

HEALTHY MARRIAGE, HEALTHY FAMILY, HEALTHY CHURCH

O, T Jones Institute Holy Convocation

November 8-9, 2023

Drs. Rozario and Angela Slack --Facilitators

Presiding Bishop J. Drew Sheard desires that the Church of God in Christ have healthy churches. To that end, he has developed an initiative to create, maintain and sustain healthy, wholesome marriages and family life. Bishop Sheard has appointed Drs. Rozario and Angela Slack as the first Directors of the Marriage and Family Initiative for the Church of God in Christ

Scriptures to Consider: St Luke 2:52, Acts 16:5

Premise: Healthy Marriage: The Foundation of Healthy Ministries and Family Life

Healthy marriages create the atmosphere for healthy ministries. Since the family is the first institution God created, it is the foundation for each subsequent institution. Family is important to God, and the cornerstone of healthy families is marriage. Every person's family of origin influences their perspective of God, Church, Ministry, Authority, Cooperation, Leadership, Love, Collaboration, and the like.

Relevance of Topic to Today's Theme

Our churches will rise and fall on the overall health of our members' marriages and family lives. The health of our families should be a priority for all in leadership. Modeling healthy marriage is a key component of success in ministry. The better we equip our marriages to succeed, the more like Jesus our church becomes.

Introduction

It cannot be overstated how difficult relationships can be. God has a plan to display His overall theme of ONENESS – MARRIAGE! It has been commonly stated for years that 50% of marriages end in divorce. This percentage has also been true in Christian churches. The church must pay close attention to how we are displaying God's 1st created institution. Because of the breakdown of marriages and families, Christian leaders have a responsibility to show that the power of God is available to help us to create and sustain healthy relationships. Healthy leaders + healthy marriages = healthy families. Come and learn how to have a happy and healthy marriage that inspires others in your church to desire the same!

Healthy Marriage, Healthy Family, Healthy Church:

- A. Make Your Marriage a High Priority
- B. Healthy Communication Keeps Marriage Fresh
- C. Clear Roles and Responsibilities are Vital to Healthy Marriages
- D. Conflict Must Be Managed if Not Resolved
- E. Collaboration is a Key to Healthy Marriages

Scriptural Support

Hebrews 13:4-6; Romans 12:18; Colossians 4:6-8
I Corinthians 3:9

Application for Daily Living

There is little that impacts family life quite as deeply as the marital relationship. Families rise and fall on the overall healthiness of the marriage relationship. Proper utilization of the information shared will reap long-term benefits for married couples. Their families will benefit from the example they see and the exposure they have to healthy marriages.

Suggestions for Implementation

Each church should consider a marriage ministry and a single adult ministry that teaches healthy relationship skills. These skills should be taught to every age group in the church.

- Pictures of healthy families should be displayed where children can see them
- Sunshine Band and youth leaders should have age-appropriate discussions with their members
- Young adults should have trainings related to healthy dating relationships
- Seriously dating couples should receive Pastoral counseling and pre-marital relationship skills training. Married couples should interact with other married couples through Couples' Retreats, seminars, Sunday School classes, Bible Studies

Recommended Ministry Models

Healthy Marriage ministries have flourished throughout the church world. Even though marriage is not highly regarded in some communities, the church should consistently display a high regard for this God-given institution. Healthy marriage and healthy families should consistently be on display for all the world to see.

Possible Barriers or Constraints and Suggestions

Many people who have had bad experiences in their personal relationships have shown a level of disdain or skepticism towards the potential effectiveness of healthy marriage efforts. A realistic perusal of most congregations will reveal that people obviously desire relationship but many cannot seem to "get it right." We should not stand idly by as some people have serial disastrous relationships and display to others hopelessness and frustration as the only potential outcomes to be expected. Healthy marriages are possible and should be the goal of all in leadership to tout healthy relationships as the expected norm, not as a fluke or rare gem.

To give proper attention to healthy marriage and families church leaders may consider the following action steps.

1. Designate a healthy married couple to implement a marriage ministry
2. Make sure that communication of the gospel is relevant to the needs of the family demographics of the congregation
3. Utilize bible stories that depict healthy marriage and family dynamics
4. Encourage people to spend family time
5. Host a community family conference
6. Provide regular relationship skills trainings for men, women and youth
7. Pastors can prepare sermons designed to strengthen marriages and families
8. Utilize older marriage couples to mentor younger couples
9. Sunday School classes can be designed for married couples, single, engaged and dating youth.

BIO. Rozario Slack is the founder of The Legacy Campaign, where he trains people to develop healthy, marital, family, and dating relationships. Dr. Slack also is the co-author of Basic Training for Couples, a black marriage curriculum featured on CNN's Black in America. His curriculum has been used throughout the world for more than a decade. His relationship counsel and advice has been published in Essence, Ebony and Black Enterprise magazines. Dr. Slack received his MDiv (1993) and D. Min (2003) degrees from C.H. Mason Theological Seminary at the ITC in Atlanta. In 1993 he received the Bishop J. O. Patterson Sr. Leadership Award. In 2008, Dr. Slack received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from C.H. Mason Theological Seminary., Dr. Slack is the Director of Men's Ministry International Sunday School Department's Sunday School University and writes for the Interpretative Expository Commentary.

Dr. Rozario Slack is the pastor of Temple of Faith Deliverance Church of God in Christ in Chattanooga, Tennessee and District Superintendent of the Southern District, He is the COO of Tennessee Eastern First Jurisdiction, where Bishop Felton M. Smith, Jr. is the Jurisdictional Prelate Dr. Slack travels extensively to preach and conduct seminars in the areas of marriage, fathering and other family issues. Dr. Angela Slack is the founder of Get Charmed, a charm school for girls. She has been practicing medicine for more than 25 years and oversees one of Chattanooga's few Night Clinics for children. She is a very active leader of the women and youth of her church.

Although a very busy Chattanooga pediatrician, Dr. Angela Smith-Slack, has assisted her husband in the development of a ten-session guide called 10 Great Dates for Black Couples. based on the award-winning program, 10 Great Dates, by David and Claudia Arp. Drs. Rozario and Angela Slack provided technical assistance for The US Office of Family Assistance Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood grantees nationwide for many years. They presented technical assistance, seminars and training workshops for community and faith-based organizational leaders for over a decade at the International Smart Marriages Conference.

The Slacks have been in ministry together for 21 years and lead the Marriage and Singles Ministries at their local church. They have been married for 30 years and are the proud parents of three children: Will. Pamela and Taylor.

LEADERS SHOULD SEEK TO GIVE MORE FOCUS TO HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS, COUPLES AND FAMILIES TO INCREASE THE RELEVANCE, REACH, AND IMPACT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH---

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