

# Spiritual Praxis: Building and Sustaining Community©

By Pamela Ngunjiri, MSW, MTS  
As presented at the Healing Black Men Conference,  
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# Why do this?

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wu7j6S7BhFM&feature=related>
  - It is a calling

# Why do this?

- We need Black men to be active participants in our lives and in our communities
- We need their: intellect, humor, wisdom, strength, perseverance, fathering, dreams, inventions, direction, relationships, touch, tears, pain and sorrows

# Why Spirituality?

## This is how I see Spirituality

“Dear Child of God, I write these words because we all experience sadness, we all come at times to despair, and we all lose hope that the suffering in our lives and in the world will ever end. I want to share with you my faith and my understanding that this suffering can be transformed and redeemed. There is no such thing as a totally hopeless case. Our God is an expert at dealing with chaos, with brokenness, with all the worst that we can imagine. God created order out of disorder, cosmos out of chaos, and God can do so always, can do so now--in our personal lives and in our lives as nations, globally. ... Indeed, God is transforming the world now--through us--because God loves us.”

— Desmond Tutu, *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time*

Spirituality compels, builds and sustains

# What are the roles of community and community members in the lives of African American Men?

- “We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, not educated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all. We all belong to this family, this human family, God's family.”  
-- Desmond Tutu

# Roles cont'd.

Stated a different way –

- To build
- To sustain what has been built

# How do we know this?

- This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. – I John 3:16

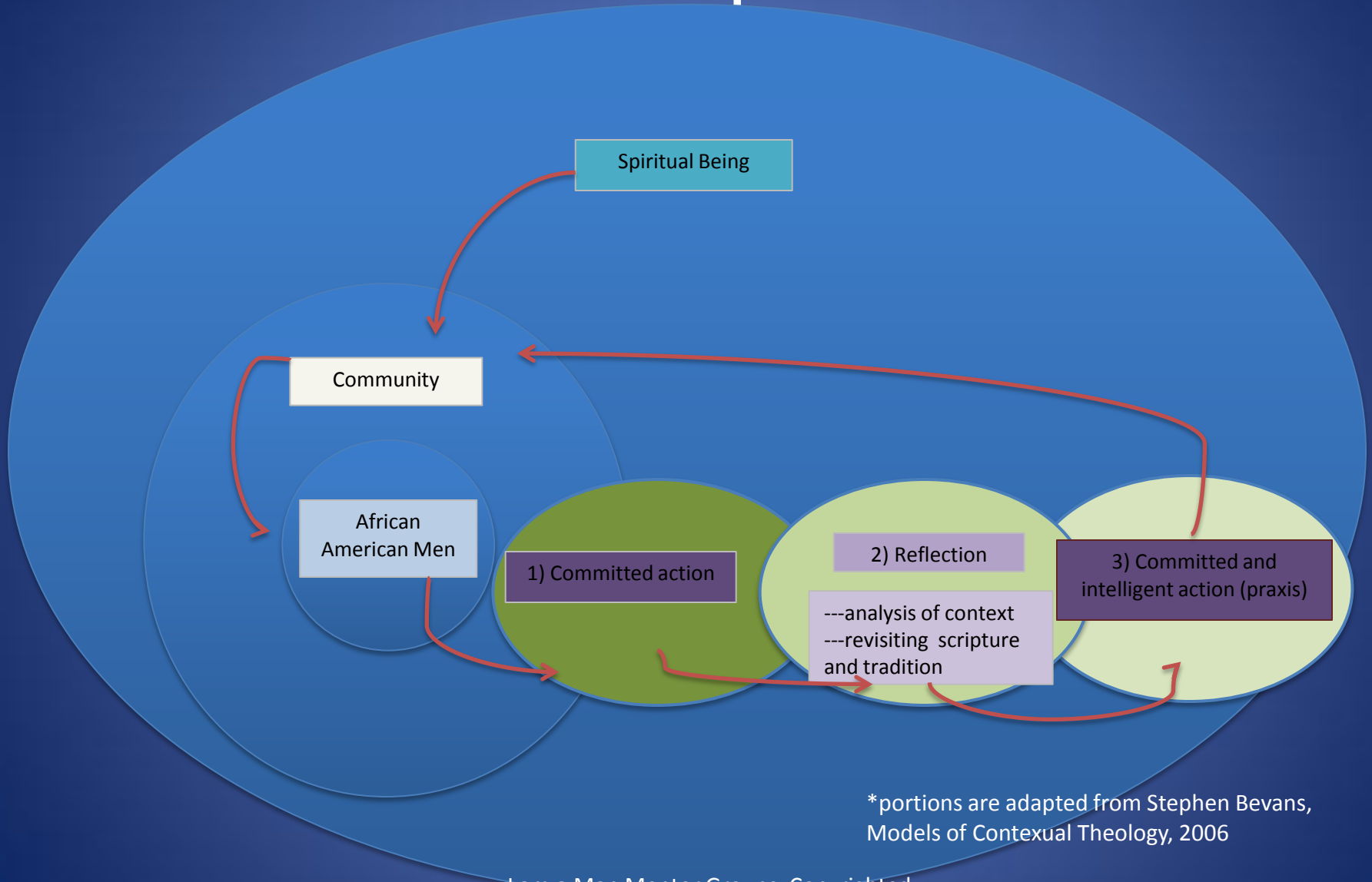
# What is Spiritual Praxis?

Spiritual Praxis - Compelled, committed and intelligent action. The source of the compelling is from a higher power. The intelligent action is defined as reflection which includes analysis of context and revisiting both religious texts and social traditions.\*

\*Based on Bevans, 2006 Praxis Model



# The Process of Spiritual Praxis\*



\*portions are adapted from Stephen Bevans, Models of Contextual Theology, 2006

# Why Spiritual Praxis?

This is why I chose Spiritual Praxis:

Psalm 121:1-2, A Pilgrim Song:

I look up to the mountains; does my strength come from mountains? No, my strength comes from God, who made heaven and earth and mountains.

--The Message

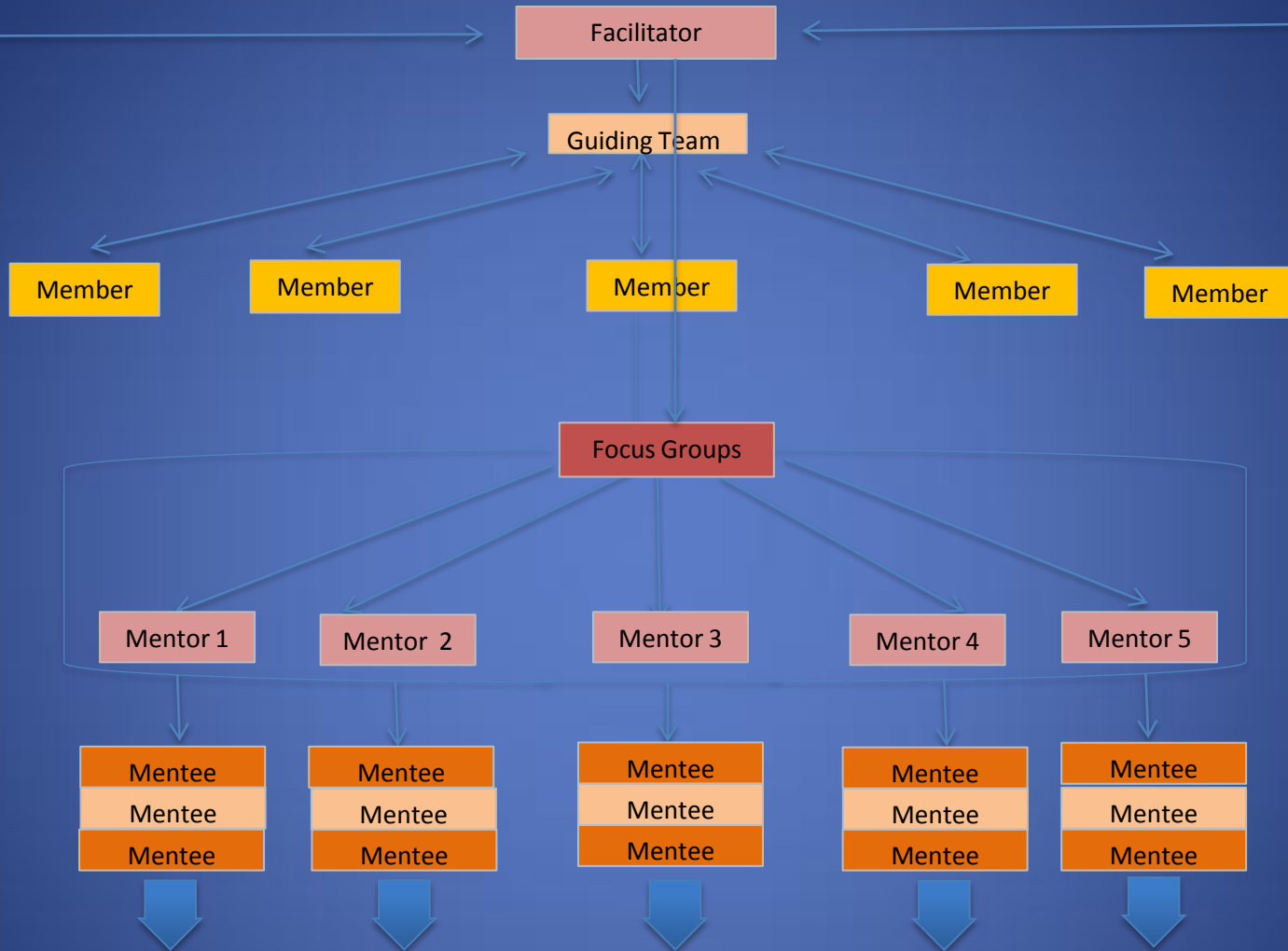
In other words, I can't do this by myself.  
Something bigger than myself has to handle it  
and I have to play my part.

# What is the plan?

- I Am A Man Mentoring Groups

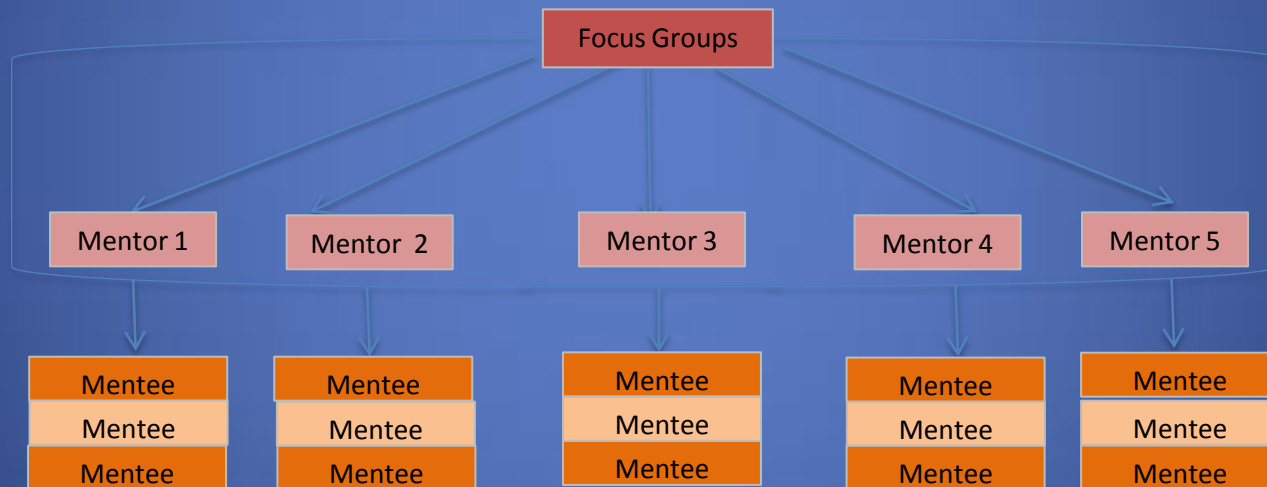
What is this and what does it look like?

# I Am A Man Mentoring Group



**COMMUNITY, FAMILY, SELVES**

# FOCUS GROUPS



# How do we do this?

- Who do you know that can help in this process?

<u>Name of Suggested Participants:</u>	<u>Phone #:</u>	<u>Email Address:</u>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		

# Activity:

- What do you want to see change for African Men in your community?

Go to sheet with marker and list situations and concerns that you have observed in the community.

Come back, choose one and put on your plan of action sheet

Keep this information to combine with your Focus Group



Plan of Action:

I want to see (changes, concerns, etc.)

My marketing plan (what you will use i.e. flyers, email, website, etc):

My ads will say:

Meeting dates and times (at least 2):

Meeting location:

# How do we get them to help?

- Get them to a gathering
- Go back to your plan of action sheet and as a group write down how to get them to the gathering under the marketing plan section.

# What do we think they need to know in order to come to the Gathering?

- On your action plan sheet under the My Ad Will Say section, fill that out; this is what they need to know

# When will you do this?

- Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Time: \_\_\_\_\_

- Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Time: \_\_\_\_\_

# Where will you do this?

- Recreation Center
  - Church
  - School
  - Library
- Coffeehouse
  - Home

# 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

- What do you do?

- 1st Meeting Checklist
- 
- Give information on what the task/purpose of meeting is: \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- Seek background of guests (have guests fill out an information sheet and collect it; have assistant go through them while leader proceeds, listing strengths, weaknesses, skills on a matrix by name)
- 
- Ask for suggestions/opinion (list these so guests can see them):
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- Record input and add to information we already have (go to network/meet and greet break for participants, while you and assistant record suggestions and review to draft mentees and mentors)
- 
- Draft mentors (assign mentors role/title and give job description; breakout and have discussion regarding expectations, have them set up tentative meeting dates with mentees)
- 
- Draft mentees (assign mentees role/title to mentors and give job description; breakout and have discussion regarding expectations)
- 
- Distribute Forms (applications [copy to mentor], group assignment form [copy to mentor and to mentee], which includes contact information for mentor)
- 
- Fill out mentor sheet for supervisor; have supervisor job description and chain of command sheet to give to mentors; waiver sheets for all to fill out; COLLECT BEFORE THEY LEAVE! [permission sheet])
- 
- Come back together as a group and introduce mentors and they in turn tell about themselves and name their list of mentees
- 
- Have Follow up meeting date and time with mentors, within 7 days and they meet with mentees within 7 days
- 
- 
- Schedule training time for mentors and mentees next day or even better, immediately after this meeting
- 
- Record tasks assigned and follow up date and time

# Seek Information

- Hand out Who I am forms
  - Review information



# Seek input from guests

- What are their concerns regarding the community and African American Men?
- What are they interested in doing at it?
- What are their strengths to address it?
- What do they see as the end result?

# Grouping

- From the Information Sheet, determine who will be mentors and who the mentees will be and assign them accordingly.
  - Give Form letter of Mentor/Mentee assignment to Mentee and Mentor
- Give Job Descriptions to each according to role



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you so much for your desire to participate in the "I Am A Man Mentor Group®". We welcome you and we are excited for what you have to offer to the group. Based on your input and the information you filled out on the application form, we have placed you with Mentor Mr. \_\_\_\_\_.

Below you will find your Mentor's contact information. Attached you will find a description of expectations for yourself and your mentor.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your mentor. If for some reason you cannot reach your mentor, feel free to contact me at 651-645-0567.

Thank you again, and we look forward to meeting with you again soon.

Mentor Contact Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Pamela Ngunjiri, MSW, MTS

651-645-0567

email: yoberwick@aol.com

# So you meet, now what?

## The role of the Mentor

Job Description for Mentor:

Objective:

Assist moving Mentee to a more self-sufficient level in various life situations than where they began by giving spiritual direction through encouragement, modeling and resource provision, to.

Tasks:

Meet on regular basis with Mentee

Determine what Mentee's purpose, goals and objectives are

Provide input and resources as appropriate to the particular situation

Provide feedback to Supervisor with suggestions or recommendations for program improvement

Provide feedback with regard to the overall functioning of the relationship with Mentee

Set up meeting schedules with Mentees, Supervisor and other resource persons

Direct the development of Mentee's purpose, goals and objectives (use devotions, modeling, resource information, testimony, books, scripture, conversations to motivate, explain, bolster mentee)

Expectations:

Attend training as requested by Supervisor

Participate in Spiritual Devotion Groups

Provide support from a Spiritual perspective (God/Spiritual Being focused and guided)

Outcomes:

Measurable change in Mentee's perspective of his life and its impact upon his community, family and/or peers

Measurable change in Mentee's relationship with community and/or family, peers, etc.

Measurable change in Mentee's perception of his value and role in the community and his family

# Before 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting

- Review 1<sup>st</sup> meeting (see evaluation form) beforehand
- Purpose:
  - to determine those who are still interested;
  - to solidify commitment;
  - to set up regular meetings (have format);
  - to answer questions;
  - to support

# Review of 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting

Evaluation of 1st meeting for 2nd Meeting

What were your goals?

Where your goals met?

Were your objectives met?

What could have gone better?

What went well?

What impact did your event have on the community?

What was the attendance?

Any viable leads?

What changes would you make?



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting

2nd Meeting

Greeting

Prayer

Devotion

Mentee's report on progress:

Area of Mentee's concern:

Your response (uplifting, encouraging, positive)

Next meeting time and date

# What next?

- How long does this go on?  
Depends on the goals of the mentee and the obtaining of the same
- What does the Mentor do with the information?  
Passes this information to the Supervisor
- What does the Supervisor do with the Information?  
Supervisor/Facilitator collects this information, compiles it and shares with Mentor's and in a large group setting, with the Mentee's and other community members in person or in a document of sorts; we reflect upon it, make changes and then repeat the process with new information and improved action (committed and intelligent action)
- What is the outcome of all this?  
Achievement of goals for change in the community, but mostly a change in the Mentee's view and value of himself in his community

# Reading List

bell hooks:

The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love

We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity

And anything else she has written

Desmond Tutu:

No Future Without Forgiveness

Herb Boyd and Robert L. Allen:

Brotherman: The Odyssey of Black Men in America – An Anthology

Derrick Bell:

Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism

James Cone:

All of his stuff

Allan Boesak:

All of his stuff

# Local Resources

- Brotherhood, Inc. – St. Paul
- Umoja
- African American Men Project
- Healing Brothers

# Tell me about this project model:

Questions for Workshop Participants:	Responses from Workshop Participants:
1. Does this model make sense?	
2. What are the holes in it?	
3. What would you change?	
4. What would you add?	
Other comments:	