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THE BLACK CHURCHES OF BROOKLYN FROM THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

by

CLARENCE TAYLOR

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1992

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

THE BLACK CHURCHES OF BROOKLYN FROM
THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

by

Clarence Taylor

Adviser: Professor David Rosner

"Black Churches of Brooklyn" looks at significant periods in the history of the black churches including the independent black church movement, the black migration period, and the civil rights movement of the 1960's and examines the impact these periods had on these institutions.

Chapter One explores the formation and development of the black major denominations in Brooklyn. Brooklyn's emerging middle class played a significant role in shaping the early black churches into cultural institutions that incorporated European architecture, classical music and literature. These cultural forms were used by Brooklyn's black churches to forge an African-American identity and challenge the racism of the larger society.

Chapter Two examines the formation and development of the Holiness-Pentecostal churches. The chapter focuses on the establishment of Holiness-Pentecostal churches in Brooklyn and their impact on the black population of Brooklyn.

Chapter Three takes a look at the growing entertainment industry in Bedford-Stuyvesant and other black communities in Brooklyn and at the black churches responses to this challenge. I contend that the formation of church clubs and auxiliaries and their involvement in dances, bazaars, and fashion shows was not an indication of a growing secularism among the black churches of Brooklyn, but a blending of the secular with the sacred. The churches were responding to a changing black community that invested heavily in modern leisure activities.

Several black ministers and their churches moved to the forefront struggling to improve the lives of the people of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Chapter four examines the various ways several ministers and churches confronted institutional racism, unresponsive government officials, and ghettoization of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Inspired by Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights movement, some of Brooklyn's prominent black clergy and their churches became involved in the Downstate Medical Center Campaign in the summer of 1963. Chapter Five examines this civil rights campaign in Brooklyn and how a number of Brooklyn's black churches attempted to gain economic justice.

This study's major task is not only to provide a deeper understanding of Brooklyn's black churches but a better understanding of the people and community that these institutions served.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would never have been completed without the help of several people. First I owe a tremendous debt to my friend and teacher David Rosner. His supervision, encouragement, and patience were invaluable. David insisted that I make this work more than a political history of the black clergy of Brooklyn. Professor Rosner suggested that I explore the cultural aspects of the black church and its significance to the black communities of Brooklyn. He insisted I examine a large number of sources no matter how trivial I viewed them. He raised many questions and helped me see the broader picture of the role of the black church.

I'm greatly indebted to Professor Carol Berkin who carefully read the draft, edited and suggested major structural changes in the dissertation. Professor Berkin suggested that I include the voices of members of the various pentecostal churches and not just focus on the leadership. Her constructive criticism made this dissertation a much richer work. I profited greatly from Professor Eric Foner's insight. Despite his busy schedule and non-affiliation with CUNY's Graduate School, he worked with me from the beginning of the dissertation process until the end, suggesting changes, raising questions, and

encouraging me. Professor George Cunningham's insightful comments on chapters 1, 3 and 4 helped me recognize the role the black middle class played in shaping the black churches of Brooklyn. I would like to thank David Garrow for his comments on the text. His advice was very useful, especially on the Downstate chapter.

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suggesting changes, editing and typing major portions of the study. Marsha was my major source of inspiration. When I was seriously contemplating giving up this project, she convinced me to continue pointing out the significance of this study. Her encouragement and belief in me helped me finish this dissertation. Marsha has touched my life like no other person. She has helped me see the world differently. I am extremely grateful and blessed that she has come into my life. I love her dearly and this work is dedicated to her.

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Dissertation Introduction

In 1955, a year after a fire had destroyed its old edifice, Concord Baptist Church moved into its new, one million dollar building on Madison Street and Marcy Avenue. According to Walter K. Taylor, Concord's building committee chairperson, the entire building was one of "beauty, modernity, and solemnity."

> The architectural style is romanesque which comes from the 11th and 12th century Roman buildings and is characterized by the use of the round arch and thick massive walls and interiors. . . Upstairs on the lower second floor are 40 Sunday school and adult classrooms. The balcony for the main auditorium is on the second floor. Also, upstairs are the day nursing, kindergarten, little theatre, bride's room, pastor's study, lounges and reception room. In Fellowship Hall, where Sunday morning services will be held temporarily, the facilities are convertible so that the hall can be used for other activities. A gymnasium or a banquet hall, for example, is possible. The banquet set up is augmented by a hotel style stainless steel kitchen.

Concord Baptist Church's concern with architectural beauty, entertainment, recreation, and banquets was not unique. In Brooklyn, as elsewhere, black urban churches became more than institutions that met the spiritual needs of the community. They attempted to address the social, cultural as well as political concerns of African-Americans.

In the preface to The Black Church in the African American Experience, both C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya assert "A good way to understand a people is to study

their religion, for religion is addressed to that most sacred schedule of values around which the expression and the meaning of life tends to coalesce." It should be added that a good way to understand a community and its transition over time is to study its religious institutions. From their beginning Black churches in America struggled daily to provide leadership, moral guidance, cultural activities and other activities denied blacks in a racist society.

Brooklyn, New York became the home of a large number of churches of various denominations. As Brooklyn and other urban centers changed over time, black churches attempted to keep pace with the increasing demands and strains of urban living, by addressing the needs of Brooklyn's black population. "The Black Churches of Brooklyn" is a look at a changing urban environment and how these religious institutions attempted to address the concerns of the black community in order to improve the quality of life for black people.

Specifically, "Black Churches of Brooklyn" looks at significant periods in the history of the black churches including the independent black church movement, the black migration period, and the civil rights movement of the 1960's, and examines the impact these periods had on these institutions. As new periods ushered in a set of unique economic and social conditions, black churches eagerly searched for ways to capture the loyalty of the increasing black population of Brooklyn. In addition, the study

explores the role that both class and gender played in the development of these institutions.

Chapter one explores the formation and development of the black major denominations in Brooklyn, from the early 19th to the early part of the 20th century. The chapter includes the African-Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal, and Congregational churches. Brooklyn's emerging middle class played a significant role in shaping the early black churches into cultural institutions that incorporated European architecture, classical music, and literature. The dissertation challenges E. Franklin Frazier's assertion that the black bourgeoisie only imitated white society. Instead, I argue that Brooklyn's black middle-class, like African-Americans in slavery, molded Christianity to meet their own needs. I contend that the cultural forms used by Brooklyn's black churches were not evidence of African-Americans attempting to emulate white society. Instead, cultural forms were used to forge an African-American identity and challenge the racism of the larger society.

As a result of southern migration, by the third decade of the 20th century Brooklyn's black communities experienced rapid growth. The new comers to this urban center brought with them their own religious customs and institutions and used them to adjust to their new environment. These religious institutions called Holiness-Pentecostal Churches, made their appearance in the early part of the 20th century

but became a major force in Brooklyn's black communities beginning in the 1930's.

Chapter Two examines the formation and development of the Holiness-Pentecostal Churches. The chapter focuses on the early pioneers of Holiness-Pentecostals, on doctrine, on the establishment of Holiness-Pentecostal Churches in Brooklyn as well as the significance of the movement among Brooklyn's black population. Specifically, the work explores the way Holiness-Pentecostalism presented a new world-view among working-class African-Americans, helped give blacks a sense of belonging and leadership experience, and became an avenue for economic and social success for poor men and women.

By the middle 20th century, the entertainment industry made its mark on the growing black community of Bedford-Stuyvesant. By the second World War, movie theaters, lounges and cabarets, and other forms of leisure entertainment grew here. Chapter Three takes a look at the growing entertainment industry in Bedford-Stuyvesant and other black communities in Brooklyn and at the black churches responses to this challenge. I contend that the formation of church clubs and auxiliaries and leisure activities such as dance, picnics, bazaars, and fashion shows was not an indication of a growing secularism among the black churches of Brooklyn, but a blending of the secular with the sacred. The churches were responding to a changing black community that was investing heavily in

leisure time activities. I specifically focus on the role women played in the growing leisure activities of Brooklyn's black churches.

By the middle of the 20th century, Bedford-Stuyvesant was Brooklyn's largest ghetto. Plagued by the problems of poor housing, high unemployment, inadequate health care, a failing school system, and increasing incidences of juvenile crime, Bedford-Stuyvesant received little assistance from the federal, state and city governments. Several black ministers and their churches moved to the forefront struggling to improve the lives of the people of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Chapter Four examines the various ways several ministers and churches confronted institutional racism, unresponsive government officials, and ghettoization of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights movement had a tremendous impact on the black churches of Brooklyn. Inspired by King and the movement, some of Brooklyn's prominent black clergy and their churches became involved in the Downstate Medical Center Campaign in the Summer of 1963. Chapter Five examines this civil rights campaign in Brooklyn and how a number of Brooklyn's black churches used cultural forms in order to gain economic justice. It was the first time black churches and their leaders acted collectively and used radical tactics to gain concessions from both the State and City of New York. By the 1960's the black power movement hit the nation including Brooklyn. I explore how

that borough's black churches attempted to address the black power movement by gaining access to governmental funds and establishing anti-poverty programs. I argue it is too simplistic to assert that the churches were co-opted by politicians. Instead, I contend that faced with the growing militancy in the black community, black churches were searching for viable solutions to address the growing social and economic needs of black people of Brooklyn.

This study's major task is not only to provide a deeper understanding of Brooklyn's black churches but a better understanding of the people and community that these institutions served. W.E.B. DuBois noted "It is thus clear that the study of Negro religion is not only a vital part of the history of the Negro in America, but an interesting part of American history." (N.3)

Introduction Endnotes

1. Amsterdam News, 6/4/55.

2. C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, The Black Church in the African American Experience (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990) pxi.

3. W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folks (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1961), p.144.

Chapter #1

THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF BROOKLYN'S BLACK CHURCHES FROM THE 19TH TO THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

In November 1885, members of The Bridge Street African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church in Brooklyn held a concert celebrating the purchase of their new pipe organ. According to The New York Freeman, Henry Eyre Brown, organist of Brooklyn Tabernacle Church, played the "William Tell Overture." The church choir sang "As Mountains Around His People." Two members of the congregation performed a violin and piano duet of "Could I Teach the Nightingales." However, the highlight of the evening was the performance by Edward G. Jardine, owner of Jardine and Sons, who built the $3,000 instrument.

> Mr. Jardine gave an idea of the calmness and repose of nature and the singing of birds on a summer's afternoon. The pipe of the shepherd is heard in the distance echoed from hill to hill. The peasants enjoying a rustic dance, but are interrupted by the distant muttering of thunder, the storm approaches, thunder is heard, it grows louder as the storm grows nearer; the winds moan, the storm breaks with full violence; it subsides and the vespers Hymn is sung by the peasants as a safe deliverance from the tempest. (N.1)

The event highlights how Brooklyn Black churches moved to incorporate secular elements into the religious service. But it symbolized more. Beginning in the first half of the 19th century, black Brooklynites began to establish religious institutions that would address their needs in an urban society. They exposed their parishioners to classical

music, scholarly sermons, literature, elocution, classical architecture, and fine art, and stressed values such as intellectualism, self-improvement, and financial success. However, church leaders were not merely imitating the larger white society. Instead they were seeking strategies to address their needs as African-Americans.

Until recently, little has been written about the culture of urban black churches in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Scholars usually focus on the political and economic aspects of black churches. (N.2) This chapter examines the emergence of these institutions in Brooklyn, revealing their cultural characteristics, values, beliefs, sacred world view, and their general impact on black Brcoklyn.

Many Africans became acquainted with Christianity through the Atlantic slave trade. Western nations justified enslaving Africans by claiming they were saving souls from eternal damnation by delivering them from heathen practices. However, many slave owners refused to convert their slaves because they thought that blacks did not have the mental capacity to understand Christian principles, or they feared Christianity would make slaves rebellious, or they cared little about the spiritual life of their chattels. In addition, many slaves rejected Christianity because it stressed literacy (memorization of the verses and catechisms), they believed it lacked drama, and condemned many African practices including spirit powers, voodoo, and

conjurers or magic men. (N.3)

It was not until the Great Awakenings, beginning in the late 1720's and reemerging in the decades before the Civil War, that large numbers of Africans converted to Christianity. During these eruptions of religious fervor, fiery ministers delivered a powerful message challenging traditional Christianity and offering salvation to anyone, regardless of social and economic position. These preachers or awakeners contended that salvation did not come through a priestly class or though formal knowledge. Instead, anyone could find God through conversion by faith or rebirth, evidenced by trances, visions, shouting, dancing, "fits" and other ecstatic acts. The conversion experience was appealing to both whites and blacks whose literacy limited their involvement in the Anglican, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches that required followers to be well-versed in the Bible. Many African-Americans attended evangelical revivals and took part in the conversion experience. (N.4)

As African-Americans embraced evangelical Protestantism, they reshaped its form and content to accommodate their own needs. They accepted the basic doctrine of Evangelicalism, conversion through faith. Their sacred world view included a God who could deliver them from slavery. The Old Testament was essential to African-Americans because its narratives stressed the theme of faith and deliverance. When singing about the Hebrews being

delivered form bondage because of their faith in God, slaves were actually playing out their own deliverance from oppression. Like the peoples of all nonliterate societies, slaves made little distinction between words and action. In Black Culture and Black Consciousness, Lawrence Levine notes: "Ideas and words are seen as part of the same reality as the events to which they refer; words are powerful, often magical parts of the real world in their own right; ideation is as 'behavioral' as any other form of action." (N.5)

By seeing themselves in the context of sacred time and sacred space, African-Americans in bondage were able to invoke the presence of God anytime and anyplace. Worship was not limited to a church; it could take place in the fields, by a campfire or when the individual was alone during the day. "By creating sacred time and space," Levine observes, "man can perpetually live in the presence of his gods, can hold on to the certainty that within one's own lifetime 'rebirth' is continually possible, and can impose order on the chaos of the universe." (N.6)

The emotional behavior of African-Americans -- ecstatic dancing, shouting, moaning, sobbing, fainting, singing -- at all times of the day, in the fields as well as in places of worship, was seen by the slaves as proof of the perpetual presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in an individual or the congregation. Rituals, music, dance, and sermons all infused the world with a personal communion with God. (N.7)

African-American Christianity was also communal. Active participation on the part of the congregation was essential in worship in, for example, the call-and-response ritual and the ring shout. In call-and-response, an individual sang or preached, and the congregation responded. In the ring shout, a group of congregants danced in a circle, singing a continuous chant. The participants stamped their feet and clapped their hands to the music, usually working themselves into a frenzy. Shouts of encouragement were heard throughout this activity. This process of blending the individual voice with the communal helped create a corporate identity. The leaders' role was not more important than that of any congregant. (N.8)

Although sermons in African-American religion from slave days on were delivered by preachers who were considered leaders of congregations, the preacher's role in worship did not supersede that of the congregation. Sermons were not scholarly lectures but rituals intended to evoke an emotional response from the congregation. Ecstatic behavior evidenced the presence of the Holy Spirit. Without an emotional outpouring from the congregation, sermons would be meaningless. (N.9)

The ritual style of African-American religion continued after slavery. Many late 19th century observers noted the highly emotional and communal aspect. For example, the black abolitionist William Wells Brown in The South and its People, recalled visits to numerous black Baptist churches

in Tennessee between 1879 and 1880, writes:

> In the evening I went to the First Baptist Church on Spruce Street. This house is equal to in size and finish to St. Paul. A large assembly was in attendance, and a young man from Cincinnati was introduced by the pastor as the preacher for the time being. He evidently felt that to set a congregation to shouting, was the highest point to be attained, and he was equal to the occasion. Failing to raise a good shout by a reasonable amount of exertion, he took from his pocket a letter, opened it up and began, "When you reach the other world you'll be hunting for your mother, and the angel will read from this paper. Yes, the angel will read from this paper."
>
> For fully ten minutes the preacher walked the pulpit, repeating in a loud, incoherent manner, "And the angel will read from this letter." This created wildest excitement, and not less than ten or fifteen were shouting in different parts of the house, while four or five were going from seat to seat shaking hands with the occupants of the pews. "Let dat angel come right down now an' read dat letter," shouted Sister at the top of her voice. This was the signal for loud exclamations from various parts of the house. "Yes, yes I want's to hear the letter." "Come, Jesus, come, or send an angel to read the letter" . . . and other remarks filled the house. (N.10)

However, when urban black communities developed and the education and socioeconomic position of some African-Americans improved, they began a reinterpretation of religious life. Rejecting "uncultured" ante-bellum religious practices, many blacks created institutions that stressed a world view different from traditional African-American Protestantism. The new world view is exemplified by the churches of Brooklyn, New York.

Brooklyn's Black Population

People of African origins have resided in Brooklyn since the seventeenth century. During the colonial era,

most blacks in Brooklyn were slaves on farms owned by the early Dutch settlers. Harold X. Connolly notes that in the first comprehensive census of New York, taken in 1698, 15 percent of the county's population, or 296, were African slaves. No free blacks were listed in Kings County, which consisted of Brooklyn, Bushwick, Flatlands, Gravesend, and New Utrecht. By the early 18th century, the slave population of Kings County had grown rapidly, making it the "heaviest slaveholding county in the State of New York." By the mid 18th century, one-third of the county's population was of African origin. (N.11)

Kings County was an agricultural community that relied heavily on slave labor. By 1790, sixty percent of all white families residing in Kings County were slaveholders. It became known as the "slave holding capital" of the state. This fact explained why there were so few free blacks in the County. Although on-fifth of New York State's black population was free, by the end of the century only three percent or 46 free blacks resided in Kings County, the smallest number in the state. (N.12)

Between 1800 and 1870 the population of Kings County increased from 5,720 to 419,921. Eventually, Brooklyn would absorb the other five counties. By the second half of the 19th century Brooklyn had come to dominate Kings County with 396,099 Kings residents in Brooklyn in 1870. Although it did not grow as dramatically as the white population, the black population increased from 1,811 to 5,653 between 1800

and 1870. 4,931 of the 5,653 county blacks resided in Brooklyn. (N.13)

Throughout the 19th century no individual neighborhood claimed a majority of Brooklyn's black residents. During the 1830's blacks purchased land in an area in the ninth ward, founding the communities of Weeksville and Carrsville. These two independent black communities were located within a mile of one another within the boundaries of present Bedford-Stuyvesant: Atlantic Avenue on the North, Ralph Avenue on the East, Eastern Parkway on the South and Albany Avenue on the West. By 1875, 650 blacks resided in the Weeksville-Carrsville communities. There was another large black concentration within the fourth ward, which included Fulton Street on the West, Sands Street on the North, and Bridge Street on the South. By the 1830's one-third of Brooklyn's blacks resided in this area. (N.14)

Formation of Black Churches

Outside of the black family, the black church became the most important institution among African-Americans. Churches helped African-Americans gain independence, met their religious, educational, and social needs, and alleviated the impact of racism; they also provided a satisfying community life. As Brooklyn's black communities developed, so did numerous churches. The first of these institutions was established in the early part of the 19th century. The number of free blacks increased in Brooklyn, either from blacks who had gained their freedom through

manumission or blacks who had moved into downtown after the building of the first steam ferry between Manhattan and Brooklyn in 1814. As the black population of downtown grew, many newcomers sought places of worship. Some joined the predominantly-white First Methodist Episcopal Church of Brooklyn, popularly known as Sands Methodist Episcopal Church, although the increase in black membership caused great alarm among the white membership. Responding to white resentment, church officials charged people of African origins $10.00 quarterly to worship at Sands. In addition to this humiliation, the pastor of the Church, Alexander McCaine, publicly defended slavery and would publish a pamphlet entitled, "Slavery Defended from Scripture." (N.15)

Deciding to form their own congregation, blacks collectively withdrew from Sands and held religious services in their homes. They sent a delegation to Philadelphia to meet with Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, to seek recognition in the African Methodist Episcopal body and a minister for the new congregation. The male members of the new congregation selected a trustee board, which applied for and received official recognition from the State of New York as the First African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church. By taxing each member fifty cents a month, the new congregation raised enough money in 1819 to purchase land on High Street and build its first church. In 1854, after moving to Bridge

Street in Brooklyn, the church changed its name to Bridge Street African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church. (N.16)

Soon after, other African Methodist churches were organized. Sometime between 1827 and 1835, the black community of Williamsburg organized the Union African Methodist Episcopal Zion, joining with the newly formed African Methodist Episcopal Zion. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion broke off from the John St. Church (Methodist Episcopal) its black members left in 1800 to form their own church, because they had been forced to worship separately from white members. The new body added Zion in order to distinguish themselves from the African Methodist Episcopal Church established by Richard Allen in Philadelphia in 1796. In 1844, the Mount Zion African Methodist Society was created and in 1847, the Weeksville community organized the African Methodist Episcopal Bethel Church (later known as Bethel Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Church). (N.17)

By the second half of the century, other African Methodist churches had been formed. In 1850, Williamsburg blacks established the First African Methodist Episcopal Church; in 1852, blacks founded an AME church in Flatbush. Fleet Street African Methodist Episcopal Zion church was founded by fifteen members of an AME Church relocating to Atlantic Ave., who applied for an won recognition as a church body in the AME Zion connection in 1885. The congregation, located on Fleet Street near Myrtle Avenue,

was force to move in 1905 to Bridge St. after the second floor of the Fleet St. church collapsed in 1904, killing 10 and injuring forty. Once on Bridge St. the church changed its name to the First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Incorporation records note the establishment of a Saint Peters African Church in 1837, and a Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1885, although there is no information on these bodies. (N.18)

The next largest group of churches established by blacks were Baptist. Although the early black Methodists had gained congregational independence, they became dependent on the bishops of the Methodists Episcopal in their ecclesiastical affairs, in order to receive recognition as a part of Methodism. The Baptists did not have any hierarchical structure and therefore were independent in all manners. This independence made it easier to establish Baptist churches. Anyone organizing a group of people could establish a Baptist church. The independence in ecclesiastical affairs may also explain why the Baptist were considered more evangelical and spirited in services than the Methodists. (N.19)

In 1847, six members of the Manhattan Abyssinian Baptist Church residing in Brooklyn met at the home of Maria Hampton on Fair Street. Their mission was to create a Baptist church in their own community, eliminating the hardship of traveling across the East River every Sunday to worship. The small but growing band of worshipers hired

Samuel White, formerly of Abyssinian Baptist Church, as pastor, purchased two lots on Concord Street near Duffield, and built the Concord Street Baptist Church of Christ. (N.20) The racially integrated Berean Missionary Baptist Church, located in Weeksville, became the second black Baptist Church in Brooklyn when its white membership abandoned the church in the early 1850's. Before the end of the century other Baptist churches had been established, including Calvary in East New York in 1875, Bethany in 1883, and Holy Trinity in 1899. (N.21)

The African Methodist and Baptist were the largest denominations in Brooklyn, but not the only ones. The same year that Concord was established, James Gloucester (son of the founder of black Presbyterianism in Philadelphia, John Gloucester) started a Presbyterian mission on Fulton and Cranberry Streets. After moving to Prince Street in 1849, Gloucester was granted permission from the Brooklyn Presbytery to organize the Siloam Presbyterian Church. Both the Congregational and Protestant Episcopal Churches made inroads in Brooklyn with the founding of a Colored American Congregational Church in 1853 and the Nazarene Congregational Church in 1873. The small black community of Carnarsie established the Plymouth Congregational Church in 1888. (N.22)

In 1875, a small group met at the home of businessman Kellis Delamar to organize a Protestant Episcopal Church. During the first year, services were held in the Delamar

home at 417 State Street; Prince T. Rogers, of Fayetteville, North Carolina was selected pastor. The following year, the group received official mission status from the Protestant Episcopal Diocese and named their group the St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal Church. The parishioners received official parish status in 1890. (N.23)

These nineteenth-century black Brooklyn churches began modestly. Concord, Bethany, Varick Memorial, and St. Augustine all began in founders' homes while St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal started out in a store at 1887 Pacific Avenue. Unable to buy or build, both Siloam and Nazarene rented halls on Fulton Street, while the small Holy Trinity Baptist Church rented a building on Claver Place and Jefferson Avenue. Financially poor, many churches were unable to attract or hold on to their leadership or full-time manager. For example, between 1847 and 1863, Concord had five ministers; from 1883 to 1887, Bethany had four ministers. The Rev. William H. Dickerson of Siloam resigned as pastor after church officials were unable to pay the minister the $1,000 annual salary agreed on, cutting it by $200. (N.24)

With the exception of Concord Baptist and the African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal, membership remained small in the black churches of Brooklyn. As late as 1889, many churches had less than one hundred members. Berean reported 35 members; Nazarene, 46; St. Varick, 52; and St. Augustine, 86. Both Fleet AME Zion and Bethany Baptist reported a

little over one hundred members. (N.25)

Despite humble beginnings, many churches survived to become vital organizations. Church trustee boards became more efficient, keeping records and managing accounts, as well as delivering monthly and annual financial reports to the congregation. A case in point is Concord Baptist Church. While presenting his annual financial report in 1906, Rev. William T. Dixon in 1906 praised the board of trustees for their "careful and correct accounting" procedures, singling out the secretary, Mr. Graham H. Cooper, for providing excellent services for twenty-three years. "He is exact in his figures and renders monthly and yearly reports to the church," which are "printed and distributed among the members of the church and congregation so that each member may see where the money goes." (N.26)

The churches employed various techniques to raise revenue, the most common the Sunday collection, which proved a steady source of income. Some churches in financial straits turned to desperate measures. Siloam Presbyterian rented pews to its members, and the AWME imposed a mandatory fee of fifty cents per member. Usually black churches used more innovative methods to raise money. Both St. Augustine and Siloam charged admission to annual excursions and bazaars. AWME, Zion AME of Williamsburg (Varick), and Siloam held concerts; Fleet Street charged admission to their annual picnic. Bethel AME organized color-coded groups to compete with each other in raising money for the

church. (N.27)

In addition to becoming self-supporting institutions, free from outside pressure, black churches of this era became important institutions in the struggle for liberation. During the ante-bellum period, Brooklyn's black churches emerged as active agencies in the struggle against slavery. Both Bridge Street African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal and Concord Baptist Churches became sanctuaries for runaway slaves, while Siloam Presbyterian Church created a fund for the underground railroad. (N. 28) Clergy and church officials participated in the fight for African-American freedom. Some became active in black conventions, such as the Christian Union Convention organized by ministers of New York and Brooklyn. The Convention met on January 14th and 15th, 1861 to "take into consideration of our present oppressed condition and to take measures to invite Christians throughout the United States to observe a day of fasting and prayer to Almighty God for his interposition in our behalf in these times of trial and peril." Among the organizing ministers were Samson White, pastor of Concord Baptist, and L.C. Speaks, pastor of Bridge Street. (N.29)

Brooklyn's black churches made a major contribution in the field of literacy. During the ante-bellum period, Concord Bridge St. and Siloam established Sunday schools, whose purpose was not only religious but also educational. The Brooklyn Sunday School Union Annual Report of the Board

of Managers for 1858/59 points out that Sabbath schools were well-organized departments, staffed by teachers and managed by a superintendent. Bridge St. had nine teachers, Concord 10, and Siloam 17. Bridge Street Sabbath School serviced 44, Concord 65, and Siloam 154 students in 1859. The report indicates that the classes were not only for children: 96 of the students at Siloam, nine at Concord, and none at Bridge were in the children's class. Both Concord and Siloam had libraries, reporting 45 and 100 books, respectively. (N.30)

As black churches multiplied in Brooklyn during the post-Civil War period, they joined in creating Sunday Schools. In some cases Sunday School enrollment was more than half the size of the churches' membership. concord reported 696 church members in 1891, and a Sunday School enrollment of 430. Bridge St. had 874 members and 542 Sunday School members. Union Bethel AME had 89 Sunday School members out of 107 church members. (N.31)

However, many black churches' schools reported having more Sunday School members than regular churchgoers. In 1892, Calvary Baptist's congregation was 354 and its Sunday School membership 550. Siloam had 175 church members and 210 Sunday School students. St. Augustine had 170 Sunday School members and only 150 church members. In 1896 Berean had only 60 members but 165 enrolled in Sunday School, while Nazarene Congregational Church reported 1,342 Sunday School members and only 102 Church members in 1900. (N.32)

Sunday Schools attracted students outside the churches because they combated illiteracy as well as gave religious instructions to African-Americans. Many in Brooklyn's black community took the opportunity to gain tools for advancing in an urban society.

The Growing Significance of the Black Middle Class

As the black population in Brooklyn grew, social and economic differences within communities developed. By the end of the Civil War, most Brooklyn blacks were relegated to the lowest labor market positions with little chance of advancement. The 1870 and 1880 censuses reveal that the vast majority of African-Americans were manual laborers. Most employed black women worked as domestic servants or as laundresses. Black men were variously farm laborers, waiters, seaman, draymen, and porters. Most blacks were excluded from factory work; and only a handful owned businesses. (N.33)

Despite harsh discrimination and a rigid class system, urban society offered occupational and educational opportunities denied to blacks in rural life, thus promoting the development of a small yet significant black elite. Some members of this group were from families that occupied high positions among the black population before the civil war. They were usually the professionals, doctors, lawyers, and educators. Other blacks moved into this group by becoming successful business owners, ministers and skilled workers including a number of dressmakers, undertakers,

carpenters, barbers, butchers, tailors, brick masons, shoemakers, and clerks. (N.34)

Some rose to prominence, among them William H. Smith called by The New York Times in 1895 one of the "Wealthy Negro Citizens" of Brooklyn who was employed at the Bank of New York. Worth over $100,000, Smith lived in a "handsome house" on Lafayette Avenue and employed several servants. (N.34) Samuel R. Scottron, a successful businessman during the late 1890's and early 1900's (whose stock included mirrors, looking glasses, wood moldings and imitation onyx for lamps) reported his yearly income at $25,000. Scottron was active in the Republic Party and in 1894 was appointed to the Brooklyn Board of Education. (N.35)

Peter Ray (1825-1906), one of Brooklyn's first black physicians, graduated from Castleton Vermont Medical School in 1850 and opened both an office on Herkimer Street and a drug store in Williamsburg. He became a member of the Kings County Medical Society and treasurer of the Brooklyn College of Pharmacy, which he helped establish, as well as a major property owner. (N.36)

Dr. Susan Smith McKinney-Steward (1847-1918) became the first African-American woman to practice medicine in the State of New York and only the third in the country. She attended New York Medical College for Women, graduating in 1870 as valedictorian. McKinney was the founder of The Women's Hospital and Dispensary in Brooklyn, later the Memorial Hospital for Women and Children. She was active in

both the Women's Suffrage and Temperance movements. According to The New York Times, her house on Dekalb Avenue was located in the "midst of the fashionable quarter of the Hill," and The New York Sun asserted that Dr. McKinney had a "handsome bank account." William Seraile notes that she financially supported her husband, stricken with apoplexy in 1890, and six other family members living with her on Dekalb Avenue. (N.37)

Maritcha Lyons (1848-1929) became one of Brooklyn's most prominent black educators of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Lyons was the daughter of Abro and Mary Lyons, whose house was a station on the Underground Railroad. Fleeing New York city during the Draft Riot of 1863, the Lyons moved to Providence, R.I. where Maritcha was the first black to graduate from Providence Public High School. In 1869, Maritcha began teaching at Colored School No. 1 (later Public School number 67) under the supervision of the noted black educator, Dr. Charles Dorsey. Later, she became an assistant principal, training new teachers for elementary school service. (N.38)

Among the elite were several ministers, including Rufus L. Perry, (1834-1895), who was born a slave in Tennessee and later attended a school for free blacks. In 1852, he escaped slavery and began to study theology at a Seminary in Michigan. Graduating in 1861, he became an ordained Baptist minister and served as pastor in Ann Arbor, Ontario, Buffalo and finally Messiah Baptist Church in Brooklyn. He founded

and edited the National Monitor, a monthly religious publication, and wrote The Cushite: or the Descendants of Ham. (N.39)

Fredrick M. Jacobs, born in 1865 in Camden, South Carolina, received his B.A. from Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois in 1884 and a degree in theology from Howard University in 1887. In 1895 Jacobs received a doctor of divinity degree from Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. Two years later he became pastor of the Fleet St. African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. While serving as pastor, Jacobs attended Long Island Medical College and earned a medical degree in 1901. Soon after, he left Fleet St. to establish a lucrative medical practice in Brooklyn. (N.40)

William Dixon (1833-1909), pastor of Concord Baptist Church, was born in Elizabeth, New York and educated in Brooklyn public schools. He became a school teacher and principal and served as pastor of Concord from 1863 until his death in 1909. He founded the New England Baptist Association and was elected its president in 1900. He was also moderator of the predominantly white Long Island Baptist Association. (N.41)

T. McCants Stewart (1852-1923) became one of the most prominent and influential citizens of Brooklyn. Born of free parents in Charleston, South Carolina, Stewart attended Howard University from 1869 to 1873 and later the University of South Carolina, where he received both an A.B. and an

LL.B in 1875. After practicing law briefly in South Carolina, Stewart studied in Princeton. In 1879 he was an ordained minister, becoming pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City. In 1883, Stewart gave up the ministry to become a teacher at Liberia College for two years. In 1885, Stewart moved to Brooklyn, becoming the corresponding editor of the New York Freeman; in 1886 he resumed his law practice as attorney for Bridge St. AWME Church. He was appointed to the Board of Education in 1893 (N.42)

Evidence suggests that intraclass marriage was common among Brooklyn's black elite. For example, in 1874, Susan McKinney, then Susan Marie Smith, married the Rev. William McKinney, a "modestly wealthy man" who owned a building valued at $6,000.

Two years after her husband's death in 1896, Susan married the Rev. Theophilus Gould Steward, who was a well known minister, Chaplain of the Twenty-Fifth U.S. Colored Infantry and professor of history at Wilberforce. Susan's older sister was married to famed abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet and Susan's daughter Annie, married M. Louis Holly, son of the Bishop of Haiti. (N.43)

When reporting on the success of a person, the black press sometimes noted the economic status of the person's spouse. For example, The Age reported that Mamie Louis Anderson, the first black women embalmer in Brooklyn and who owned her place of business was married to Charles F.

Anderson, a well known business man. (N.44)

The black press' description of wedding ceremonies also suggests interclass marriage was common among the black elite. Papers sometimes described both bride and groom as leading citizens, from wealthy families and as prominent in the community. In addition, a report on the wedding, what people wore at the event and the events at their reception were given. Both the weddings and receptions were elaborate events, that took place in large churches, were usually catered affairs, and were attended by the black elite from New York and other cities. In one such description, The Freeman noted that a marriage occurred between "one of Brooklyn's favorite and leading society ladies, Miss Henrietta R. Mays" and Will J. Douglass, a "prominent young man" and "president of the Alpha Club." The affair was "attended by representatives of the leading families in Brooklyn, and many from New York. Among the strangers present were Mrs. Geo Boardly and Mrs. Andrew Stephens and daughter of Philadelphia, Mrs. Mary Jacques and Mrs. Jas. H. Bradford of Baltimore, Mrs. Mortimer Lewis and the Misses Somerville of Washington." In another wedding, the Age reported that the bride wore a gown of pearl gray silk, decked with white roses. . . also a diamond hair pin, a gift of the groom." Prominent guests also attended the affair. (N.45)

Brooklyn's black elite also had numerous social affairs, including concerts, dances, and literary events.

Many of these events were interracial events and fe: tured with European selections. For example, a testimonial was held for Mme. Albert Wilson. The "leading citizens" from both Brooklyn and New York attended. The event was a "notable artistic and social success. Mr. Walter F. Craig, Mme. Jones, and M. Wilson were bright particular stars of the occasion and acquitted themselves in brilliant style, the Li Trovator Fantasia by Mr. Craig being especially well done." (N.46) The Henry Highland Barnet Republican Club gave a concert in Brooklyn. "The program was as follows: Part I - organ solo, Mr. Melvelle Charlton; soprano solo, Mre. Estelle Pinckney Clough; piano solo, Miss Bertha Bulkley; selection, Nashville Quartet, Philip Parlock and W.H. Tucker, tenors, and N.B. Collins and J.F. Delyons, basses; violin solo, Miss Marie A. Wayne; and baritone solo, Mr. Burleigh. According to The Age:

> The reputation of these artists are well known, when Mr. Charlton sat at the organ to render the opening piece he was greeted with hearty cheers. He deserved the greeting, for he performed the last movement of Widor's Sixth Organ Symphony: in a creditable manner. But it was his performance of Builmant's 1st Sonata" 1st movement that he appeared at greatest advantage . . . Mme. Clough sang Delibe's "Indian Bell Song" from "Lakme" in a manner which exhibited the wonderful timbre and flexibility of her well-cultured voice . . . Mme. Terrell sang Gounod's "Cavatina" from "Queen of Sheba" with signal success . . . A very charming feature of the program was Miss Marie Wayne's violin solo, a "Hungarian Dance," by Keler-Bela . . . (N.47)

Many of these events were interracial, demonstrating that they were more than social and cultural affairs. These

events were used to promote racial harmony. Blacks and whites could come together and enjoy each others company. The events also suggest that the black elite had confidence in its ability to attract larger audiences to their events.

Besides social and cultural events, Brooklyn's black elite was active in a number of activities to uplift African-Americans. Businessman Samuel Scottron became an Outspoken advocate on the need of "self uplifting" of African-Americans. Expressing a view that blacks must help themselves, (a view that many members of the black elite held), Scottron contended in a speech at Bethany Baptist Church in the summer of 1905:

> The Negro has advanced rapidly and seemingly beyond all comparison. He is moving along with the age and it would be impossible for him not to advance . . . But it remains for him to show that he is contributing to the force that moves things! That he is not dead weight, simple ballast, clinker in the furnaces, but good coal affording light and heat . . . What can the negro do for himself and what is he doing are the all-important questions, and in the answer of these lies the future of the American Negro. (N.48)

He was also a crusader for the abolition of slavery abroad. Along with Henry Highland and Garnet, Prof. Charles Dorsey, Rev. Thomas Dixon of Concord Baptist Church, and the Rev. A.N. Freeman of Siloam Presbyterian Church, Scottron was a member of the American Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. (N.49)

Maritcha Lyons was an outspoken advocate for women's rights and African-American equality. She was active in the

Women's Club movement of the late 19th century and a member of the Women's Loyal Union. An outspoken integrationist, she attacked the evils of segregation arguing that denying blacks participation in the larger white society has impeded their progress and jeopardized America's democracy. In a letter of August 17, 1918 Lyons stated:

> The colored American is a corporate part of the body politic, and the practice of relegating him outside the pale of American citizenship is a constant source of irritation and mischievous cause of confusion. civil rights are hinged to life, liberty and happiness. Where bigotry and race prejudice are rampant their permanency is jeopardized. The future destiny of the United States, its lasting honor, its permanent safety, depend upon the coherence of its citizens-all its citizens. This is the groundwork upon which rest the stability of a democratic form of government."

According to Lyons, there could only be one solution to America's race problems:

> The abuses that exist are the outcome of unscientific, unscrupulous propaganda on the part of those who have abrogated to themselves the right to obstruct the path of the colored American. These obstacles, illogical assertions, preconceived notions, false premises, specious reasoning -- must be cut down or dug up by the keen blade of unprejudiced opinion; must be burned away by the urgent glow of an unquenchable reverence for humanity. (N.50)

Many members of Brooklyn's black elite became advocates of educational facilities for blacks. In a speech celebrating the opening of a new building for one of Brooklyn's "Colored schools," schools that serviced African-American children, Professor Richard B. Greener, who held a degree from Harvard and became a well known black educator,

contended that the colored schools of Brooklyn were needed because they instilled pride. In addition, teachers made black children aware of their rich heritage and in order for African-American children to become "useful" they "must be trained by sympathetic heads and hearts of their own race."

In 1883, when the Board of Education contemplated closing the "colored schools" in Brooklyn, Rev. Rufus Perry, Charles Dorsey, Rev. Thomas Dixon, and a number of other members of the black elite spoke out against the Board's decision noting the need for such schools. Moreover, Charles Dorsey, principal of one of Brooklyn's colored schools, operated an evening school for African-Americans. At a special event celebrating the operation of the school, both white and black supporters including T. Stewart McCants, H.E. Dresser, a son of an abolitionist, and journalist J.E. Parsons gave their support for the school. (N.51)

By the late 19th century, newspapers had recognized the existence of Brooklyn's black elite. In 1892, the Brooklyn Daily Eagle reported on a social affair of the "Colored four hundred of Brooklyn," the "elite of Brooklyn's colored citizens." In 1895, The New York Times asserted that Brooklyn attracted a number of wealthy blacks: "As soon as negro men amass a comfortable fortune, they move from this city across the East River, because they can find in Brooklyn more economical and satisfactory investments." (N.52)

By the second half of the 19th century, Brooklyn's black elite had created institutions that provided opportunities to cultivate leadership as well as to struggle against racial discrimination and poverty. Established in the 1850's, The African Civilization Society was made up of prominent blacks: Daniel Payne, President of Wilberforce University, Xenia, Ohio; the famous abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet; the Rev. J. Sella Martin claimed by the weekly Anglo-African as a most promising preacher; the Rev. Rufus Perry and Amos Freeman, pastor of Siloam Presbyterian Church, both Brooklynites. The society's objectives were to "promote civilization and Christianization of Africa and of the descendants of African ancestors in any portion of the earth," to destroy the African slave trade, to make people of African origins industrious "producers as well as consumers" and to elevate "the condition of the colored population of our own country and of other lands." (N.53) After emancipation, the Society dedicated its entire effort to establishing and maintaining free schools in the South. At its sixth annual meeting in 1865, the Society reported that it had hired 24 teachers and supported ten day and night schools, working with hundreds of men, women, and children. (N.54)

The Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum opened in 1866 and was incorporated in 1868. According to the constitution of the Asylum, its objective was to "shelter, protect, and educate destitute orphan children of Colored

parentage, and to instruct them in useful trades." Besides giving shelter to over three hundred children and educating them with a professional teaching staff, the institution provided the orphans with good medical care. Its medical staff included an ear, eye, nose and throat specialist, stomach and intestine specialists, a genito-urinary specialist, a dermatologist, and a dentist. (N.55)

Although it received financial support from whites until 1902, it had a predominantly black board of directors and an all-black staff. According to historian Careton Mabee, all of Howard's superintendents were black. After 1902, prominent blacks still led the organization. The Board of Trustees included William T. Dixon, pastor of Concord, W.T. Timms, pastor of Holy Trinity Baptist, and L.J. Brown, pastor of Berean Baptist Church. The Women's Auxiliary of the Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum, established in 1904, was responsible for fund raising, providing clothes and bed linen and "other comforts" for the children; members included Maritcha Lyons, Mrs. Charles Dorsey, and Verna Waller, wife of physician Owen Waller. (N.56)

The Black Middle-Class and the Black Churches of Brooklyn

The institutions most clearly demonstrating involvement of the black elite were the churches. Although church records do not report membership during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, available information strongly suggests that the black middle-class played a leading role

in these institutions. Of the twenty officers of Siloam's Presbyterian Church in 1899, twelve of the seventeen whose occupations could be ascertained were employed in middle-class and lower middle-class positions, the majority as clerks. The trustee board of Bridge Street African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church n 1918 was dominated by prominent middle-class men, including a real estate and insurance broker, the treasurer of the Howard Orphanage, and a machinist. The secretary of the board, James E. Bruce, was listed by the Brooklyn Daily Eagle as a member of Brooklyn's Colored 400. Of the twenty-four officers listed for Concord Baptist Church in 1918, only eleven could be identified by occupation. Eight of the eleven held middle-class positions, including six clerks, an undertaker, a realtor, and a carpenter. Of the five trustees whose names appear on the charter of Bethany Baptist Church, at least three had middle-class occupations, engineer, carpenter, and coachman. Leading members of St. Augustine Episcopal Church included is founder William J. Delamar, Maritcha Lyons, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Dorsey. Although some men held jobs in the larger community as janitors and servants while acting as officials of the church, their numbers were small. (N.57)

Unlike other institutions, churches did not have the same relationship to the larger community. As the middle-class gained prominence in Brooklyn's black churches, they could use these institutions to develop their own image as rational, urbane, literate, community leaders, addressing

expression of black church culture. It was a way to demonstrate an urbane, polished style of worship, identifiable with the European cathedrals. According to the minutes of the twenty-third Quadrennial of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Churches (1908): "Architecture is the art of building according to principles which are determined, not merely by the ends the edifice is intended to serve, but by consideration of beauty and harmony." (N.59) This was especially evident in the black churches of Brooklyn.

Through collective efforts, the black churches of Brooklyn organized building committees and sponsored fund raisers to finance large brick gothic structures with pointed arches, stained glass windows depicting biblical scenes, lavish outer carvings and interior designs, decorated altars, fancy wooden pews to accommodate hundreds, and elegant chapels.

Sometime between 1890 and 1914, during the pastorship of Rev. L.J. Brown, Berean Baptist Church on Bergen Street purchased a brick building with high arches, stained glass windows, and a small garden. Shortly after, the church's building committee adopted a plan to add two elaborate wings to the church. St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal also purchased a two-story castle with a large tower and stained glass windows. In 1899, St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal Church purchased St. Mary's Chapel on Canton Street, a large brick building with an extended entryway and high arched,

stained glass windows. Moreover, at least six churches claimed that they had edifices that could seat 300 or more worshipers. (N.60)

One of Brooklyn's most elegant churches was the Bridge Street Wesleyan African Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 309 Bridge Street, formerly the estate of Edward and Margaret Pierrepont, who signed the property over to the First Congregational Church. In 1854, Bridge Street AWME bought the building from First Congregational for $12,500. The church had two wooden pillars in the entrance porch and a "spacious gallery." The main hall seated twelve hundred people comfortably. The New York Freeman described the woodwork and upholstery as "substantial and neat." By the turn of the century Bridge Street had added a thirty-light chandelier, made of oxidized brass, to its decor. (N.61)

Great care was also give to the decoration of the churches to establish the proper atmosphere for Sunday morning worship. The New York Globe reported that on one Sunday morning the Bridge St. AME Church had flowers that were "tastefully arranged. . . The Bible desk was covered with a beautiful white silk cover, trimmed on either side with silk cord and silk moss fringes. In the center was a cross of lilies-of-the-valley. Behind the pulpit was suspended a large cross of choice flowers." The New York Freeman proclaimed that the flowers for a Sunday morning service at Siloam Presbyterian Church on Prince Street were "quite elaborate, perfuming the church with their

fragrance." The Zion AME Church of Williamsburg lecture-room was garnished with flowers; the major attraction was the pastor's harvest table located in the auditorium, "heavenly laden with choice fruits, flowers, vegetables, wheat, etc." Many churches established floral committees during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (N.62)

Lecture rooms were an important feature of the churches as cultural and academic institutions. Concord Baptist, Bridge Street AWME, Zion AME of Williamsburg, Fleet Street AME and other elite black churches of Brooklyn built lecture rooms, which became centers of cultural events, lectures, literary endeavors, and classical musical programs. Concord's lecture room was used for lectures by noted black scholars such as journalist Ida B. Wells; T. Thomas Fortune, editor of The New York Age; and T. Steward McCants, noted author, attorney, pastor and organizer of numerous black literary societies. On several occasions, the Guitar and Mandolin Club of the local YMCA performed in the lecture room for the church. (N.63)

The stress on architectural and interior design reflected the new secularism of the black churches, an appreciation of aesthetic beauty and wealth. Parishioners saw their churches as places of beauty to be held in reverence, changing the idea of sacred space in black churches. Unlike earlier African-Americans who extended the spatial boundaries of the sacred, the black elite religious institutions limited it to a house of worship, giving the

secular a greater role. It de-emphasized the magical or mystical and reinforced worldliness, materialism and aesthetic beauty.

Like architecture, music was also intrinsic to the style of Brooklyn's black church worship. Although information about the music performed during the regular Sunday services is limited, newspapers ads, announcements of church concerns, and church anniversary books give indications. In traditional African-American Christianity, music was spiritual and participatory, involving singing, dancing, and shouting from the congregation as well as the performers; however, these institutions incorporated European classical music, which emphasized beauty, organization, and exactness in performance. Church music contributed to a cultural hierarchy emerging in the late 19th century, which enjoyed its arts outside of religious institutions in concert halls, museums, opera halls. (N.64)

It was not uncommon for churches to sponsor recitals, cantatas, and concerts featuring prominent artists. During its centennial celebration in 1918, Bridge St. featured two soprano solos and a violin performance. In a benefit concert held for Bridge Street, Nellie Brown, famed New York soprano, sang "La Stella" by Arditi and "The Last Rose of Summer." The Concord Literary Circle featured a violin duet, and a vocal performance of "Love's Golden Dream." An evening dinner held for the benefit of the Nazarene Congregational Church featured a solo from C.C. Clarke,

baritone, from Denver, Colorado; a performance from Prof. Charles Johnson, tenor, of Brooklyn; and Edward Wood, Violinist, also of Brooklyn. (N.65)

Moreover, the black churches relied on musical experts for polished and professional performances. All church choirs were trained by choir masters or musical directors. Occasionally, they participated in choral contests. The churches purchased large pipe organs and hired trained organists, among the best known, Dr. Susan McKinney, musical director of Bridge St. AME, the Turner Lyceum, and later the Siloam Presbyterian Church. The music of Bach, Handel, Brahms, and Franck set the tone for Sunday services. Recalling an earlier period, before gospel music became a dominant force at Berean Missionary Baptist Church, Myra Gregory noted that Baroque music was commonly heard. (N.66)

Music was no longer a participatory ritual but a performance that parishioners appreciated solely for its artistic value. The black churches hired well-trained professional staff to direct the services: choir masters, organists, and other musical experts. Parishioners responded to performances as though they were attending concerts. Instead of clapping and shouting, they listened and applauded. Describing a concert given by the Hyers Sisters at Zion Church on August 18, 1884, The New York Globe reported that the audience "attentively listened and were enthusiastic in their applause." A benefit concert for Bridge Street Church, was described by The New York Freeman,

as a financial success; the audience as "an appreciate one" and "applause and encores were generously bestowed." (N.67)

The black churches also moved toward a well-trained ministry. Early on, the black Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Congregational denominations required their ministers to receive seminary training at institutions such as Fisk University in Tennessee, Trinity in Alabama, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, and Biddle in North Carolina. (N.68)

This educational requirement was later established in the African Methodist churches. As early as the 1840's, AME state conferences passed resolutions calling for the establishment of seminaries. The first significant African methodist school was Wilberforce University, in Ohio. Morris Brown at Atlanta was also established. Due to the shortage, the AME established a rotation policy, by which the few educated ministers circulated among the congregations. In 1908, the twenty-third Quadrennial General Conference of the AME called for a well-trained ministry:

> If proper endeavors are not put forth, there is great and impending danger of the respectability and influence of our church being seriously lessened. The constant advancement of culture in the pew renders absolutely imperative the demand for equal advancement of culture in the pulpit. We are persuaded that our ministry is so well aware of these truths that no argument is needed to enforce the admonition to scrutinize with care the candidates for admission to our Conference and to insist on a high standard of qualifications. (N.69)

Although the Baptists did not have general educational requirements for ordination, the elite Baptist churches became discriminating. Before the Civil War, institutions run by other denominations educated the elite. Woodson notes that both Lincoln and Biddle, Presbyterian Colleges, graduated men who later joined both Methodist and Baptist Churches, probably because there were more Methodist and Baptist churches. However, after the Civil War, the Baptists established their own educational institutions to train ministers, Shaw University in Raleigh in 1865, and both Morehouse in Atlanta and Roger Williams in Nashville in 1867; Virginia Seminary College in Lynchburg, the Arkansas Baptist College, and the University of Louisville. (N.70)

Among Brooklyn's notable educated Baptist ministers were Francis Blair of Bethany, who received both his bachelors and masters degrees from Lincoln University; Rufus L. Perry, who received his Ph.D. in theology from Michigan Seminary; William Thomas Dixon of Concord Baptist Church, a former school teacher and principal who graduated from Arkansas University; and S.E. Lee of Shiloh Baptist Church, who held a Bachelors of Divinity from Virginia Seminary. (N.71)

As educated clergy appeared in Brooklyn's black pulpits, sermons became more intellectual. A detailed analysis of sermons of the late 19th and early 20th century is difficult, since virtually none survived. However, the black press of New York did occasionally summarize a sermon

delivered by a Brooklyn minister, providing some evidence. These sermons were not impromptu speeches, but well-planned, scholarly, biblical lessons based on an exegetical outline. Citing a Biblical passage and critically analyzing it, the preacher would usually conclude with practical applications. This approach cut across denominational lines: Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal, and Congregational, African Methodist and Baptist churches.

A sermon delivered by the Rev. J.W. Gloucester, founder of Siloam Presbyterian Church, at Bridge Street AWME illustrates the style. Selecting his text from the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy, Gloucester told the congregation that Moses presented "life with its attendant blessings to the people, as the condition of proper obedience to the divine law; or death with its cures as a result of disobedience" and cautioned the parishioners that ability to choose right or wrong; to accept Christ or reject him." (N.72)

The emphasis on scholarship rather than emotion was evident in the weekly press descriptions. The newspapers refer to them as "informative discourses," and "eloquent." For example, The New York Globe described a sermon given by the Rev. C.C. Astwood at Bridge Street as "an intelligent and pertinent discourse. A sermon by the Rev. L. Joseph Brown, pastor of Berean Baptist, was described by The New York Age as "scholarly and instructive." (N.73)

The sermons of high-church ministers were more than

just scholarly discourses; they reflected a changing sacred world view. In earlier African-American religious, there was little distinction between sacred and secular, and the sacred encompassed every aspect of life; in the black church culture the sacred was limited to a moral and ethical damnation. One did not come to God through mystical or emotional experience but rather through knowledge and reason. Moreover, greater stress was placed on the secular, making a clear distinction between worldly and otherworldly. Churches became more concerned with the social, political and economic conditions of African-Americans. Traditional Afro-Christianity stressed that God would deliver the faithful from the wicked, but Brooklyn's black churches adopted a more mainstream view: individuals must actively improve their lives in this world. Many preachers focused on proper behavior, ethics, and hard work as a means of improving the moral character of African-Americans, not as a requirement for heaven but for a successful existence on earth.

Dr. Rufus Perry's sermon at Bridge Street AWME Church on "Our Progress" illustrates this point. Perry contended that blacks had made strides in the fields of real estate, business, journalism, and religion, twenty years after emancipation. He urged blacks to work to be successful. In another example, a Sunday morning sermon on February 17, 1886, the Rev. Dickerson of Siloam pointed out the progress of blacks in a sermon entitled "Prospects of the Colored

People of the South." The Rev. H. Thomas of Bridge Street spoke on the "noble men of the race," referring to Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodism and John Gloucester, founder of black Presbyterianism. He reminded people of African origins that they had a great historical past and urged them to improve their status through hard work. (N.74)

The self-improvement message was not always delivered by clergy; prominent people from the black community would give sermons. The men and women who helped organize and administer the churches adopted a more urbane model in worship and services. They, like African-Americans in bondage, created this model to meet specific needs and to develop their own sense of identity in an urban society.

Black churches promoted literacy, hoping to challenge the notion of black inferiority and to define blacks as rational human beings, able to appreciate literature and art, to think abstractly, and to advance socially and economically. The churches also hoped literacy would improve the condition of the black masses.

Next to Sunday schools, literary societies were the best tool of Brooklyn's black churches to promote literacy. The Brooklyn Literary Union of Siloam Presbyterian Church was first in 1886. Soon after the establishment of the Brooklyn Literary Society, other literary groups were formed including the Concord Baptist Church's Literary Circle, St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal's Literary Sinking Fund,

Nazarene Congregational Church's Literary Society, Union Bethel African Methodist Episcopal's Young People's Literary Society, Bridge Street's Turner Lyceum, St. John AME Church's Star Lyceum and Fleet Street's Progressive Literary Union. (N.75)

These societies sponsored debates, lectures, elocution contests, recitations, musical recitals, and discussion of pertinent issues facing Black America. At a meeting of the Brooklyn Literary Union, the Rev. Rufus L. Perry delivered a paper on the progress on the black race. At a meeting of the Concord Literary Circle, addresses were delivered by editor T. Thomas Fortune, prominent black attorney Rufus Perry and William Edwards, who spoke on "Improvement: The Order of the Age." In another Literary Circle program, reported The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Ida B. Wells spoke of the "Afro-American in Literature." Mrs. E. Saville Jones sang "L'incontra," H.H. Butler sang "I'll Await Your Smiling Face," and Miss Helen Thompson "read a very commendable essay on Patriotism." At the Literary and Sinking Fund Society of St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal Church, a member read from Mark Twain, and a violin solo and duets were performed. At the Turner Lyceum of Bridge Street AWME Church, the Rev. A. Merrill Spoke on "Possibilities and Probabilities." The Brooklyn Daily Eagle contended that "there is no other city in the union that possesses as intelligent a community of young people as the City of Churches." (N.76)

The Brooklyn Literary Society's constitution and by-laws indicated a high level of organization, sophistication, intelligence, and middle-class values. This group, meeting the first and third Tuesday of each month from eight to ten p.m., following a prescribed agenda that included: singing and prayer, reading of the minutes, report of the board of managers, and literary exercises (lectures, reading of papers, debates, and general business). According to the constitution, the Society's president, T. McCants Stewart or an invited guest was obliged to give a lecture. All papers and debates had to follow guidelines:

> 1) No paper read before the Union shall exceed twenty minutes, except by special vote. 2) In stated debates there shall be four disputants, each of whom shall be limited to ten minutes, and there shall be no transfer of time. 3) All papers and stated debates shall be followed by a general discussion, which shall not exceed forty-five minutes; and state debates shall be decided in the affirmative or negative by vote of the Union. (N.77)

The black elite was active in these institutions. The Brooklyn Literary Union included among is distinguished honorary members Fredrick Douglass and author and poet Frances E. W. Harper. Its officers included T. McCants Stewart, president; New York Age publisher T. Thomas Fortune, corresponding secretary; and George H. Watson; The Board of Directors included Prof. Charles A. Dorsey and Maritcha R.Lyons, both principals of the Brooklyn "colored" schools; M.P. Saunders, treasurer of the Howard Orphanage Industrial School; Fredrick B. Watkins, listed along with

C.A. Dorsey as a member of Brooklyn colored 400; C.H. Lang also a member of Brooklyn's Colored 400 and one of its wealthiest black residents; and Dr. Susan McKinney, the first black women doctor in Brooklyn. Other members included William Hogarth, Rev. William Thomas Dixon, pastor of Concord Baptist Church, and Rev. Rufus Perry the chairman of the Board of Directors of Turner Lyceum was Walter S. Durham, an accomplished singer. The president of the Star Lyceum was R.M. Brown, a general commission and export merchant; and J. Howard Wilson, president of the Progressive Literary Union was a member of Brooklyn's 400. (N.78)

The literary society organizers saw themselves as part of what W.E.B. DuBois called the "Talented Tenth," the best and the brightest of the race, obligated to uplift the black masses by exposing them to the best literature and culture. The New York Age, published by T. Thomas Fortune, a major organizer of New York literary societies, contended that the masses of blacks were in "need of the superior contact which an intellectual and enlightened mind can give. . . Those of the race who have had intellectual and mental training are to be the levers with which the masses are to be lifted. A literary society in Brooklyn organized with a view to the mental uplift of the community, is an imperative necessity." (N.79)

Using culture to lift the underprivileged was not unique to the black churches, but was part of the larger movement in the late 19th and 20th centuries. A wave of new

immigrants, mainly from eastern and southern Europe, as well as blacks from the southern part of the United States, moved to northern cities, replacing a mostly white native-born work force and bringing their own unique culture into the factories and urban centers. The period witnessed the formation of labor unions and the rise of dime novels and other forms of popular culture. According to historian Daniel Walker Howe, the American Gentry was "mostly middle-class, mostly Whig-Republican, literary men and women," who wanted to humanize the new industrial-capitalist order by "infusing it with a measure of social responsibility, strict personal morality, and respect for cultural standards." (N.80) (72) This middle-class esteemed Victorian virtues -- hard work, soberness, postponing gratification, and sexual repression, was a means of molding the new work force. Lawrence Levine notes that the museums, art galleries, opera houses, theaters, and symphony halls became "active agents in teaching their audiences to adjust to the new social imperatives in urging them to separate public behavior from private feelings, in keeping a strict reign over their emotional and physical process." (N.81)

This cultural attitude in the black churches has been attacked by scholars, who contend that these institutions did little to oppose racial inequality in the early 20th century. Instead of leading the struggle, these institutions merely promoted decorous religious culture. For example, Gayraud Wilmore contends that:

> By the end of the First World War, the independent black churches were becoming respectable institutions. Having rejected the nationalism of Turner, they moved more and more toward what was presented by white churches as the model of authentic Christian faith and life. The dominant influence of clergy in the social betterment and civil rights groups helped to keep these organizations on an accommodationist trajectory. (N.82)

To label these churches accommodationist, however, is too simplistic. The significance of black church culture must be understood in its historical context. The churches emphasized that blacks could accomplish the best in art, literature and music; they went against a wave of opinion contending that blacks were mentally and morally inferior. Through a flood of pseudo-scientific literature, songs, magazines, motion pictures and other forms of popular culture, people of African descent were portrayed as innately shiftless, lazy, childish, stupid, amoral, oversexed, violent, beastly, as natural gamblers and as dangers to American society. (N.83)

D.W. Griffith's Birth of a Nation is a good example of this type of propaganda. Based on Thomas Dixon's 1902 novel, The Klansman, the film portrayed Africans liberated from the domesticating influence of slavery as beasts. Once the loyal black servants teamed up with the notorious carpetbaggers, they destroyed the social fabric of the south. Black union soldiers beat up decent white southerners; black brutes lusted after and attempted to rape white southern women, and black mobs killed anyone who stood

in their way. Once blacks gained control of South Carolina's state legislature, they made a mockery of the legislative process. Black buffoons ate chicken, drank whiskey, took their shoes off and picked their feet, and horrified whites by passing a bill that legalized interracial marriages. (N.84)

The popular image of Afro-Americans as brutish and dangerous, had political implications. Southern states disenfranchised African-Americans, amending their constitutions and adopting voting qualifications, including the grandfather clause, poll tax, and the white primary. States and local governments passed legislation segregating public facilities as a means of excluding blacks from the larger society. These regulations, popularly known as Jim Crow laws, denied African-Americans equal access to railroads, schools, libraries, hotels, hospitals, restaurants, parks, playgrounds, water fountains, toilets, and cemeteries. The north also imposed restrictive covenants; neighborhood improvement associations, municipal ordinances, and blockbusting by realtors forced blacks into northern ghettos. (N.85)

This pattern was not limited to local governments. Between 1873 and 1898, the United States Supreme Court ruled to strip African-Americans of their constitutional rights. In the Slaughter House cases of 1873, the court ruled to curtail privileges and immunities protected by the Fourteenth Amendment, giving states the green light to

restrict the rights of blacks. In 1883, the court ruled the 1875 Civil Rights Act unconstitutional, because the Fourteenth Amendment did not grant Congress the power to outlaw discrimination practiced by individuals. Again in 1898, the court ruled that separate-but-equal facilities were constitutional in Plessy v. Ferguson. Such decisions sent a clear message across the nation that the highest judicial body would not oppose the crusade to lock blacks into a caste system.

Discrimination was not limited to the courts. Between 1886 and 1900 twenty-five hundred people were lynched, the great majority of them southern blacks. From 1900 to World War I, 1,100 blacks were lynched in the United States. Moreover, an epidemic of race-riots hit both Northern and Southern cities, including Atlanta, Brownsville, Texas, East St. Louis, and Chicago (N.86)

To suggest that struggle can take only one form limits our understanding of the human reaction to oppressive conditions. Wilmore and others who argue that black churches did little to oppose racial oppression ignore culture as a mode of resistance. In a racist environment, the black churches promoted social equality and human rights for African people. As arbiters of culture, the black churches helped create an image of African-Americans as intelligent, scholarly, artistically and literally accomplished within the terms the dominant white culture had set. This image directly challenged the mainstream racist

view of blacks as beastly, lazy, childlike, stupid, and menacing. By making their churches literary and artistic arenas, these religious institutions countered the popular stereotype of blacks.

While the black church was adopting Eurocentric culture, the minister's role was changing drastically. In African-American evangelical Protestantism, the preacher shared control of the worship with his congregation. The ministers of the black elite religious institutions were, for the most part, seminary-trained professionals, helping parishioners gain an understanding of the Bible and Christian doctrine necessary for salvation. In some sense, the pastor became an intermediary between God and the individual.

In their crusade for a cultural hierarchy, black churches took any deviation as illegitimate and, therefore, intolerable. Insisting on proper behavior and correct leisure activities for the masses, they viewed with disdain many earlier aspects of African-American religion, particularly emotionalism. Sometimes, they scornfully ridiculed African-Americans who still practiced them. This resentment was expressed at the thirty-fifty annual National Baptist Convention:

> Then there is a third class representing quite ten thousand, who are simply cutting didoes and bellowing like an untamed animal of the Balaam specie while their thousands of followers scream like they are being stung by wasps, and shout until the building rocks in self-defense. Men of this type have no business in the pulpit. They split churches, break up homes and demoralize the communities in which they live and move and have their being. The poor people put their money into church property, pay the pastor's salaries, but have no knowledge of the real work of the Church of God. Their dilapidated, ramshackle, greasy buildings are parodies on clean, restful, sacred places, where the people, like David, are glad to go to meet God. (N.87)

Legitimate church culture probably attracted many southern black migrants and working-class blacks. Most African Methodist and Baptist churches increased in membership between 1900 and 1920, while the white-affiliated denominations grew slightly or decreased in membership. However, by the end of the 1920's, practically all churches including Siloam, Nazarene, St. Augustine, and St. Phillips had grown.

When black churches defined legitimate culture through their literary societies, educated clergy and scholarly sermons, they signaled a dramatic shift in the sacred world view of African-Americans. Unlike traditional African-American Christianity, in which there was no separation between words and action, in the sacred world of the black churches words became mere symbols, separate from action. They were only descirptions and not reality. This distinction between words and deeds limited the power

African-Americans had in controlling their lives. This separation helped close an avenue by which Blacks could make decisions in a society that relegated them to the lowest social and economic levels.

The black churches also denied the full variety of religious expression, making many feel uncomfortable and unwelcome. Some sought other religious forms, such as holiness-pentecostal and spiritualist churches, the earliest of which appeared in Brooklyn in the early 1900's; they increased dramatically during the heavy black influx of the late 1920's.

Although many were unhappy with the elite churches and fled, others decided to stay and struggle to reshape these institutions. As the 20th century progressed, demographic and cultural changes in Brooklyn's black community would help redefine Brooklyn's black churches, making them responsive to the needs and desires of working people in their community.

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Chapter #2

The Rise of Holiness-Pentecostal Churches of Brooklyn

In 1947, the New York Amsterdam News reported that the Christian Antioch Apostolic Church of God in Christ on Fulton Street had celebrated its sixteenth anniversary. This Holiness-pentecostal church was the first of many established in the United States by Samuel Williams, who was given the title of bishop by the religious organization. (N.1)

Eleven years later, a New York Amsterdam News article reported the death of Greenwood Dudley of Brooklyn, who had been a deacon of the Church of God and Saints on Gates Ave. in Brooklyn since 1909. Although the article does not mention a denomination, the church was most likely Holiness-Pentecostal. The name of the church is usually associated with that denomination, and the article refers to the pastor as an evangelist, a title used by Holiness-Pentecostal groups. (N.2)

These two news articles point out that by the 1930's, Brooklyn's mainline Black churches were not its only religious institutions. As the Black population increased, the major denominations began sharing space with other sects, including Holiness-Pentecostals. Most scholars who write on Brooklyn ignore the existence of these religious orders. (N.3)

It is a mistake to label Holiness-Pentecostal religious

institutions storefronts without making distinctions among denominations. Moreover, many black churches in Brooklyn started as storefronts, in someone's apartment, or as a small operation. Included among those with modest beginnings were Concord, Cornerstone, Brown, Holy Trinity Baptist, Mt. Sinai Baptist, Concord Baptist, Mt. Lebanon, St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal, and Bethany Baptist. In his 1930 study, George Hobart uncovered 68 storefronts, including 24 Baptist, one Protestant Episcopal, one African Methodist Episcopal, and one Methodist. Yet to label all Holiness-Pentecostal churches as storefronts is misleading, for by the middle 1950's some of these churches in Brooklyn were well established institutions with large edifices, claiming hundreds of members. (N.3)

As the 20th century progressed and Brooklyn's black population increased, Holiness-Pentecostal churches grew dramatically, attracting mostly the working poor. They became the fastest growing religious form in the black community. Their growth raises many questions. What do we know of these organizations? Why did they grow? How did these religious groups differ in doctrine and worship from the major denominations? What was the relationship between these institutions and the socioeconomic conditions of Brooklyn's black working class? This chapter examines these questions and presents the cultural and social significance of the Holiness-pentecostal churches in Black Brooklyn.

Origins of the Holiness-Pentecostal Churches

The holiness-Pentecostal movement had its origins in the post Civil War South. It was sparked by a growing dissatisfaction with the movement toward a refined way of worshipping in the established mainline churches, especially the Baptist and Methodist denominations. In 1867, a group of ministers of various denominations who advocated living a life of holiness, "heart religion," shouting, "spirited congregational singing," modest dressing, and dwelling in the Holy Spirit, held a camp meeting at Vineland, New Jersey and formed the National Holiness Association. Calling for a return to Christian fundamentalism, Association ministers held revivals that helped spread Holiness beliefs throughout the nation, especially the South. By the 1890's a number of "comeouters", people who had left the Methodist Church, formed their own denominations, traveled and held camp fire meetings advocating "theological and ethical purity." They became a significant element in the Holiness movement. By the turn of the century, some of these groups became Pentecostals, claiming that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, manifested by speaking in tongues of men or angels, was an essential experience in the lives of the faithful. (N.4)

By the turn of the century, African-Americans became a major force in the formation of the Holiness-Pentecostal movement. With very few exceptions, founders of Holiness-Pentecostal sects were former Baptist ministers who complained about the inertia in their churches and advocated

a personal experience with God. They stressed experiencing the spiritual baptism of the Holy Ghost, manifested through ecstatic behavior.

A prominent figure in the Holiness-Pentecostal movement was William J. Seymour, born in Centerville, Louisiana in 1870. Seymour received little formal education and at the age of twenty-five moved to Indianapolis, Indiana where he worked for a while as a waiter in a restaurant. Although little is known about his early religious development, in Indianapolis he joined a Methodist Church. Sometime in 1900 Seymour moved to Cincinnati, Ohio and came under the influence of the Evening Light Saints, a Holiness sect that traveled throughout the south spreading their message. After confessing and asserting that he was sanctified, he was baptized by the Evening Light Saints and became a traveling evangelist. In 1905, Seymour met Charles P. Jones, the founder of the Church of Christ Holiness USA. (N.5)

Probably influenced by Charles Parham, a white holiness minister from Kansas who established a Bible school in Topeka in 1900 and conducted revivals in the South, (N.8) Seymour applied to Parham's Bible school to gain greater religious training. There Seymour adopted the view that speaking in tongues was a sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Parham, a segregationist, refused to let Seymour attend classes or study with his white students in the main classrooms. According to E. Myron Noble, Seymour, and other

blacks, "were sent to an anteroom where they could hear lessons taught through an adjoining door." (N.6)

In 1906, Seymour was invited by Miss Neely Terry to preach a sermon at a church she attended in Los Angeles. Terry had been exposed to Holiness teaching while visiting Houston and wanted Seymour to become an associate pastor to the church. Seymour accepted the invitation, but his advocacy of speaking in tongues caused the church leader to deny him further access to the building, forcing him to seek another place to conduct services in that city. A husband and wife, who where members of the church that had closed its doors to Seymour, invited the evangelist to hold services in their home, and several people received the Spirit and spoke in tongues. Seymour attracted an enormous following and sought larger quarters. The preacher found an abandoned building in Azusa Street where he conducted a huge revival, receiving press attention and attracting people throughout the nation. This event, known popularly as the Azusa movement, although not the first recorded act of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking tongues among black Holiness-Pentecostals, was significant because it attracted crowds nationwide, lasted for three years and motivated others in the Holiness-Pentecostal movement to adopt the message of Seymour. (N.7)

Other African-Americans, including Charles Harrison Mason and Charles Price Jones, organized Holiness-Pentecostal churches. Mason, born in Tennessee in 1866,

became a Baptist minister in 1893 and established a church in Arkansas. Soon after, Mason became discouraged with "the strict Calvinistic teachings of the Baptist faith" and left the denomination in search of a closer relationship with God. He traveled to Mississippi, where he soon came under the influence of Charles P. Jones and other black ministers who advocated sanctification or living a holy life at all times, and divine healing. In 1896 mason and Jones founded th church of God, and in 1897, the name of the religious group was changed to the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). Hearing of the Azusa Mission, Mason visited the revival in 1897 and accepted the tenets of Holiness doctrine, including speaking in tongues, the washing of the feet of the saints, and divine healing. The doctrine of speaking in tongues divided Mason and Jones; eventually the latter left COGIC and formed a new religious group. (N.8) Jones, born in Georgia in 1865, became a Baptist minister in the late 1880's. By 1894, Jones became dissatisfied with his own personal experience and began adopting the beliefs and practices of the Holiness movement, such as sanctification and outpouring of the Spirit, while attempting to remain a Baptist preacher. His Baptist brethren voted him out of the Baptist Association. After fasting and praying, Jones responded to his ouster by calling for a convention of all those interested in Holiness. Jones eventually emerged with other Sanctified groups from Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky and formed the Church of Christ

Holiness. (N.9)

Black Holiness-pentecostal groups were also influenced by the racial attitudes of white Holiness-Pentecostal organizations. The Pentecostals of the World (PAW) and the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God in the Americas are good illustrations. Founded as an interracial body sometime during or right after the Azusa movement, the advocating sanctification and speaking in tongues, the PAW experienced a change in racial composition during the 1920's. Blacks, many migrating from the South, joined the ranks of the PAW, thus causing white members to leave and form a new organization called Pentecostal Churches, Inc. Although claiming to be an interracial body, by the 1930's the PAW was dominated by blacks. (N.10)

A racial split caused the formation of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas. During its early history it was an association of the predominantly white sect, Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, formed in the last decade of the 19th century. According to census records, Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas was established because of the "growing prejudice that began to arise among the people outside" against the association. In 1908 the association and the larger organization agreed to separate. (N.11)

Other divisive issues were not always racial. For example, one issue dividing groups was the concept of the Trinity. According to many Holiness-Pentecostal groups,

including COGIC, the Untied Holy Church of America Inc., and Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God in the Americas, God appear in three forms, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The trinitarian doctrine, a major tenet in most Christian denominations, claims that there are three distinct personalities in the Godhead, each with a specific role. However, by 1913, the Trinitarian view was under attack by some Holiness-Pentecostal leaders. Motivated by ministers who attended a 1913 Pentecostal camp gathering at Arroyo Seco in Southern California there questioned the validity of the Trinity, the Rev. Frank J. Ewart, a Pentecostal minister from the West Coast, asserted that the only personality in the Godhead was Jesus Christ and that the Father and Holy Spirit were only titles for God to reveal his personality. This belief, known as the "Jesus Only" or the oneness doctrine, was soon adopted by some Holiness-Pentecostal groups, including the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and The Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apolistic Faith. (N.12)

By the 20th century, there were numerous Black Holiness-Pentecostal groups, including the United Holy Church of America, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Free Church of God and Christ, Church of Christ Holiness U.S.A., Church of God and Saints of Christ, United Holy Church of America Inc., Mount Calvary Holy Church of America Inc., The Church of the Living God, House of Prayer for All People, Church of Our Lord Jesus, United Pentecostal Council of the

Assemblies of God Inc., Pure Holiness Church of God, Glorious Church of God in Christ Apostolic Faith, Churches of the Apostolic Faith Association, and Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God. (N.13)

Despite the differences in Holiness-Pentecostal groups, they adhered to similar doctrine and practiced common rituals. All asserted that the Bible was the highest authority. Like mainstream Protestant denominations, all black Holiness groups claimed that their doctrine, including baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, faith healing, sanctification, and other tenets of Holiness doctrine, were based on the scriptures. Moreover, the Bible was used to justify the restrictive life style that many Holiness groups adopt, including dress codes, dietary restrictions, and the taboo on recreational activities. They attacked practices of mainstream churches, claiming that they were not "scriptural." As the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World noted: "The denomination stresses belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures, as the only sufficient rule of faith and practice, and does not practice, and does not emphasize systematic theology." While the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas "utterly opposes the teaching of the theologian, William Lovett asserts: "It is the baptism where Jesus, the baptizer, exercises his sovereign will, control and possession of us through the person of the Holy Spirit." The believer becomes a stronger witness for Christ. (N.17)

The practice of glossolalia among Black Holiness-Pentecostal groups had its origins in the Azusa movement. Groups such as the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Church of God and Christ, Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, and the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas assert that a sanctified person may be taken over by the Holy Spirit, leading to a trance or an altered state of consciousness. The believer has no control over his body and begins speaking in a foreign language or a language of "Angels." The Church of God and Christ contends that "speaking in tongues" and the gift of healing, proof of the miracles of God, are a consequence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (N.18)

The practices and rituals of black Holiness-Pentecostal groups are also very similar. Although the songs of the Holiness-Pentecostal churches were written in the style of hymns and anthems during their early years, they were upbeat, similar in tempo to jazz and the blues, encouraging clapping in time with the music. This music, referred to as gospel music by the late 1920's, promoted participation and recaptured African-American Christian rituals practiced during slavery. In call and response, the congregation responded to the singers by singing, shouting, and dancing; thus manifested possession by the Holy Ghost through speaking in tongues. In Protest and Praise, Jon Spencer notes that singing in the early black Pentecostal churches was "tongue singing":

> During the Azusa Revival, "The activity that further differentiated Pentecostalism was "singing in the spirit' or singing in tongues. Indeed tongue-singing had occurred previously among such religious groups as the Shakers and Mormons, but only during the Second Pentecost did it procure a well-wrought interpretation that secured worldwide promulgation through Pentecostal publications. (N.18)

Early Pentecostals contended that the Holy Spirit filled the church, taking possession of the parishioners leading them to sing in xenoglossa or in glossolalia. Jennie Moore, a participant in the Azusa Revival asserted that during the Revival she was led by the "Spirit" and sang in tongues. "I sang under the power of the Spirit in many languages, the interpretation both words and music I had never before heard. . ." (N.20)

Lawrence Levine notes the significance of the music of the Holiness-Pentecostal churches:

> While many churches within the black community sought respectability by turning their backs on the past, banning the shout, discouraging enthusiastic religious, and adopting more sedate hymns and refined, concertized versions of the spirituals, the Holiness churches constituted a revitalization movement with their emphasis upon healing, gifts of prophecy, speaking in tongues, spirit possession, and religious dance. Musically, they reached back to the traditions of the slave past and out to the rhythms of the secular black musical world around them. They brought in the church not only the sounds of ragtime, blues, and jazz but also the instruments. They accompanied the singing which played a central role in their services with drums, tambourines, triangles, guitars, double bases, saxophones, trumpets, trombones, and whatever else seemed musically appropriate. (N.21)

However, the music of Holiness-Pentecostal churches,

unlike the slave spirituals which concentrated on the Old Testament, focused on the New Testament and the key role Jesus played in salvation, this was illustrated in Bishop Garfield Thomas Haywood's "Jesus the Son of God," written in 1915:

> Do you know Jesus, our Lord, our Savior, Jesus the Son of God? Have you ever seen or shared of His favor? Jesus, the Son of God, O Sweet Wonder! O Sweet Wonder! Jesus, the Son of God; How I adore Thee.
>
> God gave him a ransom, our souls to recover; Jesus the Son of God. His blood made us worthy His Spirit to hover; Jesus the Son of God. O Sweet Wonder! O Sweet Wonder! Jesus the Son of God; How I adore Thee. (N.22)

The message of Holiness-Pentecostal music was also therapeutic, relieving the hardships of the poor in the secular world and promising them a better life if they put their trust in the Lord. The saved did not have to worry about the lack of material wealth, as illustrated by Charles Price Jones' 1900 composition, "I'm Happy With Jesus Alone":

> There's nothing so precious as Jesus to me;
> Let earth with its treasures be gone;
> I'm rich as can be when my Savior I see;
> I'm happy with Jesus alone. I'm happy with Jesus alone, I'm happy with Jesus alone; Tho poor and deserted, thank God, I can say I'm happy with Jesus along. (N.23)

Song writers of the early Holiness-Pentecostal church wrote in a style of person testimony, sometimes using the first person to describe the power and goodness of Jesus. Titles such as Theodore Harris' "I Owe My All to Jesus," Charles W. Williams' "I Feel Like Going On," Charles Price

Jones' "Jesus Has Made It All Right," R.C. Lawson's "God is Great in My Soul," and Mrs. S.K. Grimes' "Since the Comforter Came," reveal the testimonial nature of these songs. May Tyler's study of 104 gospel songs of Charles Henry Pace, an early pioneer of Pentecostalism, claimed that many of the songs were personal testimonies as well as personal counsel to listeners. (N.24)

The lyrics of Mrs. S.K. Grime's "Jesus" and Gladstone T. Harewood's "Now I'm Saved" both illustrate the bond the believer had with Christ:

> When I was bow'd by distress and grief, Jesus, the Joy of my soul Came to my heart and brought sweet relief, Jesus, the Joy of my soul. (Grimes)
>
> Once I was far from Jesus my life was filled with sin The cruel pow'r of Satan Ruled all my heart with-in, I had no consolation Nor any sure relief; What-e'er I sought for comfort Broughton-ly pain and grief. Now I'm saved and I'm happy today, Thanks to God that this I can say; Now I'm saved and I'm happy today, I'm safe in the King's highway. (Harewood) (N.25)

Not only did the songs focus on the benevolence of Christ and his ability to save the believer, they also concentrated on how Jesus gave them equality in the Christian world. Hattie Edwards Pryer's "The Royal Nation" is a good example:

> Why should we feel sorry? Why should we feel and When we think of our station, we can't help but feel glad, Jesus is our leader, king of Kings is He; All the people, both rich and poor to Him shall bow their knee. We're a Royal Nation, children of the King, We are heir of God and joint heirs with Jesus; Soon in glory we'll tell the bless-ed story, We're the Royal Nation of the land. (N.26)

Holiness-Pentecostal sermons also involved the participation of the congregation. Pastors of Holiness-Pentecostal churches attempt to evoke a response from the congregation using numerous methods such as shouting, raising their voices, singing and dancing for the Lord and constantly repeating a phrase. In his study of black metropolitan religious forms, Arthur Fauset describes one such sermon at the Mt. Sinai Holy Church of America, Inc. in Philadelphia:

> If the preacher senses that her words are not getting over, or that there is a lassitude creeping over the congregation, she will cry out, "Help me!" or she will plead, "Holy Ghost, speak through me!" At various times during the sermon a single member or a group of members will rise suddenly and speak in tongues and perhaps dance about either in place or through the hall. (N.26)

However, like music, sermons represented more than a form of collective worship. Holiness-Pentecostal sermons were testimonies revealing a personal relationship between the believer and God. In some cases, the person was on the brink of death and God stepped in to demonstrate his powers and love by rescuing the individual. R.C. Lawson contended that after living a sinful life and developing a deadly case of tuberculosis, he turned to God and was healed. The founder of COOLJC testified to his congregation that god had taken him through a special journey. "God had a way of bringing me. He had to strip me first, He had to bring me out of the crowd and into the Church, He had to pull me out of the world, He had a way of doing it." (N.27) As a

teenage preacher, Bishop Smallwood Williams stated that "other times I introduced my evangelistic sermons with a personal testimony of my preteen experience of salvation by saying 'After spending twelve long years in sin, God saved me." (N.28)

Besides music and sermons, testimonials were common in Holiness-Pentecostal churches as a means of reinforcing beliefs. During the testimonial period, members take turns speaking to the congregation of the blessings they received from God and how He has worked miracles.

Testimony is also antiphonal, involving a response from the congregation as a member "gives testimony." In his 1958 article "Store-Front Religion", G. Normal Eddy reports visiting numerous House of Prayer of Our Lord Churches in Harlem. He described a typical testimonial service at one such institution:

> Perhaps the most distinctive thing about their services is the frenzied congregational participation. After a brief period of spontaneous singing, the young and old line up and take their turn at the microphone to offer testimony. It may be a long or short effort, but occasionally it becomes so emotional that a few lose control of themselves completely. Others start to clap their hands while the speaker moves around in ever-increasing tempo until eventually he jumps high off the floor. He throws back his head as if from a violent spasm. His actions are contagious and those waiting in line to offer testimony begin to imitate him. (N.29)

Black Holiness-Pentecostal Churches in Brooklyn

As blacks migrated to the north, they attempted to create a viable community life, building institutions that

expressed their customs and traditions. These included the Holiness-Pentecostal churches. In Black Chicago, Allan Spear notes: "of all aspects of community life, religious activities were most profoundly changed by the migration." According to Spear, migrants established a large number of Holiness-Pentecostal churches: "The migration, however, brought into the city thousands of Negros accustomed to the informal, demonstrative, preacher-oriented churches of the rural south. Alienated by the formality of the middle-class churches, many of the newcomers organized small congregations that met in stores and houses and that maintained the old-time shouting religion." (N.30)

Like Chicago and other urban areas with a large influx of black migrants, Brooklyn, New York became the site of many Holiness-Pentecostal churches. It is difficult to determine when Holiness-Pentecostal churches began to appear in Brooklyn, since many located in apartments of storefronts when undetected. Also, these institutions did not leave records. A study published by the Protestant Council of Churches in 1931 noted that the Holiness-Pentecostal churches represented a small segment of Brooklyn's black population in the early 1930's. According to the study, there were at least fifty-four non-Holiness-Pentecostal churches in Brooklyn. These fifty-four congregations had a membership of 28,160. The council listed only three Churches of God in Christ, with an estimated population of 354; three "Pentecostal," also estimated at 354; two

Churches of God, with a population of 236; three Nazarene, with a combined membership of 242; and twenty-six other institutions not affiliated with the major denominations. (N.31) The number of members belonging to the twenty-six unidentified churches was estimated at a little over two thousand.

The Baptist was the fastest growing denomination. By 1952, there were at least thirty seven black Baptist churches in Brooklyn. Of the thirty seven, sixteen reported a membership of 34,125. The second largest Protestant group among blacks were the African Methodist Episcopal and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches. Of the six AME churches, five reported a combined membership of 5,358 while the two of the three AME Zion reported a total membership of 4,456. However, throughout the 1940's and 1950's the number of Holiness-Pentecostal churches and their membership grew dramatically. Many were located in Bedford-Stuyvesant and included the Life and Time of Jesus Pentecostal Church, St. Mark's Holy Church, St. Paul's Church of Christ Disciples, the Elect Church, Mt. Hope United Holy Church of America, the Church of God and Saints on Gates Ave., the Faith Tabernacle Church of God, at 573 Gates Ave., House of Prayer for All People on Sumpter St., Jesus Christ's Triumphant Church of the Apostolic Faith on Quincy St., Glorious Pentecostal True Holiness on Fulton St., True Holiness on Fulton St., and the Pentecostal Church of All Nations on Gates Ave. According to the American News, Pentecostal

churches were the "fastest growing churches" in Brooklyn. (N.32)

The Church of God in Christ became the largest Holiness-Pentecostal sect in Brooklyn. In 1952, the Protestant Council of Greater New York listed twelve COGIC institutions, three with a combined membership of 1250. The first group was established in 1925 by Frank Clemmons, a native of Washington, North Carolina, who had converted to the Church of God in Christ in 1914. Forced to leave school to help support his family, Clemmons soon began preaching. In 1918, after a few months in the Army, he moved to Brooklyn and began worshipping with J.F. Bridges, a minister of the Pentecostal group Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith (COOLJC), and a close friend of Clemmons. However, Clemmons was unsatisfied with the doctrine of COOLJC and decided to establish a COGIC church in Brooklyn. (N.33)

Clemmons and his wife Polly began holding prayer services in their apartment, attracting a loyal following. As the prayer group grew, they moved to Rochester and Dean Streets in Bedford-Stuyvesant, renting a storefront. By 1939, the group had raised enough money to purchase a church at 1845 Pacific Street, in the rapidly growing black community of Bedford-Stuyvesant. (N.34)

Three years after the first COGIC, a second COGIC was established. No records of the early history of the church exist, thus it is difficult to detail its early history. It

was located in a storefront at 29 Lafayette Street. Ulysses Corbett, one of the church's earliest members, recalls a storefront seating only a few dozen. Taffie Brannon, another founding member of the church, recalls that the church on Lafayette Street was on the ground floor of a walk-up. The founder and pastor of the church, a Rev. Cartwright lived with his family above the church. (N.35)

By the early 1930's, under the leadership of John E. Bryant, the congregation had organized numerous auxiliaries including a music department, Home and Foreign Mission, Bible Band, Young People's Society, and a gospel choir. Throughout the 1930's the church grew, forcing the congregation to move twice to other storefronts, first on Fulton and then on Marion St. Eventually in 1936, the church purchased its first and only building at 137 Buffalo Ave. (N.36)

Throughout the 1940's and 1950's more COGIC congregations were organized, including at least two in East New York, one in Brownsville, and another in the Coney Island section. But the majority of were founded in Bedford-Stuyvesant, 9 of the 12 reported by the Protestant Directory of Metropolitan New York. (N.37)

The best known COGIC established in Brooklyn in the 1950's was Fredrick D. Washington's Washington Temple. Washington was born in Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1903, the son of a minister in the Church of God in Christ. Following in his father's footsteps, Washington began preaching in

Arkansas before his teens and became a minister in the COGIC before adulthood. He eventually settled in Montclair, New Jersey, where he became pastor of the trinity Temple COGIC from 1933 to 1951. Claiming a divine order to go to Brooklyn, he left Montclair after 18 years of service and in July 1951 established a canvas cloth tent service on Fulton Street in a vacant lot at the corner of Grand Ave. Accompanied by his wife Ernestine, a well known gospel singer, and Alfred Miller, and organist and choral master, Washington held nightly revivals delivering firey sermons and prayers, "healing" the sick and baptizing by water those who converted to the faith. Washington's tent, known as the "Sawdust Trail" because of sawdust covering the floor, grew rapidly. Between July and October 1951 many volunteered to serve as ushers, choir singers, deacons, ministers, nurses, etc. During its first public baptism, eight converts appeared, and crowds overflowed into the streets. Eventually, the nightly tent services were filled to capacity, forcing Washington to move first to a storefront at 26 Reid Ave., and then to another storefront at 1142 Herkimer Street, where Washington paid $110 a week in rent. Through member's efforts, Washington was able to buy the Lowes Theater on Bedford Ave. in 1952. (N.38)

Besides the Church of God in Christ, other Holiness-Pentecostal groups were established in Brooklyn before World War II. A Jesus Christ's Triumphant Church of the Apostolic Faith at 289 quincy Ave. was founded in 1938, a Glorious

Pentecostal True Holiness Church in 1932, the Elect Church in 1936, and several Churches of God in the last 1920's and early 1930's, a United Holy Church of America, two Daddy Grace's House of Prayer for All People in 1932 and 1937 respectively, a True Holiness Church, and a Pentecostal church of All Nations, Inc. at 402 Gates Ave. (N.39)

One of Brooklyn's most popular Pentecostal groups was the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc. The first group was formed by Peter J.F. Bridges, born in Washington, North Carolina in 1890, into a Methodist home. Introduced to a Holiness Church at an early age, he became fascinated with the charismatic preaching style. As a child, he would kill chickens and preach their funeral.

Unable to finish school, Bridges went to work as a laborer; he married, and left the south seeking better economic opportunities. It is not clear when he became involved with Lawson and the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic. Under Lawson, he was ordained and established his first church in his apartment in Bedford-Stuyvesant in the late 1930's. Through tithes, special offerings, and money donated by Bridges from his salary, the members purchased a church on Marcy Ave., selecting the name Buelah COOLJC. From this branch other ministers were trained who established churches in Brooklyn. (N.40)

By World War II, black Holiness-Pentecostal churches in Brooklyn had multiplied. There were several churches of the Apostolic Faith, at least three Apostolic Overcoming

Holiness Churches of God, a Church of God and Saints, and a United Holy Church of America, Inc. By the mid 1960's there were four COOLJC, and at least a dozen Churches of God. In addition, the number of COGIC institutions had dramatically increased to 31, 28 were located in Bedford-Stuyvesant. There were also new organizations such as the Deliverance Evangelistic Center and the Tabernacle Prayer for All People. Most of these black Holiness-Pentecostals practiced conversion, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. (N.41)

Probably the most dynamic Pentecostal minister in Brooklyn during the post-World War II period was Arturo Skinner, (1924-1975), born in Brooklyn, and educated in the New York Public School system. As a young man, he felt trapped in a life of despair and turned to drugs. Skinner claims that, while he was walking in the streets of New York and contemplating suicide, God spoke with him, convincing him to dedicate his life. Skinner began attending Pentecostal churches, including Mother Rose Artimus Horn's Pentecostal Church on Lenox Avenue in Harlem, but moved to New Jersey. Adopting the style and structure of Pentecostal churches, Skinner established in Newark by the last 1940's a Pentecostal church in an apartment. As his congregation grew, Skinner moved to larger quarters, renting storefronts and eventually buying a place of worship in Newark in the 1950's name it the Deliverance Evangelistic Center. Skinner soon opened another center on Dekalb Avenue in downtown

Brooklyn. (N.42)

Although not affiliated with any major Holiness-Pentecostal groups, Skinner's Deliverance Evangelistic church borrowed liberally from them. This group advocated sanctification, speaking in tongues, washing of the saint's feet, divine healing and the trinity. Prayer services, a testimony period, and gospel singing are part of every service. Despite the similarities between Deliverance Evangelistic and other Holiness-Pentecostal groups, the major emphasis and attraction of Skinner's group was divine healing. According to Skinner and his followers, God had given him the special gift of healing. The healer in direct communication with God, practiced the laying on of hands (the healer has the power to heal by touching the inflicted area) and calling on God in an assertive voice to heel the invalid. Skinner decorated the walls of his church with the wheelchairs, canes, and crutches of the people he had healed as proof of his powers. In his work, Nine Gifts of the Spirit, Skinner asserted "we do not attempt to negate the ethics of the medical profession. If you don't have faith in God, you had better get a good doctor. We simply believe in God's Word." For Skinner, healing is:

> Life triumphs over death. God bless doctors! But they do not have the final say. They cannot command sight into blinded eyes. Through the means of surgery, cripples have been made to walk; but when God heals, he leaves no scars! Psychiatrists, with all their logic, cannot restore minds, or speak peace to a troubled and tormented soul. Nor is there a psychiatrist who can renew a right spirit within man. The gift of healing is a

supernatural expression of the HEALTH OF GOD. (N.43)

Besides services at Deliverance evangelistic centers in Newark, Brooklyn, and later Philadelphia, occasionally Skinner held "Deliverance Crusades" at Madison Square Garden and Rockland Palace in Harlem, attracting large crowds. There was singing by the 500-voice Deliverance Choir and "Holy Ghost Rallies" with praying and healing of the sick. (N.44)

Similar in doctrine and rituals to Skinner's group was Johnnie Washington's Tabernacle. Born in Mississippi in 1929, Washington grew up in poverty and left school to help support his family. Raised as a Baptist, he was exposed to the Church of God in Christ at an early age. The religious service had a great impact on him, according to Washington, especially the emotional singing and preaching and the personal relationship the saints had with God. As a teenager, he became a gospel singer performing in many Holiness-Pentecostal churches. Washington moved to Brooklyn and briefly joined a Disciple of Christ Church where he conducted prayer meetings and revivals. After gaining experience, Washington began a street ministry on Franklin and Nostrand Avenues in Bedford-Stuyvesant. In 1967, Washington broke away from the Disciples and established his own group in Red Hook Brooklyn. He later moved to Rockaway Ave. in Brownsville and called his new church the Tabernacle Prayer for all People. (N.45)

Although like Skinner's Deliverance Evangelistic Center, Tabernacle was not part of any organized group, it adopted practices from other Holiness-Pentecostal groups including speaking in tongues, testimonies, long prayer services, and divine healing. Music included congregation participation and tambourines, scrub boards and guitars, and drums. Strict codes of behavior were adopted by the body, prohibiting parties, dancing, and smoking. The congregants referred to themselves as saints, noting their special status with God and distinguishing themselves form the sinful. (N.46)

Huey Rogers' Bible Way Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ World Wide Inc. of Brooklyn was another important Holiness-Pentecostal church. Born in Georgia, Rogers was converted to the Holiness faith at an early age, and became a preacher at 14. Migrating to Brooklyn, he joined the newly established Bible Way Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ World Wide Inc. An ambitious man, Rogers rose through the ranks of the organization and in 1959 was appointed president of the Bibleway General Young People's Congress, winning fame as a hard worker. In 1967, Rogers became pastor of the Bible way Temple on Gates Ave. which soon became one of the largest Pentecostal churches in Brooklyn. (N.47)

The Significance of Holiness-Pentecostal Churches in the Black Community

According to personal testimony, the early members of Holiness-Pentecostal churches were poor. Mother Brannon, who joined COGIC in the late 1920's, asserted that the early members of her church were poor and had "nowhere to go." Maritcha Harvey, a member of Beulah Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith and daughter of its founder, Peter F. Bridges, noted that the first members of her father's church were working class poor people. "Many did domestic work and there were "no professional" people in the early church. On many occasions when members of Beulah could not meet the financial obligations of the church, Pastor Bridges would have to assist. According to his daughter, "The church did not take care of him, he took care of the church," (N.48) Similarly, Frank Clemmons, founder of the First COGIC, had to work at various jobs in order to meet the expenses of his church because the congregation was unable to provide the money. Morry Bryant McGuire, a member of Church of God and Christ on the Hill and daughter of Rev. John Bryant, notes that as a young child growing up in the church, many people were poor and suffered greatly during the Depression. She recalled that many members of the church turned to Rev. Bryant for financial assistance and "he did all that he could in order to help." Many people joining Holiness-Pentecostal churches were southern migrants. (N.49)

Nettie Kennedy was one of those poor migrants joining a Holiness-Pentecostal church in Brooklyn. Born in North Carolina in 1903, Nettie stopped attending school at the age of nine in order to "go to work on a farm" picking cotton to help support her family. Like many blacks working in the cotton fields, she received less than a dollar a day. Nettie married in North Carolina and had four children. However, the relationship deteriorated between Nettie and her husband and she decided that she had to end her marriage. Left alone with four children and little opportunity to advance economically, Nettie decided to move north. She had relatives living in Philadelphia and New York and had corresponded with them. They had informed her that opportunities were great in the North and race relations were better. Moreover, Nettie read a local North Carolina paper called the "Grit" that informed her of the great opportunities. Convinced that she could improve her economic condition and get a better education for her four children, Nettie became part of the large wave of migrants heading North, and headed for Philadelphia in 1929. (N.50)

Despite her optimism, life was rough in Philadelphia during the Depression. Although she stayed with her aunt, Nettie found it difficult to make ends meet. She was unable to find a job and soon decided to leave Philadelphia and move to Brooklyn. Nettie stayed with a cousin on Herkimer Street in Brooklyn and soon found work as a domestic servant. "I was sleeping in white folk houses and working."

Nettie also joined a small Pentecostal church. "This church was like a family," according to nettie. Many members had migrated form the South and were poor. But they banded together for worship and social events. The members met on Sunday for services and during the week for prayer meetings, choir rehearsal and club meetings. For Nettie, the church was the most important institution in her new life. It gave her somewhere to go and something to do. "I watched children grow up in the church and have children. It means so much." (N.51)

Brooklyn's black residents, like blacks in other urban areas, had few economic and political choices. Although, social and economic conditions handicapped blacks, their plight did not stop them from seeking means to improve their lives. The creation of the Holiness-Pentecostal churches illustrates a conscious effort by blacks to establish an identity and self-worth. Through these religious institutions, people of African descent created an identity by defining Christianity, asserting important theological issues and doctrine, and expressing a unique view of God, heaven and earth. Many contended that they were uncomfortable in the large churches and were unable to express themselves as they did in southern churches. Their style of worship differed form the mainline churches that many found boring and too formal. U.L. Corbett, born in North Carolina in 1894, migrated to Brooklyn in the 1920's. Corbett, who joined a COGIC on Fulton Street in 1928,

asserted that "there is but one Church, the Church of God and Christ. People use the word churches when talking about the other churches, but these churches are not real." (N.52)

Moreover, Holiness-Pentecostalism was used as a means to adjust to an urban environment. For Pentecostals, the world was seen as an evil and hostile place. It was in the camp of Satan, and all secular pleasures were counter productive to spiritual development. Consequently, the believers contended that they must separate from the world. As Lovett notes:

> The world for black Holiness-Pentecostals is viewed as human society without Christ, or may refer to human behavior which reflects fallen man and does not conform to the image of Christ as revealed in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. 1 John 2:15 is the bedrock for the belief concerning the world. Members of the movement are constantly exhorted to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, and if any man love the world, the loves of the Father is not in him. Within black Holiness-Pentecostalism, the individual is exhorted to "give up worldliness as a part of the sanctifying process." (N.53)

For the most part, black Holiness-Pentecostals in Brooklyn, like Holiness-Pentecostals in other communities, cut themselves off form the outside world by rejecting many aspects of urban life. They established a strict code of behavior that included aspects of dress, language, and proper etiquette in and outside the church. Samuel Gibson who joined Arturo Skinner's Deliverance Evangelistic Center in the early 1950's notes that dancing, gambling, drinking, smoking, and other "pleasures of the world" were rejected by the "saints". According to Gibson, the only dancing allowed

in church was dancing to "praise the Lord." Maritcha Harvey as member of Beulah Chruch of Our Lord Jesus Christ, lamented over the modern ways of the members today. During the early period of the church, people were faithful to holiness, they did not partake of social affairs of the world. "The apostolic church today is not as strict as it was fifty and sixty years ago. When I got saved. I promised the Lord I would not go to the movies anymore. So I don't go to the movies. Today, there is a change. Some are on the fence. I don't want to be on the fence." (N.54)

Not all were able to conform to the strict code of behavior. Evelyn Smith, an early Beulah member whose parents were founding members notes:

> I had lots of friends and they were of various denominations. And I went to all their churches. Beulah was very hard. I dropped out for awhile. The reason I stopped going to church, I'll tell you in plan english. One day I had a midriff on and someone in church made a remark and it was blown out of proportion and at that time I was twenty two. I decided that this is it for me.

Smith could not conform to the strict code of the church.

> Anyone who knows Pentecostal-Apostolic know that there are rigid formalities. You can't wear makeup, you can't wear this or that and the other. In my house you could not wear short dresses and you better not go to church without a hat over your head. It didn't bother me about the makeup but it was that things were so rigid. At twenty-two I had a 12:30 curfew. If I came in later, I could not get in my house. I would have to stay at a friend's house. The way I came up was pure pain living. (N.55)

By rejecting aspects of urban culture, Brooklyn's black Pentecostals were attempting to make sense of their

environment. By not accepting the values of their urban environment, they closed themselves off from the larger community and created their own community. Thus, they helped each other cope with their environment. It helped bring order to their disordered world and provided them with a support system.

Mother Taffie Brannon of COGIC on the Hill, recalled coming to Brooklyn from the South in the later 1920's with her daughter. She came upon a Church of God in Christ located in a storefront on Lafayette Avenue led by a pastor Cartwright. Brannon began attending services and became part of the church community. The pastor and his wife invited Brannon and her daughter to stay with them in the storefront. "The Cartwrights treated me like a daughter," Brannon said.

Brannon noted that the services were always special events. They lifted her out of the humdrum, and brought her closer to God and the members of the congregation. Brannon asserts that many people were attracted to the church because they were allowed to participate. Many were poor and had nowhere to go. The church was a home where people could gather, laugh and have a good time.

Services were held every Sunday morning and during weekdays in the evening. (N.56) The Sunday service began at 11:00 am and lasted till 3:00 PM in the afternoon, while the evening services began around 7:30 or 8:00 and sometimes would last until early in the morning. The services

included gospel singing, prayer and testimony period, the sermon, and devotional. According to Brannon, the services were lively events involving the participation of the congregation in every aspect of worship. The services helped people escape their problems by joining members in "fellowship." (N.57)

Because the members of the Beulah Christ of the Apostolic Faith met several times a week for services, Maritcha Harvey asserted that the congregation was like a family. (N.58)

Myra Lovell, a member of the Lafayette Church of God recalled:

> I remember what good times a few saints used to have, old and young. The age didn't mean anything to the young ones, as long as we were saved. That's what was important. We worked together and had a good time in the Lord. At Herkimer Street I remember in the contests we used to have with the Red and Blue teams. What a time on Thanksgiving night when we had the program. When the team raising the most money was announced, we would shout for joy in sweet fellowship. No fuss! What we raised helped to purchase 404 Lafayette Avenue in sweet spirit. (N.59)

Bessie Smalls, also a member of Lafayette Church of God since 1944, remembered "coming to Lafayette in 1944. I found some beautiful young people consisting of the Yearwoods, Boyces, McConnells, Coulthursts, Turpins, the Marshalls and their children. We had some wonderful times in the Lord. I am still at Lafayette enjoying the Lord." (N.60

Some lived above the churches in close quarters, thus

helping create close bonds. Darlington Coulthurst, recalled as a child living in the same building in which her church was located.

> I remember that Rev. Marshall used to keep his bicycle chained to the radiator on the first floor at 426 Herkimer Street. I used to pass it every day when I came home from school to have my lunch. The Marshall Family lived in the apartment above the church and we lived on the floor above them. My father used to take care of the house. In the winter time Pop would bank the fire at night and in the morning, around 6:00 am, it was my job to fix the fire and close the furnace door so that the heat would come up. I had to go downstairs two flights, pass the door at the back of the church and then go down into the cellar.
>
> I can remember going downstairs on the mornings following a funeral at the church. The body would remain in the church overnight. The open casket was placed near the door that I had to pass on the way to the cellar. I had to go downstairs, but I was scared to go past the open door, scared to be down in the cellar by myself, scared to come back up past the door again, but I was more scared not be take care of the fire because I'd have to answer to my father. (N.61)

Adding to the view that the Pentecostal churches helped members cope with their environment was the belief in healing. Healing is the best illustration of God taking care of believers. It takes place among the community of saints and is proof that no believer needs to turn to the world, for God will take care of every need

The story of Penny Hooks is just one of many examples that Holiness-Pentecostals use to prove how faith in God will deliver them from worldly tribulations. It also illustrates their personal relationship with God. As a young woman living in Harlem in 1962, Hooks was stricken

with multiple sclerosis which left her unable to walk. Her family took Penny to several doctors and she was eventually admitted to hospitals for treatment. However, Penny's condition grew worse. She lost control of her body and her mental state deteriorated. She had screaming fits and threatened family members with bodily harm. After a brief stay at home, Penny became deranged and violent and was finally admitted to the Psychiatric Ward at Harlem Hospital. (N.62)

One Sunday Penny's mother met an old friend who informed her of the Arturo Skinner and how God worked through him to heal people. Mildred Hooks traveled to Brooklyn and spoke to Rev. Skinner. Skinner assured her everything would be all right and traveled to the hospital to meet Penny. One February 21, 1963, Penny was released from Harlem Hospital and the Hooks family began attending Sunday services at Deliverance Evangelistic Center in Brooklyn. Eventually Penny's family began accepting the notion that her suffering was due to spiritual, not medical reasons. According to her sister, Esther Hooks, "Penny was demon possessed. . . " Skinner used prayer and anointed her with oil. Gradually Penny began to improve. By October 1963, her mental faculties were restored. She regained her speech and the violent outbursts stopped. Moreover, by the fall of 1964, Penny began to walk. (N.63)

The Penny Hooks story, like other Pentecostal stories of supernatural healing, reveals both an individual and a

communal relationship with God. The root of all human problems are spiritual, therefore, if a person accepts God and attempts to live a sanctified life, God personally takes care of his needs of his saints. At the same time healing confirms for the community of saints that their doctrine and practices are legitimate. It is a paradigmatic act, confirming that the world described in the Bible is real. For Pentecostals there is only good and evil. If one has faith no matter what the circumstances are, God will deliver. As Maritcha Harvey contends, "Healing makes the Bible real." (N.64)

As noted earlier, Holiness-Pentecostalism stressed an otherworldly doctrine, rejecting many values of the larger community. However, despite their otherworldly view, Holiness-Pentecostals share many values with the larger society, including moral orientation, seeing the world in terms of right and wrong, and progress, a belief that things in the future will improve. Sociologists assert that these are core values shared by the majority of Americans. (N.65)

Moreover, the economic success of some Holiness-Pentecostal members suggests that elements of Holiness-Pentecostal beliefs, equipped them with values that helped them strive for middle class and working class status, thus keeping them from being part of the growing urban under-class. When Peter F. Bridges migrated from Washington, North Carolina, he had only an elementary school education and was relegated to manual labor. However, according to

his daughter, he believed that "you could not get rich working for anyone." He saved and invested his money in real estate. Near the end of his life, Bridges owned five houses. (N.66) Samuel Gibson of Deliverance Evangelistic Center, although working as an unskilled laborer and as caretaker of the church, he managed to save some money and with a loan from the church, purchased a home in Bedford-Stuyvesant. (N.67)

Ruby Richards' life demonstrates this drive for economic independence. Born in 1928, Ruby came to New York at an early age with her parents and moved to Bedford-Stuyvesant. Ruby grew up in a religious home. Both her parents were ministers and operated a storefront church on Marcy Street. However, they lost the church when the city decided to build a public high school in the place where the church stood. Her parents were so discouraged, they decided to join another Pentecostal church instead of operating their own. They joined St. Marks Holy Pentecostal church founded by Eva Lambert. Ruby loved the church and had developed a close relationship with Bishop Lambert. She remembers the bishop referring to her as "my little girl." (N.68)

In 1944, Ruby graduated Girl's High School and soon married Alva Richards, second assistant pastor of Concord Baptist Church. Alva Richards met Ruby at St. Marks when he began working with the church's choir. Despite the fact that Alva was a Baptist, Ruby refused to give up the

Pentecostal church. Ruby and Alva reached a compromise. They decided they would not interfere in each other's religious practices. Each would attend the church of their choice. (N.69)

Ruby began working as a practical nurse soon after graduation and continued working after her marriage. However, after a few months of working in a hospital, she was assigned to work with syphilis patients. She also learned that she was pregnant. Fearful of contracting a venereal disease and with the urging of her husband that she quit, Ruby left nursing and became a "homemaker." In 1945, Ruby's first child Rudy was born. It would not be until eight years later that her second child, Debra was born. In 1955, Ruby gave birth to her third child Janet. The children attended St. Mark's Holy Church. (N.70)

Ruby's husband did not earn much as an assistant pastor and the family applied for public housing. The application was accepted and the Richards moved to a housing project Brownsville Brooklyn. (N.71)

But tragedy soon struck the Richards household. In 1960, Alva developed prostate cancer and died less than a year later. Ruby suddenly found herself alone with three children and no income. She decided to look for work. Although her oldest was sixteen, the two girls, eight and six, needed supervision. Therefore, she could only take part time work. In her search for employment, she passed George Gershwin Junior High School on Van Siclin and Linden

Blvd. and decided to apply for anything possible. She was hired as a school aide for four hours a day. It was a hard struggle but she managed on her small income. While working at Gershwin as a school aide in the late 1970's, Ruby learned about a career ladder program for paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals earning college credits would be promoted and receive a raise. Ruby decided that this was a great opportunity. Her children were getting older and were able to take care of each other. Ruby first applied for a paraprofessional position and was accepted. She worked during the day and attended Brooklyn College in the evening. Eventually, Ruby earned enough credits and moved from educational assistant to educational associate, the highest level of a paraprofessional.

Ruby believes that her decision to involve her children in the Pentecostal church may have set them on the right track. The structure and discipline demanded by the church and the number of church social activities that the children were involved in helped keep them out of trouble and "focused on positive things." Ruby became a butcher and eventually moved into a supervisory position for the Atlantic and Pacific company. Debra became a traffic violation patrol officer, and Janet is employed by the Traffic Dept. as a computer programmer. (N.72)

The collective effort of members of several congregations to economically improve their churches also suggests many adopted values of the larger society. In

1931, the Protestant Church Council reported that none of two Churches of God, nor the three COGIC churches owned property. However, by 1939, the second COGIC established in Brooklyn was able to purchase a building valued at $20,000. Although the first COGIC did not report property throughout the 1940's, by 1952, the church reported having $25,000 in property. Jesus Christ Triumphant Church of the Apostolic Faith had humble beginnings in 1938, but by 1947, it reported having $17,000 and by 1952, it had $35,000 in property. St. Paul's Church of Christ Disciples had "humble beginnings". It started out as a storefront operation, but due to the fund raising efforts and savings of its members, it was able to purchase a theatre for over $100,000 on Gates Avenue and convert it it to a church. Between 1938 and 1944, Buelah's pastor, Peter Bridges, used money from tithes and offerings from his congregation and put a down payment on a church building on Marcy Avenue. The congregation of St. Marks Holy Church managed to raise $7,000 in four weeks in order to pay off the remainder of their mortgage. (N.73)

These illustrations of individual and collective efforts, avoidance of worldly pleasures, and stress on discipline, suggest that Holiness-Pentecostals developed middle class values of upward mobility, economic independence, an appreciation for hard work, and respect for ownership. This, in return, helped create a culture that helped black Holiness-Pentecostals adjust to the demands of the larger society and avoid becoming members of a

socioeconomic underclass identified by its involvement in violent crime, out of wedlock pregnancy, and welfare dependency.

Women and the Black Holiness-Pentecostal Churches

Historically, women's roles in the established black churches were largely defined by the Paulian concept that women are naturally limited, on a lower plane than men, submissive by nature, and incapable of leadership. Thus, it was sinful for women to preach or to lead. Most denominations adopted this concept, including some Holiness groups.

However, despite the sexism within Black Holiness-Pentecostalism, women were vital in improving their roles. In their study of Holiness-Pentecostal churches in Bronzeville, Chicago Drake and Cayton noted that although men dominated the formal positions of power in the Baptist and Methodist churches, women were able to "rise to the top" in the Holiness-Pentecostal institutions. (N.74)

Similarly, unlike the major Black denominations of Brooklyn, in which males had a monopoly on ministerial and other positions of power, Holiness-Pentecostal churches gave women opportunities to become leaders of congregations and religious organizations. Although men occupied most of the ministerial positions in the Holiness churches, by the 1940's there were some women who were elders, bishops, and ministers. This is not to argue that institutions were free

of sexism. Many women were still limited to so-called "womanly" duties such as secretaries and Sunday School teachers. However, the opportunity for women to develop leadership skills was greater in the Holiness-Pentecostal churches, probably because of the view that the Calling was not limited by sex.

Elder Priscilla Proctor's Elect Church on Fulton Street serves as an example. Elder Proctor began preaching the gospel and soon had a small following, but no church. Instead, the small caravan "went door to door to collect funds and do good for those in need." They later established a "praying band" and visited churches and the sick, healing "many souls." Probably due to both the growing membership and financial assets, Proctor was able to set up the Elect Church on Fulton Street in 1936. (N.75)

During the 1940's and 1950's, many women founded Holiness-Pentecostal churches, including Pastor Ethel Crump (the Sanctified Church in Christ), Rev. Rose Carrier (Life and Times of Jesus Pentecostal Church of the Apostolic Faith), Bishop Eva Lambert (the St. Mark's Holy Church), Bishop Mary Martin (the Life and Time of Jesus Pentecostal Church of the Apostolic Faith), and Grace Haven-Waller (the Tabernacle Healing Temple). (N.76)

Besides pastors, women were found in other formal positions of power in Holiness-Pentecostal churches. According to the 1950 Church Council report, the House of Prayer for All People, located at Fulton Street, had women

in the position of Sunday School Superintendent, chairperson of the Trustee Board, Church Clerk, and Treasurer. Besides having a woman pastor, the Jesus Christ's Triumphant Church of the Apostolic Faith, had women holding positions as Associate Minister, Church Clerk, and Treasurer. In 1939, in the Church of God located on 1637 Bergen Street, women held prominent positions, including Assistant Pastor, Music Director, Director of Religious Education, Church Clerk, and Treasurer. The Church of God on Sumpter Street had two Associate Ministers, Director of Music, and Sunday School Superintendent who were women. The Church of God and christ on the Hill had an Educational Director and Musical Directors who were women. (N.77)

Thus, many Holiness-Pentecostal churches challenged the Paulist concept held by the major denominations. Instead of limiting women, they were able to move into positions of authority. Like men, they could receive the calling to preach and lead.

Although it is possible that men refused to join or abandoned churches with women in leadership, some men accepted and even served in leadership with women. At least two men served as elders of the St. Mary Holy Chruch under the pastorship of Eva Lambert during the 1940's. During its twelfth anniversary celebration, St. Mary's Holy Church had several men on the arrangement committee, including Elder Issac S. James, overseer, Elder William T. Young, ruling elder, and Brother Milton Grayson, Assistant to the

Secretary. The Jesus Christ's Triumphant Church of the Apostolic Faith, under the leadership of Ethel Crump, had at least two men serve as Assistant Ministers. Some women were appointed to high positions, demonstrating the congregation's willingness to accept women in leadership positions. Sister Grace Haven-Waller was ordained by Bishop Samuel Sapp of the Church of God, thus allowing her to establish her own church. (N.78)

Conclusion

In his study of an urban Pentecostal church, Melvin Williams notes that it "serves as a place where members take refuge from the world among familiar faces. It is a source of identity and a matrix of interaction for the members it recruits. It is a subculture that creates and transmits symbols and enforces standards of belief and behavior." Williams goes on to note that besides conferring social status, the Pentecostal church gives "meaning, order and style to its members lives, and provides for social mobility and social rewards within its confines." (N.79)

What Williams found is also true of the black Holiness-Pentecostal churches of Brooklyn. These institutions should not be seen as inconsequential, evidence of social disorder, or as Joseph Washington asserts "unable to exhibit little or no ability to contribute to the religious dimension of the Negro." (N.8) Like the black mainline churches, black Holiness-Pentecostal churches were used by both black men

and women to define their lives and the world despite the attempt by the larger society to depict people of African origins as savage or brutes, incapable of improving their lives. Black people of Brooklyn, like African-Americans in other urban areas, used black Holiness-Pentecostal churches to express their humanity and oppose racism. they see the world as a hostile place, in Satan's camp. This world view is a shield against the harsh realities of the larger society. In addition, people who are denied the social and economic mobility valued by the larger society seek alternative ways of improving themselves. People in the Pentecostal churches of Brooklyn have gathered together for support, making their environment meaningful and stable. These churches provide what Williams contends is a meaningful human interaction. Holiness-Pentecostal churches established "new forms of community life relevant to the residents present social and economic plight. Responding to the threat of a fraudulent, remote or incomprehensible social order which is beyond real hope or desire and invites apathy, boredom, and even hostility, these blacks are creating bounded groups which give them a stake in a social order." (N.81)

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Chapter #3

Brooklyn's Black Churches and the Growth of Popular Culture

According to some scholars, by the mid-1930's, black churches had lost their vitality and were unwilling to struggle for black liberation. Joseph Washington notes:

> The Negro Minister as a race leader and the Negro religion as a racial institution met the needs of the Negro at the turn of the century. But as the forces of segregation congealed, the Negro Minister became a negative power, holding his people in check. Once a rebel with a cause, the Negro Minister became a reactionary -- partly because he had no philosophical or theological roots. By 1936, Negro churches were decreasing in membership, or were just maintaining the 1916 membership. (N.1)

Concurring with Washington, Gayraud Wilmore asserts that while the Pentecostal churches grew dramatically, the mainline churches became dysfunctional by the 1930's:

> Thus the church . . . now found itself relegated to the periphery of the closed circle that was the segregated black community. From that eccentric and unfamiliar position the church -- began to offer -- personal security for older adults -- mostly female -- or the lower middle class . . . the center was surrendered to the street people, the cabaret crowd, and the lower class -- in white society. (N.2).

Despite these assertions, Brooklyn's non-Pentecostal black churches did not decrease or remain stagnant. Between 1920 and 1931 the number of churches increased from 20 to 49, with the largest growth among the Baptists, from 9 to 36. Even more compelling is the increase in Brooklyn's black church congregations. Between 1920 and 1931, Bridge

Street grew from 1,300 to 2,800; Fleet AMEZ from 986 to 2,400; Berean Baptist from 545 to 1500; Bethany from 700 to 1600; Concord from 900 to 2,800; and Holy Trinity from 500 to 31,000. (N.18) Although Berean experienced a decline from 1931 to 1952, from 1500 to 1300, both Bethany and Concord increased to 3,666 and 8,674, respectively. Cornerstone went from a storefront operation in the 1920's to a church of 1500 in 1943. First Baptist Church in Brownsville Brooklyn increased from 50 members in 1940 to 400 by 1952. Mt. Lebanon Baptist soared from 350 members in 1940 to 4,500 in 1952. Zion Baptist increased from 856 to 3,526 between 1940 and 1952. The Baptists and African methodists were not the only mainline black churches to experience rapid growth. The white-dependent denominations also increased in membership, although less dramatically. Siloam Presbyterian grew between 1920 and 1931 from 215 to 580; St. Augustine from 390 to 651; St. Phillips from 220 to 460; and Nazarene Congregational from 135 to 800. Although Nazarene's population had decreased to 380 by 1952, St. Phillips increased to 1,250 and Siloam to 1,020. (N.4)

The growth of these major denominations was due, in large part, to the influx of migrants into Brooklyn. Many older established black churches left the downtown area and followed the stream of blacks moving to Bedford-Stuyvesant in the 1930's and 1940's. The first of these older churches to relocate was Bridge Street AME Chruch, which purchased the White Grace Presbyterian Church building in 1938. The

Concord Baptist Church soon followed, purchasing the Marcy Baptist Church in the early 1940's. First AWME Zion, Siloam, and St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal all moved to Bedford-Stuyvesant in the 1940's. (N.20) Thanks to relocation and the establishment of new churches, by the late 1950's there were over 80 black congregations, including 39 Baptist, and 11 African Methodist. (N.5)

This rapid growth of Brooklyn's black churches calls into question scholar's claims that, after World War I, black churches lost their vitality and that they had become institutions only offering "personal security to older adults." Despite the accusation that the black churches were unresponsive to community needs, working-class and middle-class blacks helped mold these religious institutions to promote the cultural, social and spiritual interests of the black community.

One aspect of black church life not examined by scholars that helped make churches relevant to their communities is popular amusement. By the late 1920's Brooklyn's black churches had begun incorporating aspects of popular culture, including dance, fashion, drama, popular music, and recreation, thereby blending the sacred with the secular and making the churches responsive to the desires of the African-American communities. This chapter examines the cultural and social patterns Brooklyn's black churches adopted and their significance for Brooklyn's black community.

Popular Entertainment

By the turn of the century, entrepreneurs had helped shape America into a consumer society. Through advertisements, millions of Americans were convinced that they could improve their social status by buying products that would cure bad breath, beautify their teeth, keep skin youthful, get rid of tough beards, and improve their sex appeal. As the century progressed, entertainment entrepreneurs transformed recreation into a commodity. Besides attracting the middle classes, these businessmen of mass leisure targeted the growing urban working class, offering them amusements at affordable prices. Cabarets, dance halls, amusement parks and nickelodeons sprang up in major Northern cities in the early part of the 20th century. (N.6)

In addition, modern technology brought entertainment into millions of American homes. By the 1920's, the radio had introduced Americans to African-American music (ragtime, blues, jazz), to prize-fighting, baseball (the World Series), and other competitive sports, and to weekly series, such as "Amos 'n' Andy" and "Gang Busters." (N.7)

The motion picture industry was perhaps the most powerful form of entertainment shaping Brooklyn in the 20th century. By the early part of the century, numerous theaters had been established in storefronts. Proprietors set up rows of benches and used a projector to show reels of

film that flickered on a screen. The five-cent admission fee attracted crowds. On Pitkin Ave. in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, over twenty "five-cent variety theaters" were operating in 1910.

Many were alarmed at the movies because this new form of entertainment seemed contrary to many conventional values such as hard work, self-control, sober earnestness, and industriousness. Opponents of movies argued that the motion pictures stressed senseless entertainment, uninhibited fun, and contributed to immoral behavior. Many felt that leisure time should be spent productively. Reading, writing, hard work, and other activities that helped develop the moral character of the individual were desirable.

Movie opponents argued that movies, besides being a threat to individuals, were a threat to the community at large. Opponents feared that neighborhoods would be destroyed by the undesirables attracted by this form of entertainment. Opponents noted that children were especially vulnerable to the new form of entertainment. According to the Brooklyn Daily Eagle:

> It is said that since the establishment of these places, the majority of the children who were in the habit of spending their winter evenings in the reading rooms have evinced a liking for the moving picture shows. There has been a noticeable decrease in the number of child readers in the libraries. The manual training classes cannot boast of the good attendance that they had formerly. It is claimed that this is largely due to the moving picture shows. (N.8)

The community's leading citizens, among them Alexander S. Drescher, director of the Brownsville Board of Trades, went "on record as unalterably opposed to these resorts." Dr. Abraham Silverstein, the Rabbi of a large Brownsville congregation lashed out against the moving picture theaters, asserting that they were a menace to the public morals. Several attorneys representing citizens of Brownsville, threatened to seek an injunction against the theaters. (N.9)

Movie theaters met resistance not only in Brownsville but also in other areas of Brooklyn. In May 1910, a group known as the Children's Society obtained evidence showing that Jacob Prisland, a doorkeeper at a theater on Myrtle Avenue and Skillman Street, allowed minors to enter. The Court of Special Sessions fined him $25.00. (N.10) Two days later, the Eagle reported, Deputy Chief John B. Braken of the Bureau of Licenses met with prominent Brooklynites, including attorneys, clergy and people "owning more than a million dollars worth of property." The meeting, at Borough Hall, protested the granting of a license to the Albany Parkway Amusement Company for a movie theater at Eastern Parkway at Albany Avenue. Lawyer Manasseh Miller objected because:

> The issuance of a license for a common show on Eastern Parkway was contrary to the law regulating the Parkway. Second, before the license is granted, the permission of the park commissioner would first have to be obtained. Third, it was contrary to public policy. Fourth, it was contrary to the will of the individuals immediately affected by the proposed show. (N.11)

A member of the Twenty-Fourth Ward Board of Trades asserted that he had been instructed by his organization to oppose the granting of the license because "It was something out of place in the section;" he stated emphatically that "the people did not want it." Some even challenged the artistic value of movies. Adolph Rosenfeldt, an attorney representing property owners in the area, disputed the Albany Parkway Amusement Company's assertion that there were redeeming qualities in the picture show.

> They will tell you the lawyer contended that they are educational institutions and that they give people a change to enjoy music and art. If there is any music in the class of songs that are sung in such houses, I don't know what their idea of music must be. And where is the art in the pictures? They will throw any kind of picture on the screen to draw the people, pictures that are often broad and suggestive. (N.12)

Some people worried that the moving pictures posed a threat to the community because they attracted working-class people. One man, who testified that Eastern Parkway "was unquestionably the handsomest street in Brooklyn," protested in behalf of St. Paul Chapel and the children. A movie theatre on Eastern Parkway would "bring an undesirable class of people from other sections of the city that were to wanted." Mrs. E. Smith, a property owner, pleaded with Braken not to issue a license "for the sake of children ..." As a mother, she did not want her children "to come in contact with the element that was drawn by moving picture houses." Father John I. Smith, Assistant Rector of St.

Gregory's Church on Brooklyn Avenue, spoke for his congregation in opposing a place of amusement in their neighborhood, which had an "orderly, and quiet atmosphere." The Minister called movie theaters "hell-holes." (N.13)

Not all prominent citizens opposed the new establishments. Realtors who were putting up new buildings on Pitkin Avenue were not opposed, because they could collect high rents for the double stores needed for movie house. (N.14)

Despite the protest, the movies attracted a wide audience. Many enjoyed the excitement of screen action. It offered consumers of entertainment an inexpensive pleasure during their free time. Because of the popularity of motion pictures, movie stars became more popular than national political leaders. People admired actors and actresses on screen and adored their extravagant lifestyle. Newspaper gossip columns reported on the latest rumors about their lives; magazines such as Daily Variety were created in the 1930's to report on Hollywood.

Entrepreneurs rushed to take advantage of the growing popularity of movies. Recognizing that there were great profits in the movie making industry, they began building movie palaces able to seat hundreds. The Brevoort Theater on Brevoort Place and Bedford Avenue, for example, with a seating capacity of 2,500 became one of the largest theaters in New York. "The Structure," according to the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, "both outside and in, is pleasing." The

exterior was made of tapestry and brick. The lobby was well-lighted and had polished marble, plate mirrors and tiled floors. The spacious auditorium had 1,800 chairs on the main floor and 700 in the balcony. The theater contained "massive pilasters of classic design, a painted domed ceiling, ornamental cornices and richly paneled walls." According to the Brooklyn Daily Eagle:

> There is a promenade foyer on the mezzanine floor. On this same floor are homelike waiting and lounging rooms, with open fireplaces, seats, reading tables and writing desks and all things needed for comfort. There were also well-appointed retiring rooms for women and children. Men will find a smoking room at their disposal. (N.15)

Besides the Brevoort, other Bedford-Stuyvesant theaters included the Apollo, Howard, Commet, Sumner, Tompkins and Regent. Located along the major commercial streets of Fulton Street and Gates Avenue, they were geographically as well as economically accessible to working-class people. On weekday evenings, double features were offered at special bargain prices. On Saturdays, children attended matinees with a double feature of comedy, adventure or horror films, preceded by several cartoons. For example, the Brooklyn Apollo advertised a Little Rascals Comedy, along with "Adventures of Galahad" and five cartoons. Saturday matinees were an all day affair, beginning at noon and lasting until 5:30 or 6:00 in the evening. (N.16) By the late 1930's, Brooklyn residents were spending much of their leisure time in move palaces, engrossed in comedy, horror,

western, romance, and cartoons. (N.17)

As blacks migrated to northern urban centers, they did not go unnoticed by entrepreneurs of commercial entertainment. By the late 1930's and early 1940's, the owners and managers of the Bedford-Stuyvesant movie theaters were specifically targeting the black community, with ads in the black press offering double and triple features, late shows, matinees, and movies with black casts. The Regent, Howard, Sumner and other theaters advertised such films as Oscar Micheaux's "All God's Stepchildren," Edgar G. Ulmer's "Moon Over Harlem," "Tales of Manhattan" featuring Paul Robeson and Ethel Waters, and "Song of Freedom" starring Paul Robeson. (N.18) In October 1939, The New York Age reported that Benjamin Resnick, manager of the Regent, had brought "bigger and better screen attractions starring Negroes" to the Bedford-Stuyvesant audience. The movie "Moon Over Harlem," a "powerful drama ripped from the heart of Harlem" with an all-black cast, promised to be a good one "not because it is a sepia picture -- rather because it is a good one." The Regents Theater sensationalized the film "God's Stepchildren". "THE UNFORGETTABLE STORY OF A BEAUTIFUL MULATTO GIRL WHO DIDN'T WANT TO BE COLORED AND THE STRANGE AND UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WAS THE RESULT OF IT -- AN AMAZING PARALLEL TO IMITATION OF LIFE." (N.19) In November 1942, the Brevoort began featuring the first all-black newsreel. Current information on African-American celebrities, including actors, singers, and sports figures,

were major features of the newsreel. (N.20)

Bedford-Stuyvesant was known not only for its movies, but also for its sparkling night-life. As the black community grew, entertainment entrepreneurs rushed to establish bars and grills, lounges, cafes, and night clubs. By the late 1930's Bedford-Stuyvesant had begun to rival Harlem, especially the area on and around Fulton Street, offering the best in entertainment.

Blacks were part of the entertainment world, not just as consumers, but also as producers. Although white entrepreneurs owned many of these establishments, African-Americans began opening these centers during and after World War II. Cain Young's, The Kingston Lounge, Alex and Sylvia Harry's, the Bedford Lounge, and Henry and Edna Gantt's Pleasant Lounge were among the notable establishments operated by blacks. The bar and grill industry also offered blacks employment opportunities as bartenders, barmaids, chefs, waiters, floor managers, and hosts and hostesses. (N.21)

Bartenders and barmaids were important to the new night-life establishments, in some instances, a major drawing card of bars and grills. Elmo's Lounge at 243 Reid Street advertised that it had a "cozy cocktail bar and restaurant", and the Turbo Village on the corner of Reid Avenue and Halsey Street had an "unusual cocktail lounge." Cafe Verona on 1330 Fulton Street, featured "Mel Williams, Chief Bartender of the Cafe Verona along with Tony, mixing

too, and barmaid Jeanette Britt. . . the center of attraction at this spot. This trio possesses a large following and, thereby, keeps the Verona in the Limelight." Dotty Moore of the Decatur Bar and Grill "has one of the finest personalities and her style of serving drinks is far above par." Described as a mecca of tavern seekers, the Arlington Inn featured barmaid Catherine Williams. "Cathy, one of the most well-liked barmaids in Brooklyn -- has brought new life to this place." (N.22)

Unlike local pubs which served a predominantly male population, the large bars and grills were portrayed as nice places to bring a date, thus becoming centers for heterosexual mixing. Women patronized them. Of the 41 people attending the grand opening of the Kingston Lounge in 1944, 21 were women. Dozens of married couples were on hand to celebrate the Kingston Lounge's first and second anniversaries in 1945 and 1946. (N.23) One element prompting women to patronize the lounges and clubs of Bedford-Stuyvesant was their cuisine. Many of these places served full course dinners. They were sophisticated entertainment centers with fine cuisine.

Lounges, cafes, and bars and grills built spacious dining rooms. Frank's Caravan on Hancock and Throop Avenues advertised "Excellent Food in "The Arabian Room, the Finest Dining Room in the Area." The owners of Wellworth Cafe prided themselves on a spacious dining room. (N.24)

Moreover, food represented a form of syncretism and

urbanization. As African-Americans came into contact with various ethnic and racial groups in the urban centers, they adopted new cuisines. Many bars and grills and lounges served the finest in "Southern cooking," while others offered their customers Chinese cuisine. Smitty's Corner offered both Chinese and American dishes. The Ten-Twelve Bar and Grill at 1012 Myrtle Avenue in downtown Brooklyn boasted that its "Southern cooking is supreme. . . " "Fried Chicken and Chops" were the specialty of the Kingston Lounge, established in 1944. Jack Man's Corporation Bar and Grill advertised its Chef Charles Higgins as "barbecue king" while the Flying Horse Bar and Grill located at Gates Avenue specialized in steaks, chops and seafood. Both the Wellworth Cafe and Travelers Inn hired "famous" Chinese chefs. The Arlington Inn on Fulton Street offered an open seafood bar including the "freshest crabs, lobsters, fish obtainable" and specialized in "Chinese-American foods prepared by our two Chinese Chefs." The Traffic Lounge at Bedford and Lafayette Avenues served buffet dinners and featured Italian cuisine. (N.25)

Bars and grills also offered shows. Many musicians, comedians, and other entertainers got their start at these establishments. At Cafe Verona, Tuesdays were "Audition Nights" giving amateurs the chance to win an appearance in the cafe floorshow. The Baby Grand, at Fulton Street, featured Melvin Smith, "King of the Blues," Janie Mickins, "Song Stylist," and Betty Brisbane, "Queen of the Exotic

Dancers." Eddie Coombs Quartet played at the Baby Grand. Cafe Verona at 1330 Fulton Street offered jazz bands and trios, pianists, and comedians. Snooky Marsh, well-known in Brooklyn circles, teamed up with Manhattan Paul, the "dynamic emcee," at the Cafe Verona "leaving the audience in the aisles." (N.26)

In his weekly column in the Amsterdam News, "Brooklyn Tavern Jottings," Ike McFowler, reported on activities at the Brooklyn bars and grills in the 1940's.:

> Shows at the Cafe Verona have become the talk of the town. Each week there is a fine performance headlining some of the top-notch entertainers of the day. Highlights of the current bits of entertainment the Verona has to offer you is the piano playing of Robert Harvell. This young man has a playing style similar to that of the Nat King Cole Trio. Keep your eye on this young artist, for he is destined to be one of our stars in the near future. Ray Simmons and his trio have gained a bevy of friends and well-wishers via their fine style. They will satisfy your own dancing desires. (N.27)

In June 1946, Ike McFowler Enterprises presented "Five Hilarious Sessions of Entertainment Each Week," including star musicians of radio, stage and screen every Monday night. On Tuesday evenings there were big name acts and an amateur contest. Sunday matinees featured a "great show," dance music, music by "John English and his Society Orchestra, Clint Smith and his Clintonians, and Rector (Wizard of the Strings) Baily and his sensational combo." (N.28)

The Kingston Lounge, Palm Gardens, K & C Tavern, the

Famous Casablanca, Larry's Redevous, to name just a few, offered dancing, jazz, blues, and stars from stage, screen and radio. Manhattan Paul featured "Rose La Rose (Brooklyn's Own Exotic One), Ted Cole (King of the Blues), and Mary Sinclair (Sweet Vocalist)." (N.29)

Many blacks had an opportunity to perform, otherwise denied them in the larger society. Among the many entertainers were Rector Baily, featured on the Hammond organ at the Kingston Lounge, Johnney guitar Sanders, appearing weekends at Quincy, and the Eddie Coombs' Quartet performing nightly at Manhattan Paul. (N.30)

Bedford became such a popular entertainment spot that black weeklies carried regular columns highlighting Brooklyn's night-life. In the 1940's the Amsterdam News featured Clyde Williams' "Night Life," Tommy Watkins' "Escaping in Brooklyn," and Ike McFowler's "Brooklyn Tavern Jottings." The New York Age ran Larry Douglas' "Swinging in Brooklyn" and Buddy Franklin's "Brooklyn After Dark."

Brooklyn's Black Churches and Amusement

Many black church leaders abhorred the growth of popular culture. They saw it as evil and a corruption on the moral values of blacks. Even before the turn of the century, some black ministers and churches were involved in the temperance movement, blaming establishments that sold alcohol of morally corrupting African-Americans. Thomas Dixon of Concord Baptist was an advocate of prohibition and

addressed the Prohibition Party of Brooklyn, noting the negative impact alcohol has on the black community. Concord Baptist had a WCTU that met on a regular basis and a series of "Gospel Temperance" meetings that were held at Siloam Presbyterian on Sunday evenings. The WCTU of Berean Missionary Baptist Church met on Monday evenings. In 1930, the Rev. Henry Hugh Proctor, pastor of Nazarene Congregational Church lashed out against immoral night-life in Brooklyn's black sections. Proctor claimed that Harlem's better class blacks were leaving for Brooklyn to escape the unhealthy effects of Harlem's night-life and warned that Brooklyn might suffer the same moral deterioration. (N.31)

Not only were taverns, bars, and nightclubs under attack, Christian institutions promoting popular activities came under criticism. For example, a meeting of the interdenominational Ministers Conference of New York, Rev. F. A. Cullen of Salem Methodist Episcopal attacked the YMCA for "fostering unchristian ideals. Rev. Manual Bolden of the First Emmanuel Church warned that this modern age of "materialism and lawlessness much be challenged.

> "The modern idea of the gospel as a social cult for the few pretended intellects or demoralizing social uplift agency, such as is seen in some Young men's and Young Women's Christian Associations and some religious denominations who stress all kinds of attractions paraphernalia, festivals, demoralizing activities and degenerating dances, is misleading, erroneous, and unrighteous. There may be certain values, but I am sure that they do not represent the Ideal Man, Jesus Christ our Lord; not his Apostles.
>
> The minister of our Lord should not compromise with

> evil factors in the nation, in his city, in his community, and his established church, in his home and in his private life. The spirit of lawlessness self-expression and apostasy is rampant throughout the world, and its effects are felt in our immediate local environment. The compromising attitude of professed followers of Lord strengthens and encourages such conditions as bootlegging, bold prostitution, gambling, cabarets, dens of vice, pool rooms, dance halls, and places of degeneracy. (N.32)

The attack of ministers and others who were involved in popular cultural entertainment suggest that many felt that their world was coming apart. In some sense, their world of which church and religious activities was being replaced by secular activities; therefore, their prominence was diminished. These attacks were attempts of ministers to fight to save their world. It was no accident that many churches still sponsored recital and lectures, well into the 1940's.

Despite the warnings from some ministers, by the 1930's Brooklyn's black churches had begun to incorporate aspects of popular entertainment into their regular activities. Responding to the growing demand, black churches offered gala recitals, musicales, beauty contests, popularity contests, banquets, sporting events and other forms of popular entertainment. Usually described as a pure fun, these events blurred the boundaries between sacred and secular and demonstrated a growing tolerance for amusement. Heterosexual social activities and recreation were not only sanctioned, but encouraged by the Church. Church auxiliaries and clubs were incorporated to mix the sacred

and the popular amusement.

Auxiliaries had always been an important feature of church structure, serving the members, assisting pastors, and improving the quality of worship. A good example is the missionary society, which cared for the sick, disabled, young, old and poor of the church. Other clubs included floral societies, user boards and choirs, which also raised funds. (N.33)

By the late 1920's and early 1930's and continuing through the 1940's and 1950's, the number of organizations in Brooklyn's large churches increased dramatically. For example, between 1925 and 1940, Brown Memorial Baptist added thirteen auxiliaries; between 1928 and 1948, Mt. Sinai Baptist Church increased from a handful of clubs to twenty-five auxiliaries. Bridge Street had fifteen auxiliaries in 1917; by the late 1950's it had established twenty-seven more. By the mid 1950's, Concord Baptist Chruch had forty-five auxiliaries functioning regularly, making it one of the largest in the nation. (N.34)

The influx of blacks into Brooklyn's churches in the 1920's and the acceleration during the post-World War II period help explain the increase in clubs and auxiliaries. Ministers, church officials and parishioners established clubs, recognizing a potential source of revenue.

One major objective was to raise funds through social events, such as anniversary days, dinners, and pledges. Nazarene clubs helped pay off the church's mortgage. The

Concord Organizations raised money for the building campaign. In some cases, ministers relied on clubs to supplement the budgetary needs of the church, as noted in the weekly bulletin of Bridge Street: "All presidents, groups, all monies being held in your club treasury must be turned in by Sunday, October 28 Budget Sunday . . . We must meet our Budget." Ultimately, clubs became economically indispensable to their churches. (N.36)

However, the sole purpose of church organizations was hardly financial. Auxiliaries were not on-directional; they had a different meaning for parishioners than they did for pastors. The social activities planned by auxiliaries demonstrate, as their names suggest, the growing importance of popular entertainment: Siloam's dance committee, Stitch and Chatter, Currents Events, Talent Guild, and Fortnight clubs; Cornerstone Baptist Church's Bench Members, Recreation group, social action committee, and Superior Clubs; and the First AME Zion Intercultural Club, all were established between 1929 and the middle 1940's. Bridge Street AWME Church organized the Silver Spray Social, Mary McLeod Bethune Dramatic, the Rainbow, and Eureka Clubs, while the Nazarene Congregational Church established the Progressive Art and the Epicurean Clubs. The Mt. Sinai Baptist Church organized the Paul Earl Jones Friendly Circle. The Brown Memorial Baptist Church's Men's Energetic Club and St. Martin's Art Guild were others. Many of Nazarene Congregational Church's affairs were organized by

the Epicurean Club. Siloam's events were planned by a variety of auxiliaries, including the Dance Committee, Current Events Club, Stitch and Chatter Club, the Talent Guild, and the Fortnight Club. Even Pentecostal Churches, which stressed a fundamentalism that associated entertainment with worldly evil and forbade recreational and leisure activities had established social clubs by the 1930's and 1940's. The COGIC on the Hill had a sewing and Mothers Clubs and a Young People's Willing Workers. The church of God on Lafayette Avenue had a Men's Progressive League and a Youth Fellowship. The Neighborhood Mission of the COGIC on Fulton Street had a youth organization, the Victory Temple of COGIC had a Women's Circle and the First COGIC organized a Sunshine Band. (N.37)

By the 1930's popular music had taken on greater significance in Brooklyn's black churches, supplementing the programs of spirituals, recitals and classical concerts. The Intercultural Club of the First AME Zion Church sponsored a talent show called "The Stars of Tomorrow" featuring promising young vocalists, instrumentalists and dramatic performers. Noted stars appearing included the father of the St. Louis Blues, W.C. Handy, and popular radio host Joe Bostic. The Talent Guild of Siloam Presbyterian Church presented a show entitled "The Stairway to Stardom," presenting romantic songs such as "Don't Even Say Good-By," "I Wonder Can It Be Love," and "Say You Love Me Too." The Mount Sinai Baptist Church set aside one Sunday a month for

"cultural activities, particularly musicals." At the annual Spring Concert of Concord Baptist Church a 300-voice choir, the combined Gospel and Youth Choirs of the church, mixed classical with popular music. Besides performing Beethoven's "Mt. of Olives," "Oh Rejoice, in the Lord," and Leisring's "Let the Nations Rejoice," the chorus sang folk tunes including "Erie Canal" and the "Savage Warrior." Holy Trinity's singing group, the Rolling Stone Jubilee gave a concert with a one-dollar admission. (N.38)

The Rev. James Adams of Concord Baptist Church organized a youth band, with boys twelve to eighteen, which played at church functions and "for recreational purposes outside and apart from the church." The Women's Auxiliary of St. Phillips Church sponsored a musical and "Tea" for its congregation. The Auxiliary of the Men's Club of St. Augustine Episcopal Church presented a "Night in Brooklyn" described as "real fun," featuring a "master magician," as well as popular music. In some religious circles, dancing became a legitimate form of entertainment. In 1942, St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal Church sponsored a "gala fall dance" at Webster Hall in Manhattan, arranged by the church's dance committee, with music by Don Wilson and "his Blue Ribbon orchestra." The Dance Committee in Siloam Presbyterian Church gave a Coronation Ball presenting a Calypso singer, the "Great MacBeth and his Orchestra," as well as a contest crowning the Queen of the Ball. Siloam also sponsored a dance at the Chateau Gardens in 1951, where

an estimated crowd of a thousand enjoyed the "jumping sounds of the Jimmie Simmons Orchestra. . . " (N.39)

Gospel Music

The emergence of gospel music is one of the most significant events in black religious culture in the 20th century. The content and performance style of gospel which had its origins in the Holiness-Pentecostal churches altered the nature of worship, recapturing a traditional African-American Christianity that emphasized the immediate presence of God and guaranteed deliverance by faith. Gospel gave the congregation a greater participatory role. No other cultural form reveals the blurring of the boundaries between sacred and the secular better than gospel music. (N.40)

Like African-American Christianity during the ante-bellum period, gospel music required the participation of the congregants as well as the leader. Thus, the call-and-response format in gospel music altered worship in many black churches. Trained professionals and church officials conducted services, but ordinary parishioners were also given a voice and helped set the emotional outburst. The audience response elicited by gospel singers made worship more democratic. (N.41)

Although the message of gospel music rejected the secular, the performance style promoted acculturation to a secular consciousness. Of course, by the 1930's, gospel itself had become a force of popular entertainment. Gospel performers made records and gained wide popularity,

including Manhalia Jackson and Thomas Dorsey. Exciting, emotional, unusually accompanied by shouting, hand-clapping and dancing in the aisles, gospel music was sometimes labeled jazz and blues with a religious message because it borrowed instruments, rhythms, and performance styles from popular African-American music. Paul Oliver, Max Harrison, and William Bolcom point out that by the 1930's:

> It is likely that the contrasts of falsetto and bass on the recordings of the Ink Spots and the vocal imitations of instruments and strong rhythmic emphasis of the Mills Brothers were influences on gospel groups. The Alphabetical Four used guitar for additional rhythmic support, and jazz technique was clearly evident in the comb-and-paper muted 'trumpet' accompaniment of their first recording, Dorsey's "Precious Lord Hold My Hand," and many others. Most recording quartets of the 1930's appear to have been Baptist, but the Golden Eagle Gospel Singers led by Thelma Byrd was probably Sanctified. Their "Tone the Bell" is a driving performance, with congregational singing behind the lead, and piano, guitar, harmonica and tambourine accompaniment. In "He's My Rock" the blues harmonica player Hammie Nixon not only played the accompaniment but took a blues-style solo over a humming chorus. (N.42)

The Growth of Gospel Music in Brooklyn

In Brooklyn, Siloam Presbyterian, Nazarene Congregational, and the two Protestant Episcopal Churches did not establish gospel choruses; they adhered to the liturgical models of their white counterparts, adopting refined Eurocentric music. Although it was easier to establish gospel choirs in Baptist and Methodist churches because of their autonomy, before the Depression few had such musical groups. Myra M. Gregory, a member of Berean

Baptist Church since 1912, recalled that during the pastorships of Rev. Matthews and Rev. Eldridge, from the 1920's through the middle 1940's, such "primitive" music was not heard in the church. Instead of gospel groups, these churches had large cathedral choirs. (N.43)

However, as Brooklyn entered the Depression, gospel choruses were established despite strong opposition. For example, when Jeanne Epps first attempted to create a gospel chorus at Bethany Baptist Church, she was told by church authorities they would not provide money to hire a pianist. Determined to succeed, Mrs. Epps paid church-member Vera Carty to play for the group with funds collected among the members. (N.44)

Some of the first mainline churches to establish gospel groups were Cornerstone Baptist Church (1932), Bridge St. AWME (1935), and Bethany Baptist (1937). By the mid-1940's some twenty-four Brooklyn churches, mostly Baptist and African Methodist, had gospel choruses. (N.45) What accounted for this change among the churches?

One reason was that the influx of southern blacks into Brooklyn. Many migrants joined the numerous Holiness-Pentecostal churches with their emphasis on ecstatic participatory style of worship, but others joined the Baptists and Methodists, bringing this style of music with them. (N.46) Moreover, as gospel -- with the success of stars such as Manhalia Jackson, Thomas Dorsey, and Kenneth Morris -- grew widely popular, churches became more willing

to accept it. During the Depression years, gospel songs offered a message of hope to millions afflicted by economic hardship. As Manhalia Jackson noted:

> Blues are the songs of despair, but gospel songs are songs of hope. When you sing them you are delivered of your burden. You have a feeling that here is a cure for what's wrong. It always gives me joy to sing gospel songs. I get to sing and feel better right away. (N.47)

Wyatt T. Walker remarks, "the creation of gospel music is a social statement that, in the face of America's rejection and economic privation, black folks made a conscious decision to be themselves. It was an early stage of identity awakening and identity nourishing." (N.48)

In Brooklyn as elsewhere, gospel became popular entertainment, thus representing the blurring of sacred and secular. The New York Daily News reported in 1965 that Edna Gallman Cooke's "Amen" and Manhalia Jackson's "Move on a Little Higher" could be heard in record stores in Bedford-Stuyvesant as often as the most popular rhythm and blues hits. Moreover, gospel concerts were inexpensive entertainment. At a gospel concert held at Convention Hall in Brooklyn, featuring the Coleman Brothers, the Sensational Harmonaires, the Jubilee Stars, and Mrs. Ernestine Washington, renowned gospel singer and the wife of the pastor of Brooklyn's Washington Temple COGIC, F.D. Washington, admission was $1.50 at the door and .75 cents in advance. In November 1943, The Brooklyn Palace on Rockaway Ave. and Fulton Street featured the famed gospel groups the

Clouds of Joy at an admission price of .85 cents. (N.49)

Brooklyn's black churches also became arenas for cheap entertainment. Both Concord and Cornerstore Baptist gave annual gospel concerts. To prepare for its concerts, Brown Memorial Baptist Church created the office of traveling secretary, traveling treasurer, program chairperson, and refreshment chairperson. In 1958, Varick Memorial AME Church hosted a special gospel program featuring Thomas A. Dorsey and various Brooklyn gospel groups. In 1941, some 2,000 people attended a national convention of gospel choral groups at Bridge Street. Over 5,000 people attended the fifth annual WWRL Gospel Singing Contest at Washington Temple COGIC. The Lunenberg Travelers of Brooklyn took first prize, winning a one-week engagement at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem and a recording contract with Vee Jay Records. (N.50)

At the Amsterdam Weekly News' Welfare Fund City-Wide Jubilee and Gospel Festival in 1945, fifty church gospel choirs participated, including twenty-four from Brooklyn. The first concerts at Holy Trinity Baptist Church drew a crowd of 1,000 people. The popularity of gospel as entertainment was demonstrated by ticket sales. Choir directors and presidents of gospel choirs purchased 2,000 tickets for their friends and churches, leaving none for the performers to give to their families. In addition, hundreds requested choirs to perform their particular favorite gospel songs. (N.51)

Gospel music had crossed the line into the realm of leisure entertainment at an affordable price for working-class people. Newspaper advertisements contributed to the commodification of gospel, making it part of the entertainment business, in competition for the leisure dollar of consumers.

Besides music and dances, churches sponsored fashion shows, outings, and bazaars. In 1933, the Young Men's Club of St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal Church sponsored a three-day carnival, featuring "a popularity contest participated in by Brooklyn's most beautiful girls," amusement booths and "dancing to the music of a three-piece novelty orchestra." Club president, Edward DeGrant, hoped to prove that "church-going girls are just as pretty, fashionable and peppy as those found in other wholesome places." The same year, a revue was presented by the combined organizations of St. Phillips at the Brooklyn Labor Lyceum, featuring scenes from the "Emperor Jones." In 1944, the Amsterdam News reported that the 15th annual Spring Bazaar of Berean Baptist Church, running from April 25th to the 1st of May, ahd attracted a "throng" of people and raised $2,000 for the church. In 1951, Siloam held a dance at the Chateau Gardens, featuring "the jumping sounds of Jimmie Simmon's Orchestra," and a fashion show, in which "some of this town's most delectable models undulated across the floor." The Epicurean Club of Nazarene Congregational Church presented a "Fashion Extravaganza" to "entertain and

inform our fold in the art of appropriate styles from head to foot," featuring the wife of film and dance entertainer Bill (Bojangles) Robinson. Mrs. Robinson displayed "fashions around the clock." The fashion show, for women and men held at the Tabernacle Baptist Church at 388 Chester Street in Brownsville, was described by the press as an "evening of wonderful entertainment." (N.52) The Willing Workers of the Newman Memorial Church sponsored a fashion show featuring "popular lassies" modeling the latest fashions. The Choir of Bethany Baptist Church sponsored a fashion Exhibit in its lecture room. Women displayed both spring and summer styles. Beauty became such an important value that Brown memorial Baptist Church gave classes in dermatology and cosmetics in the 1930's. (N.53) Guest attending the seventh annual National Sunday School Convention at Washington Temple COGIC were treated to a boat ride around the Hudson.

The annual St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal Church boat ride had become such a popular event that, in 1938, Tommy Watkins reported it in his famous gossip column in the Amsterdam News:

> The St. Phillips boat ride was a humdinger. . . never saw so many pretty sepia maids in my life . . . and the gossip . . . Guess I'd better commence spilling it. . . A certain young thing was rampaging after Walter King -- and she should have not been . . . Eric Lane was tripping like a kitten over a barbed wired fence in the company of pretty Barbara (of the Ronrica Girls) . . . Dorothy Jenkins sighed slightly as she lulled about without her current heart beat . . . Bernice Degard and Warren Hodges portrayed love in all its glory . . . Ray Pease was romeoing about in terrific frenzy

> while endeavoring to captivate the hearts of all the young girlies. . . (N.54)

Another popular social event sponsored by churches was the banquet. Unlike dancing, in some religious circles seen as morally offensive, banquets, testimonial dinners, and other meals gave people the opportunity to socialize without "violating" the scriptures.

Many churches built kitchens and served inexpensive meals after the morning service, and church clubs sponsored dinners. The St. Phillips PE Church's June Birthday Club gave dinners in the lecture room of the church. On July 14th of 1958, Friendship Baptist Church held a southern-style barbecue. The Bridge Street AWME Church Bulletin announced weekly dinners given by various clubs. (N.55)

Many banquets and dinners were elaborate affairs in which participants could display their affluence through formal attire. At least two receptions and banquets were held for Rev. Kimball Warren of Bethany Baptist Church, sponsored by the auxiliaries of the church, with a master of ceremonies, entertainment, and prominent guests. In 1938, the First AME Zion Church held a formal banquet in the church; prominent guests sat at a dias, men wore tuxedos, and women were elegantly dressed. The walls were decorated with flowers adding to the ambience. Brown Memorial Baptist Church sponsored a formal banquet in 1948, celebrating the tenth anniversary of Rev. George Thomas, attended by Arthur Funn, a prominent mortician, Benjamin F. Butler renowned

florist, Judge O.D. Williams and Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., former pastor of the largest Baptist Church in Brooklyn, Abassynian. Both Cornerstone Baptist Church and Bridge Street AWME Church held banquets in the luxurious St. George Hotel. (N.56)

Banquets required planning and committees were established to provide the best in entertainment. For Bridge Street AWME's 187th anniversary celebration in 1953, several planning committees were established, including a banquet committee, program committee, decoration committee, a hostess committee, and ice cream committee, cake committee, three kitchen committees, a purchasing committee, and a person to handle the special guests on banquet night. (N.57)

Although the black Pentecostal churches of Brooklyn tended to downplay amusements, by the late 1950's these institutions held formal banquets with elaborate cuisine. In 1955, the Victory Temple Church of COGIC highlighted its twenty-third anniversary celebration with a reception. In November of 1957, a testimonial banquet was held at a Church of God in Christ in Manhattan. Guest included Wilber Chandler, of the COGIC "On the Hill" and F.D. Washington of Washington Temple. A banquet was held at the Waldorf Astoria for Rev. Samuel A. White, pastor of the COGIC "On the Hill," with a menu featuring Quiche Lorraine, Breast of Chicken al l'Orange, continental rice, brussell sprouts with chestnuts, Bibescot Glace, golden rhum sabayo, and petits

four. Committees organizing the affair included banquet, arrangement, ticket and finance, program, seating, floral, and music committees. (N.58)

Conclusion

Scholars have noted the growing importance of secularism in the black churches. Some have concluded that the black churches have moved away from the sacred aspect of religious life and toward a greater concern with worldly matters. E. Franklin Frazier's The Negro Church in America suggests:

> By secularization.. . . the Negro churches lost their predominantly other-worldly outlook and began to focus attention upon the Negro's condition in this world . . . the churches have been forced to tolerate card playing and dancing and theater-going. The opposition to these forms of recreation was rationalized on the basis that they would lead to gambling and immorality rather than that they were sinful. (N.59)

Frazier does not take into account the capacity of African-American religion to expand and incorporate the secular while maintaining the sacred. Brooklyn's black churches in the 20th century did not exclude the sacred as it included various forms of amusement. On the contrary, church-sponsored social and cultural events usually incorporated the sacred by including sacred rituals in these affairs, thus never losing site of its mission to heal souls. Invocation, reading of the scripture, singing religious songs, and giving the benediction became important parts of church sponsored social functions. Various social events

demonstrate the blending of the sacred and secular. The annul Bridge St. AWME Senior Choir Tea not only included entertainment and refreshments, but an invocation by a Minister, recitation of The Lord's Prayer by the congregation, readings of the scripture, and a benediction. The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary celebration of the Bridge Street Boy Scouts included a doxology, an invocation, a scripture lesson, a sermon by the pastor, and an "Invitation to Christian Discipline." At the fourth annual vesper services of the Brooklyn Club of the National Association of Business and Professional Women's Club, Rev. Archie Hargrave, pastor of the Nazarene Congregational Church was the principal speaker. The sacred even spread into political affairs. In a protest rally sponsored by the Brooklyn branch of the NAACP in 1959, an invocation was given by Father Julina Dozier of St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal Church and the benediction was given by Rev. Richard Gay of Concord Baptist Church. (N.60)

These and other events mark a transformation in Brooklyn's black church culture. As blacks were exposed to commercial forms of entertainment, they began to incorporate many of its aspects in a religious context. They did not forsake the sacred for the secular as has been suggested. For the black churches of world-view emerged which was less restrictive in its cultural patterns; it became heterogeneous, blurring the boundaries between acceptable cultural forms as it mirrored the larger society. Lawrence

Levine calls this process cultural pluralism. By the 20th century, according to Levine, "a growing cultural eclecticism and flexibility is everywhere at hand." (N.61)

Evidence suggests that the secular did not exclusively influence the sacred; rather, the secular and sacred each influenced the other. It was not unusual for religious rituals such as invocations, benedictions and hymns to appear at popular events outside of the church. The Carlton YMCA's gala reception, "Stars on Parade" featured the Stiders, an all male quartet seen in New York night clubs, "Melody Matt and his five piece ensemble" who performed "several popular numbers which brought the house down," and Maine Sullivan from the Kingston Lounge. An invocation was delivered by Rev. Milton Galamison of Siloam Presbyterian Church. On another occasion, the Rev. Garrison Waters, pastor of Newman's Memorial Methodist Church, spoke at the opening of the Allure Beauty Salon on Fulton Street. In 1942, the Dormitory Club of the Carlton YMCA held a Mother's Day Breakfast. Included in the program was a "Brief religious ceremony led by Jacob Marr, Chaplain of the Club." The Art Guild of the Church of St. Martin held a religious service honoring their pastor by holding a banquet at "Tillie's Chicken Grill," one of the new bar and grill establishments in Bedford-Stuyvesant. (N.62)

By the mid-20th century, Brooklyn's black churches had responded to a growing community that emphasized secular values, including commercial recreation, by embracing

popular culture. Simultaneously, as the secular penetrated the sacred, the sacred spread beyond the boundaries of the church and began to influence popular entertainment. The result was a form of syncreticism, creating a cohesive new cultural practice. Accommodating these changes and embracing the secular, while at the same time holding onto their sacred heritage, black churches served the community in a broader social and cultural sphere.

Brooklyn's black churches have always struggled to be an integral part of the black community. As the black population of Brooklyn grew in the 1940's and 1950's and popular culture occupied more of their time, black churches settled on a compromise between religious principles and popular leisure entertainment. They reshaped urban America by becoming institutions that offered more cultural choices to blacks. In addition, they redefined popular entertainment by incorporating religious rituals, thus maintaining their positions as moral leaders in their community. More so than any institution, the church became an organization that linked sacred and religious worlds. It became an important cultural institution by giving people across the class lines of the community a means to enjoy pop entertainment and maintain their religious values. No institution in the black community responded as the churches did to a changing community. They alone had their fingers on the pulse of the community.

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Chapter #4

Making Things Better: Brooklyn's Black Churches and the Struggle to Improve Community Life

The Ghettoization of Black Brooklyn

When Gardner C. Taylor came to Bedford-Stuyvesant in 1948 to take over the pastorship of Concord Baptist Church, he believed that the community was a promising area, thriving with an active middle class, numerous community and fraternal organizations, and a growing number of black churches all helping to bring about a positive community spirit. According to Taylor, "Bedford-Stuyvesant was a new black community. Blacks were still moving into Bedford-Stuyvesant . . . This was a very stable black community. Many people who lived in Brooklyn had come from Harlem because this was a community of homes and brownstones. It was a middle class community, a self-consciously middle class community, I think, and the optimism and hopefulness of this community were both very pronounced." (N.1) As noted in the last chapter, as the black population of Bedford-Stuyvesant grew, it also became a rich cultural center with an active night life, numerous movie theaters, and a variety of sporting activities.

Despite the promising future for Bedford-Stuyvesant, by the late 1920's the community was becoming one of the city's worst slums. The story of the ghettoization of Bedford-

Stuyvesant, Brooklyn's largest black community, is the story of official government neglect. While the social and economic conditions of Bedford-Stuyvesant and other black communities worsened by the middle 20th century, little action was taken by government officials to remedy the situation. As housing, employment, education, health care, and other areas of life deteriorated, federal, state and city governments either did nothing or gave only token attention to the problems of the urban poor. There were numerous community organizations battling against the forces that helped make Bedford-Stuyvesant. The black churches were important institutions in this battle. In fact, many ministers and their churches moved to the forefront to combat the ghettoization of Bedford-Stuyvesant, East New York, Brownsville, and other areas that became predominantly black neighborhoods. Many pastors became involved in various social movements including school integration, adequate health care, black political empowerment, employment, and juvenile crime prevention. This chapter first looks at the reasons for the ghettoization of black Brooklyn and the church's role in the struggle to improve conditions for African-Americans.

Housing

The most obvious sign of Bedford-Stuyvesant's transformation from a viable community to a slum was the rapid deterioration of housing. By the 1920`s as blacks

came into the area, realtors saw an opportunity to make profits, bought brownstones and homes, converted them into apartments and charged high rents. Moreover, many were absentee landlords who provided few services to keep up their property. Overcrowding and inadequate living conditions resulted. (N.2)

A 1929 Welfare Council report asserted that the housing conditions for many blacks in Brooklyn were terrible. Many lived in frame buildings without fire escapes. Some buildings were turned into single room apartments causing overcrowding. Toilets were found in the yard of some tenements and in other buildings they were located in the halls forcing families to share them. (N.3)

Community groups made an effort to convince federal authorities to take action against banks who made loans to real estate speculators who converted homes into apartments, charged high rents, and provided little or no services to their tenants. Nothing however, was done. Sociologist Ernest Quimby notes this pattern continued throughout the 1930's and 1940's.

> "More and more private homes were subdivided into apartments and single rooms. Overcrowding became commonplace. An increase in absentee landlords resulted in decreased services to tenants. From 1930 to 1940 there was minimal construction. Two neighborhood locales were known by the police and non-residents for prostitution and vice, Myrtle Avenue, between Nostrand Avenue and Broadway, and the vicinity of Franklin Avenue and Fulton Street. Despite protests from churches, black and white homeowners and other groups, the city did nothing. (N.4)

In 1938, Albert Clarke, representing the Brooklyn Federation for Better Housing, a community group struggling for better housing conditions for blacks, reported the results of a study on the living conditions of blacks. Examining the twenty-two block area in East New York, Clarke reported that "4,807 families were forced to live in 3,421 dwelling units in the heart of the slum area covering 22 city blocks." 91 percent of the housing was in old buildings without central heating; 85 percent was without hot water, 26 percent was without tubs or showers, 4 percent was without electricity or gas cooking, 16.1 percent lacked private toilets and 80 percent of the dwellings were owned by absentee landlords. Moreover, 84 percent of the housing was between 40 and 50 years old. (N.5)

In one case in 1941, tenants living in a tenement on Myrtle Avenue were so fed up with their living conditions that they launched a rent strike. The tenants asserted that there was no central heating in the building. In addition, the building was infested with rodents and roaches, had loose wiring, and gas and oil leaks. (N.6)

The construction of public housing did little to relieve the poor housing conditions in Brooklyn's black communities. The first housing project in Brooklyn was built in the predominantly Jewish community of Williamsburg and in Redhook, a largely Italian community. For the most part, blacks were excluded from these projects. (N.7)

As Bedford-Stuyvesant approached the 1950's, housing

did not improve. In 1949, a representative of five families living in a tenement on Sumpter Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant made public the horrible conditions of their dwelling. Hot water was only available for a few hours a day, rodents were rampant in the building, there were big holes in the walls, and the building and halls were filthy. Despite the tenants' formal complaint to the Board of Health, the absentee landlord was not forced to make changes. Conditions in this building were not unusual. During the postwar boom, the Community Council reported the number of dwellings in Bedford-Stuyvesant decreased from 74,849 units in 1950 to 74,095 in 1957. The decrease was partly blamed on demolition which accounted for the loss of over 600 units. The building of public housing projects in the 1950's did little to relieve the situation. Most people lived in privately owned two-family and multi-family dwellings. Bedford-Stuyvesant had the second highest rate of overcrowded occupied units in Brooklyn -- eight percent. In addition, nineteen percent of the housing was considered substandard, the highest percentage in Brooklyn. The creation and maintenance of black ghettos were not the work of black residents but people in powerful positions including realtors, bankers, and government officials who took little action to stop the manipulation of Bedford-Stuyvesant and other black communities. (N.8)

Employment

The World War I demand for industrial labor allowed unprecedented numbers of blacks in Brooklyn to enter the manufacturing industries. Harold X. Connolly notes that by 1920, a quarter of Brooklyn women in the labor force were employed in manufacturing establishments. The greatest number of women were in clothing and textiles, while the men were heavily employed as semiskilled operatives and longshoremen. (N.9)

Yet, despite gains made by African-Americans in employment in the 1920's, the Brooklyn Urban League reported that unemployment among Brooklyn's black population had reached it highest level in six years, a fact the league attributed to the "closing of opportunities which brought them here in large numbers during the war." A 1928 Brooklyn Urban League survey of 106 Brooklyn firms revealed that only 58 hired blacks; of the 1,534 black workers hired by the 58 firms, 80 percent were classified unskilled. A public hearing conducted by the State Temporary Commission on the Condition of Urban Colored Population reported that the public utilities companies in Brooklyn discriminated widely against blacks. The New York Telephone Company refused to hire black operators on any level; the Consolidated Edison Electric Company refused to hire blacks as meter readers, and the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Company barred blacks from any position higher than conductor. The Depression brought hardships to many Americans. However, this period

was especially disastrous for African-Americans. In Brooklyn, the majority of blacks were relegated to service positions. Black male unemployment was high, and few were employed in industrial plants. Throughout the 1930's, the Urban League attempted to find employment for black men but for the most part was unsuccessful. In 1931, the League noted that only "emergency work" was available for black men. Although many black women were employed, of the 13,825 in the work force in 1930, 11,664 were in domestic and personal service. (N.10)

By World War II, employment conditions for Brooklyn's black population had improved. Although opportunities opened up for blacks in the defense sector of the economy, the greatest number were employed in non-defense related jobs. Firms that had locked out blacks began to hire them in large numbers, including New York Telephone, the Transit Company, and retail stores. This change was due to the labor shortage. Between 1940 and 1970 the number of people of African origins working in white-collar jobs increased from fourteen to forty-three percent. (N.11)

Although black women made gains in the clerical industry, by the 1950's the employment picture for people of African origins living in Brooklyn's largest black community, Bedford-Stuyvesant, did not improve. The 1950 median income of community residents was well below the borough-wide median income of $3,447. According to the Community Council of Greater New York, the south-western

part of Bedford-Stuyvesant had a median income of $2,228, the lowest in Brooklyn. The range in other areas of Bedford-Stuyvesant was $2,426 to 3,120. Moreover, by 1957, Bedford-Stuyvesant's 9,825 welfare cases accounted for 23 percent of the borough public assistance cases. (N.12)

Structural changes added misery to the employment situation for blacks in Brooklyn. Manufacturing employment declined as businesses shifted from the northeast to the south, west and other parts of the country. Many places closed, relocated or cut back production. The Brooklyn Navy Yard serves as a good example. Although the Navy Yard was well equipped to build war ships, the Federal government attempted to reduce its costs by turning to private shipyards to build ships. The cut back eventually affected thousands of workers, including 800 who lost their jobs when laid off from the Navy Yard Clothing store. Many of these were black workers residing in Brooklyn who were the last hired and had the least seniority. (N.13)

Health Care

Closely connected with growing poverty in Bedford-Stuyvesant was the lack of health care facilities servicing the community. In 1957, the infant mortality rate was 38.3 per 1,000, compared with the borough rate of 25.2 per 1,000. In some parts of Bedford-Stuyvesant the rate was over 40 per 1,000; in one health community, it was 52.5. Venereal disease rates were alarming. In four health areas in

Bedford-Stuyvesant, the rate varied between 588.2 and 800.9, while in six other health areas the rate varied from 1,236 to 2.807 per 1,000. Although there was a slight improvement in the tuberculosis rate between 1956 and 1958 (from 2.88 to 2.30), it was still well above the 1958 borough rate of 0.98. (N.14)

Despite these grim statistics, city officials failed to provide adequate health care to Bedford-Stuyvesant residents. In a 1953, report, the Hospital Council of the City of New York reversed its 1949 opinion which had called for the city to allocate funds for a hospital in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The Council acknowledged the horrible conditions in Bedford-Stuyvesant but rationalized that the causes were environmental. "As long as persons in need of hospital care receive it, the location of hospital beds within the area is not of itself a means for reducing the incidence of tuberculosis, venereal disease, infant mortality or maternal mortality. Of major consequence for the incidence of the above conditions are environmental factors such as sanitation, housing, nutrition, and health education." (N.15)

Acknowledging that residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant must go outside their community for health care, the Hospital Council justified their refusal to build a hospital with the claim that it was no real burden for people to travel 30 or 45 minutes on public transportation to reach other facilities. Moreover, it concluded that a new hospital in

Bedford-Stuyvesant would be detrimental because it would reduce the occupancy of neighboring hospitals and "thereby increase their operating costs per patient day and impair their present level of efficiency." According to the Council, the solution to Bedford-Stuyvesant's problems was to add 125 beds to Cumberland Hospital, almost thirty minutes away. (N.16) The Bedford-Stuyvesant Health Congress, a coalition made up of community activists and other local groups, protested the city's reluctance to provide a hospital. Requesting that the Mayor release funds from the capital budget to build a hospital in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the Congress noted:

> The people of Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, especially the Negro people, have paid and continue to pay a terrible toll in death and suffering because of their residence, race, creed, color and economic status. Year after year twice as many mothers die. . . year after year twice as many babies die. Dr. Kogel, Former Commissioner of Hospitals, characterized Bedford-Stuyvesant as an area rich in tuberculosis and poor in hospital facilities. The toll of death and suffering increases with the years. . . Our community is acutely aware of its needs, and experiences mounting resentment over the continued inaction of City Authorities to date. (N.17)

Despite the protest of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Health Congress and its insistence that Cumberland was obsolete and too far away for Bedford-Stuyvesant residents, the Board of Estimate (which had decided, in 1951, to set aside $1,250,000 for construction of a hospital in Bedford-Stuyvesant) chose in 1956 to expand Cumberland Hospital. This decision meant that Bedford-Stuyvesant would remain

without proper health care. (N.18)

Despite the health crisis in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the high rate of infant mortality, tuberculosis and venereal disease, city officials ignored these problems. This lack of concern and the view that the health care problems in Bedford-Stuyvesant were purely economic demonstrated that city officials had little concern for black people and that black life was of little consequence.

Education

More than any institution in America, public schools were seen as a means of upward mobility and economic mobility. Education was a means by which poor children climbed out of poverty and became responsible citizens. Despite the fact that education was seen as an important means of gaining success, racism and discrimination led to segregated, inferior education for black children throughout the nation. Their chances of upward social and economic mobility were thus limited. Brooklyn was no exception. As early as 1940, when Bedford-Stuyvesant's black population was increasing, community and civic leaders complained about overcrowding and segregation in many public schools that serviced the community. The School Council of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Williamsburg, a community group consisting of parents and teachers, asserted that only 20 of the 56 classes at P.S.3 on Hancock Street and Bedford Avenue received the normal six hour daily instruction. All other

classes received only four hours because of a teacher shortage. The school was considered the worst in the city. With only one hallway for 1,700 children, it was a fire trap. Forty children were assigned to a room. Shop classes were located near the school's boiler, creating a situation in which children could be burned. Similarly, at P.S. 36 all classes received four hours of instruction. Because of a teacher shortage at both P.S. 44 on Throop and Madison and at P.S. 129 on Gates and Lewis Avenues, classes were divided, creating overcrowding. In addition, children were denied hot lunches because of improper kitchen facilities. The School Council also complained that children graduating from junior high schools in Bedford-Stuyvesant were zoned to older high schools that lacked modern facilities such as swimming pools and industrial shops. (N.19)

Despite numerous complaints, the Board of Education did little to change these conditions. In the 1950's community groups reported that the New York Public School System was essentially segregated and that black and Hispanic children received an inferior education. In 1954 at a symposium of the National Urban League, Kenneth Clark, an Associate Professor of Psychology at City College also asserted that the New York City Public School System was segregated and black children were receiving an inferior education. According to Clark, these segregated schools left black children with a sense of inferiority and hindered their educational progress. (N.20)

The Public Education Association (PEA) reported in 1955 that there were forty-two elementary schools with a 90 percent black and Puerto Rican student body and nine junior high schools with 85 percent black and Puerto Rican student bodies. The PEA also reported that school buildings were older and there were fewer experienced teachers in the black communities than in white communities. Although the PEA claimed that the Board did not intentionally segregate students based on race, it argued that the agency did nothing to change the conditions. (N.21)

The Parents Workshop for Equality in New York City Schools, a community group led by the Rev. Milton Galamison of Siloam Presbyterian Church, that struggled for school integration, examined the racial make-up of ten junior high schools located in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville. In the late 1950's seven ranged from 70 to 88 percent black and Puerto Rican, while three were between 90 and 100 percent black and Puerto Rican. Although the expected reading level for eighth graders should have been 8.6, the average reading level for eighth graders in these schools ranged from 5.4 to 6.2. Students reading on a third grade level or lower in these ten schools ranged from 44 percent to 63 percent. (N.22)

The Parents Workshop noted that thirty elementary schools in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville were almost totally segregated. In the late 1950's nine ranged from 86 to 89 percent black and Puerto Rican, while 21 schools were

from 92 to 100 percent black and Puerto Rican. Although the reading level for sixth graders should have been 6.3, it ranged from 3.9 to 5.2. (N.23)

The Superintendent and other officials of the Board of Education stated that the Board was opposed to "racially homogeneous schools" and that it would integrate segregated schools as soon as possible; no action was taken to integrate schools however. A good example of the Board's refusal to act quickly for integration was junior high school 258. In the early part of 1955, JHS 258 on Marcy and Halsey Streets in Bedford-Stuyvesant opened with a racial make-up of 99 percent black and Puerto Rican student body. Community groups advocating that the school be integrated, claimed that children were not receiving the same instruction as children in predominantly white schools. In addition, few teachers were regularly appointed and 33 out of the 45 teachers have requested transfers due to poor working conditions. (N.24) However, despite protests from the Brooklyn Branch of the NAACP, the Brooklyn Urban League, and other community groups, members of the Board argued that the school was located in the heart of the black community, therefore, it was not practical to integrate it. Moreover, the Superintendent William Jansen asserted that he was in favor of the neighborhood school concept, the belief that children should attend schools in their own neighborhood. He, in reality, supported segregation. In March of 1957, Jansen assured a group of white parents in Queens who feared

that their children were going to be bussed to predominantly black schools in Bedford-Stuyvesant, "We have no intention whatsoever of long distance bussing or bussing of children simply because of their color. If we bus children, it will be because there is a room in one school and not in another, as we do now. We believe in the neighborhood school." (N.25)

To add insult to injury, few blacks were hired as teachers. In 1949, blacks accounted for two and one-half percent of the teaching staff and one and one-half percent were regularly appointed. Of the 64,130 teachers in 1955, 544 were black, 312 had regular appointments, while 232 were substitutes. Nor was the Board of Education committed to increasing its black faculty. When the Teacher's Union requested that the Board hire more black teachers and integrate its schools, it was ignored. Instead, the Board argued that it hired teachers based on ability and not race. In 1952, Jacob Greenberg, Associate Superintendent of Schools, responded to the charge that the board was practicing racism in its hiring practices. "Anyone who can present evidence of discrimination in the appointment of teachers and fails to do so is guilty of racial discrimination. Anyone who charges discrimination were none exists is equally guilty of racial discrimination." Superintendent of Schools William Jansen nor the Board took serious steps to integrate the teaching staff of segregated schools in the mid-1950's. The Board only adopted a

voluntary transfer plan for teachers and received very few responses. (N.26) For the most part, education became a narrow avenue to success for black children.

Juvenile Delinquency

As Brooklyn's black communities grew in the 1930's and 1940's, juvenile delinquency became one of the most devastating phenomena in the black community. Many young people, turned off from school and alienated from their community, were involved in unlawful behavior including robbery, gang fights, and violent acts against the innocent. It should be noted that juvenile delinquency was not a social problem unique to the black community. Throughout the nation, juvenile crime increased. This was greatly due to Depression, which led to massive unemployment. This, in turn, led to the break up of many families. In addition, the drafting of fathers, during the war, many mothers entering the work force and the lack of childcare facilities, left many children without adult supervision. (N.27)

Juvenile delinquency became such a major problem that in 1936, the editor of the "Bedford Home Owners News urged Mayor LaGuardia to sponsor boys clubs as a means of prevention: "We believe that such clubs, properly supervised, would do much in giving our youth a healthy outlook on life and at the same time would inculcate a true spirit of Americanism." (N.28)

Similarly, in 1943, the editors of the Amsterdam News launched a campaign to get community activists, churches, and civic organizations involved in the fight against juvenile delinquency. The Amsterdam News called for programs that would "keep the children off the streets and away from temptation. Supervised dances should be planned. . . Athletic leagues should be brought to the attention of the children in the community." (N.29)

In 1943, the August Grand Jury of Kings County noted the alarming incidence of juvenile crime. Of the one hundred people interviewed by the all-white grand jury, only one was black, thus giving credence to the charge that the report was biased. Recalling an earlier period when Bedford was "one of the finest residential sections of Brooklyn, the jury asserted that a 'state of lawlessness'existed in the area".

> Groups of young boys armed with penknives of all sizes and other weapons roam the streets at will and threaten and assault passers-by and commit muggings and holdups with increasing frequency. Gangs of hoodlums armed with such knives and weapons commit holdups, stabbings, homicides and serious crimes. (N.30)

Claiming most crime in Bedford-Stuyvesant was committed by people below the age of 21, the August Grand Jury stated: "These children form into little groups, run into stores, steal merchandise and run away. They break windows; they snatch pocketbooks; they commit muggings, holdups and assaults." (N.31)

Although the Jury stated that "this is in no sense a race problem", it was clear that African-Americans were blamed for the dramatic increase of crime in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The Jury argued that African-Americans were also fed up with the increase in crime and wanted something done.

> The foregoing conditions have been testified to by the many eminent, responsible and trustworthy Colored citizens in this area. They strongly deplore the conditions and have asked and appealed to this Grand Jury to do something about them. . . The desirable elements of this area, Negro and white, and of all faiths, are all begging and pleading for relief from these deplorable and shameful conditions. (N.32)

The jury also advised the Colored State Guard in Brooklyn could be enlarged and given an armory with recreational facilities to help take care of 3,000 boys. It asserted that the Guard members could be good role models for black youths. Despite attempts to appear non-biased, the Jury's blatant racism was evident: "A great influx of people from out of the State and other areas into this district require more stringent supervision by the public authorities." It called for an investigation of the "Relief rolls," and a longer waiting period for relief "in order to eliminate the tendency to live off relief." (N.33)

The Homeowners News, the Amsterdam News and the Brooklyn Grand Jury called for emergency action to deal with the problem of juvenile delinquency. Police reports indicate that during the first ten months of 1943, there had been a 53.4 percent increase in juvenile arrests, compared

to the first ten months of 1942. In eight police precincts serving Bedford-Stuyvesant, there were 356 juvenile arrests in 1941. In the first ten months of 1943, there were 565. By the 1950's juvenile crime had reached epidemic proportions in Bedford-Stuyvesant. While in 1957, the overall borough rate was 33.4 per 1,000, in some areas of Bedford-Stuyvesant the rate ranged from 46.4 to 89.9 per 1,000. In 1958, the rates ranged from 65.8 to 119.0 per 1,000. (N.34)

One explanation for the increase in juvenile crime in Bedford-Stuyvesant was the growth of the "under thirty" population. By 1957, half of the area's population was under thirty. Bedford-Stuyvesant had more children under the age of 14 than any other section of Brooklyn, 11.4 percent of a total 606,564. From 1950 to 1957, the number of children between the ages of six and thirteen increased by 19 percent. As the Police Commissioner notes in his report to May LaGuardia in 1943, "The greater the number of children, greater is the number of possible delinquents." By 1957, Bedford-Stuyvesant had more children between the ages of fourteen and nineteen than any other section of Brooklyn. (N.35)

Yet the increase in the youth population alone cannot explain the dramatic growth in juvenile arrests. Three other sections had a greater proportion of children than Bedford-Stuyvesant, yet their juvenile crime figures were lower. Other factors played a significant role, including

more accurate reporting on juvenile crime by the police and greater police presence in the area. Poverty and despair were also factors. As noted earlier, by 1949, Bedford-Stuyvesant's population earned well below the borough-wide median income, and by 1959 had one quarter of the borough's home relief cases. In addition, the area had the worst housing in the borough. (N.36)

Institutional racism is also an important factor in the number of arrests of black children. There were very few black police officers in New York and the vast majority of white officers were from outside the community and had little understanding of African-Americans. They held the same racist beliefs of blacks as the larger society. This lack of understanding led to innocent people suffering unwarranted arrest and physical assault at the hands of the police. Many of these victims were teen-agers. There was little understanding on the part of law enforcement officers of the social and economic problems of Bedford-Stuyvesant and other black communities that helped produce crime nor was there any attempt to reach out to these communities in order to improve relations.

In February of 1933, the Amsterdam News reported that Bedford-Stuyvesant had been selected as a "stamping ground for two hundred additional policeman who began their duties on Monday with purposes of stamping out crime. It asserted police went on a rampage rounding up and arresting innocent people: Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and white workers in Harlem

and Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant district seethed with anger yesterday as hordes of detectives and police swarmed into their districts arresting innocent citizens by the scores in a pre-election dragnet ordered by acting Mayor Vincent R. Impelitteri." According to the article, some thirty blacks and Hispanics were arrested indiscriminately in Bedford-Stuyvesant on charges of vagrancy. (N.37)

The Brooklyn branch of the NAACP waged a campaign against police abuse calling for federal and state investigations into police shootings of blacks in Bedford-Stuyvesant and holding rallies to protest police brutality. In May of 1959, the NAACP held a rally protesting "This New Wave of Police Brutality in Brooklyn," the death of Al Garret at the hands of the police and the beating of a fourteen year old girl by the police. (N.38) However, despite numerous cases of police brutality and protests from civil rights and community groups, no action was taken by city officials to stop police assaults. This lack of effort was just another indication of the lack of concern and respect that government officials had for people of African origins.

Recreation and Juvenile Delinquency

A variety of social services, recreational, and sports activities were offered by community organizations in order to address the problem of juvenile crime. Many community leaders and organizations advocated sports as an effective

means of stopping crime committed by children. In addition, many viewed recreation as a way of building good character, sportsmanship, and discipline. Organized physical activity also took children and teen-agers off the streets, thus decreasing their chances of breaking the law. Sports also offered poor kids hope out of the ghetto. By developing their skills in boxing, basketball, baseball, and other sports, children could aspire to become professional athletes. Moreover, sports reinforced such American values as competition, discipline, perseverance, and hard work, thus it was a good means of social control.

The view that sports and recreation was a panacea against juvenile delinquency led to the development of significant recreational opportunities for working-class children. One of the first facilities offering recreational activities for the growing black population of Brooklyn was the Carlton YMCA. At the turn of the century, some prominent African-Americans, including Alexander J. Henry, pastor of Nazarene Congregational Church, met at the Brooklyn branch of the YMCA located on Bond and Fulton Streets to advocate a black YMCA. In urban centers throughout the north, separate branches of the "Y" were established. White Philanthropist, George Foster Peabody, donated a three-story building at 405 Carlton Avenue in downtown Brooklyn for a YMCA, and in 1903 the Carton YMCA opened. (N.39)

Although the Carlton "Y" excluded boys and limited its

membership to men, when it first opened in 1902, it soon opened its doors to boys for religious training and in 1911 established a boy scout unit. By the second decade of the 20th century, it had become a broad recreational and social service center with a billiard table, checker tables, dominoes, and a yard for outdoor sports. Through fund-raising with $25,000 contributions from John D. Rockefeller and Julius Rosenwald, who had contributed to other African-American YMCA's, an additional building was added to the Carlton. The Rosenwald building contained a swimming pool, bowling alleys, showers, baths and dormitory rooms. (N.40)

In 1926, the Carlton YMCA purchased 125 acres of land in Strassburg, New York for a boys' camp, giving hundred of inner-city children the opportunity for a few summer weeks in the outdoors. Carlton also had a baseball team and a basketball team. Carlton's basketball team, the "Big Five" won championships titles from 1917 to 1925. As late as the 1940's the black press was reporting on the teams. The Amsterdam News reported the Carlton varsity team, "celebrated the close of a successful season on Saturday night by defeating the League All-Stars 38-36 in five minutes of overtime play," listing scores for both teams and the number of points each scored. Besides sports, the Carlton offered the boys the opportunity to participate in a glee club and orchestra. (N.41)

The need for moral and spiritual training was not limited to men and boys. Soon after the formation of the

Carlton YMCA, and African-American branch of the YWCA was established at 122 Lexington Avenue in the downtown area of Brooklyn. Like the Carlton "Y", the Lexington YWCA stressed spiritual and moral training including Bible study. Encouraging stereotypical gender roles, the YWCA put little stress on sports and recreation and more on practical training for women, with a Household Department that helped train African-American women for domestic employment. The Lexington YWCA offered courses in cooking, laundering, nursing, dressmaking, sewing, and childcare. According to a 1936 WPA report, employers favored girls training by the YWCA. (N.42)

Still, the YWCA offered girls some recreational activities, including horseback riding and dancing. Shortly after World War I, through fund-raising in the black community of Brooklyn, the YWCA acquired a four-story brick building on Ashland Place, containing and library and concert hall that seated 250, which could be used as an educational center during the day and on special occasions for dancing. (N.43)

The Brooklyn Urban League-Lincoln Settlement, established in 1908 in downtown Brooklyn, offered blacks classes in cooking, embroidery, carpentry, and dancing. It had a choral club and sponsored debates. In addition, it offered working mothers nursery services. (N.44)

Due to the lack of revenue, Lincoln Settlement closed its doors in 1920. The Brooklyn Urban League took over

operation of the Settlement house; and in 1927, the organizations merged. The Brooklyn Urban-League-Lincoln Settlement House participated in a variety of social-service activities, persuading Children's Court to appoint a black probation officer. In 1934, it joined with the Fusion Party and the Municipal Civil Service Commission to open conductor and train positions to blacks. It also organized and supervised the Adult Education Division of the Board of Education, which educated hundreds of students and employed a number of teachers. The Urban League-Lincoln Settlement operated a kindergarten, also under the supervision of the Board of Education, and assisted hundreds of delinquent boys and girls in Children's Court. (N.45)

Recreation and sports were included in the Brooklyn Urban League-Lincoln Settlement program. Located at 105 Fleet Place in downtown Brooklyn, it offered basketball, wrestling, boxing, volleyball, and swimming. The League also had a tennis team. (N.46)

The Brooklyn Urban League expanded its recreational and sports services when it purchased a pre-Civil War Baptist Church at 377 Hudson Avenue and converted it into a boy's club. Opened in 1928, the Hudson Avenue Boy's Club was located in an area of Brooklyn where juvenile crime rates were high. A gym with a basketball court, pool room, club rooms and a shower room were installed. Painting, carpentry, drama, and music were offered daily. The following year, the Snyder Boys Club was opened. A year

later, the Brooklyn Urban League took over the finances of the Snyder Avenue Boy's Club in Flatbush. (N.47)

Besides these private and community efforts to combat juvenile delinquency, the city government turned to recreation as a solution to youth crime. Playgrounds, parks, and recreational centers became the city's major weapons in halting juvenile delinquency. Besides, playgrounds and recreation centers were seen as a means of developing children into good citizens. Both playgrounds and recreational centers enforced structure. People were hired to supervise the facilities. In addition, all activities in playgrounds and recreational centers were organized, having rules and regulations and with little chance for children to be creative and make up their own activity and games.

One agency actively sponsoring recreation and sports as a means of fighting juvenile delinquency was the Police Athletic League (PAL) founded in 1914 as a non-profit organization supported by voluntary funds. It was taken over by the Juvenile Aid Bureau of the New York Police Department and by the 1930's ran programs for both boys and girls, including boxing, tournaments, baseball, softball, and basketball leagues, bowling teams, fife and drum corps, boat rides around New York, trips to the zoo and Botanical Gardens in Prospect Park, Brooklyn and picnics. In addition, the League operated several recreational centers in the city, including three in Bedford-Stuyvesant, which

provided game rooms, basketball courts, and arts and crafts facilities. PAL organized playstreets, referred to as "Asphalt Camps." The League blocked off traffic to one hundred city streets including several in Bedford-Stuyvesant during the summer, transforming them into "centers for volleyball, baseball, basketball, quiet games, remedial education, singing, dancing and painting." (N.48)

Although, the city government built playgrounds in white communities, throughout the 1930's for the most part it ignored the black communities of New York. Biographer Robert Caro notes that although Parks Commissioner Robert Moses built 255 neighborhood playgrounds in the 1930's, he built only one in Harlem, one in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and none in the growing black community of South Jamaica. (N. 49) As late as 1940, Albert L. Clarke, president of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Playground Council, a grass roots organization, struggling for more playgrounds in that area asserted that Moses care so little about the people of Bedford-Stuyvesant, he denied that the community existed. (N.50)

However, by the late 1940's and 1950's, probably due to a growing rate of juvenile crime and pressure from community groups, the city launched an accelerated program of building both playgrounds and recreational centers in Bed-Stuy. According to Parks Commissioner Robert Moses

> The playground is a powerful weapon in the war on so "called" juvenile delinquency. To quote city council President Stark, "only supervised recreational centers, playground activities and

> healthy athletic competition can provide our city's boys and girls with a healthy environment. How much better it is to fight juvenile delinquency in this manner than to let young people congregate in bars, cellar clubs, and disreputable honky tonks." (N.51)

The objective of the parks was not only to provide "healthy exercise for millions of juveniles, but to create a calming as well as stabilizing effect on large numbers of people who have experienced ill effects of urbanization," thus improving the quality of life of the city. According to Parks Commissioner Robert Moses:

> the rows of trees will be planted to bring oases of green and shaded to overlook the communities. The playground is a neighborhood asset exerting a tremendous influence on safety, character, health and fun of the people of the community. The results we aim at are to have a stabilizing influence on the welfare of the community, increasing the value of surrounding property and above all, pleasanter city living. (N.52)

In 1944, with the urging of the Brooklyn Amsterdam News, and Brooklyn Borough president John Cashmore, the Board opened 14 school gymnasiums in Bedford-Stuyvesant during the summer for children. By the 1950's the city operated twenty-two playgrounds in Bedford-Stuyvesant, many with areas for "small children and their guardians including wading pools, sand pits, and a comfort station. The parks provided older people softball, basketball, and handball courts, shuffle board, tennis, horse shoe pitching, volleyball, roller skating and ice skating areas for "healthy exercise." (N.53)

To help fight juvenile delinquency, the city established at least five evening, two afternoon, and seven afternoon and evening centers operating in Bedford-Stuyvesant in the 1950's. Most operated in public and junior high schools, offering young people basketball, table games, and arts and crafts. (N.54)

Both the Brownsville Boys Club and the St. John's Recreation Center offered year-round recreational facilities. The Brownsville Boys Club, located on Linden Blvd. and Hegeman Avenue, was a gift from Abe Stark to the City of New York. Opened in 1954, the center had a swimming pool, gymnasium for basketball and other sports, game rooms, lockers and showers, and an outdoor gym on the roof. Although Brownsville's juvenile delinquency rate was below the city's average, the center helped improve the quality of life, creating a "healthier outlook and happiness of the children of Brownsville." By 1956, the club had 6,086 members, servicing 710 people a day. (N.55)

St. John's Recreation Center, located in St. John's Park, specifically aimed at curbing juvenile delinquency in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Opened in 1956, it offered a gymnasium for basketball, boxing and other exercises; a 42-by-75 foot swimming pool for recreational and competitive swimming; a senior game room with ping pong tables, a pool table, table hockey sets, and lounge chairs; a junior game room with checker sets, table hockey sets and ping pong tables; and a woodwork shop. Open seven days a week from ten in the

morning until ten in the evening, the center was staffed by fifty-one, including specialist in swimming, arts and crafts, cooking, and physical education. (N.56)

Despite the effort of city government to halt juvenile crime, it failed to address the larger issues plaguing the black community which helped produce juvenile delinquency such as poverty, dysfunctional family life, unemployment, powerlessness and alienation. By providing sports and recreation as the sole solution to juvenile delinquency, government officials and many outside of government demonstrated a lack of vision. Many assumed that all black children needed was to be taken off the streets and kept busy. There was little attempt to solve the social and economic problems that plagued their community. There was no attempt on the part of the city to understand problems facing migrants new to urban living, people living in dilapidated housing and attending overcrowded and under staffed schools, neighborhoods with the juveniles committing unlawful acts. It was a community in crisis. Despite community efforts, much more was needed to combat the problem of juvenile delinquency. There was a need for a financial commitment by federal, state, and city governments along with private sources to establish improved housing, employment opportunities, and adequate education as well as recreational facilities for the ghetto. In addition, health care facilities including mental health care to deal with many emotionally disturbed teens was essential for combating

this problem. At the same time it was opening recreational facilities in Bed-Stuy, the City only operated one mental health clinic serving people fifteen and older. Instead, the city, state and federal governments which could have made a great impact, limited its involvement by providing a least expensive way of dealing with juvenile delinquency. (N.57)

Black Churches and the Struggle to Improve their Community

Along with the Brooklyn Urban League, the NAACP, and other community organizations, the black churches became important elements in the struggle to improve the socioeconomic conditions of African-Americans. Despite the lack of effort on the part of the city, state, and federal governments to combat ghettoization and the socioeconomic problems of blacks, the black churches moved to the forefront of the struggle to improve the quality of life for all blacks by addressing a wide range of needs of the black ghetto poor.

Many of Brooklyn's black churches and clergy were in the forefront of seeking employment opportunities, improved health care, an educational system that served the needs of black children, and addressing the growing problem of juvenile delinquency. The ministers of numerous black churches, became the advocates for black people by attempting to move government officials to provide needed services for the residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant,

Brownsville and East New York. Some ministers became the most radical element in the black community in their struggle to improve the lives of black people.

Brooklyn's black congregations pooled their resources to address the growing problem of crime among young people. By organizing programs for children and teenagers, these institutions attempted to present healthy alternatives to street life. By the 1930's several black churches were keeping their doors open past the usual service hours, becoming centers for moral uplift by offering social, recreational, and sporting events for black children.

One of the most popular programs promoting moral uplift was scouting. For many scouting represented "clean speech, clean sport, clean habits, and travels with a clean crowd." Scouting was a means of saving kids from the mean streets and instilling moral values such as discipline, hard work, and etiquette.

A boy scout unit was organized in 1910 and met at the Carlton YMCA. Sometime between 1910 and 1925, Nazarene Congregational Church organized a scouting program. Both the girl and boy scouts were involved in recreational and "Christians endeavors." The boy scouts also had a musical program, including a band that played in annual school parades and for community organizations, thus connecting the children to the community. (N.58)

Other churches followed suit and established scouting programs between 1925 and 1945, including St. Augustine

Protestant Episcopal, St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal, First AME Zion, Mt. Lebanon Baptist, Berean Baptist, Bethany Baptist, St. Sinai Baptist, Brown Memorial Baptist and Cornerstone Baptist. A boy scout unit was first organized in December of 1932 at Bridge St. AWME and three years later a girl scout unit was established. By the early 1940's, Bridge St. also had a brownie troop, intermediate troop, and cub scout units. (N.59)

By the 1930's Concord Baptist church's scouting program was one of the most active in Brooklyn, with a fife and drum corps, a library and facilities for arts and crafts. Both the girl and boy scouts used the local Y's for sports, and during the summer months, the scouts left the city for sleep-away camp. (N.60)

Scouting fought against juvenile delinquency by molding the character of boys and girls. It also brought families together, giving parents the opportunity to become scoutmasters, cubmasters, den mothers, employer advisors, and advisors on committees. In 1947 the Girl Scout Parents Guild of Concord Baptist Church was providing financial and moral support to the youth of the church. Later called the Mother's Club, the Guild wanted youth to "grow up with an increasing spiritual enlightenment." In 1945, the first AME Zion Church hosted the "Scout Parents Organization's Annual Honor Night Celebration." Over five hundred people attended. "Among the events of the evening were eight parent patrols contesting for the most beautifully-dressed

table ..." Bridge St. AWME church held special services for the scouts, including a boy scouts anniversary celebration and "Scout Family Night," where parents as well as children were honored for their scouting activities. (N.61)

Along with scouting programs, both Bethany Baptist and Concord Baptist Church had basketball teams. Concord's boy scout unit, basketball and baseball teams serviced two hundred boys in the community. As members of the Brooklyn and Queens Athletic Association, the teams competed with others in the city. Concord's athletic program which included a girl's tennis team, dramatics club, drum and bugle corp, and choral groups were open to both church member and non-members. Nazarene Congregational Church's "reaching out" project offered a recreational clubroom for boys. Siloam Presbyterian Church built a gymnasium for games and exercises and a concert hall for dramatics, and other forms of "entertainment" in order to "meet the challenge of the youth of the community." Siloam along with the Department of Welfare also operated the Maria Lawtib Center for Older People which provided recreational activities including an arts and crafts program, discussion groups, trips and board games. Bridge St. AWME Church, Mt. Lebanon Baptist, and Concord Baptist churches had summer vacation schools that offered children a host of activities. (N.62) In 1945, the Amsterdam News noted that the Concord Baptist Church Daily Vacation Bible School serviced four hundred children from four to sixteen, providing a free

program of "study, play, music, and handicrafts." The summer school term was from July 2nd, soon after the public schools closed for the summer, until July 31st and operated daily from nine in the morning until noon. Bridge Street's vacation Bible school also began on July 2nd, running five days a week, offering children educational activities, music, and trips to the various parks of New York. (N.63)

Many black churches also worked with community organizations in an attempt to fight juvenile delinquency. Ministers lead charity campaigns for the Carlton and Ashland Y's. In 1941, in close association with the Ashland YMCA, Carlton YMCA, and the girl scouts, Siloam sponsored a meeting to promote community activities for the borough's youth, resulting in weekly activities hosted by the churches and community groups. On Monday's health education classes were given at St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal. On Tuesdays, choral music was offered at Siloam. On Wednesdays Bridge St. offered dramatics. All activities began at 7 p.m. and ended at 9 p.m. (N.64)

By the 1930's, most of Brooklyn's black churches, including the Pentecostal churches, attempted to involve children by creating junior usher boards, children's youth choirs, sunshine bands, and youth day committees. These youth committees sponsored various activities for children including outings, musical and literary programs, and youth day services. Both Washington Temple COGIC and Cornerstone Baptist church illustrate this point. To entertain the

young people of the congregation Washington Temple COGIC occasionally showed religious motion pictures. In addition the young people operated snack bars in the church. The Youth Committee of Cornerstone Baptist Church showed religious movies, made sound movies, and presented dramatic performances. (N.65)

These various activities demonstrate that the churches attempted to make children a part of both the church and larger community thus countering the impact of alienation. Moral guidance, education, as well as recreation were the means churches used to fight juvenile delinquency.

Not all of Brooklyn's black churches were active in all aspects of community outreach work. Some did not have the resources nor the will to take on such tasks. However, the vast majority were dedicated to saving the youth of the community. Although the black churches accepted the notion that recreation was an important means of stooping juvenile delinquency, they saw children not as threatening elements in the community that needed to be kept off the streets. Instead, they viewed recreation as just one aspect of th fight against juvenile crime. Many in the churches saw black children as part of the larger black community who had strayed away and needed moral guidance. They needed to be instilled with moral values and brought back into the community. Many in the churches willingly took on this role as moral leaders whose job was to inculcate moral principles into the young. They wanted to create a church environment

that made the youth a integral part of community life.

Juvenile delinquency was just one of many problems addressed by the black churches of Brooklyn. As noted many ministers were in the forefront struggling for black people. One of the most active ministers fighting to improve conditions for blacks in Brooklyn was Thomas Harten. Harten became pastor of Holy Trinity Baptist church in 1922. By the late 1920's, Rev. Harten had become one of the most dynamic pastors in New York City. He gained a reputation as a fiery preacher who was able to excite audiences, bringing men and women to a frenzy. Moreover, Harten gained a reputation as a protest leader. In 1925, he formed the National Equal Rights League and later on the Afro-Protective League to protest lynchings in the South and combat police brutality and racial discrimination in New York City. In July of 1925, nearly 2,000 people jammed Holy Trinity Church in response to a plea by the National Equal Rights League, protesting the "apparent propaganda of racial prejudice and oppression carried on by the police force in Brooklyn." Several black men were picked up and brought in for questioning regarding the murder of a white woman. A committee was selected by the group to call upon the office of District Attorney of Brooklyn demanding an end to police harassment of black men and the prosecution of all offending officers. The delegation included Harten, Rev. George Frazier Miller of St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal Church, Henry hugh Proctor of Nazarene Congregational Church and

Rev. Harten. Several months later over 1,000 people attended a rally called by the National Equal Right League at holy Trinity protesting the brutal police assault on Estelle Benson a black women. A few days later Harten led 300 protesters to Brooklyn Borough Hall demanding that officials take action against the police officer who attacked Mrs. Benson. (N.66)

Although Harten asserted that he would stay out of politics and concentrate only on his church after the Democratic Party passed over him in 1932 for an elected office, he continued his activities for the civil rights of blacks. In 1937 he became involved in the defense committee for the Scottboro Boys. He teamed up with Father Divine in the fall of 1937 and held a mass rally in Manhattan attracting thousands. In 1937, Holy Trinity hosted a meeting of the United Beauty Cultutists Association of America and promised to find ways to improve the working conditions of domestic workers. In 1942, the Amsterdam News reported that over 2,000 people attended Holy Trinity to hear Harten attack lynching and the "Jim Crow" tactics throughout the country. The people attending the service voted to forward a resolution to President Roosevelt urging him to "use his high office to make the democracy for which we are fighting for abroad a reality for the 15 million Colored Americans." Harten later told the crowd that it was time for an African-American to be elected to Brooklyn's 17th Assembly District. "We must endorse our own man. That

will prevent the political leaders from endorsing one of us who would be a Negro handkerchief-head Uncle Tom, political stool pigeon." (N.67)

Harten was not unique. Ministers attempted to be the moral and political voice of their community. Many ministers pooled their resources together and acted as a collective force. One of the most active ministerial organizations was the interdenominational Minister's Alliance. Founded in the 1920's in order to promote interfaith cooperation, the group sponsored Emancipation day celebrations commemorating the destruction of slavery. By the 1930's the Alliance provided food and aid for black families suffering from the impact of the Depression. In the 1940's the Interdenominational Minister's Alliance worked with city council person J. Danial Diggs, in improving bus services in Bedford-Stuyvesant. In addition, the ministerial group met with city hospital officials and was able to persuade the hospital commissioner to order voluntary hospitals to improve ambulance service in Bedford-Stuyvesant and to lift a band on city hospitals to issue contraceptive devices. The later action as in response to the growing problem of teenage pregnancy in Bedford-Stuyvestant. (N.68)

Numerous efforts were taken by black ministers of Brooklyn in order to improve employment conditions for African-Americans. Many ministers were members of the Brooklyn branch of the Greater New York Coordinating

Committee for Employment. This group attempted to win jobs for blacks in public utilities companies and department stores through negotiation and threats of boycotts. In addition, rallies, meetings, and lobbying campaigns were launched by many Brooklyn black pastors in support of a fair Employment Practices Commission during the 1940's.

However, it was not until the 1960's that ministers took militant action to force businesses to hire black workers. Sparked by the civil rights movement, a diligent effort to improve the employment conditions of blacks in Bedford-Stuyvesant was launched in the spring of 1962, when sixty eight ministers met at Cornerstone Baptist Church. The ministers all from Bed-Stuy demanded that local merchants contribute to black agencies in the community and that businesses adopt a "fair employment" program by hiring and promoting black and Hispanic workers. The group consisted of ministers from various denominations including several Baptists, a Presbyterian, and two Pentecostal ministers. Most visible were Sandy Ray of Cornerstone Baptist, Milton Galamison of Siloam Presbyterian, V. Simpson Turner of Mt. Carmel Baptist, Frank Clemmons of First Church of God and Christ, F.D. Washington of Washington Temple COGIC. Calling themselves the Ministers Movement, the group used their churches as information centers, keeping the community aware of activities of the Movement and organized their members for a one day boycott. The Churches printed over 100,000 leaflets calling for community support of the

boycott and demonstration. (N.69)

On March 31, one hundred ministers and hundreds of demonstrators picketed seven stores on Nostrand Avenue and Fulton Street, the business district of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Carrying signs that read "This is a Community and not a Plantation," "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work," "Upgrade Negro and Puerto Rican Workers," the demonstrators marched from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. scaring many of the merchants. In fact one owner of a woman's clothing store close early. (N.70)

The ministers quickly prepared for another boycott, printing thousands of leaflets and informing their membership of plans for picketing. The threat of a second boycott persuaded merchants to sit down with the ministers and negotiate. The merchants represented by the Fulton Avenue Merchants Association agreed to hire more blacks, promote them and contribute financially to community organizations. Although the Ministers movement later targeted Ebinger's Bakery, the group soon disbanded for reasons that are not clear. It may have disbanded because ministers were unable to give the time demanded for a protest movement. However, many of its members would be involved in other struggles including the attempt to persuade the building trade unions, State the city officials to hire more black and Puerto Rican workers at the construction site of Downstate Medical Center in the summer of 1963.

Health care of the community was also a major concern of many of the black churches. Some churches sponsored Health programs in order to educate the community on matters of health care.

Many ministers of the community joined the struggle for a hospital for Bed-Stuy. In 1950, a community meeting was held at First AME Zion protesting the health conditions of the community. Three years later a community drive was launched in order to get the City of New York to allocate funds for a hospital under a select committee of ministers and civic leaders. The drive was headed by Benjamin Lowry of Zion Baptist Church, and was supported by the ministers Bedford-Stuyvesant. The group that met at First AME Zion Church named itself the Citizens Committee for a Bedford-Stuyvesant Hospital Site. Besides many political figures such as the city council presidential candidate Abe Stark and Municipal Court Judge Lewis S. Flag, noted ministers attended such as Rev. George Thomas of Brown Memorial Baptist Church, Rev. Charles England of St. Augustine, and John Coleman of St. Phillips. The Amsterdam News reported that many in Beford-Stuyvesant held special prayer services for the hospital site. The prayer services pointed out that the ministers were lining their congregation behind the struggle for the hospital. Prayer was a means of raising the issue and, therefore, made people conscious of the importance of the struggle. Although unsuccessful in persuading the city to open a hospital in Bedford-

Stuyvesant, the churches became centers of information on the hospital campaign and other vital issues of the community. For example, Lowry informed his congregation on the decision of the Hospital Council to recommend adding 125 beds to Cumberland Hospital instead of opening a hospital in Bedford-Stuyvesant. (N.71)

Numerous ministers also spoke out for the improvement of education of black children. The Interdenominational Ministers Alliance sponsored a meeting at Siloam Presbyterian Church protesting the Board of Education's lack of effort to integrate schools and to seek ways of organizing a campaign for integration. Besides attempting to organize people, the meeting also gave parents and others an opportunity to express their views and give suggestions for the struggle for school integration. (N.72)

Both John Coleman of St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal and Gardner C. Taylor became members of the Board of Education. On several occasions Taylor testified at public hearings held by the Board on behalf of the Brooklyn Urban League which he was chairperson and African-Americans. At one such hearing Taylor told Board officials that "the way to integrate is to integrate." In June of 1959, Taylor sent a copy of an article in a newspaper that compared New York to Little Rock Arkansas. In a letter to the members of the Board, Taylor suggested the comparison between Little Rock, Arkansas and New York were frightening. Taylor warned Board members "I am confident that you will see this as one more

instance of the forthrightness with which we must move, in the matter of full and complete integration of New York schools. We condemn the assault on our democracy which came in the infamous attacks on nine little Negro children, and rightly -- but Little Rock will never be right until New York is right; and New York will never be right until Little Rock is right." (N.73)

The most outspoken Brooklyn minister for school integration was Milton Galamison of Siloam Presbyterian Church. Galamison, born in Philadelphia in 1923 received his undergraduate degree from Lincoln and a masters degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1947. Coming to Siloam in 1948 at the age of 25, Galamison soon asserted his opposition to segregation by refusing to pay a tax to the Brooklyn-Nassau Presbytery which was attempting to build a Presbyterian Church in Long Island where the Levittown private homes were being built. Noting that blacks could not buy the new homes, Galamison told the Amsterdam News "We want to see the extension of the Presbyterian Church ... but we cannot support movements into areas where we are not certain Negroes would be welcome." (N.74)

Unsatisfied with the Brooklyn branch of the NAACP's lack of action in the struggle for school integration, Galamison decided to become involved in the organization by first running and winning the position of chairperson of the education committee and later the president of the organization with the hope of influencing the group to take

a strong position against the Board's policy. Unable to persuade the branch, Galamison left in 1959 and formed the Parents Workshop for Equality in New York City Schools. Consisting of parents and community activities, the group held regular meetings and rallies at Siloam Presbyterian Church, published a newsletter to keep people informed of the work of the group, meetings with Board of Education officials and other activities and events. In addition, the new organization took militant action including a number of boycotts of schools in order to force the Board to integrate its schools. In one such, boycott over one chousand parents kept their children out of schools in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Williamsburg, and Harlem demanding that the Board allow parents to send their children to schools of their choice. Another favorite tactic of the Parents Workshop was to have parents show up to the school of their choice and attempt to register their children. However, the Parents Workshop most extensive effort for school integration came in the winter of 1964 when the group organized two city-wide boycotts of schools. (N.75)

In 1963, the Parents Workshop joined forces with the NAACP, CORE, and the Harlem Parents Committee and formed a new organization called the City-Wide Committee for School Integration, Milton Galamison was named president of the organization. He announced that the coalition would launch a one day boycott in protest to the Board of Education's refusal to take concrete steps to integrate its schools.

(N.76) A number of rallies were held at Siloam and other churches in order to organize parents, ministers urged parents to keep their children out of school and the Parents Workshop's newsletter called for support of the boycott. In addition, the large press coverage before the boycott made many aware of the event. Some parents were frightened and thought there would be trouble the day of the boycott and decided not to send their children to school. Besides receiving support from parents and civil rights groups, ministers threw their support behind the efforts of the Parents Workshop. Many churches throughout the city announced that their buildings would be used as "freedom schools," giving children instruction in math, reading and black history. In addition, some ministers were involved in attempting to organize clergy throughout the city for support of the boycott. In July of 1963, William Jones, Ben Lowery, Sandy Ray, and Galamison sent the following letter to ministers throughout the city:

> The times in which we live demand the Ministers of New York City help resolve the crisis in our public school system. To this end, the undersigned ministers, in conjunction with the Parents Workshop for Equality in New York City Schools and other agencies, have agreed on a plan of action ... If you consent to have your church used as a "freedom school" to accommodate children who refuse to attend the public schools, please return the enclosed reply card. (N.77)

On February 3, 1964 the anticipated boycott took place. CLose to a half million children stayed out of schools.

They stayed home, joined one of the three hundred picket lines or attended one of the "freedom schools." Galamison threatened to launch a second boycott if the Board refused to integrate the schools. Many who supported the first boycott withdrew from the second one including the NAACP and the Urban League. They were angry that Galamison had called for the second boycott without their consent. Many also feared that a second boycott threatened their leverage to bargain with the Board and would cost the support of white liberals. Despite the lack of support, a second boycott was carried out on March 15, 1964. (N.78) Although it was half the size of the first one, Galamison proved that he was able to mobilize thousands of people without the support of the traditional civil rights organizations. The boycotts gained the Galamison reputation as one of the most militant civil rights leaders in Brooklyn and it catapulted him to the head of the school integration movement in New York.

Conclusion

Ministers and their churches have been an active part of community life by attempting to deliver services and leadership to the black community. Before there was a war on poverty and a commitment by federal, state and city governments to address the problems of the urban poor, black ministers and black churches were in the forefront struggling to improve the quality of life for blacks in every aspect. Unlike secular and civil rights organizations

that had limited resources, space and membership, the black churches used many means at its disposal to wage a war against poverty, racism, and government inaction. It was not only concerned about the spiritual nature of black people but their social condition. C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence MiMaya called this the "holistic" approach. "In fact, a holistic view of the ministry of the Black Church, of being involved with all aspects of life, has bene one of the continuing major attractions for many black clergy throughout history; the holistic view represents a major historical strand among black churches that calls for continuous prophetic involvement in all phases of black communal life." (N.79)

There is no doubt that the black churches should have organized themselves into a much more cohesive group, giving leadership by mobilizing people as a political block to assure the election of black candidates, guaranteeing large demonstrations in the streets, and as a lobbying group putting pressure on all branches of government to do something about the dire conditions of Bedford-Stuyvesant and other black poor neighborhoods. However, considering the churches lack of funds, little or no government assistance, many black churches did a monumental job in the struggle to improve their community.

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Chapter #5

THE MINISTERS COMMITTEE FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR BROOKLYN AND THE DOWNSTATE MEDICAL CENTER CAMPAIGN

Between July 15 and August 6, 1963, a ministerial organization called the Ministers' Committee for Job Opportunities for Brooklyn, made up mostly of black ministers from the Bedford-Stuyvesant area, conducted a protest campaign at the construction site of the Downstate Medical Center demanding that one-fourth of all construction jobs at the twenty-five million dollar construction project be granted to blacks and Puerto Ricans. The construction project was chosen because of its close proximity to the Bedford-Stuyvesant area in hopes of generating jobs for this devastated community. The committee helped organize hundreds of people, led several protests that resulted in the arrest of over seven hundred protesters, and received extensive news coverage before reaching a settlement with Governor Nelson Rockefeller. Unlike the Ministers Committee attempt in the spring of 1962 to win employment for blacks by boycotting and picketing businesses operating in Bedford-Stuyvesant the Downstate campaign was much broader. It attempted to build a mass movement that challenged both the state government and the building trade union practices that resulted in the exclusion of blacks from working in the

construction industry. It was a major attempt to break down the barriers of discrimination throughout the entire construction industry and alter state and city policy. The Downstate Medical Center campaign also would differ from the City wide school boycotts of 1964 because of the radical methods used at the construction site and the pivotal leadership role that several black ministers played. Downstate would also differ from the school boycotts because of its heavy reliance on the black congregations of Brooklyn for financial support and troops for the picket lines. Moreover, because of the many demonstrators, state and city officials involved in the campaign, this was the first major civil rights campaign in New York City to capture a national audience. Both newspapers and television covered the events at Downstate.

However, despite the fact that this was one of the largest civil rights protests in the urban North during the civil rights decade, the Downstate campaign has been largely ignored by scholars. Moreover, a few works have focused on the black clergy and their churches in northern civil rights campaigns. Although numerous scholars have written on civil rights movement and black clerical figures during that decade, most of the literature focuses on southern civil rights campaigns. (N.1) This void produces an incomplete history of the civil rights movement.

By unfolding the historical events of the Downstate

Medical Center campaign, this narrative shifts our attention from the South and attempts to broaden our knowledge of a northern civil rights struggle and the role some northern black ministers played during this crucial era in American history. It will trace the activities of the Ministers Committee including the strategies and tactics it adopted in order to create a broad mass civil rights movement and its attempt to end racial discrimination in the construction industry in the State of New York.

Origins of the Downstate Campaign

An important goal of the Downstate Medical Center campaign was to increase job opportunities in the mostly black community of Bedford-Stuyvesant. This community is located in north central Brooklyn. Its northern boundary runs across Clinton Avenue across to Flushing, dividing it from Williamsburg. Its eastern boundary is at Broadway and Saratoga Avenue, separating the community from Bushwick. Classon Avenue, running from Flushing Avenue to Atlantic Avenue makes up Bedford-Stuyvesant's western border and Atlantic Avenue extending from Classon Avenue to Broadway is its southern boarder. (N.2)

By the early 1960's, the most militant and vocal organization attempting to improve the quality of life for Bedford-Stuyvesant's poor was the Brooklyn Congress of Racial Equality. In 1962, the Brooklyn affiliate teamed up

with the Rev. Milton Galamison and his Parent's Workshop for Equality in New York Public Schools and launched a sit-in at the Board of Education office demanding and eventually winning relief in an overcrowded school in Bedford-Stuyvesant. In September of that year Brooklyn CORE launched "Operation Cleansweep". Members of the organization attempted to get city officials to improve the sanitation conditions of Bedford-Stuyvesant and other ghettos by dumping garbage on the steps of Brooklyn Borough Hall. In 1963, Brooklyn CORE assisted tenants in fighting slum conditions by helping them file complaints with the city's Building Department and urging them to initiate rent strikes. (N.3)

Brooklyn CORE was considered the most radical chapter in national organization. It was the first CORE chapter to use direct militant action such as picketing and sit-ins. In 1961 it held a sit-in at Lefrak Reality Company. In addition, CORE blocked trunks at Ebinger Bakery demanding that they hire black workers in the summer of 1962. (N.4)

Yet, despite its active role in Bedford-Stuyvesant and elsewhere, Brooklyn CORE remained a small organization. As late as April 1963, the Brooklyn civil rights organization had only thirty five members. The diverse membership consisted of both young black and white adults to middle age militants who had been involved in radical politics since the 1940's. The economic status was as diverse as the age

makeup of the organization. There were working class laborers including a mailman and bus driver, and white collar professionals including a university professor and medical doctor. The racial makeup of the organization was at least fifty percent white until the Downstate campaign, when the number of blacks dramatically increased. (N.5)

In the summer of 1963, Brooklyn CORE became a member of the Joint Committee on Equal Opportunity, a coalition of civil rights and labor organizations, whose major goal was to end racial discrimination practices in New York. The Joint Committee which included the NAACP and the Urban League of Greater New York, initiated a sit-in at Mayor Robert Wagner's office in early July demanding a halt to all construction sponsored by the city until all discriminatory hiring practices were "eliminated". (N.6)

In early July of 1963, Brooklyn CORE mounted a dual campaign against bias in the construction industry and unemployment in the ghetto, demonstrating for jobs for blacks and Puerto Ricans at the Downstate Medical Center project located on Clarkson and New York Avenues. Downstate was chosen by Brooklyn CORE because of its closeness to the Bedford-Stuyvesant community and because of the racially discriminatory policies practiced by the numerous building trade and construction unions. Despite claims that race was not a factor, people of African descent were excluded from jobs by a "catch-22" stipulation: work eligibility depended

on training in an apprentice program, and admission required the recommendation of two union members. Since scarcely any blacks belonged to the unions, they were effectively shut out of training programs, and thus out of jobs. The system made a mockery of the state's anti-discrimination laws. (N.7)

Although the power to select apprentices rested with the local unions, New York Building Construction Trade Council officials made little effort to change the rules. In 1960 African-Americans accounted for 22 percent of the City's population, but only two percent of apprentices in the building trades. Three years later, the New York State Advisory Committee of the Untied States Commission on Civil Rights reported that while New York residents of African descent were being denied employment, many white construction workers were "blue collar commuters," traveling as much as one hundred miles a day to and from their jobs. Of the nineteen craft unions engaged in the construction project, only the carpenters had black workers. (N.8)

Oliver Leeds, chairperson of Brooklyn CORE, invited Warren Bunn of the NAACP and John Parham of the Urban League to discuss strategies for launching protests against the construction unions. Leeds, Bunn, and Parham first visited the construction site of the hospital and found that, with the exception of a few black carpenters, the work force was "Lilly White." Although they attempted to negotiate with

the trade unions and convince them to hire more black and Puerto Rican workers, according to Leeds, they were all "but kicked out" of the union offices. After failing to convince State officials and the Building and Construction Trade Council through negotiation to increase the number of blacks and Puerto Ricans, Brooklyn CORE, along with the NAACP and Urban League, announced that the organizations would stop construction of the hospital by demonstrating at the construction site of the medical center until the State, City and construction unions guaranteed that blacks and Puerto Ricans make up twenty-five percent of the construction workers and that the building trade unions open their ranks to people of color. (N.9)

A coalition of civil rights and labor groups called the Joint Committee on Equal Opportunity joined Brooklyn CORE, but the Brooklyn civil rights group realized from the start, however, that the Downstate campaign would require a large number of protesters at the construction site. Acknowledging that they were unable to attract these large numbers, members of Brooklyn CORE and the Joint Committee which included the NAACP and the Urban League of Greater New York, turned to some of the black ministers of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community for support because many of them headed the largest black congregations in the city. Many in CORE believed the ministers were able to mobilize thousands of people from their churches to participate in the campaign.

(N.10)

One of the most outstanding features of Bedford-Stuyvesant's transformation to a black community was the rapid growth of its religious institutions and the social and political ascendancy of black ministers. Throughout the 1930's, 40's and 50's, the number of black churches in Bedford-Stuyvesant multiplied. In 1929, there were five black baptist, one AME, two AME Zion, one congregational, one protestant Episcopal, and a handful of storefront churches in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Yet, by 1940, there were eighteen black churches among the major protestant denominations in this north central Brooklyn community. By the late 1950's the number of black churches had increased to over fifty-five including forty-two baptist, eight AME, and three AME Zion. The major denominations were not the only religious institutions to experience rapid growth. In 1931, there were sixty non-mainline churches in the Borough of Brooklyn, yet seven years later sixty-one of these institutions were in Bedford-Stuyvesant alone. (N.11)

Various reasons accounted for the growth of black religious institutions during this period. One reason for the increase was the growing black population of the area. Many black migrants finding northern black churches incompatible with their religious customs established storefront churches in order to practice their way of worshipping. In addition, older black churches followed

their members into Bedford-Stuyvesant. By 1940, eight of Brooklyn's ten oldest black churches had relocated in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Finally, groups and individuals broke away from congregations because of internal struggles and factionalism, and established new churches.

The biggest benefactor of the large influx of blacks into Bedford-Stuyvesant were the black Baptist churches. Although many of these migrants joined Holiness-Pentecostal churches, the Baptist were able to attract many of these newcomers. The leading black Baptist Church was Concord Baptist which claimed a membership of 10,000. Both Cornerstone and Mt. Lebanon claimed to have memberships at 6,000. Zion Baptist, Bethany and Antioch Baptist churches claimed memberships of over 3,000. The largest black non-baptist churches was Siloam Presbyterian, Bridge St. AME, First AME churches had a membership of 2,000. Most prominent people of the community were members of these churches. (N.12)

Because of their size and wealth, the large black churches of Bedford-Stuyvesant selected well educated men for pastors. They became not just spiritual leaders, but some of the prominent men and leaders of the community. Benjamin J. Lowry, who became pastor of Zion Baptist Church in 1921, received an undergraduate degree from Yale and masters degree from N.Y.U. Sandy F. Ray who took over the leadership of Cornerstone Baptist in 1944, was a graduate of

Morehouse. Gardner C. Taylor, who became pastor of Concord Baptist received in 1948 a B.A. degree in education from Oberlin and a B.A. in theology from Leland. Milton Galamison got a Bachelor of Divinity from Lincoln University and a Master of Theology from Princeton Theological Seminary. One of the most educated black pastors of Bedford-Stuyvesant was C.L. Franklin. The Mississippi born minister, who came to Mt. Lebanon in 1938, had a Ph.D. from Columbia. (N.13)

Ministers of the large black congregations in Bedford-Stuyvesant were prominent in the community. They were part of social elite of the black community. Some belonged to greek organizations. Gardner Taylor was a member of Kappa Alpha Psi, along with many doctors and lawyers in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Sandy Ray and C.L. Franklin, members and Benjamin Lowry were members of Phi Beta Kappa of Alpha Phi Alpha along with Judge Myles A. Page, the first black judge in Brooklyn and Herbert T. Miller, executive director of the Carlton YMCA. (N.14)

Besides belonging to socially prominent fraternities, many lived on President Street in the posh neighborhood of Crown Heights, known as "Ministers Row". Described by the Amsterdam News as one of the most exclusive residential areas in Brooklyn in 1951, the neighborhood was home to at least eight of the fourteen ministers who first became involved in the Downstate protest resided in Crown Heights. (N.15)

More importantly, some of the leading ministers of Bedford-Stuyvesant during and following World War II were influential in the political arena. They endorsed and worked for candidates, had close ties to city and state officials, were appointed to high positions, and ran for office. In 1941, the Rev. George Thomas of Brown Memorial Baptist Church was selected by a group of prominent black citizens of Brooklyn to run for city council 1941. In 1955, Thomas became the first black selected by the Republican Party to run for congress in a Brooklyn district. (10th district). Sandy F. Ray of Cornerstone Baptist Church, was considered a stalwart of the Republican party. Before starting his tenure at Cornerstone, he had been a member of the Ohio State Legislature. He had developed close ties with the Republican top brass. In the 1940's Ray launched a drive with the assistance of other prominent black Republicans including the Rev. B.J. Lowry of Zion to re-elect Gov. Thomas Dewey. Ray also had developed a good relationship with Nelson Rockefeller, who often visited Cornerstone Baptist Church. (N.16)

The most politically prominent minister of Bedford-Stuyvesant is Gardner C. Taylor. After serving only eleven months at Concord, the 30 year old minister was appointed to a local school Board by Brooklyn President John Cashmore. Taylor later developed close ties with Mayor Robert Wagner who in 1954, named Taylor to an advisory group to improve

city services. In 1958, Taylor was selected by the Mayor to serve on the Board of Education and in January of 1962, the Brooklyn pastor was one of three men selected by Wagner to replace Joseph T. Sharkey as Democratic leader of Brooklyn (N 17).

The leading black ministers were a privileged group, with status and power in the larger New York community as well as in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Most were political reformers who had worked for civil rights by supporting such moderate groups as the NAACP and the Urban League. It should be noted that some did have experience in protest campaigns lasting a very short time. None had been involved in any long term campaign or in challenges to an opponent as large as the State of New York.

Despite their prestige in Bedford-Stuyvesant and (on the whole) politically mainstreamed views, fourteen prominent ministers responded to the plea of Brooklyn CORE and the Joint Committee and took part in the civil disobedience campaign on July 15. (N.13) After hours of picketing at the site, all fourteen ministers, along with Oliver Leeds, had decided to disband and gather again on July 17th, when Oliver Leeds saw a truck heading for the open gate. Leeds turned to the ministers and said, "We can come back Wednesday, but I'm taking this truck today," and sat down in front of the oncoming vehicle. Without a word spoken, all fourteen ministers and many supporters joined

Leeds to block trucks attempting to enter the site. In a scene resembling a southern civil rights protest, the demonstrators sang freedom songs as they were carried into police vans. Later that evening the ministers were greeted by a crowd of two thousand supporters at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The crowd heard speeches from the clergy and voted to support their efforts to end job discrimination at Downstate. (N.18)

Although some white ministers joined the effort, the black clergy stepped to the forefront and led the campaign. On the night of July 15, at a meeting at Cornerstone, a group of black ministers formed the Ministers' Committee for Job Opportunities for Brooklyn to help direct the demonstration, selecting Sandy F. Ray as the chairperson. Although it is not clear why Ray was selected, the sixty-five year-old minister might have been chosen because of his close ties with Rockefeller. It was probably believed that the selection of Ray as the head might give the ministers an advantage in negotiating with the Governor. (N.19)

To coordinate the protest, the Ministers Committee selected the Rev. William A. Jones as director of the Downstate campaign. Although Jones was only twenty-nine and just completing his tenth month as pastor of Bethany Baptist Church in Bedford-Stuyvesant, his selection was no accident. The pastor of the 4500-member church was experienced in civil rights protest. He had been active in a ministerial

struggle in Philadelphia to obtain jobs for blacks. He later formed a ministers' group that negotiated with the Bond Bread Company and other businesses for employment opportunities for blacks. (N.20)

Other members of the Committee were Gardner C. Taylor, Walter C. Jacobs, Pastor of St. Augustine Episcopal Church in Bedford-Stuyvesant; Carl McCall from the New York City Mission Society; Richard Saunders, Pastor of Stuyvesant Heights Christian Church; Benjamin Lowery of Zion Baptist; Milton Galamison of Siloam Presbyterian Church; and A. W. Wilson of Morningstar Baptist Church. With the exception of Carl McCall, all of the executive committee were from Bedford-Stuyvesant and were pastors of churches whose membership exceeded a thousand. (N.21)

What motivated these clerics to risk their reputations by involving themselves in a militant civil disobedience protest? One overriding motivation was the inspiration of Martin Luther King in particular and the civil rights movement in general. During the middle 1950's and early 1960's, King raised the consciousness of the clergy all over the country, moving to the forefront of black protest in the South. King helped smash Jim Crow laws by means of massive, sustained, and non-violent demonstrations, boycotts, and sit-ins and forged a new image of the black minister as militant agent for social change. Bedford-Stuyvesant ministers, sparked by King and the movement, raised money

for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as well as other civil rights organizations, and used their churches as forums by allowing King and others involved in southern civil rights campaigns to speak. Some even attempted to launch a civil rights battle in New York. During the late 1950's and 1960's, Milton Galamison led the struggle for school integration in New York City. He organized the Parents Workshop for Equality in New York City Schools, an organization that educated parents and worked for a desegregation timetable. In March and April of 1962 ministers of Bedford-Stuyvesant, including Sandy F. Ray, Milton Galamison, and George Lawrence of Antioch Baptist Church, headed a successful but short-lived ministerial group know as the Ministers' Movement, which won jobs for black residents by boycotting and picketing merchants on Fulton Street. Downstate offered them yet another opportunity to fight to end Jim Crow in their own backyard. (N.22)

Leadership is an important element in a protest campaign. In his work on Black Insurgency, Doug McAdam notes that

> "All manner of movement analysts have asserted the importance of leaders or organizers in the generation of social insurgency. To do so requires not so much a particular theoretical orientation as common sense. For in the context of political opportunity and widespread discontent there still remains a need for the centralized direction and coordination of a recognized leadership." (N.23)

Prestige and legitimacy help attract support for a protest. The ministers moved to the leadership of the protest because they were already leaders in the community, had a large audience at their disposal and were able to use two elements of major importance in creating a mass movement. The first element the Committee for Job Opportunities relied on was ministerial networking. Members of the clerical protest group contacted other pastors throughout the city, urging them to get their congregations involved in the planned demonstrations. Gardner Taylor recalls personally contacting "two or three pastors," urging them to take part in the demonstrations. With enough demonstrators, the ministers hoped to stop construction and force Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Mayor Robert Wagner, and Peter Brennan, president of the Building Trade Council (which consisted of 122 unions) to accept the twenty-five percent quota. (N. 24)

The second important element was charisma, a basic ingredient in pastoring, used to attract membership and inspire parishioners during religious services. The clergy involved in the Downstate protest relied on their charisma to generate support for the campaign. To motivate their congregations to participate in the demonstrations, pastors told parishioners during Sunday morning services (and at other times) that they were part of a moral and patriotic movement: their goal was to make America more democratic by

eliminating racism and discrimination. In pulpits and at rallies, ministers appealed for support by linking Downstate to the larger campaign to abolish Jim Crow in America. At a rally in Tompkins Park, 6000 people gathered to hear the ministers explain the significance of the protest. "We are here in response to the call of history," proclaimed Sandy Ray. Linking the Downstate struggle to a larger struggle for human dignity, Sandy Ray contended; "There will be no turning back until people in high places correct the wrongs of the nation." Gardner Taylor referred to a demonstration planned for 22 July, declaring that the "Revolution has come to Brooklyn ... whatever the cost, we will set the nation straight ... "The protest will be peaceful," he said, "but if the ruling white power structure brings it about, our blood will fill the streets." (N.25)

Yet leadership was just one aspect of the movement. An examination of any social protest movement should not focus on the leadership alone but also on the concerns and activities of participants on every level. The participants help make up what social scientists call local center movements. The churches involved in the Downstate movement became a local movement center, "an interrelated set of protest leaders, organizations, and followers who collectively define the common ends of the group, devise necessary tactics and strategies along with training for their implementation, and engage in protest actions designed

to attain the goals of the group." The Downstate campaign provided churches with a new role; institutions once concerned with religious and cultural concerns became involved in political protest challenging the status quo in the city. They became means of empowering people by moving them to street protest and nonviolent civil disobedience. This collective effort to disrupt society was an attempt to empower people otherwise ignored. The religious activities of parishioners were expanded to include collecting funds to support political protest, attending church rallies, and becoming "jailbirds for freedom," in addition to the traditional rituals, songs and prayers. (N.26)

There were various reasons why ordinary people became involved in the Downstate campaign. Many were persuaded by their pastors to participate. At Siloam, the pastor appealed to the auxiliaries to give a day on the protest line. Mrs. Gwendolyn Timmons, a member of Siloam's choir, recalls being on the picket line because the choir had pledged a day to protest at the construction site. (N.27) Others participated because they were deeply convinced it was their duty. Samuel Fredricks, a member of both CORE and Siloam, knew that black men who served during the Second World War and the Korean War and were trained as surveyors and bulldozer operators were being denied construction jobs. Fredricks believed white outsiders were being "imported" for these jobs. Employed as a postal worker, Fredricks would

leave work, change quickly, and join the demonstration. (N.28)

Not all members could or would participate in the demonstrations. Some decided to participate on other levels. For example, Winifred Fredricks had to take care of small children and was unable to demonstrate, but ran bake sales and raised money for the campaign. (N.29) Thousands participated in nightly rallies held in the churches of Bedford-Stuyvesant, giving support to the campaign. On July 15th, some 2,000 people gathered at Cornerstone Baptist to declare their support for the campaign. On July 24th, 1,500 appeared at Mt. Sinai Baptist; on July 29th, 1,000 attended a rally at St. Augustine, and on July 31st, 2,000 attended Berean Baptist for a rally. (N.30)

Hundreds helped the protest movement by volunteering to go to jail, while others contributed whatever they could to the campaign. For example, at a rally at St. Augustine, $1,700 was collected in a special offering for the campaign. (N.31) Moreover, individuals donated whatever they could. In a letter to Rev. Richard L. Saunders, treasurer for the Ministers' Committee, Milton Galamison noted that a Mrs. Lily contributed $10.00 in August, but the check had been destroyed during the demonstration. "She was, however, kind enough to persist and has renewed her gift." In a letter to Mrs. Dorothy Bostic, Rev. Galamison thanked her for her "generous support of the struggle being waged for equal

employment opportunity in the building and construction field. We are greatly encouraged. Your contribution of $100.00 has been forwarded to the movement's treasurer, Reverend Richard Saunders, and will be used to defray the cost of bail and other expenses." (N.32)

Protest and Settlement

On July 22, more than 1,200 people took part in the demonstration at Downstate. Two hundred and eleven of them were arrested, the largest number in New York City since the Harlem Riots of 1943. Protesters sat in front of all entrances to the hospital grounds in an attempt to deny trucks entrance to the work site, thereby causing delays in construction. Police arrested demonstrators; many were carried away singing freedom songs. As one group of demonstrators was taken away by police, another group moved in and took their place. In the police vans, the arrested protesters sang religious songs and prayed. Police later used barricades to deny the protesters access to the entrances. However, many of the defiant demonstrators ran under the police barricades. Moreover, the campaign had gained the support of many whites, who made up an estimated 25 percent of the demonstrators. (N.33)

Despite the massive turnout on July 22, the ministers were soon to learn that maintaining a protest movement was

no easy task. The clergy could not rally as much support in the protests that followed. The following day only two hundred people picketed. By July 26, the number of protesters was estimated at only one hundred fifty. (N.34)

One reason for the fading attendance was the scheduling of demonstrations between 7:00 A.M. and late afternoon, to coincide with construction hours. Because most demonstrators were working people who could not afford to sacrifice more than one or two days' pay, their involvement was restricted. The ministers urged their parishioners to pledge a day to demonstrate. Rev. Saunders strongly suggested that the campaign use children, as in the Birmingham, Alabama protest, but the idea was rejected. Instead, to compensate for reduced numbers, dedicated activists employed more militant tactics for denying access to trucks, for example, creating a human chain by locking arms and lying down in the path of construction equipment. When arrested, demonstrators went limp; the arresting officers had to carry them to the paddy wagons. Some tied their arms to fences with wire, forcing police to use wire cutters to break them free. By July 29 over six hundred pickets had been arrested.

For all their efforts, there was little progress in moving state, city and union officials to accept their demands. Both Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Mayor Robert Wagner responded to the demonstration by pledging to enforce

existing anti-discrimination procedures, which had so far been ineffectual in breaking down the color line on state and city building projects. Building Trades Council president Peter Brennan, refused to meet with the ministers and denounced their demands as "blackmail". The day after the July 22 demonstration, he announced that he would attempt to establish a six man panel to screen job applicants, thereby replacing the old system in which two union members nominated candidates. (N.35)

Not one official promised a definite number of jobs. Both Rockefeller and Wagner favored increased employment of blacks in construction but neither accepted the twenty-five percent quota. Recalling a conversation he had with Mayor Wagner, shortly after the large demonstration on July 22, Gardner Taylor contends that the mayor begged the question by pointing out his lack of jurisdiction in state programs like Downstate, while the governor publicly condemned the premise as "unlawful and counter to American principles." (N.36) Brennan's proposed six-man board and Rockefeller's and Wagner's pledges to investigate discrimination in the building trades were dismissed by the protest leaders as inadequate. The ministers and the Joint Committee decided to keep on demonstrating until the state, city and unions accepted the 25 percent quota.

To make matters worse, as the protest continued, violence increased. At one demonstration, a riot nearly

occurred when some pickets in a crowd of one hundred taunted the police, calling them "stormtroopers," and teenagers locked hands and stood in front of the trucks. The police then formed a double line and used their night sticks to push protesters away from the entrance and arrested them. Demonstrators reacted to the rough tactics by striking and kicking the police as they were carried away. Two police officers and two women protesters were injured. The following day, a police officer was struck by four young men when he attempted to confiscate their cache of rotten eggs. Twenty police officers came to his defense and carried the four men away. As the demonstrations dragged on it became clear that the ministers were losing control. (N.37)

Arrest records suggest that participation by younger demonstrators contributed to the growing militancy. On July 15, only 6 of 28 pickets were younger than 35. By July 23, this age group accounted for more than half. On July 24, 42 of 50 people arrested were under the age of 35, and the number of young people kept increasing. Behavior may also have been more aggressive after July 23 because half or more of the younger demonstrators resided outside of Bed-Stuy; they were less inclined to follow the clergy's direction (N.38)

Mindful of mounting problems, the ministers began to back off from the quota demand as early as 28 July, when Gardner Taylor stated: "Some of us are not particularly

wedded to the quota idea." It was a negotiating item, he suggested; the civil rights leaders were open to other ideas. (N.39)

The fear of losing control of the crowd grew among the members of the Ministers' Committee as a result of increasing violence. Yet violence was not their only concern. The strain of the continuing demonstrations created a burden that many were not willing to bear. Some complained that, because of their involvement in the long campaign, their churches were being neglected. At a meeting of the ministers, Oliver Leeds recalls Sandy Ray stating that he was ready to pull out of the protest. According to Leeds, Ray claimed that the campaign was dragging on with no end in sight; it was taking time away from his ministerial duties. Other ministers agreed and added that the decreasing numbers of demonstrators indicated that they could not continue much longer without complete loss of support. This in turn would leave them without any leverage. As a result of these developments, the Committee sent letters to the Governor requesting that he meet with them to work out a compromise. Although Rockefeller refused their initial request, on August 6 he did grant them a meeting to work out a solution. (N.40)

Although it is not certain why the Governor met with the ministers, the agreement suggests that the ministers were willing to accept his terms and completely abandon the

25 percent quota. During the three-hour meeting, the Governor, the Reverends Gardner Taylor, Milton Galamison, William Jones, Walter Offutt, Benjamin Lowery, W.G. Henson Jacobs, along with Ramon Rivera of the Urban League, worked out an agreement that provided for laws against bias to be enforced and funds withdrawn from state projects at which discrimination was practiced. The Governor would name a representative to oversee the construction industry and report all cases of job discrimination to the State Commission on Human Rights, which in turn would sponsor a public hearing on August 15 to investigate charges of racial discrimination against Sheet Metal Workers International Association Local Union 28. Finally, a recruitment program would be created for finding qualified blacks and Puerto Ricans for apprenticeships and membership in eighteen unions. In return, the ministers agreed to call off the demonstration immediately. (N.41)

Except for the recruitment provision, the accord was no more than a duplication of proposals previously made by the Governor. There was no assurance that the Trade Council would comply, nor was there any enforceable ruling that specific numbers of black and Puerto Rican workers would get either construction jobs or union cards. At a press conference, Rockefeller made it clear that the 25 percent quota was never considered at the meeting. (N.42)

CORE reacted unfavorably to the settlement. Although

Oliver Leeds had given his approval to the agreement, members of Brooklyn CORE voted to reject it and continue picketing. In a letter to the ministers of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Leeds expressed his disappointment with the organization's vote.

> It was my judgment that while the accord was less than satisfactory, it was nevertheless, a good beginning. However, neither the membership of CORE nor the Joint Committee of New York City, composed of the civil rights groups, felt this way. (N.43)

Brooklyn CORE and the Joint Committee publicly condemned the settlement on the following day. A spokesperson said that the settlement was inadequate because the ministers gained no more than "a simple reaffirmation of a promise to enforce state laws against discrimination." Calling the accord between the Governor and ministers a public relations device and a substitute for "meaningful" action, the Joint Committee called for continued demonstrations at Downstate. The Joint Committee promised to continue demonstrating until 50 percent of apprentices entering the Building Trade Unions were Negro or Puerto Rican, a committee of six was established to monitor further discrimination by the building trade unions, and a job training program in the construction trades was established. (N.44)

The ministers condemned the call for renewed demonstrations and announced complete withdrawal of their financial and legal assistance. Both Jones and Galamison

accused Brooklyn CORE of "bad faith," not only for calling for more demonstrations, but also for telling arrested protesters not to follow the advice of the legal council hired by the ministers. Consequently, the Ministers' Committee announced its disassociation from the organization. (N.45)

The ministers' accusation that CORE and the Joint Committee operated in bad faith was unfounded. CORE rightfully complained that, although the two groups were working as a coalition, no CORE members were included in the decision-making process. In fact, the settlement was reached without any member of CORE being present.

Despite the Joint Committee's call for continued demonstrations, the ministers' withdrawal resulted in an almost total loss of support. Only forty-four demonstrators appeared at the construction site on August 8, and the campaign soon died. (N.46)

The Downstate campaign was the last effort by a wide cross section of Brooklyn's black church community to engage in civil disobedience. With the exception of Milton Galamison who would lead two city-wide school boycotts for integration, and William Jones, who as head of Operation Breadbasket led selective patronage campaigns against businesses that discriminated against blacks, demanding and winning more jobs, black ministers ceased to use militant methods throughout the 1960s. (N.47)

However, they did not neglect the social and economic problems of their community. By the mid 1960's, the Great Society had brought new opportunities that led ministers to address the needs of Bedford-Stuyvesant. In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty and racism, providing funds that would create job-training programs, educational opportunities for youth, improved health care for the aged, civil rights legislation, and urban rehabilitation. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Food Stamp Act, Medicare and Medicaid amendments to the Social Security Act, and the Civil Rights Act were some landmarks of the Great Society. (N.48)

Johnson's "Great Society" helped define a new role for government; it would be at the forefront in the battle against poverty and racism and other evils of inequality. Robert Caro notes:

> His "War on Poverty" was not crowned with triumph like his war on prejudice. Many of the laws he rushed through Congress in such unprecedented numbers--in a frenzy of legislation--as if, it sometimes seemed, he equated speed and quantity with accomplishment, were inadequately thought through, flawed, contradictory, not infrequently exacerbating, at immense cost, the evils they intended to correct. But his very declaration of that war was a reminder--as was his overall concept of a "Great Society"--of government's responsibility to do more than stand idly by without at least attempting to strike blows against ignorance and disease and want. The presidency of Lyndon Johnson marked the legislative realization of many the liberal aspirations of the twentieth century: in storming, on behalf of those laws, long-held bastions of congressional hostility to social-welfare programs, he used the power of the

> presidency for purposes as noble as any in American history. (N.49)

The Great Society was the most massive spending campaign to end poverty since the New Deal. As federal funds flowed into New York, a leadership attempting to create and direct programs evolved. Bedford-Stuyvesant ministers, many involved in Downstate, were among the leaders. In 1964, with the help of federal funds, Mayor Wagner created the Youth-In-Action (YIA) program, granting the agency $223,225 to examine discontent among the youth and to develop anti-poverty programs. Rev. William Jones and Rev. Carl McCall became members of the board of directors. By 1965 YIA had become equivalent to the Harlem's Har You Act. Designated as Bed-Stuyvesant's official anti-poverty program, it received money from the federal government and offered many programs, including job-training for unwed mothers, remedial education, and adult on-the-job training. Rev. Offutt of Bethany became chairperson of the Board of Directors, while Antioch Baptist, Siloam Presbyterian, Concord Baptist and Nazarene Congregational rushed to house YIA cultural programs. From 1963 to 1966, Siloam housed a Head Start program.

Despite his militant protests after Downstate, by 1967 Galamison had also given up street politics and became dependent on government assistance. He became founder and chairperson of the board of directors of the Opportunities

Industrialization Center, a vocational training program that placed thousands of youth and adults in jobs. (N.50)

The choice of some of Brooklyn's black churches to become agencies for the federal government's war on poverty was not entirely motivated by the disappointing results of radical street politics. It was also brought about by the change in direction of the civil rights movement. By the mid 1960's, many people involved in the movement became disillusioned with the lack of success in the struggle for an integrated society and began asserting black empowerment. The civil rights movement had failed to address the problems of deteriorating black urban life. Poverty, and its related problems could not be answered by attempting to create an open American society. Instead many African-Americans began to call for control over the educational, economic, and political institutions in their neighborhoods. Power was the only means of eradicating the ghettos they viewed as the creation of white society in order to control blacks. There was a call for economic self-help and the operation and support of black businesses. The black aesthetic movement also wanted to liberate the minds of black people. Advocates of black empowerment also called for cultural liberation. Blacks should identify with Africa by adopting African hair and clothing styles and support African art forms such as music, dance and study African and "Afro"-American history in order to develop pride in black people.

Blacks should no longer look for allies to solve their problems. The white dominated society was racist and did not have the interest of blacks at heart. Many argued that blacks should instead rely on the collective power of black people. (N.51)

Brooklyn CORE serves as an illustration of the shift in direction of those involved in the civil rights movement. After the Downstate campaign, new members joined the organization. Included in the new wave of Brooklyn CORE members were people advocating black empowerment and an exclusion of whites from the leadership in the organization. Led by Sonny Carson, the new members contended that black power was the only way to get rid of ghettos in the urban centers. Blacks had to be in control of the institutions in their community and had a right to self defense. This nationalist direction taken by the new members also questioned the role of whites in the organization. According to the new members, whites were incapable of leading blacks because they could not understand their plight nor did many have the interest of blacks at heart. Instead, blacks must lead their own struggle. White members complained that they were under verbal attack by the new members and excluded from decision making positions. David Feingold, an active white member of Brooklyn CORE probably reflected the view of many whites members on the new black nationalists.

> But along with the youths who wanted to improve their lives came a group of black men who were bitter with the world. They had been hurt by the white world that they wanted only revenge. Many black persons have felt this way. But in the past they have steered away from CORE's integration philosophy and the non-violent emphasis. With these out of the way and with the emergence of all black leadership, the bitter persons found CORE a good place in which to work. (N.52)

Even Oliver Leeds, the chairperson of Brooklyn CORE came under attack for having a white wife. The push for black power and the expulsion of whites or at least reduction of them to menial roles led to clear factions within the Brooklyn civil rights group. Besides the new militant members pushing a black nationalist agenda, there were white liberals and an old guard of black workers who advocated integration, and those who attempted to reach an agreement between the two factions. (N.53)

During this period, black churches came under heavy attack. Many ministers were described as "uncle toms" and accused of preaching the "white man's religion." Gardner Taylor recalls keeping a baseball bat in his office because of the fear that nationalists might attack him because of his moderate views. (N.54) The growth of the black power movement may have led many Brooklyn ministers look elsewhere to give service the community. The War on Poverty gave them a good avenue to remain vital economic and political agents in the black community.

Failure and Success

The Downstate movement gained widespread media coverage but failed to rally effective support for its goal: jobs for blacks and Puerto Ricans in New York's construction industry. The campaign did not generate a substantial number of these jobs. Although hundreds of blacks and Hispanics were interviewed under the agreement, few were hired.

A major reason for failure was the Ministers' Committee's inability to build an effective protest movement. The ministers failed to rally large numbers of blacks and Hispanics, and they were unable to mobilize their own congregations or any lasting basis. Protesting and jail-time meant absence from work and loss of wages, a price few were willing to pay.

More importantly, the Ministers' Committee failed to convince the community at large that the situation in New York mirrored that of the South. Although racial discrimination was a fact of life in the North, New York was a far cry from Alabama or Mississippi. Rockefeller and other government officials convinced the public that they were sympathetic to the cause of fighting racial bigotry and that anti-discrimination laws already existed in the State. The brutality inflicted on civil rights demonstrators in the South, which helped win public sympathy, did not materialize during the Downstate affair. The New York public was not

bombarded with images of Bull Conner, fire hoses, police dogs turned on children or the more overt forms of racism seen in the South. The lack of brutality and the expressed support of government officials for the basic goals of the campaign, if not the means, probably made the public less sympathetic to Downstate. They may have questioned the need for a civil rights campaign modeled after the Birmingham protest. Because leaders of the Downstate campaign were eager to create a civil rights movement, they failed to include other community and labor groups.

Although the campaign aimed at jobs for Puerto Ricans as well as people of African origin, few Puerto Ricans took part in the demonstrations, nor was there any real attempt to gain support in the Hispanic community, which would have made the movement more broad-based. Likewise, an attempt to gain labor's support would have boosted the campaign; it might have changed the perception that the campaign was an attack by the black community upon labor. On August 6, Leon Davis, president of Local 1199, Drug and Hospital Union, with a predominantly black and Hispanic membership numbering over 22,000, offered the movement an opportunity to broaden the campaign. He gave his support in letters to both Governor Rockefeller and Mayor Wagner urging a halt to state and city construction projects until discrimination in the industry could be eliminated. (N.55) Since 1962, Local 1199 had linked the struggle for better working conditions with

the struggle for civil rights. The union had cooperated with civil rights groups including King, Powell, and A. Phillip Randolph to end racial exploitation. Realizing the importance of the redistribution of health care in black communities, the union leadership was willing to join any struggle for racial and economic justice. (N.56) Moreover, by failing to expand the movement and include local 1199 and community groups, they missed the opportunity to link the job struggle to adequate health services in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The fight for adequate health care would have expanded the struggle beyond the issue of employment. They might have focused the Downstate campaign on issues of community empowerment, redefining Downstate in the community, not just as a training hospital, but as an answer to the health care needs of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Despite its shortcomings, the Downstate campaign was not unproductive. The campaign helped focus attention on the construction industry, one of the most discriminatory in the country. Although they did not achieve their original goals, the movement moved state, city and union officials to take action against racial discrimination in that industry. Although some accused the clergy of "selling out," they were perceptive in knowing when to end the protest and negotiate an agreement. If they had continued the campaign, the protest would have fallen apart, and they would have lost leverage in negotiating a settlement.

Moreover, by leading the Downstate campaign, the black clergy helped sensitize citizens about the need to eliminate discrimination in the North as well as in the South. They contended, like CORE, that the struggle for civil rights should not be limited to the South. Consequently, the Downstate struggle afforded many their first opportunity to take direct action against institutional racism.

Most importantly, by revealing the role black clergy could play in the struggle for black equality, the Downstate campaign calls into question the view (argued by many) that urban black ministers as a group were divorced from the struggle. Although part of an established black elite, the members of the Ministers' Committee for Jobs and the black churches challenged state and city governments as well as the construction industry, leading a civil disobedience protest. They helped define a new role for the churches of their community. They were willing to risk their reputations as "responsible leaders" and support from politicians, congregation members, and the community, by assuming leadership of a grass-roots movement to end racism. If we are to gain a better understanding of urban black ministers in the civil rights struggle, we must pay more attention to their role in northern black urban communities during this crucial decade.

Equally significant, the Downstate campaign exemplified the movement for liberation by black churches across

denominational lines. Parishioners as well as ministers accepted the new image of black religion fostered by King and SCLC as militant and oppositional, seeking to address the social and economic plight of people of African origins.

The Downstate campaign was part of the black religious tradition of Brooklyn. Challenging racism, it expanded the struggle from the cultural and social arena to the political arena. It made religion an ideology of liberation, attempting to empower blacks. After Downstate, the black churches of Brooklyn took a new direction; they sought social and economic justice for people of African origins. As Martin Luther King stated, "So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be."

Chapter 5 Endnotes

1. Some of the few works that focus on northern as well as the southern civil rights campaigns are David Garrow, Bearing The Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1986); August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, CORE: A Study of the Civil Rights Movement 1942-1968 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Alan B. Anderson and George W. Pickering, Confronting the Color Line: The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986) which focus on northern as well as civil rights campaigns.

2. Community Council of Greater New York, Brooklyn Communities: Population Characteristics and Neighborhood Social Resources (2 vols.; New York, 1959), 1: 98.

3. Meier and Rudwick, CORE, pp. 199-200.

4. Interview with Oliver and Marjorie Leeds; 8/11/88; Meier and Rudwick CORE, p. 184.

5. Interview with Oliver and Marjorie Leeds; Meier and Rudwick, CORE, p. 200.

6. Interview with Oliver and Marjorie Leeds; New York Times, 7/11/63.

7. Interview with Oliver and Marjorie Leeds; New York Times, 7/16/63; Amsterdam News, 7/16/63.

8. Ibid.

9. Interview with Oliver and Marjorie Leeds.

10. Interview with Arnold Goldwag, 7/27/88, a member and Public Relations Director of Brooklyn Core 1962-1967; Interview with Gardner C. Taylor, 8/1/88; interview with William Jones, 12/22/87.

11. Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac, 1929; William Hobart, "Black Churches of Brooklyn". Protestant Church Directory, 1952.

12. Protestant Church Directory, 1952.

13. Cornerstone Baptist Church Anniversary Book; Stanley M. Douglas, "The History of the Siloam Presbyterian Church 1949." (Brooklyn Historical Society)

14. Amsterdam News, 6/19/54, 1/27/56.

15. Interview with Oliver and Marjorie Leeds; New York Times, 7/6/63.

16. Sandy F. Ray, Journeying Through a Jungle (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1979) pp. foreword; Interview with Mrs. Sandy Ray, 10/2/87; Connolly, Ghetto, p. 106; Amsterdam News, 11/4/50.

17. Interview with Rev. Gardner C. Taylor, 8/1/88; Amsterdam News 2/15/58, 1/27/62.

18. Interview with Oliver and Marjorie Leeds; Interview with Gardner C. Taylor; The fourteen ministers were: Garner C. Taylor of Concord Baptist, Albert Smith of St. Paul Community, Saul S. Williams of Pilgrim Baptist, W.J. Hall of Bethel Baptist, Benjamin J. Lowery of Zion Baptist, Milton Galamison of Siloam Presbyterian, Edward Holmes of John Wesley Methodist, Hinson Jacobs of St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal, Sandy F. Ray of Cornerstone Baptist, Richard Saunders of Stuyvesant Heights, F.D. Washington of Washington Temple, A.W. Wilson of Morningstar Baptist, William A. Jones of Bethany Baptist and Melvin Williams of Bethany Baptist; New York Times, 7/16/63; New York Herald Tribune, 7/16/63; New York Amsterdam News, 7/20/63.

19. Interview with Rev. William A. Jones, 12/22/87.

20. Interview with Jones; New York Times, 7/24/63; William A.

21. Executive Committee for Job Opportunities to Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller, 7/28/63, The Milton Galamison Papers, at the Wisconsin State Historical Society; New York Times, 7/24/63, 8/7/63.

22. Amsterdam News, 3/24/62, 3/31/62, 4/7/62, 4/14/62, 5/5/62, 5/12/62, 5/26/62, 6/2/62; New York Recorder 5/7/62; New York Times 4/1/62; Diane Ravitch, The Great School Wars (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1974) p. 261-262.

23. Doug McAdam, Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 47.

24. New York Times, 7/22/63.

25. Ibid; Amsterdam News, 7/27/63.

26. New York Times, 7/23/63.

27. Interview with Galamison; Interview with Taylor; Interview with Gwendolyn Timmons 4/14/88. Ms. Timmons is a member of Siloam Presbyterian Church and participated in the Downstate demonstrations; New York Times, 7/16/63.

28. Interview with Samuel and Winifred Fredricks, 5/9/90.

29. Ibid.

30. New York Times, 7/25/63, 7/30/63, 8/1/63.

31. Galamison to Richard L. Saunders, Dec. 12, 1963. Galamison Papers, Galamison to Dorothy Bostic, July 31, 1963.

32. New York Times, 7/23/63.

33. New York Times, 7/23/63, 7/24/63, 7/25/63, 7/26/63, 7/27/63.

34. New York Times, 7/23/63, 7/24/63, 7/25/63, 7/26/63; Amsterdam News 7/27/63, 8/3/63.

35. New York Times, 7/23/63.

36. Press Release, Thursday, July 18, 1963, Robert L. McManus, Press Secretary to the Governor; Transcript of a television interview of Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller for "In Search of a Solution: Civil Rights," Originating over the facilities of WOR, New York, Taped on July 31, 1963; New York Times, 7/18/63, 7/24/63; Interview with Taylor, New York Times, 7/23/63.

37. New York Times 8/1/63, 8/2/63.

38. Arrest Docket Part 1B-Kings County Book 1, 1963.

39. New York Times, 7/29/63.

40. Interview with Oliver and Marjorie Leeds.

41. New York Times, 8/7/63; Amsterdam News, 8/13/63; Interviews with Taylor, Leeds, Jones and Galamison; Job Opportunities for Brooklyn letter to Pastors, 8/9/63, Galamison Papers; New York Times, 8/7/63.

42. New York Times, 8/7/63

43. Interview with Leeds; Interview with Arnold Goldwag, 7/27/88, a member and Public Relations Director of

Brooklyn CORE 1962-1967; Leeds to Galamison, 8/12/63; Leeds to Galamison, (no date).

44. Meier and Rudwick, CORE, p. 231; Interview with Leeds; Interview with Goldwag (see note 38 in published work); New York Times, 8/8/63.

45. Ministers' Committee for the Opportunities statement to clarify its position, 8/9/63; New York Times, 8/9/63.

46. New York Times, 8/9/63.

47. Diane Ravitch, The Great School Wars (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1974), pp. 273-279; Miriam Wasserman, The School Fix NYC, USA (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), pp. 314-315; Jones, God in the Ghetto, pp. 96-101.

48. Robert A. Caro, The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Means of Ascent (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), p.

49. Ibid.

50. Amsterdam News, 8/1/64; Charles M. Morris, The Cost of Good Intentions (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1980), p. 65; Amsterdam News, 8/1/64, 6/3/65; Connolly, Ghetto, p. 189; Amsterdam News, 11/11/67, 12/9/67; Homecoming Celebration for Milton Galamison, Jan. 25, 1923 - March 9, 1988 - Siloam United Presbyterian Church.

51. Meier and Rudwick, CORE, pp. 204-208, 412-420.

52. Memorandums, David Feingold to Valerie Jorrin, 2/6/67, 2/13/67; David Feingold, Memo on "The Role of the white worker in CORE (no date). (These memorandums are located in the David Feingold Papers at the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

53. Interview, Jeffery Gersen with Gardner C. Taylor, 7/27/88.

54. New York Times, 8/7/63.

55. Leon Fink and Brian Greenberg, Upheaval in the Quiet Zone (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), pp. 24, 78-79.

Conclusion

Brooklyn's Black Churches Today and Tomorrow

Contrary to C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya's contention that "the process of secularization in black communities has always meant a diminishing of the influence of religion and an erosion in the central importance of black churches", this work has demonstrated that throughout their history, Brooklyn's black churches reflected the social and cultural concerns of a society. (N.1) Brooklyn's black churches were successful in remaining a pivotal part of the black communities by blending the sacred and secular while attempting to address the numerous concerns of black people. It is a credit to these religious institutions that they adjusted to the social, cultural, and political changes in the community in part by remaining competitive with secular social institutions and forms of the black community.

As Brooklyn entered the 1970's it was confronted with numerous problems. Crime, drugs, inadequate health care for the poor, Aids, a failing public school system, the exodus of the middle class, and the growth of the urban poor have contributed to the deterioration of the quality of life. During this urban crisis, many of Brooklyn's black churches have been absent from the daily affairs and struggles of the working poor and growing underclass. Many of Brooklyn's

black churches only open during the week for choir rehearsal or prayer service and offer little or no social and cultural services to the community. Nor are the ministers involved in the political concerns of black people.

Yet there are still some churches that maintain a high level of activity. Scouting, an active club life, outings, excursions, banquets, and anniversary celebrations, are some of the activities of these churches. Berean Baptist, Bridge St. AWME, First AME Zion, Cornerstone, Mt. Sinai Baptist, Concord, are just a few that still have scouting programs meeting on a regular basis. In recent years, the auxiliaries of Bridge Street AWME church sponsored a shopping and sightseeing trip to Lake George, NY. The Men's club of the First Baptist Church of Crown Heights sponsored a barbeque, while the Women's Club organized a bus outing to Reading, Pennsylvania. The victory Club of Cornerstone Baptist Church hosted a Mother's Day Buffet and Theatre party and the Floral Club of Concord Baptist Church had a dinner for the church. (N.2)

Yet these cultural and social activities alone will not help Brooklyn's black churches reach the growing number of poor. To have a presence in the black community, the churches must go beyond their walls and congregations and must offer out-reach programs. Most churches are limited by lack of funds, making it extremely difficult to offer such outreach programs. But these churches must be creative and

search for ways to win the urban poor as they have done in the past. They must address the concerns of the poor and be willing to help them address the economic crisis. The leadership should also be in the forefront of a movement for political empowerment of the black community. (N.3)

Some Brooklyn black churches and pastors have moved in this direction. Herbert Daughtry, pastor of the House of Our Lord Pentecostal Church at 415 Atlantic Avenue Brooklyn, is a good example. Daughtry helped establish the United Black Front shortly after the murder of fourteen year old Randolph Evans in 1978 by a white police officer. By leading marches and demonstrations, this protest group attempted to put pressure on Mayor Koch and other City officials to take action in order to stop the murders and brutal assaults by police on black people.

Unhappy with the lack of Christian leadership in the United Black Front, Daughtry founded the African People's Christian Organization (APCO) in 1983. Asserting that "Africaness and Christianity are irreconcilable" and that "Biblical Christianity" originated in Africa, APCO is a black Christian nationalist movement whose major objective is to build educational, social and economic institutions in the black community solely controlled by blacks. According to the organization:

> Theologically, the God of the Bible identified with the oppressed masses and with their liberation. Both the old testament and the new testament relate

> statements and stories confirming God's presence with any deliverance of poor subjugated humanity. (N.4)

The leaders of APCO attempt to reach the masses by getting them involved in the various divisions of the group including the Timbuktu Learning Center, voting block, prison ministry, lecture series and regular membership meetings. In addition, APCO has its own radio show, broadcasted on the all black radio station WWRL Saturday mornings. (N.5)

APCO is still in existence. However, because of its narrow nationalist outlook, its unrealistic goal to "build a nation", and its close association with Daughtry and his church, APCO has failed to build a mass movement.

In an attempt to address problems among young black men growing up in single parent households headed by women, the House of the Lord Church has created a program entitled "Man to Man, Inc." Modeled after the "Big Brother" program, "Man to Man" introduces positive male role models into the lives of black males six to sixteen years of age. Male volunteers twenty-five years or older attempt to develop a strong relationship with young black males through recreational activities such as softball, outings, and attending sporting events; cultural events including trips to museums, concerts, and library events; and educational activities such as tutoring and homework assistance. "Man to Man" challenges the social problems facing black males by attempting to develop in them sound judgment for daily

decisions, instill qualities such as cooperation, respect for others, the benefits of hard work, and the importance of family. It is an innovative program that needs to be established by more community organizations. (N.6)

Both Bridge Street AWME and Beulah Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ also serve as good illustrations of churches with innovative programs addressing the needs of the black community. Bridge Street has numerous out-reach programs including distributing food and conducting services at shelters for the homeless, missionary work at both men and women prisons, walk-in counseling at the church, Al-Anon meetings, and counseling for people overcoming drug and alcohol dependency, resume writing programs, and employment services. In addition, Bridge Street, in conjunction with the New York City Public School Auxiliary services, offers classes for adults wishing to gain a high school equivalency diploma. The response has been overwhelming. The church doors are open seven days a week and the church reported a growing membership of four thousand members. (N.7)

Beulah also offers a free literacy program for adults, a job training program, and a computer literacy program. In addition, the church has an office in which counseling is offered to the community. (N.8)

The Rev. Johnny Youngblood, pastor of St. Paul Community Baptist Church in East New York represents one of the most unique ministries in Brooklyn. Located in a

devastated neighborhood in Brooklyn, St. Paul has become one of the most stabilizing forces in that community. Youngblood, who came to the church in 1974, has managed to increase the membership from less than one hundred to over three thousand. Under Youngblood's leadership, the church has built both an elementary school and secondary school. Moreover, St. Paul has joined with other churches in the area and the Industrial Area Foundation to help build low income housing in Brownsville and East New York Brooklyn. The most controversial element of Youngblood's ministry is the weekly black men's service. In an attempt to bring black men into the church, Youngblood and St. Paul have reached out to black men across social and economic lines by offering them a chance to come together and express their problems, concerns, emotions, and receive moral support. The service includes scripture reading, songs by the Men's choir, poetry reading, drama performances and testimonies in which men may stand and state their personal problems. Throughout the service, white men are blamed for the plight of the black man because they refuse to share power, while black women are accused of not being understanding. Youngblood, a dynamic preacher, uses cursing in order to bring complicated thoughts "down to earth" so all can understand. He states that it is okay to have vices, as long as you "give yourself up to the Lord." (N.9)

There are no concrete solutions offered by the Men's

services. Blaming white men and black women for the conditions of black men without offering concrete solutions to their plight is too simplistic. Despite this criticism, the service has attracted a large number of men including professionals, entrepreneurs, the working class poor, and drug and alcohol users. It is a place where black men can gather, vent their anger, encourage each other, offer hope, and gain self-esteem.

Al Sharpton, a Pentecostal minister from Brooklyn who has become prominent because of his radical street politics, also has made an impact in the black communities of Brooklyn and elsewhere. Sharpton came to prominence in 1986, when he joined forces with attorneys C. Vernon Mason and Aldon Maddox and helped organize a series of protest that successfully brought pressure on Governor Mario Cuomo to appoint a special prosecutor in the murder of Michael Griffith and racial assault on two other men by a white mob in Howard Beach, Queens. Three men were eventually convicted. (N.10)

With Maddox and Mason Sharpton attempted to use similar tactics in the Tawanya Brawley case. Brawley was a fifteen year old African-American girl from Wappinger Falls, New York who asserted that she had been raped by white police officers. Sharpton and the attorneys refused to let Brawley testify before a grand jury investigating the charges. They often times called the Governor and the state attorney

General Robert Abrams racists, and used inflammatory language. The grand jury later found that Brawley's story was unfounded, made up in order to stop her stepfather from hitting her. (N.11)

Although the Brawley story was found fraudulent and Sharpton was accused of fanning flames of racism, his popularity and determination have not declined. He later mobilized hundreds of people and led marches in Bensonhurst Brooklyn after the fatal shooting of sixteen year old Yusuf Hawkins by white teenagers in that community. He also helped organize and lead protest in Brooklyn attracting hundreds and calling for the city to take action against the growing crack-cocaine epidemic in the black communities. (N.12) Although without a church, Sharpton has drawn people with his radical street politics. His nationalism and insistence that blacks turn to their resources and rely on their own community for strength has won him the admiration of many working class blacks. He has given people a sense of empowerment and a way to actively express their anger.

During the 1980's and 1990's, urban centers have experienced a shrinking tax base because of the flight of the middle class and the decline of federal aid. Cities have been forced to cut their budgets by reducing social services and this makes life harder for the working poor. The need for black churches to help in this time of crisis is great. Basil Wilson and Charles Green note that the

"contemporal black church has demonstrated a willingness to experiment with new approaches to organization ..." (N.13) If the black churches are to have the impact on the lives of black people they once had, they must address the vital cultural, social, as well as political concerns of the black community.

Conclusion Endnotes

1. Lincoln and Mamiya, Black Church, p.383.

2. Bridge Street AWME Church Weekly Bulletin, 4/21/91; Berean Baptist Church Weekly Bulletin, 4/9/89; Cornerstone Baptist Church Weekly Bulletin, 4/28/91; First Baptist Church of Crown Heights Weekly Bulletin, 4/28/91; Concord Baptist Church Weekly Bulletin, 4/21/91, First AME Zion Weekly Bulletin, 4/28/91.

3. Basil Wilson and Charles Green, "The Black Church and the Struggle for Community Employment in New York City" in Afro-Americans in New York Life and History (January 1988).

4. African Peoples' Christian Organization brochure, "Building Nationhood" (no date); Wilson and Green "The Black Church," pp.66-68.

5. Ibid.; African Peoples' Christian Organization Lecture Series brochure, 5/1/91 to 5/22/91.

6. House of Our Lord Pentecostal Church brochure, "Man to Man., Inc." (no date)

7. Interview with Wilbur Jones, pastor of Beulah Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ Church of the Apostolic Faith, 5/17/90; Bridge Street AWME Church Weekly Bulletins, 3/10/91, 4/21/91.

8. Interview with Wilbur Jones.

9. Details, 6/91, pp. 14-18; St. Paul's Community Baptist Church "All Male Worship Service" program, 5/7/91; Johnny Youngblood's sermon at the "All Male Worship Service", 5/7/91.

10. New York Times, 12/21-31/86, 1/1-10/87.

11. New York Times, 8/24-28/89, 9/3/89.

12. New York Times, 8/28/89, 9/3/89.

13. Basil Wilson and Charles Green, "The Black Church and the struggle for Community Employment in New York City, p. 66.

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