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By Adam Belz
The Gazette
Michael Williams knows that children need fathers. He grew up without one.

As a teenager, he left his mother's home, then spent two turbulent decades in and out of prison. Most of those years he was angry, bitter and defiant, at least partly as a result of his family's dysfunction, he says.

"The father provides

safety at home. If a child doesn't feel safe at home, he doesn't feel safe nowhere on the face of the Earth," the 54-year-old says.

Around 1990, Williams turned his life around. He's been married since 1992, and last year, he and his wife, Cleta, and their 6-year-old daughter, Mychala, moved back to Cedar Rapids, in part so

► **FATHERS, PAGE 15A**

anski, Mason

The committee says each would bring a unique set of skills to the job of president.

UI Faculty Senate President Victoria Sharp on Friday had the same message. She said all the candidates have their own strengths, and that faculty support was spread among the four.

"I think we could all work with any of them — that's what's important," Sharp, an associate professor of urology, said.

The committee was charged

by the regents to recommend, without ranking, at least four finalists.

One issue not mentioned in the report is the support among UI faculty, staff and students for UI Provost Mike Hogan. Hogan, one of four finalists rejected by the regents in a 6-2 vote that ended an initial presidential search last November, was not a finalist recommended by the second search committee.

► **UI, PAGE 15A**

General: Baghdad 40% controlled

Troops find IDs, but not 2 U.S. soldiers captured last month

BAGHDAD (AP) — Security forces in Baghdad have full control in only 40 percent of the city five months into the pacification campaign, a top American general said Saturday as U.S. troops began an offensive against two al-Qaida strongholds on the capital's southern outskirts.

The military, meanwhile, reported that paratroopers had found the ID cards of two missing U.S. soldiers at an al-Qaida safe house 75 miles

north of where they were captured last month, but there was no sign of the men. The house contained computers, video equipment and weapons.

Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno said. American troops launched the offensive in Baghdad's Arab Jabour and Salman Paq neighborhoods Friday night. It was the first time in three years that U.S. soldiers entered these areas, where al-Qaida militants build car bombs and launch Katyusha rockets at American bases and Shiite Muslim neighborhoods.

► **IRAQ, PAGE 15A**

U.S. troops recover soldiers' IDs

The U.S. military announced Saturday the identification cards of two missing soldiers from an attack last month were found. Four U.S. soldiers and an Iraqi translator were killed in the pre-dawn ambush near Yousifiyah.



SOURCE: ESPN

PUBLIC SAFETY

A way to connect loved ones after disasters

McClatchy Newspapers
MIAMI — After Hurricane Katrina ripped through New Orleans, Matt Callmeyer struggled to call his wife, who had evacuated.

"I had to drive to Baton Rouge to get cell phone service," the city emergency responder said. He felt lucky that he knew where she was. Other residents were rescued from their roofs or lured to shelters in different states.

"People already had the

stress of losing a residence," Callmeyer said. "So they didn't need the added strain of not knowing where family members were."

Families around the nation may have a new way to find their loved ones after emergencies such as storms and other disasters.

The American Red Cross has recently developed a Web site that may help — Safeand-Well.org.

► **SITE, PAGE 15A**

The challenge of black fatherhood



LEFT: Michael Williams, his daughter Mychala, 6, and his wife, Cleta, moved to Cedar Rapids, partly to be near two of his older children. Williams grew up without a father around, and he is proud to be providing stability for his own children.

BELOW: Willie Barney of Iowa City joins hands for a team cheer with his children before the start of a family kickball game at North Central Junior High School in North Liberty. Barney often takes his wife and children to the gym for family recreation. Anaya, 4, is shown at left and Damarian, 6, is at right.

Ken Jara/The Gazette

It's complicated, and it's simple, say the men doing it

By Adam Belz

Michael Williams knows that children need fathers. He grew up without one.

As a teenager, he left his mother's home, then spent two turbulent decades in and out of prison. Most of those years he was angry, bitter and defiant, at least partly as a result of his family's dysfunction, he says.

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Diane Cross/The Gazette

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Using the site

■ If you have relatives or friends in storm-prone regions, you can ask them to register at www.uslandwell.org.
 ■ After a storm or other disaster, registrants can return to the Web site or call friends or relatives outside the storm area to have their information updated.
 ■ You then will be able to call the Red Cross or type their names and addresses in at the Web site to get their latest updates.

Site/Have plan in place

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The site allows relatives and friends to figure out whether a loved one is safe by typing in a name and phone number or address.

To use the service, a person can register at SafeandWell.org before a storm hits and update his or her status afterward. Automated messages such as "I'm in a shelter" or "I am safe and well" will appear on the site under the person's name when a relative does a search.

"It's not a foolproof system," said Tom McFadden, spokesman for the Red Cross. "But it's another piece that should be helpful in a family's communication plan during a disaster."

Callmeyer said that would have been a huge help after Katrina.

"If I was evacuated to an emergency shelter, that would be a huge help," Callmeyer said. "That would make people less anxious, knowing where their family members are."

The only hitch is, the resident needs to have Internet access or phone service — which storms can interrupt for days — to update his or her status.

The site could be especially useful to people whose families reside in other states, organizers said.

"It's all about getting the word out so people know about it beforehand," said Paige Cauthron, Broward County's director of emergency and volunteer services for the Red Cross.

McFadden stressed that people should have a communication plan already in place in cases of emergency.

Iraq/Soldier

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The overall commander in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus, said during a news conference with visiting Defense Secretary Robert Gates that the operation would put troops into key al-Qaida-held areas surrounding Baghdad.

Odierno said there was a long way to go in retaking the city from Shiite Muslim militias, Sunni Arab insurgents and al-Qaida terrorists. He said only about "40 percent is really very safe on a routine basis" — with about 30 percent lacking control and a further 30 percent suffering "a high level of violence."

The U.S. ground forces commander discussed the new offensive and the security situation in an interview with two reporters as he visited an American outpost near the main market in the capital's southern Dora district, a major Sunni Arab stronghold.

"There's about 30 percent of the city that needs work, like here in Dora and the surrounding areas," Odierno said. "Those are the areas that we consider to be the hot spots, which usually have a Sunni-Shiite fault line, and also areas where al-Qaida has decided to make a stand."

With Baghdad and Basra — the country's second-largest city and gateway to the Persian Gulf — under curfew, violent deaths were down dramatically Saturday. Only three people were reported to have been killed or found dead in sectarian violence.

That did not include the discovery of 13 bodies of a bus known to have kidnapped last year in western Iraq while driving to a training camp in neighboring Jordan. The bodies were found 65 miles west of Ramadi police and hospital

Fathers/Important in children's lives

► FROM PAGE 1A

Williams could be closer to two of his older children from a previous marriage.

"I done broke the cycle, and that was my intent in the matter," he says.

Williams is a success story, and he is in the minority.

Almost seven of every 10 black children in America live in a home this Father's Day where there is no father, according to the Administration for Children and Families in Washington. The federal agency spends \$150 million each year on research and programs to promote marriage and fatherhood as part of its Healthy Marriage Initiative.

The absence of a father in the home is not limited to African-Americans. More than half of all children in Iowa are growing up in single-parent homes, according to a 2004 report commissioned by the state's Department of Human Services.

Overwhelmingly, those single parents are women.

Why fathers matter

Studies have shown that children, women and men benefit when fathers are active in the lives of their children.

Research shows children raised by both of their parents in a sound marriage are healthier, more likely to attend college, far less likely to be poor and less likely to drop out of school, do drugs, abuse alcohol, be victims of sexual abuse or get divorced later in life, according to the Administration for Children and Families.

A study by Princeton and University of California-San Francisco researchers showed that adolescents in father-absent households are more likely to break the law and end up in prison.

Mothers and fathers also benefit from a sound marriage. Studies show they are in better health and have more money. The women are less likely to suffer domestic abuse, commit suicide or abuse drugs and alcohol. The men are less likely to commit violent crime.

Role models needed

William Perkins is pastor

of the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Cedar Rapids, where women outnumber men two to one. He makes an effort to get fellow black men involved in the church as role models.

"Children . . . just need something from a man," he said. "They need that male image — just the presence, a symbol of strength."

Perkins and Lonnie Jordan III, retiring pastor of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Cedar Rapids, both say they know women who do a good job raising children on their own.

But both Bethel and Mount Zion make it a priority to encourage men to be leaders, role models and fathers.

"We're mentoring our boys, and we're teaching them to handle themselves, not only spiritually, but also taking that role as a father," Jordan said. "We try to support them, to keep that (family) structure going."

Perkins said he strives "to provide some leadership for young men to really step up to the plate." If some young men "step up," others will follow, and the trend will spread, he said.

On Mother's Day, the men of the church — from elderly men down to little boys — served Sunday dinner to the women of the church. The women loved it, Perkins said.

Also, the growing number of men in the church formed a men's gospel chorus.

"I'm good at delegating," Perkins said. "Just trying to get them to participate, participate, participate."

Roots of the problem

In 1965, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who was then an assistant secretary of labor and later would become a U.S. senator, sounded the



The Rev. William Perkins
Bethel A.M.E. Church



The Rev. Lonnie Jordan III
Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church

Resources for fathers

- **Lin County:** For information on family and fatherhood programs, contact Alison Graham, director of Parent Education Consortium at Grant Wood Area Education Agency, (319) 359-6903.
- **Black Hawk County:** Empowering Dads is offered through the Family & Children's Council of Black Hawk County. Contact David Goodson, (319) 234-7600, extension 21.
- **Macgregor County:** Dads of Destiny workshops and seminars champion responsible fathering. Contact Kurt Sothmann, (563) 263-9168.
- **Northeast Iowa:** Howard, Attamaseok, Winneshiek and Clayton counties have a project called Children First to help separating, divorcing and never-married parents. Contact Sarah Rogness-Waters, (563) 382-4447 or (563) 419-1655.
- **On the Net:** Department of Human Services fatherhood Web site at www.dhs.state.ia.us/fatherhood

plate," he said.

In cases like his, where the mother and father of a child never marry, the problem is a lack of commitment, he said.

"Why aren't these fathers committed to these kids? I gotta say it's because they weren't committed to these mothers in the first place," he said. "That goes back to being weak. That's what I say to these fathers."

The lack of skills, the education gap and poverty play a big part, he said. Another factor is that black women are reluctant to have abortions — an assertion backed up by statistics.

Not still, as someone who's seen both sides of fatherhood, Darnes said a father's absence — for all races — is ultimately pretty simple.

"It comes down to not making a choice to sacrifice what needs to be sacrificed to be there," he said. "It is a choice. You decide who you are and who you're going to be."

■ Contact the writer: (319) 398-6272 or adam.balof@gazette.com



How to participate:

- It equals 25 minutes of reading.
- Parent or teacher initial each.
- Every 25 minutes you read, you read 10 baseballs (250 minutes).
- Parent sign next to the base.
- Scorecard into the Binn-Balder Shop at Veterans Memorial Stadium to see prize.

Fun-Kidder Diamond Shop

Hours:
 Mon-Fri 10am to 5pm
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Site/Have

alarm over the dissolution of the black family. He blamed slavery and racism for the problem.

Slavery split up black families. Jim Crow laws that followed the end of slavery in the late 1800s heaped on humiliation and oppression — especially for men looking for jobs, Moynihan wrote. Continuing racism in the 20th century condemned millions of black Americans to a cycle of discrimination, poor education and poverty.

These forces were causing disaster for black families and therefore disaster for American society, Moynihan concluded. Unemployment, inner-city crime, welfare rates and school dropout rates were climbing as the black family in America imploded.

Critics condemned Moynihan's conclusions as racist and sexist. Critics argued the black family was simply evolving, that households run by single mothers were part



Diann Dawson

African American Healthy Marriage Initiative

of an effective social system. They said an insistence on the traditional father figure was white, middle-class, male chauvinist snobbery.

Diann Dawson, director of the Office of Regional Operations for the Administration for Children and Families since 1996 and head of the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative, said those criticisms miss the point.

It wasn't until the 1970s that black men began in such large numbers to abandon the

Fathers/

► FROM PAGE 1A

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"For those women, is that by choice? Probably not," she said.

She said welfare programs in the second half of the 20th century helped erode families — and not just for blacks. "In many ways, public policy discouraged marriage," she said.

Hope

Willie Barney thinks the matter of absent fathers is complicated. But, then again, it's simple.

He grew up in Reinbeck, just southwest of Waterloo. His father was black, his mother was white. His father was not around.

"The legacy that my father left, and that his father left for him, is the inability to be a father, an inability to be a man," the 33-year-old said.

He and his wife, Jody, met at the University of Northern Iowa. They live in Iowa City, have four children and are adopting two more.

He is the principal of North Central Junior High in North Liberty and will leave that job this summer to become principal of East High School in Waterloo.

Leaning against the wall, watching his children race around the North Central gymnasium, Barney explained how much he's had to figure out on his own, without the help of a father's example.

"How should you be treated by the opposite sex? What should you expect from the opposite sex?" he said. "I learned it by what I didn't see."

Skills like conflict resolution, compromise within a marriage, sacrifice for your family — they're learned behaviors, best learned by example, he said.

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