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### A study of the viability of African American adoption recruitment videotapes as a promotional tool for the One Church, One Child of Pennsylvania, Incorporated recruitment campaign

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A Study of the Viability of African American Adoption  
Recruitment Videotapes as a Promotional Tool for the  
One Church, One Child of Pennsylvania, Incorporated  
Recruitment Campaign.

Renee B. Gettys

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the  
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of Rowan University  
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Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved 8/2/97

## ABSTRACT

Renee B. Gettys

A Study of the Viability of African American Adoption  
Recruitment Videotapes as a Promotional Tool for the  
One Church, One Child of Pennsylvania, Incorporated  
Recruitment Campaign.

1997

Dr. Steve Shapiro  
Corporate Public Relations

Recognizing the enormous number of African American children in foster care in Pennsylvania, members of the Pennsylvania African American clergy, led by Reverend William B. Moore and the Honorable John F. White, Jr., Secretary of Public Welfare met with Governor Robert Casey in 1987.

This successful meeting resulted in the development of the One Church, One Child of Pennsylvania, Incorporated in 1987. The program is a branch of the national One Church, One Child, organization, founded by Father George Clements in Chicago, 1970.

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. is a non-profit corporation in partnership with the Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth and Families.

This is a study of the viability of African American adoption recruitment videotapes as a promotional tool for the One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. adoption recruitment campaign.

MINI ABSTRACT

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One Church, One Child of Pennsylvania, Incorporated, desired to use African American adoption recruitment videotapes as part of their promotional presentations. The organization discovered that it was difficult to use videotapes as part of its promotional materials due to time limitations, although responses to content were favorable.

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## CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND/HISTORY

One Church, One Child, is a special recruitment program organized to increase the number of adoptions of African American children by African American families. The program is designed by and for black clergy, nationwide, to promote and recruit prospective adoptive families through black church congregations.

In the 1970's, child welfare systems reported that the number of African American children in foster care, waiting to be adopted was increasing. The plight of these children continued to grow as a disproportionately high number of black children remained in the child welfare system.

Father George Clements, a black, Roman Catholic priest, living in Chicago, Illinois, was moved by the staggering number of children in care. He believed that black families could and would adopt these children with the proper information and community outreach.

Father Clements developed the concept that if every black church would recruit one family from its congregation to adopt at least one child, the number of black children in foster care would decrease substantially or be eliminated. He named this concept, "One Church, One Child."

He then adopted an African American boy, removing him from the child welfare system. At that time, it was unheard of for

a priest or even a single parent to adopt children. Father Clements responded to the controversy by adopting two more sons.

As a result of Father Clements' effort and commitment, the One Church, One Child program began to grow. In Chicago, black families began to adopt. Others, unable to adopt, assisted with outreach and maintaining the program. Many leaders of the black community felt this type program had the potential to fulfill a great need.

In 1987, members of the black clergy in Pennsylvania, led by Reverend William B. Moore and the Honorable John F. White, Secretary of Public Welfare met with the Governor of Pennsylvania, the Honorable Robert P. Casey to implement the One Church, One Child program in Pennsylvania. The meeting was successful. One Church, One Child of Pennsylvania, Inc. became a non-profit corporation in partnership with the Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth and Families.

Nationwide, the program has been implemented in thirty-nine states. To date, One Church, One Child has been involved with more than 40,000 adoptions.

The program's national office requires that all State Board of Directors be members of the clergy. Clergy and other professionals are active in Regional Advisory Council throughout each state. The Regional Advisory Council members are responsible for organizing and providing local support for all

promotional activities of the program.

In Philadelphia, the One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. office is located at 3901 Market Street. From this office, Rose Williams, the Regional Coordinator, Southeast Region initiates local promotional activities. Her goal is to increase the number of black clergy participating in the program. Their participation involves committing their congregations to actively recruit at least one prospective adoptive family.

Rose Williams' ultimate goal is to increase the number of adoptions of black children through the program, in the southeast region of Pennsylvania.

The promotional activities utilized by this office includes the following:

- a. Sending One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. representatives (officers and volunteers), to speak to local black clergy to recruit their participation.
- b. Sending One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. representatives to speak to church congregations.
- c. Distributing program brochures and pamphlets at area churches and other locations.
- d. Sponsoring special events throughout the area.
- e. Showing black adoption recruitment videotapes during church presentations. Please note that in the Philadelphia and South Jersey areas, there are only two well known black adoption recruitment videotapes.



My search for additional black adoption recruitment videotapes revealed no record of any other black adoption recruitment videotapes having been made in the Philadelphia or South Jersey areas.

According to Rose Williams, the One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. staff, felt that a program videotape would greatly enhance the recruitment campaign. They felt that prospective adoptive parents would respond more readily, once they viewed a videotape which personalized the One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. adoption experience. The plan was that the videotape would be shown during church presentations and other activities. Thus, One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. made a program videotape which emphasized the positive aspects and need for black adoptive families to adopt children.

The responses of church audiences to the videotape were mixed. According to Rose Williams, whenever the videotape was viewed by a congregation or other audience, the program received good responses from the audience. Good responses included, viewers' inquiries about participation in the program as prospective adoptive families, volunteers signing up to assist the program and congregations committing to find at least one black family to adopt.

The other responses did not involve the content of the videotape. According to Rose Williams, program representatives were met with resistance when they wanted to show a videotape

because the congregation or church groups felt it would take too much time to be shown. The One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. representatives were often given approximately five minutes to speak. This was not long enough to show the videotape, thus the videotape was often eliminated. It was felt by the One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. staff that an evaluation was needed as to how and when a videotape could best be used as a promotional activity.

An informal evaluation by One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. of the videotapes revealed that time is an essential factor in correlating special activities with routine church functions. Time often dictates the depth and breath of church services, programs or even special church functions. This became evident as church officials needed to make special arrangements for the videotape to be shown. This involved difficulty with scheduling an appropriate time during the church service or church meetings.

However, once the videotape "One Church, One Child of PA, Inc." was viewed, by clergy and church audiences, the program received positive feedback about its quality of content and aesthetic effects.

It became evident, that a study was needed to evaluate the use of African American adoption recruitment videotapes as a viable promotional tool for the One Church, One Child, Inc. recruitment campaign.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**TOPIC STATEMENT AND METHODOLOGY**

**TOPIC STATEMENT:**

A study of the viability of African American adoption recruitment videotapes as a promotional tool for the One Church, One Child of Pennsylvania, Inc. recruitment campaign.

**METHODOLOGY:**

**PRIMARY RESEARCH:**

**DEFINING TERM:**

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. is a recruitment program organized to promote African American churches to recruit at least one African American family, to adopt at least one African American child. The program acts as a liaison between the State of Pennsylvania Child Welfare System and adoption agencies. It does not function as an actual adoption agency.

**DIRECT INTERVIEWS:**

Interview with One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. Regional Coordinator, Southeast Region, Rose Williams. Rose Williams coordinates the promotional activities in the Philadelphia area

and manages the social service responsibilities of the agency, along with other staff members.

Interview with Program Administrator, Jacquelin L. Banks of the Black Adoption Consortium, Inc. The Black Adoption Consortium, Inc. is a licensed adoption agency, located at 5090 Central Highway, Suite 6, Pennsauken, New Jersey. Jacquelin Banks is responsible for promotional activities at this adoption agency. Sandy Lawrence is the Executive Director of the Black Adoption Consortium, Inc.

#### **CONTENT ANALYSIS OF BLACK ADOPTION RECRUITMENT VIDEOTAPES**

"One Church, One Child of PA, Inc." videotape was designed specifically to motivate African American families to adopt African American children. Highlights of this videotape include interviews with Reverend William B. Moore, Board President of One Church, One Child of PA, Inc., Leon Wilkins, State Director of One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. and adoptive parent, singer Patti Labelle. Adoptive couples, single adoptive parents and children were also featured.

The video was produced by A Verve Graphic & Video. The name of the scriptwriter was not given. The actual length of time of the tape was not given. It was approximately 15 minutes in length.

"Black Boys Are Wonderful" is the most widely known black adoption recruitment videotape among the adoption agencies in

the Philadelphia and South Jersey areas. This video stressed the need for African American boys to find adoptive homes.

Highlights in the "Black Boys Are Wonderful" videotape include interviews with Zena Oglesky of the Institute of Black Parenting in Los Angeles, California and Sandy Lawrence, Executive Director of the Black Adoption Consortium, Inc. in Pennsauken, New Jersey. "Black Boys Are Wonderful" was produced by Chee Chee Williams and written by Allison Davis.

"Making A Difference" is a well known videotape for black adoption recruitment. Interviews with foster parents, adoptive parents and children are featured. This video discusses many of the myths and excuses which discourage people from adoption. "Making A Difference" was produced by the Teaneck Englewood Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs of America, Chee Chee Williams and written by Allison Davis.

"Dateline: Education - Bartley" was a videotape recording of the television show, "Dateline." Highlighted was an interview with Jacquelin Banks, Black Adoption Consortium, Inc. Program Administrator. The interview includes in depth information about the adoption process and post-adoption process.

#### REVIEW OF PROMOTIONAL PRINT MATERIAL

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. brochures.

The program has two brochures. One brochure is designed

to promote clergy participation in the organization. This brochure discusses the program's focus, the pastor's role and church coordinator's role within the program and an application form.

The second brochure is designed for anyone interested in the program. This brochure discusses the history of One Church, One Child of PA, Inc., services it offers and a listing of the Executive Committee. It also includes an application form for interested parties to receive information about the program, to host a presentation, for information about adopting a child, for volunteering to assist the program or to make a monetary donation.

#### One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. Information Kit

The program information kit includes a detailed history of the One Church, One Child of PA, Inc., a list of questions most frequently asked about adoption, an article entitled, "Black Children in Foster Care" by Anthony Neely, the above brochures and application forms.

#### TELEPHONE RESEARCH

Adoption Center of Delaware Valley  
1500 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA

Adoption Forum  
525 South 4th Street, Philadelphia, PA

Adoptions From The Heart  
76 Rittenhouse Place, Ardmore, PA

Adoption Information and Support Services  
901 B East Willow Grove Avenue  
Wynnmoor PA 19038

Interviewed the above by telephone to find the most widely used black adoption recruitment videotapes among adoption agencies and adoption services in the Philadelphia and South Jersey areas.

Each person interviewed was asked the following questions:

- a. Did they know of any black adoption recruitment videotapes?
- b. If yes, please name them. If no, do you think there is a need for black recruitment videotapes?
- c. If they named a black recruitment videotape, they were asked what their audience feedback was in response to viewing the tape?
- d. If yes, they were also asked what the presenter's feedback was when they stated they were going to present a videotape?

#### SECONDARY RESEARCH

The Center Source, ( Spalding for Children, National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption)  
16250 Northland Drive, Suite 120, Southfield, MI 48075

Video Library For Professionals Education Library  
Penn State University, University Park, PA  
(814) 865-2842

### CHAPTER 3 DATA

The data from the telephone survey suggested that few agencies were aware of the existence of any black adoption recruitment videotapes. Adoption resources that were actively involved with minority adoptions were more familiar with black adoption recruitment videotapes.

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc., Black Adoption Consortium, and The Center Source (Spalding for Children, National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption) were the three respondents that stated that they were aware of the "Black Boys Are Wonderful" and the "Making A Difference" videotapes.

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. was the only respondent contacted that was aware of the "One Church, One Child of PA, Inc." videotape. However, most of the respondents contacted were aware of the One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. organization.

The Black Adoption Consortium was the only respondent contacted that was aware of the videotape recording of the "Dateline" show, featuring Ms. Jacquelin Banks' interview about adoption.

All of the above respondents were related directly with the promotion of Special Needs Adoptions. Adoptions of racial minority children is an area which falls under the Special Needs Adoption umbrella. Black adoption recruitment videotapes were not known to many adoption agencies that did not specialize in special needs adoption.



As stated earlier, Rose Williams of One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. stated that the responses from audiences that viewed the One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. videotape, were positive. It, however, was extremely difficult for program representatives to arrange for this or any videotape to be shown during church services, church meetings or other church functions. According to Ms. Williams, the reason given was the time limitations for video presentations.

The interview with Program Administrator, Jacquelin L. Banks of the Black Adoption Consortium, Inc. reinforced what Rose Williams of One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. stated when interviewed. Ms. Banks stated that the videotapes "Black Boys Are Wonderful" and "Making A Difference" were the most well known in this area. The videotapes were used during scheduled presentations at home study meetings and orientations held at the agency. They were included as a part of the scheduled meeting time slot.

When Ms. Banks was asked about their audience's response to the videotapes, she stated that "their responses were very good. A major problem was the amount of time required for tape viewing was too long."

According to Ms. Banks, people who came to the Black Adoption Consortium meetings, however, were people already considering adoption. Ms. Banks stated that a videotape recording of her interview as a guest on the television show, "Dateline" always

receives an overwhelming response when shown inside or outside the agency.

When "Dateline" initially aired the interview, the Black Adoption Consortium agency received an enormous response. This, however, was partly due to the extensive exposure television provided. The agency was bombarded with telephone inquiries about adoption. Many of the inquiries were from people who were unfamiliar with the adoption process and wanted to learn more.

According to Ms. Banks, the agency often shows parts of this videotape because it actually describes details about the adoption process. It informs the viewer about who can adopt, how prospective adoptive parents needed to prepare to adopt emotionally and financially. Sections of this videotape also detail the evaluation and the legal process. The "Dateline" recording was approximately 60 minutes in length, which is much longer than the "Black Boys Are Wonderful," "Making A Difference" or "One Church, One Child of PA, Inc." videotapes.

Ms. Banks also stated that the length of the "Dateline" recording was problematic because it was too long to show in the agency's group meetings. The agency rarely showed the entire taping. Whenever they present it, they show segments of it. Similar to the "One Church, One Child of PA, Inc." videotape, this well received videotape was not used as often as desired because of the time factor.

The "Black Boys are Wonderful" and "Making A Difference" videotapes were used by the Black Adoption Consortium during adoption meetings. Ms. Banks stated, however, that whenever she did not use these videotapes as part of a promotional presentation, it was often due to time limitations.

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. and the Black Adoption Consortium distributed brochures and information kits during their presentations. These print materials were used to compliment the discussions. They were handed out at most inside and outside meetings. Audience participants in church, agency and other functions were encouraged to take them home for future references.

#### CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSIONS

There are only two professionally produced videotapes which promote black adoptions that are known in the Philadelphia and South Jersey areas. These videotapes are the "Black Boys Are Wonderful" and "Making A Difference."

The professionally produced videotape, "One Church, One Child of PA, Inc." is used by the One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. for recruitment of black families. It is, however, a presentation tool designed for the One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. program.

The Black Adoption Consortium has a recorded videotape of a "Dateline" television program in which the program administrator for the Black Adoption Consortium is interviewed.

The above videotapes, which promote the adoption of black children, have usually been well received when viewed in the Philadelphia and South Jersey areas. However, the length of time required to present these videotapes has been a detriment to frequent use of them. Church services and agency meetings have a limited amount of time for presentations. These videotapes, though good in content, are met with resistance because of their length and the emphasis placed on the use of time where they need to be shown.

Often in churches, shorter segments of the videotapes are not permitted to be shown because of extremely limited time

schedules. The usual time allotted is five minutes or less. This suggests that even a shorter videotape would not be well accepted in a church setting. Thus, a major problem has been for program representatives to obtain enough time to show the video. This suggests that the program doesn't need to make a shorter videotape. A videotape is, perhaps, not the appropriate promotional tool for church functions or agency meetings with limited time schedules.

The "One Church, One Child of PA, Inc." videotape when shown, results in increased inquiries about adoption. This suggests that the videotape is a useful promotional tool, when used in a setting where the time factor can be scheduled comfortably into the agenda.

Data obtained at the Black Adoption Consortium also suggests that videotapes require too much time to be presented frequently inside or outside the agency. However, the data suggests that the videotapes' content resulted in increased inquiries, indicating that black adoption recruitment videotapes are useful promotional materials. The videotapes, however, need to be shown when presentation agendas can be more flexible with time.

In addition, the data obtained at the Black Adoption Consortium suggests that prospective adoptive families are even more responsive to videotapes that give a practical, fact oriented description of the actual adoption process.

According to Jacquelin Banks, videotapes that provided commentary about the wonderful experience of adoption and the need for waiting children to be adopted were helpful. However, they did not move viewers to action to the extent that the more detailed, "how to adopt" video recording of "Dateline" did. This was shown by the greater number of inquiries the agency received every time this recording was viewed.

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. should consult with several public relations professionals to develop a more structured strategic recruitment campaign. This would most likely offer positive factual advice on conducting an effective, economical recruitment effort.

Public relations consultants could also suggest creative ways to write print materials that have greater appeal to prospective adoptive families. The brochures and information kit reviewed for this study, appeared to be designed to recruit only ministers and churches. However, a limited amount of print material was written to appeal to anyone who may be interested in participating in the program, such as volunteers, adoptive families and people able and willing to donate money.

I believe that a brochure to promote participation of the clergy and churches is necessary, however, there needs to be a brochure and information kit designed specifically to appeal to prospective adoptive families. It also would be helpful if these print materials would state exactly what services the

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. offers to prospective adoptive families.

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. should make sure that future adoption recruitment videotapes, print materials and other promotional materials address the problems that can occur during and after the adoption process. Some of the program's promotional materials do discuss this, however, it is somewhat vague. Problems or the fact that the program's staff will discuss these problems, needs to be stated, in a factual, practical way. It should also be stated that One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. will discuss possible solutions to these problems and/or give referrals for counseling whenever necessary.

The difficulties in adoption should be discussed because today, prospective adoptive parents are, rightfully, more "adoption-wary." They have heard the horror stories on television news shows, newspaper articles, books and by talking with others. They know that birthmothers occasionally change their minds and that some children can not form attachments after early abuse. Prospective parents are also aware that some attorneys and agencies are unethical. This may foster skepticism, when viewing adoption recruitment videotapes and print materials. This would be especially so, if the material emphasizes the positive aspects of adoption and only briefly or doesn't at all mention possible problems.

It would be helpful if One Church, One Child of PA, Inc.

would discuss their adoptive family support group in all of the promotional materials. The materials do mention this but it should be emphasized that this is an on-going post-adoptive service. Prospective adoptive parents, may be more motivated to adopt when they become aware that this program, as well as, others offer post-adoptive services. Families, may then feel that they will not be alone once the adoption is finalized.

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. should stress that they are an adoption referral service. This service also continues for families after the adoption is finalized. This service should be listed in their promotional materials as another post-adoptive service. The service could provide referrals for psychotherapy and other adoption resources.

Knowing that One Church, One child of PA, Inc. will continue to be a resource for families in various ways after the adoption, may motivate prospective adoptive parents to actively pursue adoption with much more assurance.

Presentations at churches should include more children, who are adoptees or are in foster care. They should speak briefly to the congregation about adoption and their own experiences. Additionally, adult adoptees and adoptive families who are members of the specific congregations could be asked to speak briefly about the adoption experience.

Seeing members of their own congregations who participated in the adoption process may encourage others to adopt or work



with One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. It would be important, however, that the children and adoptive families briefly discuss some of the difficulties involved with adoption. Again, prospective adoptive families want realistic, practical information about adoption.

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. placed public service announcements on local radio stations. These public service announcements need to be aired much more frequently. The program's staff need to have these public service announcements written in such a way that area stations will be willing to broadcast them more often. The public service announcements should encourage calls for more information, and also arrange for a time to come into the office. This would give the program's staff an opportunity to show the "One Church, One Child of PA, Inc." videotape, distribute the print material and give a mini-presentation.

One Church, One Child of PA, Inc., also, needs to establish itself as a knowledgeable adoption resource for local television and radio stations. It was used in the past, however, it should be a familiar and frequently used resource for the media. A One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. staff member, with a flexible schedule, should be assigned to monitor and cultivate a relationship with the media so that individual will be considered the adoption resource person in the Philadelphia and South Jersey areas.

This research suggests that One Church, One Child of PA, Inc., the Black Adoption Consortium, Inc. and other minority adoption agencies interested in recruiting adoptive families, should continue to use black adoption recruitment videotapes selectively. It also suggests, that many of the promotional methods the program uses, should be expanded or used more frequently. Also, additional promotional tools, more adaptable to time limitations need to be researched.

As people become more involved with new technology, One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. should consider the development of a web page and interactive scripts for CD-Roms.

## CHAPTER 5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Production of an interactive CD-ROM which could be viewed at the prospective adoptive parent(s) convenience, should be explored. A script for an interactive CD-ROM could include practical, fact oriented discussions of different aspects of the adoption process, as well as, general orientation information. Viewers would be able to bypass information which they did not need or repeat viewings of areas they wanted to review again.

Prospective parents could view the CD-ROM at home on their personal computers or at a scheduled time at the church or agency. Viewers would be able to determine the length of time spent viewing the CD-ROM. The interactive CD-ROM could be used in conjunction with the in person discussions, videotapes and print materials.

Further studies should include the following:

1. The study of church congregations and agency audiences desire and ability to use computers, a web page and CD-ROMs.
2. The study of the accessibility of computers for church and agency audiences.
3. The feasibility of One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. and other minority adoption agencies to finance the production of a minority adoption recruitment CD-ROM.

A study of additional places to give promotional presentations such as private homes or other minority functions.

A study to see if church members are comfortable or hesitant about discussing a desire to adopt and possible infertility issues with their churches. This study should have an additional component, which would be to find out if church members would prefer to be approached in a more private manner. An example of this would be non-aggressive telephone inquiries made by One Church, One Child of PA, Inc. staff to the homes of church members with offers of follow up personal interviews where feasible.

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