

CHAPTER 5
IMPORTANT FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS
AND CONCLUSIONS

Almost overwhelming obstacles face the potential AFAM CC missionary.

Sliding Into Soliloquy

There are screaming needs within the AFAM community. Discouragement exudes from those in the family who wish to see a college education utilized in more lucrative and prestigious employment. The candidate has never traveled more than a few hundred miles from home. Subtleties of racism remain as a disincentive to approach White evangelical missions. The extended family provides safety and security--why venture overseas to face risks and possible rejection?

"Cross-cultural missions is simply not in my pastor's vocabulary, and sure not in his sermons. It might be worse. Some of Pastor's friends don't even open the Bible, except to leave it. He's underpaid at Church, workin' another job, and doesn't want to see money leave the Black community, or even leave the church. I've never seen a missionary speaking at

church. They think missions is white-dressed ladies takin' food baskets. I've never even seen a missionary!"

"Nobody talks about missions on campus, even in religion class. It must be a White thing. They *talk* about it, but I don't see reps on campus, and never at church."

"Anyway, where would this Black Man get the money? The church is always takin' offerings--two or three every Sunday! But no missionaries in the budget. Pastor's new Beemer has nice gold wheels from his fifteenth Anniversary. Cost us thirty-five bucks each."

"Don't know any White churches. Not sure I'd be welcome if I went. Not even sure God really called me."

Survival Theory: Why So Few
AFAM CC Missionaries

Throughout chapter four the thesis that survival is the core AFAM cultural value has been elaborated in dialogue with the data. This research has taken nearly two and a half years, preliminary work beginning in 1988, only to be long-delayed. Not until February 1998 did a unifying theory emerge, as George Foster's method of triangulating for a cultural "fix," or core value, was pondered. At the risk of incurring anger, further reflection pushes this conclusion

further. Not only does survival appear to be the AFAM core value at present--it seems to be shifting toward security through accumulation and materialism--but the relative absence of AFAMs on the field does not now seem the result of benign neglect or lack of exposure to missions, although they are components and probably the entire reason in some instances.

The under-representation is so magnificent that it begs intention. AFAM missionaries appear to be people almost without status in the AFAM church. Support comes through close attachment to the local church. Families sometimes discourage it in favor of worldly prestige. Pastors are conspicuous for their near-absence in motivating into missions any of the survey population. All this appears intentional.

Almost every excuse for current non-involvement has vaporized. Particularly with roundtrip international airfares costing sometimes just a few hundred dollars, AFAM Christians can easily travel to the Caribbean or even to Mexico, if they would, to see developing-nation conditions. World wars and international conflicts have thrust Blacks around the world in uniform. They are no longer as parochial in travel. Even if they do not travel, TV brings the hurting world into the living room through nightly news.

As documented in chapter 2, AFAMs indeed have ample funds to support a major missions thrust of worldwide dimensions. Yes, Whites are legitimately to blame for much of historic under-representation. And repentance is appropriate. But we all have the same Great Commission. Blacks cannot point at Whites and say, "But, Lord, have you seen what they've done to us! Did you see their racism! Surely You can excuse me from the Commission!"

Educationally, AFAMs have ample college grads to meet any reasonable mission entrance requirements. And probably more missionary biographies and certainly videos exist in English at present than in any language at any point in history.

AFAM ethnocentricity has been documented in the research findings. Funds seem to be deliberately kept within the AFAM community, due to a survival mind set, and to a burgeoning materialism, fast on the heels of White materialism, and if cited studies are correct, sometimes in advance.

If so, for a Christian, this is sin and disobedience to the Great Commission of Christ, the remedy for which is

also repentance and a new walk. Indeed, a Brother missionary, James Anderson, urged:

Preach conviction to them, that is, until they are able to view slackness as sin. Missions as a mandate, even bona fide AFAM Christians will not respond.

If we are waiting for a special "Call," then this presents a dilemma. Once again, if virtually all those AFAMs whom God is calling are responding, then God is calling inexplicably few AFAMs into the harvest field. If He is calling vastly more, then vast numbers of AFAMs are disobedient to God's call, and the admonition to quietly listen and obey is timely.

Important Findings

Before proceeding with suggestions to recruiters, some of the findings of this research are here reviewed. A surprising finding is that although well over half of respondents has a pastor who preached in an expository fashion when they were called into missions, SQ 35 had no significant correlations with any other Likert-style question. Further, only eight of the 102 respondents were motivated into missions by their pastor, despite the pastor's local church prominence, and only four percent through their local church.

More motivating have been both short-term trips (for forty-two of the respondents) and someone encouraging them (a

missionary--twenty-six, and a discipler--twenty-four). Short-term trips are the best instrument at hand both for exposing AFAM pastors and others to the needs of the fields.

Another theme emerged, not numeric, but qualitative--the uniqueness, or desire to be unique, of individuals. This has implications for recruiting, and may be a fruitful area for further research. Perhaps this is another way of saying, "I will make it in this world, and with style."

AFAMs appear to prefer going to more Westernized countries, in line with the proposed theory. Again, more research would shed light here. A parochialism is also apparent from some responses, in connection with a desire not to move away from the family. As has been documented in some responses to SQ 6--factors that favor AFAM churches' financial support--a definite preference to supporting AFAMs is found. Indeed, a cluster of ethnocentric indicators has been identified in SQ 14, 16, 17, 34 and 38, and ethnocentrism appears to be significantly present in the AFAM community, as perceived by respondents.

A strong perception of AFAM materialism has also been indicated within the AFAM church.

AFAM missionaries are pioneers, counter-cultural, with a strong sense of being able to accomplish. They generally come from a secure family, and have achieved academically. Especially among those raising their own support, they are beach-hitting risk-takers who care far more what Christ thinks, than what their culture or even what their extended family may think. They are saluted.

Education and exposure to missions have constantly emerged as major perceived remedies for the problem of under-representation. This is seen in SQ 1, 11 and 12.

Another recurrent theme is White racism and its effects. This declines in importance with age, fortunately, but White missions will be obliged to give an account for AFAM representation, for instance, at higher administrative levels. A wholesale movement of racial reconciliation is demanded by the situation, as a basis for enduring mission cooperation, and even in Whites sending Blacks. However, danger exists on both sides: from Blacks that it be a forum to flagellate Whites without any desire for reconciliation and a perception that racism does not exist among AFAMs, and from Whites that no repentance is needed, and that they are not personally at fault. The example of the S.B.C. is brilliant.

The perception also emerges that AFAM missionaries prefer to go to Whites than to Blacks for funds. Whether this is congruent with Foster's "Image of the Limited Good," or a simple recognition of their reality cannot be determined. But far more respondents suggest Whites supporting Blacks than Blacks supporting Blacks.

Suggestions for Recruiters

In a word, a discipleship model of recruiting seems to best suit the need. AFAMs have asked for a personal relationship and a personal interest in them as they are recruited. Disciplers recruited many, in fact. Discipleship is requested by some even after they have arrived on the field. Unfortunately, this is time and resource-intensive, and does not lend itself to mass recruitment. If AFAMs are more security-conscious, then this can be creatively considered.

Recruitment is most effective when done by AFAMs and/or by CC teams or whatever nationality. AFAM missionary role models are rare. Discipling one AFAM may be the key to recruiting many others. A point of wisdom may be to give home assignment to senior AFAMs for the purpose of recruitment, which leads to the next point: recruitment where AFAMs are.

This includes AFAM churches, and schools at all levels, from Christian elementary schools through seminary. In fact, recruiters for Christian schools can be those who ultimately give the exposure to AFAMs which stimulates involvement. Recruiters who would go to AFAM churches would best develop credibility with a Black friend first, who can provide a reference. The message emerged, "Use you CC knowledge to work with us as a people group."

Larger missions, such as Campus Crusade for Christ, and SIM, could possibly put a lecture/video/interactive CC team on the road to target AFAM educational institutions and larger churches, as Ted Wright has suggested.

Recruiting literature with AFAM representation is more obvious. A criticism of AFAM independent missions is poor-quality media pieces, probably due to cost. Another criticism is that they sometimes do not provide security to the missionary. Security is something larger White missions have seemed to provide.

Further Research Suggestions and Needs

(1) Very useful would be carefully researched, highly readable, AFAM missionary biographies for both a youth and adult readership. (2) The volatile issue of interracial

marriage policies of mission organizations should be carefully and thoughtfully studied. (3) A number of missionaries suggested that personal factors were not adequately covered in this survey. The issue of the role of personal and extended family hindrances to AFAM mission involvement would be of great interest. The debt obstacle begs research apart from the AFAM context. What impact do personal factors have in the lack of AFAM CC missionaries? Such factors would include marriage, the impact of a child out-of-wedlock, children, parents, debt. Are these factors more important than for Whites, and if so, to what degree? (4) The proposed theory of survival as the current AFAM core worldview value could be further tested and elaborated. (5) Useful curricula for AFAM *missions* history teaching in local churches may already be in existence. If so, the wide impact has yet to be felt, but if not, this is critically needed. (6) The interest of AFAMs in reaching more-Westernized nations could be further understood. (7) Enough anecdotal evidence exists, even in literature-- "black" being a metaphor for evil--to strongly suspect an anti-Black bias held by other ethnic groups worldwide. Does substantial evidence for this exist? The heart of mankind is deceitful and full of sin (Jer. 17:9). (8) Since numbers are

so sketchy, a more accurate tally of the number of current AFAM CC missionaries would be useful. (9) AFAM pastors could be surveyed to determine their viewpoint as to the reasons for the under-representation of AFAM missionaries. Are they concerned that their own income will be reduced if their church supports CC missions? (10) Loritts suggests that a "Moses perspective" or paradigm may hold Blacks hostage to the past. The Black pastor needs to move beyond the paradigm of survival (Loritts 1998). (11) A model could be constructed for the recruitment of AFAM college students into CC missions, based upon the work of C.C.C. (12) Why does a "crab bucket" mentality seem to exist in the AFAM community, compared to ethnic groups which assist in the success of others of its members, such as among Orientals in America? (13) Why does "biblical exposition" not have more influence upon the issues raised in the survey, as seen in the absence of correlations among Likert-style questions? (14) Are AFAM mission boards in advance or lagging behind the missions interests of their constituencies? (15) Much research remains to be done in the area of impartially identifying a dominant AFAM worldview--one that is not simply a reflection of the agenda of the researchers. (16) Is a new support model needed for the AFAM

CC missionary? If so, what is it? (17) Can traditional Black churches be prevailed upon to support CC missions? If so, how? (18) How can materialism be successfully combated in the Church? (19) What are the economic and political applications of the principles articulately substantiated by conservative AFAM scholars such as Sowell and Williams? How can the Church use these principles in community development? (20) The impact of the Promise Keeper Movement upon racial reconciliation in America is of interest.

Perhaps a foundation could establish a fund to support short-term trips for pastors and one or two key lay leaders in the church for missions exposure. Recruitment of pastors for such trips may not be easy even then, but is still more likely.

Evangelical Blacks need to penetrate AFAM seminaries. AFAMs need to be recruited into Christian colleges and other Christian schools, as "feeders" into evangelical seminaries.

The need exists for AFAM and White churches to support not only their own ethnic group as missionaries, but other ethnic groups as well. Mission support should be color-blind. If this generation cannot do it, is the next, with increased breakdown of the AFAM family, likely to do better? The

independent AFAM church is a bright spot, as is increasing AFAM income, with biblical stewardship.

The Image of the Solution

What is the image of a more complete solution? Within the White community repentance for past sins of racism and its impact are foundational. We need to ask God to expose and incinerate racism and a sense of White supremacy. Impartiality toward all other ethnic groups should follow, by God's grace (Acts 10:34-35). Racism in America has created wounds that are gangrenous, and beg the reconciliation that the cross offers. Loritts has said, "A lot of Black folks feel 'You brought us here, and now you're mad at us,' and this is passed on from one generation to the next" (Loritts 1998).

Since the blood of Christ has purified those trusting Christ for salvation from "all sin" (1 John 1:7, NIV), how can we demand a second payment to us for sin--even racism, from either direction? Negatively, if we do not forgive, neither will God forgive us (Matthew 6:12, 14-15). God's clear provision is for fellowship among all Christians, through the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7). Fellowship, as distinguished from friendship, between the saved and the unsaved is not possible (2 Corinthians 6:14-17). The divisions between

"White" and "Black" churches show how difficult is that reconciliation even with supernatural grace. Genuine, lasting racial reconciliation--as distinguished from class identification across ethnic lines--is difficult to conceive apart from the foundation of Christ.

The defeat of racism needs to be evident especially among missionaries and their organizations. AFAM leadership representation, based not upon a quota or tokenism, but upon godly ability, should be apparent in White mission organizations. Racial intermarriage mission policies should be consistent with impartiality and equality before God. White missions need to aggressively recruit AFAMs, but even before this, AFAMs need to be recruited into Christian elementary and primary schools, high schools, and colleges. As much exposure as possible to Christian teaching and worldview is needed.

White churches need to be open, in fact, to membership and equal status for all minorities. The existence of Black and White churches and missions organizations is a tacit acknowledgement of our inability to work and live together in harmony, despite honest and acceptable cultural differences.

For Blacks, faith in God's provision is needed--oddly, since that is a constant AFAM church theme. Trust is needed that if money is given away to missions, that God will still care for the AFAM community, and that if a Black answers God's call to missions, God will sustain.

Blacks need also to forsake racism and ethnocentrism, forgiving Whites. AFAM Christians must treat Whites without racial partiality. AFAM churches need to obey God's Great Commission--period. AFAM pastors need exposure to foreign mission fields, and AFAM congregations need to properly compensate both pastor and missionary. AFAM churches particularly, but not exclusively, need to learn better biblical stewardship of treasure and talent.

The best solution for all the problems mentioned in this dissertation is a spiritual awakening to the claim of the Lordship of Jesus Christ among the unsaved, and revival to His Lordship among the saved. The East Africa Revival around 1930 demonstrated that racial reconciliation can accompany revival (Warren 1954, 108). God-given revivals typically include deep repentance and reconciliation between the estranged. Repentance should include any needed restitution and the pursuit of justice.

The Promise Keeper movement, which is a first-fruit manifestation of a contemporary American revival, in the author's opinion, also demonstrates how racial reconciliation can and will be a consequence to the touch of God's Spirit. The sixth promise of Promise Keepers is: "A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity" (Janssen 1994, 153).

Conclusion

Dissertations are not noted for the pleasure they bring their authors--pain is more the companion. So the author adds his stone to the quarry: this has been difficult research. A scarcity of recent studies on this topic contributes, but particularly racial antagonism, or the threat of being ethnically incorrect, emerges at virtually every step. But this has been a labor of love, and as you can sweat to build your home, you can exult in the work. This research has provided the joy of exploration and discovery, and only rarely have I tired of the quest. An esteemed teacher--Ted Ward--said in a lecture on research, "We serve the God of truth. If the truth hurts, it is the Hand of God" (Ward 1994, class notes). Truth has been the aim, here purveyed sometimes

in velvet and sometimes in sackcloth. The last portion of joy is the hope of more AFAM missionaries on the field due to an idea--a truth detonated--the Spirit of God having moved, for the sake of the Name.