A Survey of Black Churches' Responses to Domestic Violence

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A high level of church involvement among African Americans suggests the potential of the Black church in addressing domestic violence. However, very little research has examined this topic. The current study is an exploratory study of how aware African American churches are of victims in their congregation and how they respond to them. The survey was conducted with a convenience sample (N=112) of church pastors and lay leaders, ¾ of whom were senior or associate/assistant pastors, from nine cities and various denominations. The results showed that these churches may underestimate the number of members who are victims, infrequently address domestic violence from the pulpit, and sometimes provided interventions that are potentially harmful, i.e. couples' counseling and/or lack of safety risk assessment. Respondents thought that their church's response to domestic violence could be improved with more training for clergy and more knowledge of domestic violence resources. This paper provides recommendations for Christian social workers working with Black churches around issues of domestic violence.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IS A SERIOUS PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM IN THIS country, and particularly so among African Americans. In a national survey, 45% of Black women and 40% of Black men reported that they had been raped, stalked or beaten by an intimate during their lifetime, compared to 37% of white women and 30% of white men (Smith, et al. 2017). In the 12 months prior to the survey, over a million Black women and Black men had been victims of domestic violence. Homicide is a leading cause of death for Black women and Black men under the age of 44 and over half of female victims of homicide are killed by an intimate partner (Petrosky, Blair, Betz, Fowler, Jack, & Lyons, 2017).

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In addition to the possibility of serious injury or death, domestic violence can have many other serious consequences for its victims (World Health Organization [WHO], 2017; Center for Disease Control [CDC], 2008, 2018; Dillon, Hussain, Loxton, & Rahman, 2013). In comparison to those who have not been abused, victims of domestic violence are more likely to report physical disorders and ailments such as gastrointestinal disorders, bladder and kidney infections, chronic pain syndromes, heart disease and high blood pressure, and poor general health (CDC; WHO; Dillon et al.); mental health issues including anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (WHO; CDC; Dillon et al; Ellsberg, Jansen, Heeise, Watts, & Garcia-Moreno, 2008); reproductive disorders and pregnancy trauma (Leone, Lane, Koumans, DeMott, Wojtowycz, Jensen, & Aubry, 2010); homelessness and high risk behaviors such as substance abuse and unprotected sex (CDC). And while men are victims of partner violence, much of the attention is directed towards women as they are more often the target and more likely to suffer serious injuries from the abuse. Women are twice as likely as men to experience severe physical violence from an intimate (Smith, Chen, Basile, Gilbert, Merrick, Patel, Walling et al., 2017) and twice as likely to be killed (Catalano, Smith, Snyder & Rand, 2009) When domestic violence does occur, women are three times more likely to report that it adversely impacted them (Black et al., 2011).

The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC; www.dvinstitute.org) has, for many years, attempted to address the issue of domestic violence in the Black community in a number of ways, including faith-based initiatives. For example, IDVAAC has published a monograph on the intersectionality of religion and domestic violence in the African American community (Gillum, 2009), developed and disseminated a video series on "Speaking of Faith: Domestic Violence Programs and the African American Church" (Williams, 2012), and organized a number of community forums around the country in which faith leaders held discussions on religion and domestic violence. This faith-based work has included both Christians and Muslims. The current study, conducted by IDVAAC and the African American Domestic Peace Project (www.AADPP), a grass roots organization developed by IDVAAC, is a continuation of this work of providing technical assistance to faith-based groups working to end domestic violence in the Black community, and the awareness that in order to do this, we need a better understanding of how domestic violence is perceived and reacted to in these congregations.

Religion and Domestic Violence among African-Americans

Despite a decline in religious affiliation in recent years, America remains a relatively religious nation (Fahmy, 2018), and African Americans are one of

its most devout ethnic/racial groups. In the Pew Center's most recent Religious Landscape Study (Pew Research Center, 2015), more than eight in 10 African Americans were affiliated with a religion. Forty-seven percent (47%) reported that they attend church once a week or more, and almost three-quarters (73%) report praying daily – more than Whites or Hispanics (Masci, 2018). Black women are particularly devout with 83% scoring highly religious on a measure that combined frequency of prayer and church attendance, belief in God and importance of religion (Cox & Diamant, 2018). And while church attendance may reduce domestic violence, it does not eliminate it. In a national sample, frequency of church attendance was inversely related to domestic violence victimization and perpetration, significantly reducing strong racial differences in perpetration for men but not victimization for women. i.e. even among those attending services several times a week, Black women were significantly more likely than white women to report abuse (Ellison, Trinitapoli, Anderson & Johnson, 2007).

Given the level of religious involvement among African-Americans, it is not surprising that Black people, women in particular, often use religion and faith as a coping mechanism for many personal problems (Broman, 1996; Mays, Howard, & Jackson, 1996; Chatters, Taylor, Jackson, & Lincoln, 2008; Nguyen, 2018), including intimate partner violence (El-Khoury, et al., 2004; Watlington & Murphy, 2006; St. Vil,, Sabri, Nwokolo, Alexander, & Campbell, 2017; Gillum, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2006; Gillum, 2009). Studies have found that about 90% of Black battered women use prayer as a coping response to domestic violence (El-Khoury et al. 2004; Gillum, et al., 2006) the same as those in a national sample of African Americans using prayer and faith for general personal problems and distress (Chatters, Nguyen, Taylor, & Hope, 2018). Somewhat fewer women turn to their clergy: it is estimated that one fourth to one third of battered women seek assistance from a church leader (Hamby, 2014).

While the importance of prayer and spirituality seems to be readily acknowledged, particularly for battered women of color who are devout, discussions of the impact of ministerial teachings and counsel is considerably more mixed. In the late 70's and early 80's, few faith communities were trained about domestic violence (Bent-Goodley, St. Vil., & Hubbbert, 2012). Some ministers had fairly negative views of battered women's programs, often viewing them as being anti-male and the cause of marital break-ups (Williams, 2012; Williams, Ellis-Davis, Thicklin, & Combs, 2011). It was not unusual for faith leaders to encourage women to stay in abusive relationships, to "submit to their husbands," and to provide biblical misinterpretations that seem to justify wife abuse (Clark, 2015; Williams, 2012). Although many battered women still sought support from their faith communities, battered women's programs began to lose trust in faith houses, leaders, and traditions as a resource (Nason-Clark, Fisher-Townsend, Holtzman, & McMullin, 2018).

Over time these victim-blaming positions not only distanced the domestic violence field from faith communities as a trusted ally but often from many battered women as well, creating a crisis in faith (Williams et al, 2011). Thus, while many battered women find pastoral help to be useful (Hamby, 2014), others have reservations about seeking help from their faith leaders. A study of victims in the D.C. area in which Black women were significantly more likely than white victims to use prayer but less likely to consult with a minister (El-Khoury et al., 2004) suggest that this may be a particular issue for African Americans.

Several qualitative studies of African American victims found that these women were not satisfied with their pastors' reactions which included victim blaming (Gillum, 2008) and general unhelpfulness (Potter, 2007). In a study of 13 focus groups of Black Christians in eastern Michigan on issues that they would and would not bring to their minister's attention, parishioners reported that they were reluctant to discuss domestic violence because of shame, fears around confidentiality, and some concerns about the minister's actual ability to help (Mattis et al.,2007). A focus group with Black parishioners and church leaders in the D.C. area in which one-third of the respondents had experienced intimate partner violence, Bent-Goodley (2006) found very similar concerns of shame and fear that others in the church would learn of their abuse.

Studies of Black clergy have found that they believe that the church should be involved in intervention and prevention (Bent-Goodley, 2006; Brade & Bent-Goodley, 2009), but are concerned about their preparedness. A survey of 144 seminarians, the majority of whom were female, found that while two-thirds knew someone in their congregation who had experienced domestic violence, even more thought that church leaders were not prepared to help victims and that they lacked sufficient training (Brade & Bent-Goodley, 2009). Other writings on the role of the Black church raise similar issues about ministers' training, ability and willingness to effectively help in abuse situations (Bent-Goodley, St. Vil, & Hubbert, 2012; Gillum, 2009; Shannon-Levy & Dull, 2005) and to collaborate with outside agencies that may be of help (Dyer, 2017). The church's inability to provide helpful responses to victims may increase risk: when women go to their houses of worship for support in addressing domestic violence and get a lukewarm response, the delay in getting meaningful help may result in higher rates of serious injury or death (Clark, 2015).

The Black church has historically played a pivotal role in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the Black community (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Given its resources, activist history, ability to touch large numbers of individuals and credibility for many people, there is tremendous potential within the Black church to address domestic violence at the individual and community levels, for prevention and intervention. While writings on the

topic have raised concerns about the preparedness of the church to address domestic violence, the area is primarily characterized by a dearth of empirical data on the topic, particularly from the church's/minister's perspective. However, given the influence and power of ministers in the hierarchy of the Black church (Taylor, Ellison Chatters, Levin & Lincoln, 2000), it is essential that we have a better understanding of how partner abuse is being addressed in these faith spaces, and receive ministers' and church leaders' input into how those responses can be enhanced.

The current survey examined ministers' perceptions of the work that they and their churches, who serve predominantly African American congregations, do regarding intimate partner violence. Specifically, we examined these ministers and church estimates of the number of parishioners who have been victims of domestic violence, how they address the broader issues of domestic violence and, more specifically, how they respond to individual victims and perpetrators. We are also examining their satisfaction with their church's responses, how they think these responses can be improved, and their relationship with their local DV providers. The study was part of a needs assessment in six areas around the country participating in the African-American Domestic Peace Project (AADPP; www.AADPP.org). The AADPP was established as a project of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (www.dvinstitute.org & idvaac.org) to reduce violence and enhance peace in African American communities.

Method

Sample Characteristics

Respondents were from churches that had agreed for the pastor, or his or her designee, to participate in the study. There was one respondent per church. Characteristics of the churches and respondents, N=112, are shown in Table 1.

Three-quarters of the respondents were either senior pastors or associate/assistant pastors. The remaining held various leadership positions in the church, e.g. directors, lay ministry leaders, and directors. The respondents tended to be male, over the age of 50, and highly educated with almost half having done postgraduate study. Senior pastors were more likely to be male; those in the "other" category (49%) were more likely to be female.

The churches were located in six geographical areas with an active AADPP committee. Half of the respondents were from the Boston or the West Palm Beach area. The majority of the churches (82%) were from one of three Christian denominations: Baptist, Christian Non-denominational, and Pentecostal or Church of God in Christ (COGIC). An additional 10% were United Methodist. The churches were small to medium size with only about one in 10 having more than 500 congregants. Over one-third had fewer

than 100 members. A small number of the churches (7%) were described as multicultural, with congregations that included African American and/or Caribbean Blacks. Twelve of the churches were located in rural areas.

Procedure

The survey was conducted with a convenience sample in which questionnaires were completed via email or were handed out and returned at events where ministers were present. Members of the AADVPP gathered contact information and names of churches in their area that they believed were predominantly African American. However, some of the churches did not have a phone number or email address. Using their names, we attempted to locate contact information for each church. Eventually, 257 churches were emailed and 427 were called. We received 22 responses for an initial response rate of 3% (22/684).

The project determined that either the phone numbers or email addresses that were obtained were not effective (perhaps because they were a general line or address instead of to a particular person), or these modes of data collection were not effective with this population. Ultimately, we determined that in-person surveys would be more effective. Thus, representatives from AADPP handed out the surveys at events where ministers were present (e.g. prayer breakfasts, ministerial association meetings) and 96 surveys were returned. Six of the initial respondents were removed because they indicated in the questionnaire that their congregation was not predominantly African American or Black multicultural (4), or they did not provide identifying information (2). Thus, a total of 112 questionnaires were used for the analysis. returned. The study was approved by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Measures

The questionnaire consisted of 32 items. With exceptions where noted, the questions were developed by the researchers. Prevalence of abuse in the congregation was measured by asking respondents to give their estimate of the percentage of members who had been victims of domestic violence. There were separate questions for male and female victims and for domestic violence and sexual assault. For each question the response options were as follows: 5% or few, 6-10%, 11-20%, 21-30 %, 31-50%, 50%+, and "Don't Know." Respondents were asked how often "one of the pastors" was asked for help or guidance with a domestic violence case with the options of "several times a month," "about once a month," "several times a year," "about once a year," "rarely," "never," "don't know." A question on frequency with which a minister preached a sermon on domestic violence used the same response categories. These questions were adapted from the national survey of Protestant pastors (IMA World Health, 2014).

Respondents were asked about their church's activities related to domestic violence in general, and about their specific response to individual victims of violence. A number of closed-ended questions asked about the types of services or programs the church provided for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, including youth. Services that may have been offered included a shelter for abused or homeless women, a domestic violence ministry, a counseling programs for victims or perpetrators, a domestic violence crisis hotline, or a batterer intervention program. Raising awareness approaches included talking about domestic violence in Adult Education, Sunday school or youth education groups, and providing domestic violence training for parishioners and lay ministers. Those topics are listed in Table 2.

A major question on the questionnaire asked what kinds of services were offered in/by the church to actual victims of domestic violence once they had been identified. Those choices are shown in Table 3 and include pastoral counseling, referrals, safety planning and assistance leaving the abuser.

Six questions asked specifically about pastors'/parishioners' familiarity with, use of, and collaboration with domestic violence services, including batterer programs, in their area. Questions on familiarity with domestic violence services had response options of "Very Familiar," "Familiar," "Somewhat Familiar," to "Not Familiar at All." Frequency with which they worked with local domestic violence programs, for victims and perpetrators, ranged from "Several Times a Month," "About Once a Month," "Several Times a Year," "About Once a Year," to "Rarely/Never" and "Don't Know."

A question on the respondents' satisfaction with their church's response to domestic violence (respondents answering on a six-point scale ranging from "Very Satisfied" to "Very Dissatisfied") was followed by a multiple-choice question ("circle all that apply") asking what they thought the church needed in order to be more effective. Those options are shown in Table 4. In addition, participants were asked to respond to an open-ended question which asked what they would like to see their church do differently in addressing DV.

Several questions asked opinions of domestic violence intervention programs: "programs break up families," "programs create safety for victims," "batterer programs help batters learn new ways to behave non-abusively." Responses were on a five-point scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

Findings

Church Members as Victims

Respondents did not report being aware of large numbers of victims among their congregants. Forty-four percent of the churches estimated that 10% or fewer of their female church members had been victims of domestic violence. An additional 20% were not able to give an estimate. Over one-third

(35%) estimated that 10% or fewer had been sexually assaulted, with one-third indicating that they did not know. In response to a similar question regarding victimization of men in their church, over 50% said that 10% or fewer of them were victims of domestic violence, and 42% did not know how many might have been victims.

Another possible indicator of domestic violence among parishioners is how often a pastor is asked for guidance in a domestic violence situation. Respondents believed that this did not happen often – over half said from once a year (7%) to rarely (30%) or never (17%). About one in five (22%) thought assistance was requested several times a year or more. (Respondents who were senior pastors were slightly more likely to recall a minister having been asked for help at least several times a year [26.6%]).

Church's Response to Domestic Violence

Sermons on domestic violence. Respondents' reports on how often a pastor or minister spoke to the church in sermons about domestic violence were somewhat mixed. Over one-third (36%) said that the pastor addressed the topic at least several times a year, but half (49%) said that it occurred rarely or never. Senior pastors recalled it happening more frequently with almost half (48%) reporting that it happened at least several times a year.

Education and services. Church activities aimed at domestic violence, specifically education or direct services, are shown in Table 2. Almost one-third report that the church talks about domestic violence in adult and youth education groups and almost one in five churches are training lay ministers to address domestic violence. Not surprisingly, few reported attempts at direct services. i.e. shelter, counseling, or a ministry for domestic violence victims.

Helping victims and perpetrators. The frequency with which specific actions were taken by someone in the church once an act of domestic violence had been identified is shown in Table 3. In terms of the most frequently provided services, participants were most likely to report that the pastor counseled the victim, followed by couples counseling, then abuser counseling. About one in five said that the pastor did a "safety risk assessment" but only occasionally is the abuser asked to attend another church. About half of the respondents indicate that they may assist the victim in leaving the abuser either "often" or "sometimes." Slightly over one-third report that the victim is frequently referred to an agency.

Satisfaction with Church's Response to Domestic Violence

Most of the respondents were not satisfied with their church's response to domestic violence. Fifty-eight percent were dissatisfied compared to 42% of respondents who were at least somewhat satisfied. Only two percent were very satisfied with their church's response.

Resources Needed to Help Victims and Perpetrators

Survey participants were asked about additional resources needed in order for their church to do a better job in responding to domestic violence. As shown in Table 4, respondents were most likely to report that clergy need more training in how to help victims and batterers. They also wanted more places to which they could victims and batterers. Responses to an open-ended question on what they would like for their church to do differently regarding domestic violence, answered by 60% of the participants, mirrored these responses on training and referrals, particularly the need to know local resources. In addition, participants thought churches should work to increase domestic violence awareness by providing more education and information on the topic for ministers, congregants, and the community.

Knowledge of and Work with Local Domestic Violence Programs

Respondents were generally unfamiliar with their local domestic violence programs and were not likely to work with them. Four in 10 (40%) of the respondents thought they personally were familiar to very familiar with domestic violence services in their area. They thought that fewer of their church members (24%) were familiar to very familiar with those services. Sixty percent indicate that they rarely or never work with local shelters or domestic violence programs and 70% rarely or never work with batterer programs. About one in five churches reported working with shelters or domestic violence programs at least several times a year.

Attitudes toward Domestic Violence Programs

In general, the respondents held positive views of the treatment programs, but there is notable dissent. Seven in ten (71.3%) believed that domestic violence programs create safety for victims, but more than one-fourth (28.1%) were not sure if such programs made victims safer. Similarly, 64.8% thought that the programs taught batterers to behave non-abusively but 34% of the sample either disagreed or were not sure. Four in ten (41.5%) either believed or were not sure if domestic violence programs contributed to the breakup of families. Thus, while the majority of the respondents thought domestic violence programs were effective, a relatively large number were not so sure. These answers may reflect respondents' lack of knowledge about the programs, particularly the relatively large percentage of neither agree nor disagree,' or the questions tapped into genuine doubts about the efficacy of these types of programs.

Discussion

In general, ministers did not believe that very many of their parishioners had been victims of domestic violence nor sexual assault. Not surprisingly, given their relatively low estimates of prevalence, ministers were not likely to report that they were approached for guidance in domestic violence matters. Perhaps as a reflection of their perceived lack of need among their parishioners, the majority of the churches do not respond proactively to the potential for domestic violence among their congregants. The majority rarely or never address domestic violence in sermons, and over two-thirds do not talk about it in adult and youth education groups; even fewer attempt to train lay ministers in this area or to provide direct services (shelter, domestic violence ministry, crisis line etc.).

However, ministers frequently provide counseling when domestic violence is brought to their attention with the majority counseling the victim, counseling the couple, and/or counseling the perpetrator; over half provide referrals. While only four in 10 indicated that they did a safety assessment, half of the ministers indicated they often or sometimes helped victims leave the abuser.

Consistent with other research (Brade & Bent-Goodley, 2009), church leaders seem to recognize their inadequacy in addressing domestic violence. Respondents were more likely to be dissatisfied than satisfied with their church's responses to partner abuse. The majority of respondents said their churches would benefit from pastors having more training in how to help victims and perpetrators. Such training is particularly important given that counseling by the pastor is the most frequently reported response once abuse has been identified. Their tendency to conduct couples counseling and *not to routinely provide safety risk assessments points to the need for such training.*

Respondents indicated that they were moderately familiar with local domestic violence programs but rarely worked with those programs, possibly because they do not have many members that they believe are in need of those services. However, they appear to value such programs. Respondents indicated that there was a need for more such programs to which they could refer victims and perpetrators, and in general, had positive attitudes toward batterer intervention and domestic violence programs. However, the findings that 30-40% were neutral about the programs or did not think they were helpful points to a clear need for community outreach on the part of domestic violence programs.While these data indicate that for these Black churches there is only a modest amount of activity directed at intimate partner violence, their involvement is comparable to that of majority churches. As did ministers in our survey, those in a national survey (N=1,000) of mainline and evangelical Protestant churches (IMA World

Health, 2014) appear to underestimate the abuse of their members, reported infrequently delivering sermons on domestic violence, and sometimes provided interventions that are potentially harmful. In both this study and the IMA study, two-thirds of the respondents either didn't know or thought less than 10% of their members had been victimized. Three-fourths of the ministers in the IMA study estimated that they addressed domestic violence or sexual assault about once a year or less, as did 69% of those in the current study. When they did deliver help, two-thirds or more of each group used couples counseling, a practice that is often discouraged (Faith Trust Institute, n.d.).

These ministers' estimates of members' involvement in abusive relationships are less than what one would expect based on national studies (Smith et al., 2017; Catalano et al., 2009) or smaller studies of estimates of abuse among churchgoers (Bent-Goodley, 2006; Brade et al., 2009). The low estimates of parishioners' abuse by the ministers in this study suggests that victims may not be bringing these issues to the attention of their pastor. That the majority of pastors report that they are rarely or never asked for guidance in this area certainly suggests that this is not an issue that would be particularly salient to them. Under these circumstances, perhaps it is not surprising that most of the churches do not provide services for victims of domestic violence.

Recommendations for Christian Social Workers

The results from this small study suggest several ways that Christian social workers, particularly African-Americans or those work in the Black community, can serve faith communities that want to help men and women who are involved in domestic violence. The primary recommendation from this survey is that clergy need, and want, to be better trained in identifying and helping victims and perpetrators of domestic violence who may be in their congregations. Establishing relationships with local shelters and programs for victims and perpetrators is an important part of that work, as is having a church culture that does not tolerate intimate partner abuse.

Christian social workers' professional backgrounds in helping and their knowledge of and sensitivity to church processes and culture uniquely equips them to help churches and their members address issues of domestic violence. In general, they can help churches become more open and supportive of victims, perhaps making it easier for women and men to ask for help from their pastors and fellow church members. Social workers can provide direct services to church members through domestic violence ministries and church- supported services for victims and perpetrators (shelters, counseling). They can also design and participate in church-sponsored adult education classes on healthy families that include

domestic violence issues. Social workers can help design and implement comprehensive church-based programs on intimate partner violence that interface with agencies and institutions external to the church but which are critical to providing domestic violence services, e.g. batterer intervention programs, shelters and counseling programs, courts and police, and mental health agencies. Perhaps most importantly, according to this data, they can develop and conduct trainings for ministers and church lay-leaders on various aspects of domestic violence, including how to appropriately respond to victims and perpetrators and how to address partner abuse from the pulpit.

Limitations to this study

There are several limitations to the current study. The most pressing concerns are response rate and non-representativeness of the sample. Despite extensive recruitment efforts (see "Method"), we received relatively few responses. The bulk of responses were obtained by handing out questionnaires at events attended by ministers. Thus, the respondents are clearly a convenience sample of willing participants. There is much interest in involving the Black church in addressing social issues, given the importance of religion and level of church attendance among African Americans. However, as we move forward with researching issues in order to be more informed about how the Black church functions in these areas, and eventually developing evidence-based practices that involve the church, we must address this issue of how to effectively recruit Black clergy into research studies.

Given the low response rate, those willing to participate may have been those with a special interest in domestic violence issues and who may have, in general, been more attuned to and supportive of domestic violence issues. Thus, there may be even less interest in these issues in the broader ecclesiastical community, and among those who chose not to participate in the survey. Other limitations include the possibility of a social desirability bias in the sample and the fact that the responses were self-report without external corroboration. However, a social desirability effect is not readily apparent as the participants' responses are fairly conservative.Despite these shortcomings, the responses in this study are consistent with those in a much larger national sample of mainline and evangelical protestant ministers (IMA World Health, 2014), which provides some corroboration of our findings.

Conclusions

Researchers have examined Black women's use of religion as a coping mechanism for many life crises, including domestic violence. However, very

little empirical research has addressed pastors' and churches' responses to these victims, the effectiveness of interventions attempted in these settings, or ways in which these responses can be enhanced. The current study is an exploratory descriptive study of how churches view domestic violence victims and how they respond to them. Future research should explore some of those factors that are related to churches' responses particularly those that operate as impediments or barriers to addressing DV.

It is encouraging that over the past fifteen or more years an increasing number of faith leaders have included domestic violence among their expanding ministries (Williams, 2012). However, the evidence suggests that there is still much work to be done in this area. Churches have historically been agents of change and refuge in the Black community. With training, we believe that they can be in the forefront of effectively addressing domestic violence among African Americans.. ❖

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Table 1. Sample Characteristics

	n	%
CHURCHES		
Metropolitan Area (N=112)		
Boston, MA	28	25.0%
West Palm Beach, FL	28	25.0%
Tacoma, WA	18	16.1%
Oakland, CA	17	15.0%
Greenville, MS	12	10.7
Detroit, MI	9	8.0
Church Denomination (N=107)		
Baptist	33	30.8%
Christian Non-denominational	26	23.2%
Pentecostal/Apostolic/COGIC	31	27.6%
United Methodist	10	8.9%
Other	11	9.8%
Size of Congregation (N=108)		
<100	38	35.2%
100-250	36	33.3%
251-500	24	22.2%
500+	10	10.2%
RESPONDENTS		
Age (N=106)		
<50	34	32.1%
51 – 64	54	50.9%
65+	18	17.0%
Gender (N=107)		
Male	59	550%
Female	48	44.9%
Position in Church (N=107)		
Senior Pastor	57	53.8%
Associate/Assistant Pastor	22	20.8%
Other	23	25,5%
Highest Schooling (N=107)		
High school graduate, some college/training	29	27.1%
College graduate	26	24.3%
Post graduate study	52	48.5%

Table 2. Church Activities Directed at Domestic Violence

Activity (N=109)	n	%
Talk about domestic violence in adult education	33	29.5%
Talk about domestic violence in youth education	35	31.3%
Talk about domestic violence in Sunday School	21	18.8%
Train lay ministers to address domestic violence	20	17.9%
Counseling program for domestic victims	15	13.4%
Counseling for batterers	15	13.4%
Ministry for domestic violence	7	6.3%
Domestic violence crisis hotline	5	4.5%
Shelter for female victims and homeless women	2	1.8%
Batterer Intervention Program	2	1.8%

Table 3. Responses to Identified Domestic Violence Victims and Perpetrators

Response	How Often		
	Always/Often	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
A minister counsels victim (N=80)	32 (40.0%)	22 (27.5)	26 (32.5%)
A minister does couples counseling (N=81)	30 (37.0%)	25 (30.9%)	25 (32.1%)
Victim referred to an agency (N=71)	24 (33.8%)	15 (21.1%)	32 (45.1%)
A minister counsels abuser (N=77)	23 (29.9%)	20 (26.6%)	34 (44.2%)
A minister does safety risk assessment for victim (N=69)	15 (21.7%)	12 (17.4%)	42 (60.9%)
Abuser referred to batterer program (N=50)	13 (21.3%)	19 (31.3%)	29 (47.5%)
Victim helped to leave abuser (N=67)	11 (19.4%)	21 (31.3%)	33 (49.3%)
Others counsel victim (N=75)	14 (18.7%)	21 (28.0%)	40 (53.3)
Others counsel abuser (N=71)	8 (11.3%)	23 (32.4%)	40 (56.3%)
Abuser asked to attend other church until issue is resolved (N=62)	7 (11.3%)	11 (17.7%)	44 (71.3%)

Table 4. What Does Your Church Need in Order to Be Able to Respond Better to Domestic Violence? (N=112)

Respondents' perception of church's need in order to respond better to domestic violence:	n	%
More training for clergy in how to help victims	92	82.0%
More training for clergy in how to help batterers	83	74.1%
More counseling agencies for referrals	75	67.0%
More shelters for referrals	68	60.7%
More batterer programs	69	61.6%

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