



Conference aims to help men improve their lives

EVENT: Organizers say they hope to encourage them to commit time to their families and God.

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By MELISSA EISELEIN / The Press-Enterprise

RIVERSIDE - The Rev. Lacy Sykes said he is concerned about the large number of black men in prison and on parole. Sykes said he believes the numbers will continue to grow until more men start taking responsibility for their families.

"I think it starts with men not being raised by men. Our African-American women are doing a great job, but a woman can't teach a young man to be a man," said Sykes, pastor of CrossWord Christian Church in Moreno Valley.

Sykes said he hopes the upcoming Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 2005 Men's Deliverance Summit will prompt men to commit time to their families by first committing their lives to God and then by uniting with other men with similar goals. The conference is hosted by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Riverside County chapter.

"You can't do it in and of yourself," Sykes said. "In the Bible, David had Jonathan, Moses had Aaron and so on."

Sykes will be among nine Inland-area speakers taking part in Saturday's summit at the Riverside Marriott Hotel.

Speakers include Moreno Valley African Methodist Episcopal Church Pastor Ron Woods, San Bernardino Castle Rock Baptist Church Pastor John Harris and Rubidoux Life Church of God in Christ's the Rev. Phil Murray.

James Baylark, president of conference's Riverside County chapter, said men of all races face problems such as infidelity, alcoholism, anger and drug abuse and that the conference is open to any man who wishes to attend.

"I think we need to look at the areas where men need help, whether it's socially, psychologically, spiritually or financially," said Baylark.

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