [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

them.”<sup>59</sup> She claims that if one “tries to give them knowledge they reject it. They don’t feel love. When one reaches out to them, they don’t understand it. They think all individuals are the same and think people owe them.”<sup>60</sup>

Emma Jones, a church officer, is one a few of the elderly women who plays a “matriarchal role” in the church. She describes the most typical young African American male in the community as finishing high school and obtaining employment at Walmart in one of the neighboring towns. According to Ms. Jones, there are model youth; however, she stated that “drugs are taking over the community and that’s not good but there are a few good ones out there.”<sup>61</sup>

According to Ms. Guidry, African American males perceive the church as no different than the streets. “They don’t need to get from the church what they get in the streets. They get beat up over the same thing.”<sup>62</sup> She clarified that they receive the same mistreatment from the streets as they receive in the church. The ideal sanctuary functions as more than a sacred space but also as a haven. According to Ms. Brown, African American male youth view the church as “hypocrites; they lie, they don’t help people, they stereotype them; and they talk down on others; and these boys don’t believe in God because of it.”<sup>63</sup>

Ms. Jones expressed difficulty in explaining how young black boys perceive the church. She stated her observation that there are only a few young black boys, but girls are present more. She stated that as adults one is to “let your light shine before men so they see the good works and glorify.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Elaine Guidry [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Monica Brown [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>61</sup> Emma Jones [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>62</sup> Elaine Guidry [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>63</sup> Monica Brown [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>64</sup> Matthew 5:16 (King James Version)

### The Control Group and Social Justice

From her vantage point, Ms. Guidry expressed that the challenge lies in keeping African American boys out of trouble and keeping them from joining gangs. In moments of disobedience, “they want to do their own thing.”<sup>65</sup> She expressed that keeping them in church, school, and keeping them from dropping out has been hard. Ms. Brown stressed that African American boys have faced rejection from the people of the community. Christians have found a way to taking advantage of their condition of rejection and to have a condescending attitude towards them. Ms. Brown suggested that the best approach towards young African American males is to “meet them where they are.”<sup>66</sup> Both Ms. Guidry and Ms. Brown have reared boys as single mothers. In the case of a single mother, she “must work even harder to neutralize the draw of the street, and she does so mainly by being strict and by instilling decent values in her children.”<sup>67</sup> According to Ms. Jones, drugs and all that it encompasses ranks as the greatest challenge that young African American males face in vicinity of the church. The adults can tell the boys about right and wrong, and the fact that drugs will hurt them and hope for the best.

Ms. Guidry has expressed being proud of her sons, they have both graduated high school, are currently employed, and not in trouble. “A lot of parents don’t see their kids do that.”<sup>68</sup> She alluded to the idea that other parents in her situation have sons that have died prematurely or in prison. Ms. Guidry expressed that single mom’s like her face the challenge of keeping their boys out of trouble, keeping them from joining gangs, keeping them in church, and school. She describes such challenges as much tougher than what the average person perceives. She stated that she was sustained by faith, belief, prayers, and “the will to do.”

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<sup>65</sup> Elaine Guidry [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>66</sup> Monica Brown [pseud], interview by author, 2018

<sup>67</sup> Anderson, *Code of the Street*, 42.

<sup>68</sup> Elaine Guidry [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

According to Ms. Brown, society has bought into the myth that all young African American males “are all bad seeds, they cannot be helped, and there is no hope for them, by the time they are thirteen they will be in prison because of something at home, and only one out of ten will be successful.”<sup>69</sup> Although Ms. Brown stressed that such beliefs do not reflect her views, yet African American males of all ages but especially the young must deal with the stigma. “Due to the dehumanizing effects of the bad seed stigma, young African American males have historically faced vulnerability to unwarranted gun violence.

The notion of nonviolence is certainly relevant in an increasingly coarse society that today is spiraling into violence to such a degree that carrying concealed weapons, including guns, has become acceptable in many parts of the country, as has the right to kill an unarmed person deemed ‘threatening’ in a manner or clothing.<sup>70</sup>

Ms. Jones stated that being misunderstood comes with being black. As a result, such misunderstandings can become life threatening. Ms. Guidry stated that such misunderstandings that society has of young African American boys can be overcome by listening to them to obtain a clear picture.

### **The Control Group and the Code of the Street**

Ms. Brown expressed that a significant number of African American youth lack having a father or father figure; and not having discipline. As a result, the subjects of the given study face a difficult time trusting people because they have been let down. She stressed that if they are unable to deal with why their father was not around, then their future will become disruptive.

According to Ms. Guidry, when the African American boys become adults they too will likely face the following three challenges: staying alive, having a job, and having an education. Ms. Jones did express that young African American boys have to overcome the challenges which

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<sup>69</sup> Monica Brown [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>70</sup> Charles E. Cobb, *This Nonviolent Stuff’ll Get You Killed. How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible* (New York: NY: Basic Books, 2014), 242.

accompany “being black,” the presence of drug dealers, and going to jail. There lies an element of going to jail that has become glorified as “a badge of honor” within the context of “street culture” because it functions as a form of reputation building within such settings.

### **The Control Group and Cultural Capital**

Ms. Guidry suggested that the church can play a role in closing the gap that exists between the subjects of the given study by getting to know them. She also said, “let them talk, let them share their story, hear them out before being judgmental and giving advice, pray with them, and pray for them.”<sup>71</sup> Ms. Guidry’s response to how the church member can “stand in the gap” between the church and community when it comes to challenges that African American male youth face is simply “love and understanding. I have no other way to put it. Love them and understand them.”<sup>72</sup>

For clergy and church officers to position themselves to serve the subjects of the given study, they can begin by “learning who they are dealing with, their background and how they could reach them; meet them where they are, not to crucify them because of dress.”<sup>73</sup> Ms. Brown suggested that the church could do a better job as “standing in the gap” between the church and the community when it comes to challenges that such youth face by having someone in the church that has gone through the same thing these youths currently experience, someone who has walked in their shoes. Porter Chapel does have at least one officer who is an ex-offender; however, the community has several others. In such cases “a person who experienced that level of demoralization and overcame it is better positioned to help someone else who has experienced

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<sup>71</sup> Elaine Guidry [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Monica Brown [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

it.”<sup>74</sup> They must have something to relate to.”<sup>75</sup> Ms. Jones suggested that the church needs to “have something for them to do and have something to offer them to get their minds off what is going on.”<sup>76</sup> Also, she said that the church can “pray more, be concerned, be who God called us to be, and do what God tells us to do.”<sup>77</sup>

Ms. Guidry stated that faith, beliefs, prayers, and “the will to do”<sup>78</sup> helped her persevere through the struggle of rearing two sons as a single parent. Furthermore, she stated that young men like her sons need to be trusted, listened to, and others need to “believe in them to get a clear picture of things and stop doubting them.”<sup>79</sup> Her closing words for both the church and the communities is that “they need to do better, there is a God, and anything is possible.”<sup>80</sup>

Ms. Brown expressed that there is a need to for African American boys to receive recognition for the good that they have done; they need to be shown that they are appreciated. “When people that are doing well receive recognition, they become more prone to do better in the future.”<sup>81</sup> The same principle applies to those in the church. The church has people who serve in capacities without recognition but must not be taken for granted. Ms. Brown closes with the concern that “we are losing our men because of what they see, the boys do not see enough men in church, men must stand up, they are supposed to be leaders. On Sundays, Dads stay at home watching the football game. That’s what is learned and understood as normal.”<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Gerald Bolling. “Commitment, Love, and Responsibility are Key,” in *Black Participatory Research: Power, Identity and the Struggle for Justice in Education*, ed. Elizabeth R. Drame and Decoteau Irby (Palgrave MacMillan: New York, NY, 2016), 93.

<sup>75</sup> Monica Brown [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Emma Jones [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Elaine Guidry [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Monica Brown [pseud], interview by author, 2018.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.



The informing advocates and the control group have provided consistent responses regarding the state of the relationship between the local neighborhood black church with small congregation sizes and its respective community. “The Black church, Black barbershop, and beauty salons have been catalytic institutions and safe spaces for navigating the day-to-day realities of Black life.”<sup>83</sup>

Although Coach Johnson and Ms. Washington have different occupations, they both have similar responses as attributing the overall lack of success of African American male youth as due to “a lack of persistent and consist effort”<sup>84</sup> in addressing their real challenges. Coach Johnson further notes that within the realm of education, the subjects of the given study must be taught how to learn and need a broadened vocabulary. One of the benefits of having a broad vocabulary is what Tarra Yosso refers to a “linguistic capital.” The attorney Ms. Washington reemphasized that she has several clients that nobody wants. She stated that when working with African American male youth, they must know that they are cared for, and they must feel that they are equal to everyone else especially when their environment communicates the contrary. The lawyer expressed her gratitude for the Sandra Bland Act. She expressed that the struggle becomes worthwhile when she sees people get the help they need.

### **Conclusion**

Due to the nature of the exploratory research, there was no hypothesis to support or refute. The findings do challenge prior assumptions that clergy and officers tend to make regarding young African American males in the church and community of not only Porter Chapel but its sister church and peer churches. Although the findings are far from conclusive, there lies

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<sup>83</sup> Deirdre Johnson-Burel, “Nothing about Us, Without Us (Nihil de Nobis, Sine Nobis),” in *Black Participatory Research: Power, Identity and the Struggle for Justice in Education*, ed. Elizabeth R. Drame and Decoteau Irby (Palgrave MacMillan: New York, NY, 2016), 49-50

<sup>84</sup> Coach Johnson [pseud], interview by author, 2017.

sufficient qualitative data available for predominately African American churches with small congregations to begin evaluating the effectiveness of their youth ministry beyond mere numbers, but rather the depth of the ministry's impact.

The given study lacks generalizability due to the specificity of the population of study. An additional shortcoming of the study lies in the idea that there were no children or adolescents included in the interviews although the given age group served as the subject of study. Therefore, further research in the given area could include more youth with parental and guardian consent as a means to provide a broader perspective of why there lies a gap between the church and the community. Interviewing children may provide a firsthand account of what distances youth from the church; however, children tend to lack an adult perspective in terms of understanding the role of social institutions, power, and hegemonic forces.

Future studies can include police officers as informing advocates because they function as members of the public who have been commissioned to serve within a context of scrutiny. The police officer faces the strain of having to establish authority while showing respect. Nevertheless, a police officer's job requires active engagement with the community on multiple levels. "When officers act in a criminal and abusive fashion, they harm the legitimacy of the entire profession."<sup>85</sup> The findings contribute to the discipline of practical theology in terms of suggesting the need for church leaders and academics to further address the study of perceptions from within and beyond the congregation.

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<sup>85</sup> Rahtz, *Race, Riots and the Police*, 161.

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