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Preface

MANY A PASTOR, UPON TAKING HIS OR HER FIRST CHURCH, IS surprised to discover that the job description and expectations of the pastor differ from what he or she had thought. Most pastors, in accepting a call from the Lord, had in mind that they were called to preach the Word, not to run a business.

Indeed, especially in the African American church, the pastor finds a great sense of joy and fulfillment in stepping into the pulpit—providing words of comfort and hope, and words of challenge, to individuals, as well as prophetic messages to the powerbrokers of society. Many of these same preachers are considerably less excited about creating a budget, managing a staff, and attending a seemingly endless array of meetings. As a result, African American pastors by and large are better preachers than they are administrators.

What's more, seminaries in general have not done enough to prepare pastors for the day-to-day tasks associated with managing a church, which, as we will see, in many ways resembles a business and ought to be regarded as such. The church administration component of a parish is no different from that of any business or corporation.

This book is designed to help pastors balance the challenging roles that are attendant to the call to “preach.” Effective church

management is directly related to successful church ministry. Preaching is perhaps most important, but ministry is not all about preaching. Some reputations are built on the ability of the pastor to properly manage the affairs and business of the church. Effective ministry also requires such things as properly managing staff, thorough evaluation of ministry effectiveness, and efficient and faithful stewardship of God's resources, including the church's financial resources. The best of all worlds is when the pastor can do most things well and delegate in areas where he or she has weaknesses.

Ultimately, the seemingly mundane aspects of ministry cannot be separated from those aspects deemed more "spiritual." After all, the pastor's ability to proclaim the Word and to lead God's people with integrity can be severely damaged if there are questions about misuse of the church's money or improprieties related to staff persons. The reality is that *everything* a church does or does not do has some influence on its effectiveness in ministry; thus the need for a contemporary resource on church management in the African American context.

Much more could be said about virtually all the topics we have addressed in this book. Our goal is to provide helpful perspectives and practical advice on a wide range of topics—from the pastor's management style to running a business meeting to creating a budget to forming a nonprofit corporation. The Table of Contents provides a more complete list of topics covered.

We have based much of our information and perspectives on our experience at The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral in Jamaica Queens, New York. It is a church that many have found to be a worthy model of successful church management, as well as effective community and economic development. However, we pray that in your reading of the book you will not be intimidated by our examples. Allen started small and grew to become

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a mega-church. This book will hopefully help you realize that God has given you new tools to grow the church and enhance the kingdom.

We wish to acknowledge our families, the many members of The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral, and the South East Queens and New York communities for their love and support. Furthermore, we acknowledge the editorial work of Randy Frame and the Judson Press staff, as well as Christina London, whose dedication to the project was immeasurable.