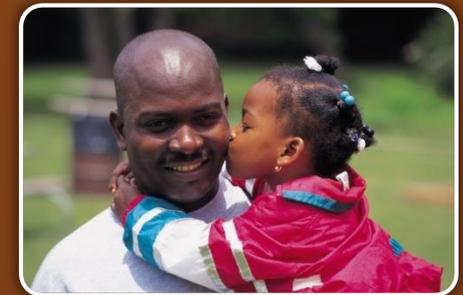


# **Empowerment through an Africentric Informed Research: A master's thesis discussion**

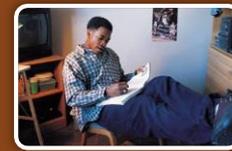
By: Ayo Aladejebi, MAEd.





*“Whatever you achieve in life, you owe it to the woman or man who stands behind you so that you can help enlighten the world”*

*— Archbishop Vincent Waterman*



# My Study

- **Title:** Journey to Fostering Cultural Identity: Are There Any Roads Leading to the Black Church? A Case Study of three Churches in Nova Scotia.
- **An Overview:** The Black church, which I define as a church with a Black cleric, a predominately Black congregants and an orientation towards African cultural values, is often considered an important institution within the Black community, yet it has received minimal attention from scholars in the field of lifelong learning/ adult education.



# The Purpose of My Study

- Examination of the role of the Black church in reproducing and affirming an African cultural identity among the congregants of African ancestry and how the Black church is an agent of significance for the Black congregants, particularly within a racially diverse multicultural society



# Research Dilemma

- Conventional methodologies are culturally destitute (Mkabella, 2005; Pellerine, 2012; Tillman, 2008)
  - Lack of historical, cultural and contemporary experiences of African people.
  - Pervasiveness of hegemonic Eurocentric research methodologies



# The Solution

- Adoption of an Africentric Informed Qualitative Methodology (AIQM) which
  - embraces and preserves the totality, the uniqueness and the significance of the experiences of participants of African ancestry.
  - inspires individual, builds community solidarity and foster relationship with external stakeholders.



# AIQM: A Definition

- Africentric Informed Qualitative Methodology is an African centred research methodology that embraces the totality, the uniqueness and the significance of the experiences of participants of African ancestry with the goal of inspiring individual, building community solidarity, fostering relationship within and outside of the community and bringing about communal positive changes.



# AIQM: The Process

AIQM embraces Africentric Paradigm (Mazama, 2003; Mkabela, 2005; Reviere, 2001)

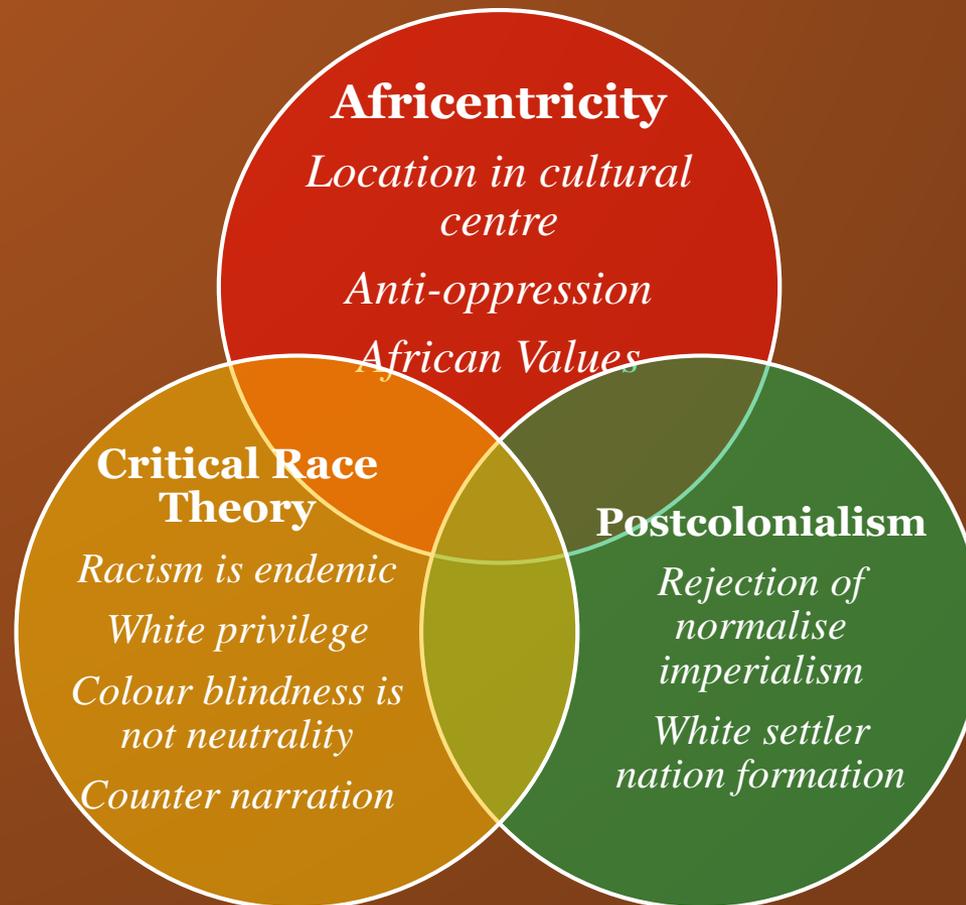
- EXPERIENCE is primal
- Participants are not mere SUBJECTS
- COLLABORATIVE Approach
- HOLISTIC Inquisition
- VALIDATION does not equate authenticity
- NUANCES of Experience
- GIVING back.



# My Approach

- Centering the voices of 17 congregants from Emmanuel Baptist Church, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, and St. Phillip's African Orthodox Church using a qualitative method of inquiry supported by a theoretical framework that includes Africentricity, critical race theory, and post colonialism

# The Framework





# The Methods

- **Semi-Structured Interviews**
  - Questions divided into 4 sections – Ice Breakers, Black Church/Community, Church & Identity, Free comments
- **Participants Observation**
  - EBC – 3 visits. Special seniors service, Lady Auxiliary breakfast, Sunday service
  - RCCG – 5 visits. Elder Abuse service, Praise is Wide night, 3 regular Sunday services
  - SPAOC – 1 visit. Meeting with the Archbishop and participants.



*“I think from personal experience I’d say that, particularly coming from Hammonds Plains, you’re surrounded by a largely White community. So you have White hills, you have Kingswood, you have all these other communities and there’s always a constant struggle to be considered equal”*

*— A Participant*

# The Voices



*Descriptive*  
**Sense of  
Belonging**

When you are  
around other  
Black people  
that share the  
same culture it  
helps you with  
your self identity

*Values*  
**A safe haven**

*In Vivo*  
**"Self  
Identity"**

# The Voices



*Descriptive*  
**We are  
different**

I'm not trying to be racist but they are White, we are Black. Sometimes they don't understand what we are going through

*Values*  
**RACISM**

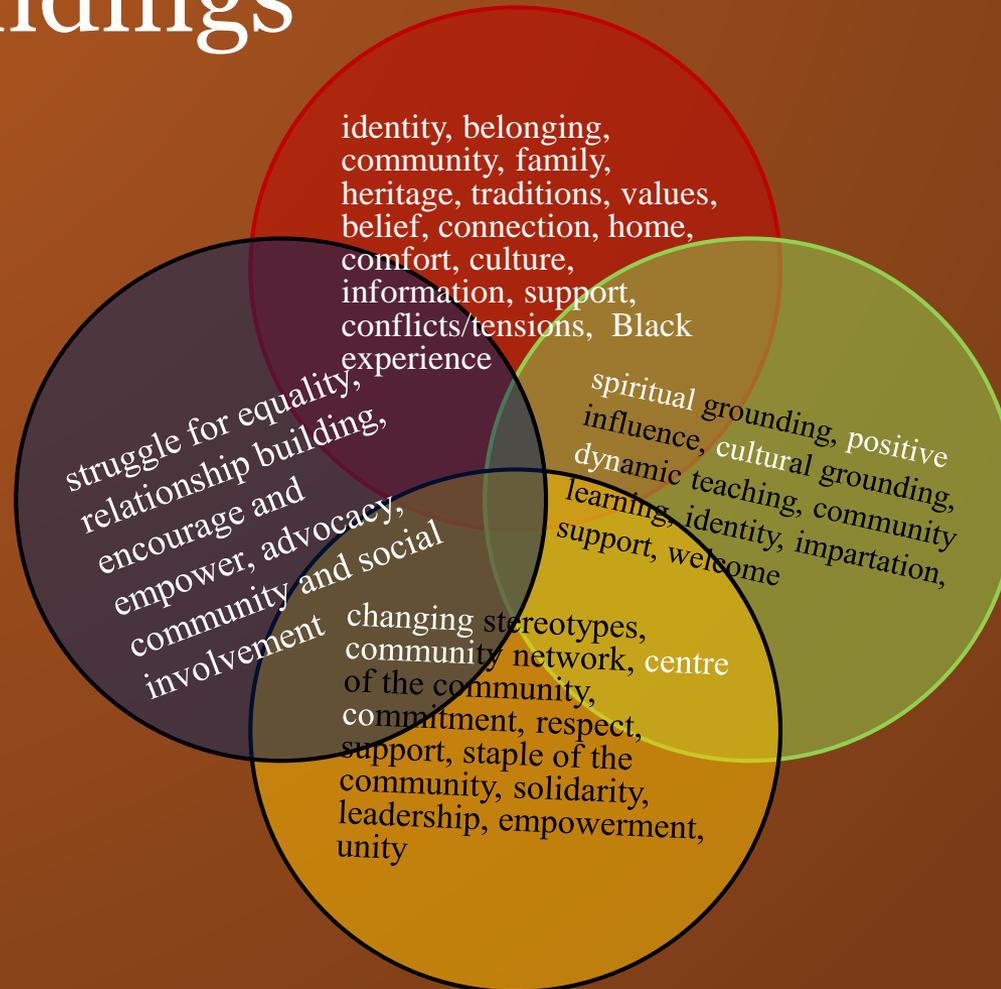
*In Vivo*  
**"They don't  
understand"**



# The Acts

- Participant observation provides an avenue to be closer to, and see participants in their natural environment (invitation to programs and rituals)
- It opens the windows to their world and provides an avenue for establishing mutual relationships.
- In addition, it also provides a means for reconciling the nuances of human behaviours encountered during the study (Hancock, 1998; Mack et al., 2010; Patton, 2002; Tope et al., 2005).

# My Findings



-  Shared Cultural Experience
-  Relevant Learning
-  Social Engagement
-  Sense of Community



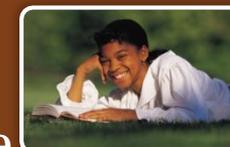
# Summary of Findings

- Emerging themes suggest that the Black church *provides valuable learning activities* and *promotes community involvement* that enhance intrinsic values such as:
  - the feeling of home, a sense of belonging, empowerment, cultural grounding, heritage, traditions, identity, and spiritual grounding.
- These values also align with the broader themes found in the data: **shared cultural experiences, culturally relevant learning, social engagement, and a sense of community**



*“I think when you're around other Black people and people that share the same culture it helps you with your self-identity as well. So I think that's kind of what the church does. It's a place where others like you, who share the same cultures, share the same values, belief, faith, and then it kind of helps you self-identify as well”*

*— A Participant*



# How does it empower?

- ***Culturally congruent methods*** – use of semi-structure interviews, personal stories, narrations, historicity and participants observation
- ***Culturally specific knowledge*** – Participants provides the knowledge based for the study
- ***Cultural resistance to hegemonic ideologies*** – response to unequal power relations within research
- ***Culturally sensitive data interpretation*** – legitimize the knowledge base of African people
- ***Culturally informed theory and practice*** – development of theories and practice to address issues confronting African people



Thank you

For further questions about my research, I can  
be reached at

[ayoaladejebi@gmail.com](mailto:ayoaladejebi@gmail.com)