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“NOW I TURN THE REMAINDER OF THE SERVICE INTO THE HANDS OF THE PULPIT”: LEADERSHIP IN AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

by

KANIQUA ROBINSON

Under the Direction of Kathryn A. Kozaitis, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The research study examines the influence of an African American religious preacher in organizing his congregation into a socioeconomic community. The research question is as follows: How does the leadership performance influence (a) the social interaction of his congregation, (b) the mobilization of congregates into members of a social group, and (c) the development of his congregation into an economic system? This study examines the Pastor, his role, influence, and management of power. Weber argued that there are three pure types of authority: rational, traditional, and charismatic. For an African American religious preacher, the authority would be considered to be charismatic. However, this study discovered that the Pastor of Washington Missionary Baptist Church, the field site for this ethnography, encompasses characteristics of each from of authority. Such characteristics are necessary in order to successfully manage a nonprofit organization, which requires a decentralization of power and shared leadership.

INDEX WORDS: Religion, leadership, nonprofit organization, African American church

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by

KANIQUA ROBINSON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Anthropology

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Georgia State University

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by

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May 2010

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the wonderful women in my life who taught me that life has no boundaries and to enjoy every moment of it: Katherine Robinson (Mama), Sarah Penn (Grandma), Rosa Lee Flournoy (Great-Grandma), Bertha McDaniel (Great-Grandma), Wyndolyn Stegall (Aunt), Dorothy Evans (Wise Best Friend), Brenda Featherstone (Godmother), and Ms. Deborah Hall (Delightful Motivator). May your souls rest in peace. Until we meet again, I will enjoy my life and celebrate yours!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

1 INTRODUCTION 1

2 LITERATURE REVIEW/THEORY 7

2.1 Anthropology of Religion 7

2.2 Theory 9

3 METHODS 14

3.1 Participant Observation 15

3.2 Content Analysis 16

3.3 Interviews 17

3.4 Focus Groups 18

3.5 Ethics 18

3.6 Challenges 19

3.7 Reflexive Analysis 20

3.8 Conceptual Framework 21

4 LEADERSHIP 22

4.1 The Pastoral Transition 24

4.2 Pastor and Church Activities 25

4.3 Preaching the Gospel 27

4.4 The Co-Pastor of Washington Missionary Baptist Church 29

4.5 Deacon Board..... 30

4.6 Analysis/Conclusion 32

5 COMMUNITY..... 35

5.1 Visitors..... 36

5.2 Maintaining Community during the Church Services 42

5.3 Communal Activities of the Church Members..... 44

5.4 Analysis/Conclusion 47

6 MUSIC..... 48

6.1 Devotional 49

6.2 Missionary Offering..... 51

6.3 Choir Performance..... 52

6.4 Music and the Church Community 55

6.5 Analysis/Conclusion 56

7 BUSINESS..... 58

7.1 Auxiliaries, Boards, and Organizations of the Church 65

7.2 Analysis/Conclusion 67

8 CONCLUSION 70

9 REFERENCES 74

10 APPENDICES..... 79

10.1 Appendix A 79

10.2 Appendix B 81

10.3 Appendix C 82

10.4 Appendix D 83

1 INTRODUCTION

Growing up in an African American family and predominantly Black community, I was taught that the local and familial Black Church provides the guidance that we needed to carry out our life as Christians. The preacher would teach about how we should act as followers of Christ and the congregation would extend his teachings throughout daily life. The loyal members of the church would also criticize others who are connected to the church and are not following the teachings. For example, we were expected to attend church every Sunday, dress in a very conservative manner in and outside the church walls, and not participate in sacrilegious acts such as fornication, drinking alcoholic beverages, dressing in a sexual manner, or anything that was sinful in their, the loyal members' and the pastor's, eyes. We were expected to live according to the rules established by the church leaders and loyal members. These rules were said to be from the Word of God, the Bible.

The church's presence was felt everywhere, not just within its walls. The church was also an extension of our family; many people in my family were members of the church. Additionally, almost everyone in that church lived in our neighborhood, so we would see each other in stores, at major events, and at school—some members were teachers at the local elementary school. All of the expectations and characteristics of the Black Church shows how important the Black Church was in my family and community.

However, I never felt as connected to the local church, and ultimately any church, as expected by my family and community. Due to its ubiquitous presence throughout the community via its members, I believed that it controlled everyone. The members acted based on the model of a good Christian that the leadership encouraged. The loyal members then forced these beliefs on

anyone connected to the church. I felt like I could not have an identity of my own and it bothered me. Additionally, I was not a part of their church community, even though some members of my family were faithful congregants. The constant criticisms were not constructive and eventually became judgmental. I did not feel that sense of support and community that are general characteristics of the Black Church. For example, when we would miss church because my parents had to work many days that week, no one understood our situation, but instead constantly criticized us for not attending church. Additionally, when my mother passed, my sister was 16 and I was 15, no one from the church checked on our family or provided any assistance or comfort. When we would see them in the neighborhood, they would just state that we need to go to church; there was no community during this time of loss. This experience jaded my view of the Black Church for years of my life.

However, during my collegiate years, I gained a new appreciation for the church. During this time, I learned how the Black Church has, in its past, been a glue that has held African Americans together. It was a place where people unite and fight for justice, such as the Civil Rights Movement. Additionally, I randomly attended my friend's church, and those congregants were a very close-knit community that leaned on each other for support. Another friend invited me to Washington Missionary Baptist Church, the field site for this study, and I saw the same sense of community. After these varied experiences with the Black Church, I wanted to learn more about this institution and the Pastor's role in forming his membership into a socio-economic community.

My research was conducted at Washington Missionary Baptist Church. I started my study in July 2009 and finished in January 2010. This study entailed conducting ethnographic research, including interviews, participant observation, non-obtrusive observation, and content analysis. I

began my research with participant observation; I attended church services and participated in its activities. I began conducting interviews in August 2009, after building a rapport with the congregation during the summer. Also, I participated in activities outside of the church services, such as the carnival, the Biggest Loser contest, and attending the church conference. Non-obtrusive observation as I observe conversations, business affairs, and other events in which I did not participate. In addition, I viewed a random selection of videotapes and listened to audiotapes of services from the two years prior to starting my research. This gave me a wide range of data to use for my research. These methods were effective in generating information about the church.

This study revealed their humble beginnings of the congregants. The church began with about eight members and was located in an apartment in May 1977. After about a year and a half, the church moved into a funeral home. The director allowed them to use a room for little or no cost. They stayed at this location for approximately two years and, with the growing membership, moved into a house and had service in the living room. However, a real estate agent, on behalf of a company, made them an offer to move out of the home. They took the offer and used that money to buy the house where they are now. Eventually, they added a sanctuary to the house. The membership continued to grow. The original members had children and the new members brought their families with them. These family ties and the friendships that were formed provided the communal foundation for the church. My research analyzes the community of Washington Missionary Baptist Church, how it was built, the role that its leadership plays in facilitating it, and the agency of the congregants in sustaining it.

This study examines how the Pastor forms his congregation into a socio-economic community. My research asks the following: How do this pastor's leadership performance (a) the social interaction of the congregation, (b) the mobilization of congregates into members of a social

group, and (c) the development of his congregation into an economic system? This research examines four dimensions of the church: the leadership, the social ties, the music, and the business. The church's structure involves the Pastor as the leader and representative of the institution. Although the Pastor does have power in every aspect of the church, he maintains the structure by dispersing control of the church to other members. The Deacon Board, the Pastor's cabinet, advises the Pastor and assists him in the administrative duties of the church. There are also other important positions that are held by members of the church, such as the Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors, both of whom handle the official business affairs of the church.

My research also analyzes the social ties that the religious institution generates and the music of the church. Many of the Washington Missionary Baptist Church's members find the family atmosphere most appealing. They maintain these social ties not only within the church walls, but they also gather in other locations. For example, many of them get together and go to various events, movies, shopping, or to restaurants. The members of the church are friends and family; many of them are related, some have been friends for many years, and there are new members that have developed friendships with the members. Music, an important aspect of the Black Church, allows people to come together and worship God. It can be inclusive or exclusive, particularly if a congregant is not familiar with the song.

The last component of my research is the economic system of the church. This study examines how the church functions as a business, specifically a non-profit organization. Every quarter, the church members, and anyone who would to come, get together and conduct the business of the church. This includes financial business and any administrative changes. For example, the financial reports—the account statements from main account and other reports from the auxiliaries—are read to the membership and officers are elected at this time. During these confe-

rences, I was able to see and understand how the church structure is maintained and the Pastor's role in the organization as its leader. In order to analyze the data collected, I used Max Weber's concept of legitimate authority and theories of nonprofit leadership. Weber explained that there are three pure forms of authority: rational, traditional, and charismatic. Rational authority rests on the rules and laws of the state. Traditional authority bases it legitimacy on the established traditions. The last form of authority is charismatic authority. This authority refers to the domination over men that are based on the followers believing that the leader has extraordinary qualities (Weber 1994).

Due to the fact that this church is a nonprofit organization, I also used theories of nonprofit leadership to analyze the leadership of the church. Pearce, Perry, and Sims, Jr. explain that "Rapidly changing competitive, legal, demographic, and technological environments, combined with an increased focus on results and accountability," many nonprofit organizations find new ways of adapting to the changing environment. Currently, Washington Missionary Baptist Church is competing with the mega-churches and other smaller churches in membership. Therefore, they must adapt to the changing environment in order to appeal to others and to improve their organization. Additionally, the church must function properly as a nonprofit organization (NPO) under the Secretary of State and in order to sustain itself. In order to do so, the Pastor maintains a shared leadership among the organization. Successful NPO have strong leadership and decentralize the decision-making authority in order to encourage teamwork. Shared leadership means that the entire team engages in leadership, instead of a single-appointed leader, which is called vertical leadership.

This study will provide an in-depth understanding of a particular African American church and explain the leadership and its impact on the church as a whole. It will contribute to the cur-

rent literature concerning religion, churches, the Black Church, and leadership in the religious institutions.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW/THEORY

2.1 Anthropology of Religion

Religion, according to Dorothy Lee, is a constant presence in a man's view of his position inside of the universe; his universe may be divine or include the divine (2008: 20). People's behavior often reflects religious characteristics in activities involving agriculture, health, and crafts. Raymond Firth argues that religion is a type of human art, a symbolic result of desire, human anxiety, and imagination articulated in a social setting (Firth 1981:584). He further explains that religion is the result of apprehension between the push for life and satisfaction, the actual and the ideal, the masses and the individual, as well as the acknowledgement of suffering and death (Firth 1981: 584).

Anthropologists have produced various interpretations of religion. Edward B. Tylor explained that religion, in its most basic form, is the belief in a spiritual creature, which is a form of worship he called "animism" (Geertz 2008: 7). This definition led to the need to understand the foundation of how the belief developed. According to Clifford Geertz, when referencing Tylor, spiritual belief started as a result of a rational effort to explain mystifying phenomena such as dreams, death and possession (Geertz 2008: 7). Tylor argued that the notion of a soul was used to provide reasoning behind mysterious natural episodes. Melford E. Spiro provided a more specific definition of religion than that of Tylor. He explains that religion is an institution that includes "culturally postulated superhuman beings" (Moro, Myers, and Lehmann 2008: 3).

David Mandelbaum builds on Spiro's definition of religion. Mandelbaum explains that religion includes all of a group's acts and beliefs that directly relate to their understanding of the supernatural (Mandelbaum 1966: 1174). He further explains that a system is considered reli-

gious if the group who practices the beliefs and the acts do so because they are confronting energies that people cannot control by their own power. Mandelbaum's definition includes both supernatural and superhuman forces discussed by Tylor and Spiro.

Karl Marx, although an atheist, acknowledged the need for religion in society. He explained that religion was invented by humans, not individually, but collectively. According to Marx, religion is used as consolation for worldly injustices and despair (Firth 1981). He considered religion as providing a false happiness, a way of hiding the exploitations that is going on in the real world. The real enemy is the societal structure in which religion functioned (Firth 1981: 83). Furthermore, Marx saw religion as a marker of the oppressed which provided a deceptive feeling of security (Firth 1981).

The concept of religion— the acknowledgement of supernatural forces in order to explain mysterious occurrences or deal with various life problems/issues— is a cultural universal that is important to the human condition. According to Kottak and Kozaitis, religion is a worldwide cultural characteristic which can be traced back to the origins of humanity. They explain that people who claim to be atheists or agnostics may confess to having a spiritual (Kottak and Kozaitis 2008: 85). Religion is a cultural universal, but adjusts to the change in group practicing the faith. The religious system of a particular group is a product of changes that occur around the social and cultural context of its conception in order to meet the demands of the people.

According to Nancy Ammerman, organized religion is an entity that includes a group of people engaged in a set of behaviors that are supported by and they define the collectivity in which the group resides. The changing groups of people (congregants), who each bring a history of practices to the collectivity, constantly reshape the culture of the organization (Ammerman 1997). Ammerman explains that the collective action of the congregants is due to their mutual

acknowledgement of a Divine being that is also a part of the celebration (1997: 210). Furthermore, religious organizations create spaces where people can be known and cared for by others outside of their biological group (Ammerman 1997).

Church services are a religious practice of religious organizations. This practice involves sacred rituals and other secular activities that provide "transcendent perspectives into social life" (Ammerman 1997:210). Services are times when religious people are not alone in their recognition and celebration of the Divine Actor. During worship, the religious group encounters the divine forces though direct experiences or spiritual rituals or stories. This religious practice transforms the organizational space to a place of personal and social expressions (Ammerman 1997). My research examines an African American religious organization (church), its services, the sacred and secular practices of its members, as well as the influence of the Pastor in building this community.

2.2 Theory

Max Weber argues that there are three pure forms of authority: charismatic, rational, and traditional. Weber explains that a charismatic leader is someone who is separated from other ordinary individuals because this person possesses superhuman, supernatural, or some form of extraordinary powers that others do not encompass (Weber 1968). Charismatic authority differs completely from rational and traditional authority. These latter forms of authority focus on the daily routine of controlling actions and the handling of rules. On the other hand, charismatic authority is foreign to legal rules and may seem irrational. Additionally, its positions of power is not given to those who possess property or those in a higher social status, but authority is given to a person who legitimately has charisma, an uncommon quality that is oftentimes considered magical (Weber 1968: 52-53; Weber 1994: 32).

A charismatic structure does not have arranged procedures for an appointment to or dismissal from a position, advancement, or salary. Additionally, there is no form of organized training for the charismatic leader and the administration. In order for the mission of the charismatic authority to work, in opposition to a bureaucratic structure, the leader assumes the duties that are appropriate to him and there has to be an obedient following (Weber 1978). The success of a charismatic leader depends on whether he finds the group of people whom he feels he was sent to lead and they must recognize the leader's mission. If the group does not recognize his mission, then the structure collapses. As long as the charismatic quality in the leader is proved, recognized, and satisfies the group, the charismatic authority will remain legitimate (Weber 1978: 227)..

Charismatic authority is unfamiliar with economic considerations. The pure charismatic authority is against the economic exploitation of spiritual gifts for personal income; however, Weber explains that this is more of an ideal concept than an actual fact. Charisma is typically anti-economic and rejects any type of involvement in the routine of the world. It can only deal with the irregular and shocking acts, which is done with emotional coldness. Therefore, economic dependence on property income is not suitable for the conventional charismatic leader (Weber 1968).

Furthermore, the charismatic authority is characteristically unstable. The leader may lose his charisma and may feel, for example, as though he is abandoned by God. Additionally, his followers will see that the leader is robbed of his powers, the mission soon dies, and the ex-followers then wait hoping for a new charismatic leader. A charismatic authority maintains power only by proving himself constantly in reality (Weber 1978). Weber states that his mission must prove itself in that the followers must prosper. If they do not prosper, then he was not sent

by the gods. If this was to happen to the charismatic authority, the leadership would end (Weber 1978).

Another legitimate authority that Weber explains is the rational authority. The rational authority is based on the belief in the laws of the state and the right of the leadership to exercise their power (Weber 1994). Weber argues that the purest form of rational authority employs a bureaucratic administrative staff. One characteristic of a legitimated bureaucracy is that the positions in the organization are legally legitimated. Additionally, these positions have duties that are legally justifiable. A bureaucracy follows the concept of a hierarchy and the candidates are selected for their positions based on their skills (Harrison 1960).

The third pure form of authority is traditional. This authority is based on the common belief of the sacredness of the existing traditions and that the authority has power through them. The individual in this role is bound by the traditions of which he is given power, which has always been in existence. Weber explains that the followers are loyal to the leader because they trust in the traditions in which that leader was put into position (1994: 31).

In the nonprofit arena, there are different forms of leadership. Pearce, Perry, and Sims, Jr.(2001) explain that there is a vertical and team leadership. Vertically managed teams refer to a hierarchical system, or vertical leadership, with the appointed leader, or chief executive, at the top. The second form of leadership is based on a decentralizing power to a group, a team. With the changing legal, technical, legal, and competitive environments, many nonprofit organizations wish to find new means of adapting and effectively achieved higher levels of performance. In order to handle these changes, NPOs have started to use team leadership instead of vertical. Usually, successful nonprofit organizations have a solid leadership with decentralized decision-making authority, also known as empowerment, which promotes and makes teamwork possible

(Pearce, Perry, and Sims, Jr. 2001: 625). Teams are beneficial in adequately maintaining a nonprofit by building, sustaining, and optimizing relationships among donors, funding agencies, employees, volunteers, and clients (Pearce, Perry, and Sims, Jr. 2001).

Empowerment refers to a team having the authority and power to manage, direct, lead itself. If a team is fully empowered, it will possess the power of decision-making, for which the entire team is responsible. Shared leadership occurs when the whole team participates in the leadership tasks of the group. The team collectively must have or be given the power or authority to make decisions in order for the group to share leadership. If the team is familiar with and had authority of the leadership tasks, members of the group can handle some of the leadership that has formerly been given to the manager or chief executive. NPOs use empowerment teams in order to take advantage of the varied talents and skills of individuals across the organization (Pearce, Perry, and Sims, Jr. 2001).

Although successful nonprofits operate in teams, the central leadership of the chief executive is important in maintaining an organization. Heimovics, Herman, and Jurkiewicz Coughlin (1993) explain that the chief executive is the center of the information flow of the organization and have an advantage over the board. The chief executive has professional experience and expertise in maintaining a nonprofit. In most nonprofit organizations, there is a board, which is responsible for ensuring that the NPO fulfills its goal (Heimovics, Herman, and Jurkiewicz Coughlin 1993). According to Axelrod, a board has the following duties: establish the NPO's mission and purpose, select and support chief executive officer (CEO), review the CEO'S performance, monitor activities and services, provide reliable financial management, procure financial resources, advance the public image of the organization, and strengthen the effectiveness of the board's own governing body (1994:135). The board operates in the shared leadership capaci-

ty as described by Pearce, Perry, and Sims, Jr. The members of the board have the power and authority to carry out leadership tasks for the organization.

3 METHODS

The research study examines the role and the influence that the Pastor has in forming his congregation into a socio-economic community. This study answers the following question: How do this pastor's leadership performance (a) the social interaction of the congregation, (b) the mobilization of congregants into members of a social group, and (c) the development of his congregation into an economic system? In order to answer this question, I employed ethnographic strategies to collect data. I collected information from four aspects of Washington Missionary Baptist Church, the fieldsite: leadership, community, music, and business. Before I discuss the strategies used, it is important to explain ethnography.

James P. Spradley (1980) explains that ethnography is the act of describing a particular culture. The main goal of ethnography is to understand a particular culture, problem, or process from a native perspective. He further suggests that ethnography is not really studying a group of people, but rather learning from them; therefore the researcher becomes the student (Spradley 1980:3). Ethnographic research includes using a wide-range of methods in the field, or location of the study. According to O'Reilly, ethnography is iterative-inductive research that depends on a group methods, which includes have direct and sustained contact with the humans under study during their daily lives. It involves listening to them as well as asking questions that would lead to a written account of the human experience that includes theory, he researcher's role, and the views of humans as object and subject. This ethnography provides a detailed understanding of the African American Church as an organization and as a community of congregants; it included having direct contact with the members and being a part of the ceremonies. It also allowed the flexibility of using various methods to the extent needed for the investigation.

The ethnographic strategy that I employed is fieldwork. This strategy is important because, as Malinowski explains, by being in the location, or field, of the studied people, a researcher can get them to open up and express their feelings and thoughts. Researching in context also allowed me to get information on the observed people's feelings during an event, as opposed to before or after it; this gave me the opportunity to observe the details of the event that may be omitted in an interview (O'Reilly 2005:10).

I began conducting research in July 2009, after getting approval by the Institutional Review Board. My study is centered on one African American Church in Decatur, Georgia. The church will be given the pseudonym of Washington Missionary Baptist Church. During July 2009, I focused mainly on adapting to the church environment in order for the members to become comfortable with my presence. In this period, I began conducting participant observation and informal interviews. I also began viewing a random sample of videotapes and audiotapes which range from 2007 to 2008. In August, I began conducting formal interviews with the congregants, pastor, and deacons.

3.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation allows researchers to directly experience the activities in the field, gain feelings from the events, and record their own perceptions of the events. Spradley explains that the participant observer has two purposes: (1) to become involved in the activities of the situation and (2) to observe the people, physical objects, and activities of the situation (1980: 54). Furthermore, the participant observer becomes a research instrument via introspection, by looking into oneself and accessing the feelings that one gets while participating in the studied events (Spradley 1980).

Spradley groups participation into five categories: nonparticipation, passive, moderate, active, and complete (from least to greatest amount of participation). Nonparticipation is when a researcher who completes ethnographic fieldwork but does not get involved in any of the events. There are times when a particular situation does not allow participation for the researcher, which calls for unobtrusive observation. The passive participant observer is present during the activities, but is not greatly involved; this researcher can be referred to as a bystander. Moderate participant is used to describe a researcher that balances being an outsider (observer) and an insider (participant). An active participant does what others are doing in order to fully understand the cultural rules for the behavior of persons studied. This participation begins with just observations, but as the researcher's understanding of the studied behavior grows, the researcher begins to emulate the actions. The last type of participation, complete, occurs when the ethnographer is already an ordinary participant in the activities, before the research began (Spradley 1980: 58-61).

During the duration of this study, I was a moderate participant in the activities and behaviors of the church under study. It was important to utilize participant observation because I was able to observe the actions of the preacher and the congregation while conducting my ethnography of the church. Participant observation gave me an opportunity to become familiar with the structure and normative actions of the church as the members experience them. This method led to me becoming familiar with the activities of the church, both sacred and secular, and I was able to experience the feelings that are associated with those activities.

3.2 Content Analysis

Content analysis can be defined both quantitatively and qualitatively. When referencing the former, content analysis is systematically counting occurrence of specific phrases, words, or

images within previously established categories that are seen in texts that have been collected beforehand. Qualitatively, content analysis focuses more on analyzing the meanings of texts rather than on quantifying categories and codes (O'Reilly 2005). O'Reilly explains that content analysis, qualitatively, includes everything from understanding what objects mean for the participants to approaches that allow the researcher to analyzing texts. (2005: 172).

While conducting research on the African American Church, I used content analyses both quantitatively and qualitatively. This study included listening to and viewing a random sample of audiotapes and videotapes of church services (Bible study, Sunday school, and Sunday sermon) over the span of two years. I viewed these tapes in order to have a wide range of data. Additionally, these audio and visual recordings allowed me to see the activities of the church services from the two years prior to my study. I am better able to compare services and find patterns via viewing and listening to the videotapes and audiotapes. I looked at patterns such as the regularity of call-and-response, sermon topics, and repetitive actions of the congregants (i.e. shouting).

3.3 Interviews

Quantitative interviews are used when discovering representations within a large population. This type of interview generates quantifiable data that can be gathered, categorized, compared, and analyzed; this is referred to as numerical data. It is pertinent to ensure standardization of techniques among the interviewers and a large representative sample in order to gather numerical data. Qualitative interviews also generate answers to the research questions; in addition to responses, it focuses on subtle characteristics such as how the interviewee is sitting, the time of interview, and facial expressions (O'Reilly 2005).

Furthermore, an ethnographic interview may be conducted while participating and observing, which can help build relationships with the studied population and would make the indi-

viduals feel more comfortable with the interviewer (O'Reilly 2005: 112-115; Levy and Hollan 1998). Individual interviews were important in this study in gaining understanding of what goes on in the environment of the church. Victor Turner explain that one important point in analyzing symbols is getting the interpretations provided by experts and laypersons (2008: 494). It was pertinent to the study to get an understanding of what are the rituals and actions, what are the feelings associated with the behaviors, and what are the meanings behind the actions from the congregation's and leadership's perspective. Through interviews, I was able to get the perspectives of the congregation and leadership.

3.4 Focus Groups

Focus groups are gatherings of four to twelve people that share a discussion of a topic chosen by the researcher. Susan Weller explains that a person's response is influenced by their interaction with other members of the focus group (1998: 372). Due to the fact that the focus groups may not everyone an opportunity to speak or say everything they would like to say, it is important to still have individual interviews in order to have more questions answer in a more in-depth manner. Semi-structured interviews generate answers to a set of questions, but allow room for the interviewee to discuss other topics. This method best suits my research design because it yielded more information concerning the church than I would have gotten if it was a structured interview. During a structured interview, there is no deviation from the pre-determined questions, none added or changed. Focus groups allowed me to adjust my questions in accordance with the responses (O'Reilly 2005: 116).

3.5 Ethics

Before conducting research in the African American Church, or in any field activity, it is important to consider the ethics that are involved in the study. While conducting this investiga-

tion, I had continuous contact with congregants during worship services and would talk with them about their beliefs and practices as members of this church. Therefore, I was thoughtful not to offend anyone. Carolyn Fleuhr-Lobban explains that when research participants studied and the anthropologist trust and respect each other, there will be positive feelings and outcomes from both parties (1998: 173). However, Karen O'Reilly (2005) argues that ethical considerations are most times overlooked when a researcher acts covertly, which is done without the consent or knowledge of the people being observed. This form of research has been met with criticism concerning not getting consent, dishonesty, and invading privacy (O'Reilly 2005: 61). Researchers should avoid being covert as much as possible, unless it is the only way to gather information. Therefore, overt research is best suited when conducting fieldwork (O'Reilly 2005).

For this study, I acted overtly in conducting my research. Before I began my study, I received approval from the pastor, the church leader, to conduct research at his church. Following this approval, I completed my application for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Georgia State University, which is a required process when conducting research on human subjects. Fluehr-Lobban explains that review boards are places that act in an advisory role (1998: 183-184). She further explains that if a research design has discrepancies, it is discussed, redesigned, enhanced, and finally approved (1998:184). These steps are necessary in taking a proactive approach to ethical research. After going through these steps, I received IRB approval and was able to begin conducting ethnographic research.

3.6 Challenges

Since beginning my research, I have encountered minimal methodological challenges. Initially, I had a problem conducting ethnographic research because the church members were not comfortable with my presence, especially after discovering that I was studying the church envi-

ronment. The main Pastor, during the first two months of my research, perpetuated this uncomfortable feeling by announcing my status as a researcher during the church services. This announcement established a separation between me as a researcher and the congregation. Due to the fact that the congregants were not comfortable with me at that time, this caused conversations, to and around me, to be limited. Such conversations hindered my data collections. When I would ask questions about various church practices, I would receive vague responses.

This issue had a negative effect on my data and I had to resolve this problem. I became more involved in the church. In addition to attending the Sunday service, I began to participate in the activities of the church (i.e. carnival), get involved in their Biggest Loser contest, go to the Bible study classes as often as possible, initiated more conversations with members, and I did not bring my notepad as often as I did in the beginning. After becoming more interactive with the church, the members became more comfortable with me, even though they knew I was conducting research. Actually, they became more proactive in my research experience by asking if I have any questions and telling me that they would like to help me as much as they can.

3.7 Reflexive Analysis

Due to the fact that I am African American, it was easier for the congregation to become accepting of my presence. Additionally, my upbringing in a Missionary Baptist African American church allowed me to have some preliminary information about this church due to the similar traditions within the Missionary Baptist denominations. However, I cannot say that I was a "native" anthropologist. According to Kirin Narayan, a "native" anthropologist is an insider that will provide an authentic perspective to the anthropological community. She further explains that native anthropologists are considered insiders despite having complex backgrounds (1993: 677). I was not a native anthropologist because each church has their own set of rules and traditions, in

addition to the denominational ones. There are aspects of this particular church that I did not recognize. For example, I was not aware of many of the songs that are sung at the church. Each church has its own unique structure and my goal was to discover the complexities of Washington Missionary Baptist Church's organization.

3.8 Conceptual Framework

Before I began this study, I believed that the African American preacher had complete and total control over his congregation. Everything centered on the goals in which the pastor had set for the church. This control includes having the power to earn, through congregants, and spend money given to the church. People follow and idolize him because the pastor's charisma and skill of persuasion draws crowds to him and make them believe that God speaks through him. I believed that an African American pastor was flashy and was paid by the membership to maintain his position. Furthermore, the pastor would use the money in the church treasury as he sees fit, with no one to challenge his authority. I also undersertood the authority of the African American pastor to be legitimated by the followers' belief in his superhuman abilities given to him by God, such as the ability to speak a person's future. For example, when a pastor says to a particular person "You will no longer deal with financial problems after this moment," and the person believes in his talents as a prophet. All of these characteristics led me to assume that the Pastor of Washington Missionary Baptist Church would have these same characteristics and would fall under charismatic authority. However, as will be proven, my research has shown otherwise.

4 LEADERSHIP

> [42]And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ (KJV, Acts 5:42,).

The most recognized leader of the Black Church is the pastor. In Washington Missionary Baptist Church, the Pastor (capitalized when referencing the current leader) is responsible for the spiritual welfare, such as leading the sacred services and providing Godly advice to members, of the congregation, with the aid of the Deacons. The Bylaws explain that the Pastor "shall seek to enlist persons as followers of Christ, preach the gospel, administer the sacrament…have under his care all services of public worship, and administer the activities of the Church in corporation with the various Boards and Committees." He is also the ex officio member of all of the church organizations except for the Ministerial Search Committee, which is responsible for the hiring and the termination of the Pastor. Basically, the Pastor is a ubiquitous presence in Washington Missionary Baptist Church. Since the church's inception in May 1977, the Pastor has been a part of all of its activities.

The founding pastor, who will be known under the pseudonym Paul, established the model in which the church follows now. Congregants mentioned his name frequently in almost all of my interviews. Paul was influential in the family-oriented environment of the church; he wanted his congregation to be close and helpful toward one another. For example, according to an older male member, "He was asked to speak at his home church. They paid him a little money and after that, he took us all out to eat. Not only that, the first holiday that we had since we knew him, he invited us over his house, and he barbequed for us." The member also explained "So everything you see that's going on now, he got us started." The traditions include dinners follow-

ing church service as well as the holiday gathering of the church members. Paul would be a part of the congregants' lives outside of the church. If there was a problem in a person's household or among members, Paul would intervene and bring peace to the situation. For example, according to an older male member, there was a conflict between a child of the church and his teacher, Paul went with the parent to the school to help solve the issue. He was very encouraging of education among the congregation. Paul promoted the current Pastor to become college-educated. With such encouragement, many of the members went on to higher education.

Paul worked to establish a church that was friendly and was based on the Biblical principles according to the King James Version. A congregant explained, he instructed the members on how to greet the visitors and show themselves friendly to newcomers by shaking their hands and asking them if they need anything. During his time as pastor, Paul, according to a congregant, "always told us to reach out to people. That is why we always shake hands and welcome everybody at the beginning of service. He didn't want us to be like those churches that when visitors come, nobody care." Additionally, Paul's foundation for the church included Biblical roles (i.e. usher, pastor, deacons, mother board, and choir membership) and other roles that the church needs to maintain themselves (boards for each church activity and various committees such as the clean-up crew). According to the congregants, he wanted the actions of the church to be fully based on the Bible and on other traditional rules of the Missionary Baptist tradition, such as the attire that members should wear for church. Due to this foundational structure, those who were raised in the church or who have attended it for a while have become accustomed to these traditions and act accordingly. These actions include certain attire being worn during church services. This attire includes men wearing suits: either a full suit with blazer and tie or just a business shirt and dress pants, usually characteristic of younger and newer male members. Women

are expected to wear dresses, skirt suits (which includes jacket, blouse, and skirt, or skirts with a blouse). Also, the greetings are done a certain way, with the shaking of the hands and asking if the visitor needed anything.

4.1 The Pastoral Transition

When Paul became ill, he announced that Michael, a pseudonym for the current pastor, would become the leader of the church. However, he still maintained his prestige and power in the church. Michael—a lawyer who works in a family law firm as well as lead the church—explained that "When I first started, I would be standing up and preaching, and then he would say something, then everybody would turn around and listen to him." He was trained by the founding pastor before taking the position. Michael also went to Morehouse School of Religion; therefore, he also has academic training in religion. When he became Pastor following all of his training, instead of changing the structure, he maintained the rules that Paul had established. The congregants explained that Michael's rise was a surprising one. One middle-aged female congregant explained that "When he preached for the first time, we were shocked! He did good and he was exciting. This was not like him. We had chills. We heard him speak before, but not like this. He was like a completely different person when he stepped on stage. After that, we knew he was going to be our preacher." When he became Pastor, Michael continued to mandate that the original structure remains. Therefore, Paul's presence is still resonates within the church walls. Oftentimes, the founding pastor can be heard in conversations. For example, when talking about being friendly to someone or going on a trip, the members, particularly the old ones, reference how Paul would insist that everyone have a close relationship with one another and always reach out to others. Also, sometimes during his message, Michael would refer to the dedication of Paul to this church.

The current Pastor gives aspiring pastors the opportunity to work on their skills. There are about two reverends in that church that are practicing for their own congregation one day. Michael has given them a few opportunities to preach on Sundays and lead discussions during Bible study and Sunday school. When they would preach during Sunday worship service, Michael would allow the reverends to carry out all of the duties that the Pastor does during service. The Pastor would then serve the role of a co-pastor, who stands up and asks for comments and provide one of his own. Also, he would provide encouraging words and constructive criticisms during the time of his comment and after church. The founding pastor trained Michael in a similar way. Before Paul passed away, he would help Michael become a better leader by critiquing him when necessary and encouraging him.

4.2 Pastor and Church Activities

The Pastor is present at most of the activities of the church. He is the ex officio member of the church organizations and he often provides advisement on certain activities or projects. Additionally, when he is present, Michael will slightly facilitate the activities. For example, during Sunday school, the pastor gives others an opportunity to facilitate the discussions; however, Michael clarifies concepts during the discussion and immediately following, he elaborates on the speaker's discussion. During many of the Biblical studies activities, the Pastor is on hand to make sure that everyone understands and to clarify any information.

Additionally, the Pastor participates in activities outside of formal worship and provides guidance to his members. Whenever there is a social activity that occurs in the church, he would be involved. After church, the Pastor would attend the dinners and the informal Bible study. During these dinners, everyone would sit at the table at Picadilly's and would talk about various topics, not necessarily related to the church. The Pastor does not sit at the head of the table, but sit at

an available seat, nest to his wife, the First Lady. Due to the length of the table and the many members, not everyone will be discussing the same topic; the table is split into conversations. Some conversations include what happened that day at church, such as the choir singing well, a child was crying too much, and what someone said that was funny. These conversations are not serious discussions; usually, everyone is in a joking mood. I feel closer to the congregation when I attend the dinners, both at Picadilly's and at the church. Every now and again there may be a main discussion, but not for long because it is hard to hear everyone. Also, at Picadilly's, there are other church groups there and having loudly conversations, so it is difficult to hear everyone and all conversations. However, if someone is interested, he/she just moves his/her chair to that part of the table and partakes in the conversation.

He would also host events at his house, such as dinners and football games on Sunday. On Super Bowl Sunday, the Pastor and the church members went to a congregant's house and watched the game. I was unable to attend, but the congregants explained that it was "fun and lively." One young female congregant explained that "He is like a father. He is always around." In addition to the activities, he also finds time to talk to the people of the congregation if they have a problem or an issue. Many, if not all, of the church members have his home and his cell telephone numbers. The membership looks up to him, as they did the founding pastor, for spiritual guidance. Previously, I had an issue with a family member and I was referred to him for advice. He is very accessible; I was able to meet with him at his law office. I explained my situation to him and he gave me spiritual and practical advice. The Pastor also said that I can come to him again if I needed anymore advice. He makes himself accessible to his members whenever they are in need of spiritual guidance.

4.3 Preaching the Gospel

The Pastor has been described as being a very passionate speaker. When he begins, the Pastor is somewhat calm and speaks in a soothing tone. However, as the sermon progresses, he gets excited about his sermon and begins to become more energetic and louder. According to a middle-aged female member, “His message is inspiring. He always ends with an uplifting part.” When the Pastor becomes more excited, so does the audience. The more energetic he becomes, the audience become increasingly active, which includes clapping, standing, and verbally responding.

The responses of the congregation during the sermon inspire the Pastor. When the audience approves, they yell words such as “Yes” and “Amen.” A middle-aged female congregant explained that “It is a way for us to show him that we agree with what he says and to keep going.” Another female member explained that “When you hear the truth, you say ‘Amen’ and it gives the Pastor inspiration to go on.” “Amen has also been described as “an affirmation that says three things: What you saying is right, I know it’s right, and I accept it’s right.” Sometimes the Pastor would say he does not have enough time and the audience would respond with “Take all the time you need.” This also shows the congregation’s eagerness to hear more from him. A young female member explained that “it is a call and response kind of thing. Like when a preacher says ‘can I get a witness?’ ‘Yes!’ With this audience, if you are telling the truth, you are going to know you are telling the truth based on their response.” Call-and-response is definitely a reoccurring part of the Pastor’s performance. At the end of the sermon, the Pastor becomes excited and starts to yell out phrases or words. Between the repeated words or phrases, the audience would yell accordingly. For example,

Pastor: (yelling) IT’S MINE!

Audience: (yelling) YES!

Pastor: IT'S MINE!

Audience: YES!

Usually at this time, most of the congregation will begin to stand and will remain standing until the Pastor is done with his sermon and following alter call, a time where people join the church. It appears as though the members, not visitors, are aware when he is close to finish because they began to stand and continue responding to his call. I am always aware when he is almost done because he becomes more excited and aggressive when he begins the call-and-response. The Pastor yells loudly and his body moves wildly, particularly his arms as he points to his audience during this time. For example:

Pastor: (yelling) IT'S MINE (Right arm points to congregation)

Audience: (yelling) YES!

Pastor: IT'S MINE! (Left arm points to congregation)

He has to maneuver his arms around the podium to point. He ends with the call-and-response and sits down after his last call. However, the call-and-response occurs throughout the sermon, not just the end, but it is not as aggressive. One of the older female members explained that "silence can be a connection for the preacher." If the audience is silent, the Pastor understands that he has to do something.

One important characteristic that the interviewed members believe is the most appealing about the Pastor's sermon is the practicality of his speech. An older female member explained that "he preaches in a way that everyone can understand it." His sermons are founded in the Bible, which can be difficult to understand. Therefore, in order to make his message clear, he explains it thoroughly using examples. A middle-aged male member explained that "Well, most of

the time he will begin with a scripture. Then he will explain it and provide examples. Then from there he makes the point of his message and then ends on a high note." He brings out these examples of real-life situations because it not only clarifies the message, but the audience also is given means in which the message can apply to daily life.

4.4 The Co-Pastor of Washington Missionary Baptist Church

The co-pastor, or assistant pastor as noted in the Bylaws, is a well-respected official in Washington Missionary Baptist Church. According to the Bylaws, his role is very similar to the main Pastor. He assists the Pastor as well as the Deacon Board in managing the spiritual welfare of the church. Additionally, the assistant pastor "shall seek to enlist persons as followers of Christ, preach the gospel, administer the sacrament,…have under his care all services of public worship, and administer the activities of the Church in corporation with the various Boards and Committees." He is also an ex officio member of all boards and organizations of the church. The assistant pastor was close to the founding pastor and assisted him in many ways. So when Paul passed away, he remained a co-pastor of the church. He is very knowledgeable of the church; when I had any questions, I was often referred to him by other members. The assistant pastor also has a major role in the Sunday services. Sometimes he would read the scripture to the congregation. Following the sermon, he hosts the alter call, a time in which people publicly confess their love for God and acknowledge that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. This is also the time in which people can join the church. Additionally, he would also give and ask for comments from the audience. If the Pastor is not present, the co-pastor will stand in his place unless otherwise noted.

4.5 Deacon Board

The Deacon Board, according to the bylaws serve as the Pastor's cabinet and acts "in an advisory capacity and assisting the pastor in the administration and maintenance of the spiritual life of the church." The candidates, men only, for the Deacon Board are chosen by the Pastor and they are examined by the Pastor and/or his delegates. The Deacon Board candidates are approved at the Church Conference by the members. The bylaws said that deacons serve for a term of one year, but it appears as though the deacons have been in their position for a while. During the conference, there is never a discussion of the reelection of a deacon, as opposed to other positions such as the chair of auxiliaries. However, reelection is not necessary because they are very familiar with the church practices and are exemplary in their duties and are well respected by the congregation. The deacons work with the ministers in the arrangement, order, and the content of the church's worship services. They provide assistance in the communion services and "supply the pulpit in the absence of the minister(s)." The deacons also help the poor, sorrowing, and sick as well as those who need spiritual as well as material aid. Additionally, with the Pastor, they are responsible for administering the monies received during the offering for charitable work within the Church's community. Lastly, the Deacon Board is responsible for any other duties that are not clearly defined by other boards or committees yet fall under the scope of the deacons.

There are other members of the church who are a part of the leadership. As mentioned previously, the Pastor and the Deacon Board are the main leaders of the church. However, there are other members of the church that are in leadership roles, which will be discussed more in the business chapter. Various members have roles such as the church clerk, Board of Directors (including deacons and other members), as well as the Board of Trustees. The Pastor does not have total control of the congregation, the co-pastor and other auxiliaries all aid in the function of the

church. When the Pastor is not present at the church for various functions, the other leaders have control. For example, the pastor was sick on a Tuesday and could not make it to Bible Study. It was not cancelled; instead, the First Lady, wife of Pastor, opened the church doors. The co-pastor and the deacon prepared the church for the service as usual, including removing the chain and orange cones that close off the parking lot from the street. Due to the fact that the Pastor was not available, the co-pastor led the Bible Study for the day.

During the carnival in August, the Pastor was unavailable, so the Deacon Board, the First Lady, and other members worked together to put on the event. I was told earlier that week about the carnival, and I decided to volunteer. When I arrived that morning, most of the church members were there. The men, particularly the Deacon Board, were barbequing hot dogs, hamburgers, and ribs outside. There were also other food dishes on the inside of the building, such as beans. My job was to monitor the freeze cup machine; unfortunately, it spilled a few times on me. My hands were blue and red, the colors of the machine. The food and the freeze cups were priced and made a good amount of money; I'm not sure of the total revenue. For a while, the members were complaining that the children of the church were not there; they came an hour after the carnival began. There was a bounce house, an air-filled structure where children could jump around and have fun. Also, there were horses that the members could ride on around the church, both children and adults. The adult members, mainly females, rode on the horses and were clearly excited as they laughed and yelled various words, such as "Yay! Ya'll need to do this!" Several members and neighborhood kids got into a hula-hoop competition. The First Lady won many of the competitions. People of all ages participated. I did not because I knew I would not win. Furthermore, there were two members, both artists, who did face painting for the little kids. Every child who attended the carnival received a free bag of school supplies (pencils, note-

books, and other items). It was a lively production; very noisy as everyone were trying to have conversations. Although the Pastor was not present, the members did a great job with the carnival.

Moreover, the Pastor gives people control over certain aspects of the church based on their strengths. Some people are in charge of the maintenance of the physical structure of the church because they are skilled in interior design and structural work. There are members who are excellent with keeping record of the money and they are in control of the church treasury. This is seen during the church quarterly conference, where everyone presents a report of what they are doing for the Pastor and members. The Pastor allows everyone to be a part of the church structure. It is not simply a dictatorial leadership, but it communal. The church can maintain itself without the Pastor being there constantly; there are others in place who can take over the services and activities when necessary.

4.6 Analysis/Conclusion

The Pastor is the highest official in the church and its main representative. He is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church, which include leading or assisting in worship services and provide spiritual support for individuals in the church. The founding pastor, Paul, sat the tone for the church. He promoted friendliness towards visitors and amongst the members. Additionally, he, with the assistance of founding members of course, laid the foundational structure for the church, which is still followed today. When he became ill, he announced that Michael will become the new leader, but he still added his input when necessary until his death. The current Pastor was trained in the traditions of the church and in the proper way. He observed Paul and would practice with him. Eventually, he began leading the church. Michael's delivery style is admired by the congregation. He is very clear and passionate about his speech; he also ensures

the members' understanding by providing examples. The audience shows their interest in his sermon by responding with words and phrases such as "Amen," "Yes," and "Thank you, Lord!" These responses inform the Pastor that his congregation acknowledges that what he says is the truth and they believe in what he is doing. Such responses provide legitimacy for the charismatic authority of the Michael, the current Pastor. Weber's theory of charismatic authority explains that in order for a leader to have legitimacy under this power, his followers must feel he was sent to lead and recognize his mission. Due to the fact that he has extraordinary skills of moving his members, the congregants remain loyal followers.

Although he is recognized as the spiritual leader of the church, the Pastor does not have total sovereignty over the church. The church does not utilize vertical leadership, but has the shared leadership model. He has other officers in place the help with the function of the church. One such group is the Deacon Board, which acts as the Pastor's cabinet and manages the basic needs of the church, such as turning on the lights for services, opening the church, lead devotional during most service, make the church aware of things that needs to be done, and act on any duties requested by the Pastor. Traditionally, the deacons are the second-in-command to the Pastor. Weber's theory of traditional authority applies here. They are given legitimate authority by the congregation because they traditionally hold power in the church. Also, the Deacon Board and the pastors (current and former) are instrumental in developing and maintaining the traditions of the church, such as the order of service.

Additionally, there are other auxiliaries that aid in the maintaining the church's structure. Other skilled members are used in various roles such as the treasury and building maintenance. He effectively assembled an empowerment team that takes advantage of everyone's skills and that each person in the leadership position has the ability to make decisions for the church; how-

ever, these decisions must still be discussed with the Pastor and other members of the congregation.

5 COMMUNITY

> For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ (KJV, 1 Corinthians 12:12).

According to its members, one of the most enduring characteristic of Washington Missionary Baptist Church is its family-oriented community. There are about fifty to sixty African American members of the church. The members range from lower class to middle class. A large group of the members have had some college. Different members have skills they have learned through education or their profession that they are able to bring to the church's business. The Pastor and his wife are lawyers and there are other members of the congregation who are employed by their law firm. Many members are employed with stable jobs. Additionally, if someone is in need of help, other members get together to provide assistance. For example, if someone loss a job, other members help financially or provide a job opportunity.

A middle-aged male congregant expressed the following about the church: "One of the things I like about the church is that it feels more like a family as opposed to an organization." Michael J. N. Dash and Christine D. Chapman offer a basic explanation of what it means to be in a congregation: "Life in a congregation is the story of persons who are engaged together in a journey and adventure with God and under the guidance of God's Spirit. It is a story of relationship and interaction" (2003:17). Washington Missionary Baptist Church epitomizes both descriptions. When church is in session, the people gather in their worship of God, which includes praising him as one body and sharing testimonies about how God has blessed them, proving God's great power.

Every time the church opens its doors and the members come into the sanctuary, they greet each other. The greeting usually consists of a handshake and a brief phrase such as "Hey, how are you doing?" Greetings sometimes include a hug, particularly if someone has been absent for a while, either due to a trip or illness. However, even though it may be brief, it means so much to the members to greet each other. A female congregant explained that the shaking of hands "makes anyone who steps in the church feel welcomed. It shows how much we are family. We have closeness." As a member, I feel welcomed when I am greeted by the others. When I first attended the church, it was surprising to have people come up to me and greet me because I have not experienced it before attending this church. Now I initiate greetings as I feel now that I am a part of the church family. After greeting everyone in the congregation, we then begin to have more in-depth conversations with one another about our lives during the week or any new information. One female member, who also grew up in the church, explained that greeting each other is "important to show people that you are not in church just to be there. You get to know people. It's a way to fellowship, get to know one another, talk to one another." The Pastor would come out front before the Sunday service begin and talk to the visitors. If someone needs anything, he would ask some to get it for the visitors as he prepare for his sermon. He makes sure that the visitors are taken care of before, during, and after the service.

5.1 Visitors

Greetings are not just reserved for the members, but also for visitors who attend the church. The founding pastor, according to a middle-aged female congregant, "wanted to build friendship and a sense of family within the church. So [the greetings] gives people a feeling of being loved, of being accepted. That's one thing that visitors say when they come that they love the fact that people are friendly to them." When visitors attend the church, they are immediately

greeted by the members of the congregation. This greeting includes asking the visitors if they would like something to drink or eat. If the visitor wants or needs anything, a member will serve them as many times a necessary. Also, the visitors fill out a "visitor's card," which asks for the person's name, address, and other contact information. This information is given to the announcers, two female members of the congregation, who then introduce the visitors of the congregation. If there are many visitors, which may be because of a special event going on that day, the announcers will just thank the many visitors for coming.

Additionally, the announcers will explain that the visitors are welcomed, their attendance is appreciated, and please come back to the church when they are available. After the co-pastor conducts alter call, a time in which people who feel as though the church is where they belong become a member, and the audience provides comments, the Pastor acknowledges the visitors. He asks the members to stand and introduce their guests to the congregation. Then the Pastor would ask the other visitors to introduce themselves. He also thanks them for coming and invites them back. This is also a time where the visitors provide comments about what they heard. On one Sunday during this time, one female visitor explained that Washington Missionary Baptist Church had a "sweet, sweet spirit." She further stated that "I never had a church with such a sweet, sweet spirit." However, there are some visitors who chose not to comment on the sermon, but they still introduced themselves to the congregation. There are instances when there are so many people that the Pastor does not have much time to allow everyone to speak; however, he still makes time to go to them and have a conversation after service is over. At times, he will stand at the doors to the sanctuary with the deacons and they would shake the hands and talk to everyone who walks out of the sanctuary. Also, other members of the congregation take the time to talk to the visitors after the service is over.

A young female member explained that “we make a point to show ourselves friendly to visitors. We want to make sure we make people feel at home.” Another member, a middle-age male, stated that “All the church should be about is just to add more friends, so I feel like a church should represent itself as friendly. You want people to feel welcomed. You want them to feel comfortable. You don’t want them to feel like an outcast.” The founding pastor established the tradition of handshaking that occurs before and after service. He taught the congregation that it is important to be friendly, shake hands, and do not ignore people because the church is after people. The same male member explained that Washington Missionary Baptist Church loves people and that “our whole intent from the time we walk into the door to the time we leave and from the rest of that time is to gain somebody else. Greeting people may seem small to somebody else, but it is very important.” The friendly gestures of shaking hands and talking to visitors are important in gaining new members.

The warm welcome attracted many members, who were not there since its inception, to Washington Missionary Baptist Church. One female congregant stated that “Friendliness brought me to the church. It is a friendly church. When I first came to the church, everyone treated me so friendly and so nice. That was about twenty years ago and it’s still the same. They are so friendly and so nice. I have been to other churches, big ones, but this church feel like a family.” I had a similar experience. When I began my ethnography, I immediately became aware of their friendly nature. As I talked to more people about my research, everyone wanted to get involved and was willing to participate via interviews and help me in any way. Additionally, the members were excited about me earning a Master of Arts degree and wanted, and still want to, come to my graduation. I was surprised that they were so accepting, supportive, and friendly toward me. Also, after Sunday school, I had questions about the lesson and the pastor would personally come

to me and answer my questions. This made me feel special and not an "outcast" even though I was new to the congregation.

I have witnessed their caring nature many times during my time at the church. For example, when my Godmother died on October 12, 2009, the church called me and sent their condolences, flowers to the funeral home, and a card to my house. The First Lady, wife of Pastor, called and helped me though the loss. Furthermore, whenever I miss a Sunday, they will be concerned and would call and check on me. They treated me as a member of their church family, even though I was not an official member of the congregation.

As I conducted my ethnography an important question developed out of my research: why is their congregation still small, with approximately fifty consistent members? Although there are people joining, the congregation has not experienced a surge in membership since I began my study in July 2009. Some of the interviewees argue that it is because the members are straight-forward when addressing what is wrong. Also, the sermons are direct and they may offend some people. For example, if a person has an attitude, someone in the church will approach him/her directly and deal with the situation. Additionally, in the sermons, the Pastor talks about various issues, even sexual topics, such as adultery. This may make people feel uncomfortable if they are in such situations. A young female congregant explained that the Pastor "will call a spade a spade" and will not condone bad behavior inside nor outside of the church. In addition to interviewing the congregants, I also interviewed visitors.

Some visitors in which I interviewed offered a different perspective as to why people, such as themselves, are not drawn to the church environment. When I asked about their experiences, the few disappointed visitors explained that they are nice, but their kindness comes with stipulations. According to one visitor: "Initially they seem warm and nice, but after a while, you

see some of their structure come out. Like they will say 'Ummm, you don't seem to wear this type of clothing that we all wear.' It doesn't seem like they pushing you to wear stuff at first, but then it will start coming up in casual conversation." Another visitor followed this comment by explaining how she did not feel comfortable because she had to dress up to attend the church. This visitor explained that she had to imitate them in order to truly be accepted by the congregation, which is why she wore a skirt. Another visitor I interviewed built on these statements by explaining that "I felt like they only said hello and shook my hand because they had to. I didn't feel like they meant it at all. They seem so used to doing it that it seems like they don't really care." These visitors did not respond well to the kind gestures of the church members.

Although the members of Washington Missionary Baptist Church were very friendly and welcoming, it was difficult for me to adapt to the ways of the group. Initially, I had an issue with my attire; women are expected to wear dresses or skirts on Sunday. The more I attended the Sunday services, the more I was asked to dress a certain way by a founding member of the congregation. The common attire for church goes as follows: women wear business attire, including skirt suits. Older women wear hats often. Younger women wear them sporadically. Men wear business pants suits. The men, especially the deacons, wear full suits that include ties. Younger men, those who are new to the church, mainly wear dress pants and shirt, but not a suit jacket; they may wear ties sometime. This is the appropriate church attire and the members are expected to adhere to this dress code. However, as I continued to attend the church, I was addressed about my attire less and less and became accepted for who I am by the congregation.

When visitors come to the church, they began to assess the setting and behave according to what they see in order to not feel embarrassed. The members of the church are also making their assessment of the visitor upon meeting them. When a visitor is aware of the Black Baptist

tradition, they naturally adapt to the environment, even if they may not have realized that they have taken this position. They are able to give off an expression that the members are impressed with. Such expressions include dressing according to the church's dress code, singing with the music, and not sitting in the back, especially if it is not the individual's first visit. If the visitor feels as though he/she is not able to give off the correct expression for this environment, they may feel uncomfortable. According to the data collected, this feeling could be due to the fact that the particular individual grew up in different Christian institutions or currently attend a church that conducts its services differently from Washington Missionary Baptist Church. Initially, I felt awkward in that environment because I felt like I could not relate to the people. I did not know the music and I was not quite familiar with "how to act in church" because, before this ethnography, I had not truly attended a Black Church in a few years. Therefore, I had to observe the atmosphere and how to act before I began to have confidence in the church. This "act" includes not speaking aggressively and being careful of my word choice and jokes. Additionally, as mentioned previously, I had to gain an understanding of the appropriate attire.

Another important factor that has influenced a visitor to dislike the church is their preconceived ideas about the Black Missionary Baptist churches. According to Goffman, when an individual tries to gain some information about a group of people, he/she looks at signs that allow him/her to apply their previous experience or stereotypes to the situation (1959). Two visitors explained that they have been to this type of environment before and they did not agree with its social or ritualistic aspects. They had their assumptions about Washington Missionary Baptist Church before even attending the service. This information suggests that visitors come with conceptions based on their previous experiences with other similar churches; therefore, their experience with this church was negative. Such feelings lead to a lack of receptivity to this environ-

ment. However, to counteract such preconceived notions about the Black Church, Washington show themselves as friendly as possible to the visitors, as mandated by the founding pastor and the current Pastor. A young female member explained that "We want to show ourselves friendly so that we will have a chance to show them something greater. So that they will be more receptive to receive something greater from us. Like ok, these people seem pretty cool, let's see what they have to say." Unfortunately, such friendly actions may not always come out as expected; they may not gain new friends.

5.2 Maintaining Community during the Church Services

When I asked some members of the church how they maintain community, the answers centered on external activities or greetings and conversations that were mentioned above. However, during my ethnography, I noticed that there are church activities that reinforce the closeness that the congregants have with one another. In addition to the fact that the church formally meets frequently during the week—Sunday school, Sunday service, Sunday evening Bible study, Bible study on Tuesday, and other business meetings—there are activities during the service that maintains community. For example, during the scripture readings in Sunday school, leader asks the congregants to read in concert out loud. At this time, everyone reads together in one rhythm. When I first went to Sunday school, I had my own rhythm of reading; I wasn't used to their rhythm yet. Therefore, I would mouth the words to avoid sounding awkward or different. I eventually became use to reading in unison with the members. Reading in unison also reinforces the concept of the church as being one body. The founding pastor established the rule of the church reading in together. According to a young female member, the founding pastor wanted the scripture to be read together because "everyone will be on the same page." Another male member explained that reading in unison provides a classroom atmosphere. This is important because it

makes sure that everyone is together and no one is left behind. Additionally, efforts are made to include everyone and ensure that they have an equal understanding, just as in a classroom setting. Additionally, the Pastor is always there to assist or correct the one leading the discussion. He also has closing remarks after the lesson is over just to elaborate or clarify the scriptures presented during Sunday school

The musical performance and the right hand of fellowship also reinforce community in the church. When the congregation sings together, it is a form of worshipping and praising God as one body of Christ. The type of voice or vocal skill does not matter; the focus is on praising God. One older female member explained that "it doesn't matter whether you have a good voice or not. The choir is a way for you to worship. It's not about whether you can sing or not. We support everybody." In addition to singing, the right hand of fellowship is important in bringing people together.

The right hand of fellowship is done during special times; such as once someone joins the church and after Baptism. When a person decides to become a member of the congregation, they walk up during the alter call, which follows the sermon. The person presiding over the alter call will ask if anyone wants to join this body, this is the time. The congregation is singing at this moment; one such song goes as follows: "Whosoever will, let him come, let him come, and drink from the waters of life." The person walks up and shakes the hand of the person who is presiding over the alter call. Also, the church clerk walks up and gives the person a card where they write down their contact information and check whether they want a church home, watch care, or need to be baptized. (A person requests watch care when they have another church home, but they have moved or is not close to that particular church and cannot attend every Sunday. Therefore, they ask that this church watch over them and provide spiritual guidance.) After the song is over,

the one leading the alter call announces that this person would like to join the church. He then asks "What can I hear?" A member than motions that the person be accepted; another member seconds the motion. Then the leader states that it has been motioned and second that this person is accepted as a member and upon the right-hand of fellowship, he/she will be an official member of the church. Then a song is performed as everyone stands and walks through the pews to the right side of the church. The congregants will then walk to the front and shake hands of the deacons, Pastor, co-pastor, the person joining the church, and some members of the Mother's Board, all of whom are standing in front of the pews, before the steps leading up to the pulpit. If the person has not been baptized, they would hold off the right-hand of fellowship until they are baptized.

A baptism ritual refers a person's rebirth in Jesus Christ. During a baptism, the co-pastor and a deacon stand on both sides of the person getting baptized. The audience watches on through a large window from within the sanctuary. The baptism pool is not outdoors; it is in a hallway behind the pulpit which is separated by a wall with a window. Before the person is dipped into the water, the co-pastor says "I baptize you in the name of the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit." Then the deacon and co-pastor dip the person into the water; the person is in there for about two seconds. After he/she has been baptized, the person changes clothes, walk to the front of church, and is given the right-hand of fellowship.

5.3 Communal Activities of the Church Members

This community is maintained by the many activities that the members are collectively involved in both internal and external to the church setting. One young female congregant explained that "We do different things. We go shopping, walk around Stone Mountain, go to Picadilly. I mean we do a lot of things together." The members participate in many activities that at-

tempt to involve the entire church. The first activity to which I was invited was the Biggest Loser Contest. In September, I was invited into the program by the First Lady, who was my team mate. We worked out together and she gave me some exercise tips. This was a way in which I became closer to the members. We would talk about our weight loss and the Saturday weigh-ins were a way in which we would talk outside of the church services. Fortunately, the First Lady and I won the contest! Despite being in competition with others, they were so supportive of our weight loss. This support was very influential in the weight loss; I have never been so successful in losing my weight, According to Yanek, Becker, Moy, Gittelsohn, and Koffman, "In African American communities, the church community remains the primary source of social support and community leadership, particularly among older African American women" (2001: 69). They further explain that "Churches are well-accepted sites for cancer screening, blood pressure control, weight loss programs, cholesterol education, smoking, smoking cessation, diabetes education, stroke prevention, physical activity, and nutrition education" (2001:69). This church is a great example of how the church provides such a strong support system; it was hard not to lose weight because everyone was encouraging each other. We recently started the second Biggest Loser competition that will end on April 17, 2010. They are also supportive in other ways, such as in education. They understand when a student has to skip a service for school. The students would explain that we have many assignments to complete for that week, and they would encourage that we get our work done and make the services as frequently as we can.

The members participate in many activities outside of the church setting. The activities are not just reserved for older members; they invite everyone. Almost every Sunday, many of the members will get together and have dinner following service, and then go to a Bible Study later, which is mainly led by the young people in the presence of the Pastor, who would provide clari-

fication when necessary. The Bible Study is conducted at each other homes, so there is a family atmosphere when they congregate. A middle-aged female congregant explained that "We would call each other and get together for other things. For example, for holidays, we are together…We feel like we don't just know each other for church, but as friends, as family outside of the church." I was able to spend Christmas with the church members. I explained to them that I was not around many people on Christmas and the Pastor and the First Lady invited me with them on the "train." The train involves the members riding to each other's homes, eating food, and seeing all of the gifts they received for Christmas. That morning the Pastor and his family picked me up from my home and we went to other houses. The Pastor would make the decision of whose house we would visit next. I soon linked up with the younger members and continued the train with them. We had great conversations in the car, as though we have been friends for years. I was also surprised at the gifts I received; I appreciate them very much.

The congregation also gets together for trips. A middle-aged female congregant explained that "We go to different functions. We might go to Six Flags or White Water." In addition to those places, they also participate in races together. One big activity is the cruises they go on regularly together, such as the cruise to Bahamas they went on last year. One of the older members organizes the cruises and another person collects money for the trip. I have been invited numerous times, but I am terrified of water. In order to counteract this, they recommended that I take a swimming class with one of the members. I did and I will again in March 2010. This was an opportunity for me to get close with some members away from church as we helped each other learn. (However, I am still not confident enough in my swimming to go on the cruise.)

5.4 Analysis/Conclusion

The members of Washington Missionary Baptist Church do not just go to church, but they form a family within themselves that forms a support system. Their friendly nature invites people into their congregation and into the social circle. There are many activities, both internal and external to the church setting, which reinforces community in the church. Some examples are as follows: musical performances, reading scripture together, going on trips, and the weight loss competition. The Pastor does not lead all of these activities; instead, he gives various members the opportunity to lead projects. Certain members are given control over the trips based on their knowledge of the activity and their familiarity with the company they are traveling with and/or the destination. Also, the weight-loss competition was managed by a math teacher who recorded the weight and BMI of members and a fitness expert from the congregation. Other activities are handled in a similar manner; the most informative person handles the event or outing. Although they are given the authority to make decisions with the activities, the person in charge must keep the Pastor and the other members informed of every step in the process.

Their close nature provides a strong support system for the members, like a family. The founding pastor formed the church into a close community. He promoted, and mandated, a close congregation that included activities within and outside the church. The current Pastor continues this legacy and ensures that the congregation remains close. The founding pastor has established a tradition of having activities that will continue to maintain a strong bond between the members. A middle-aged female congregant explained that “Church is not all about the preaching. Church is supposed to be there for you. I love that church.”

6 MUSIC

> [1]O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.
> [2]Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.
> (KJV, Psalm 96: 1-2)

Music is an important aspect of Washington Missionary Baptist Church. Spirituals can be heard before and during the Sunday service, Bible Study, and Sunday school. According to C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, in many black churches, music, particularly singing, is second only to the sermons as the reason members become attracted to the congregation. It is also the primary medium of spiritual transport of the congregation (2005: 346). In Washington Missionary Baptist Church, singing is important in the worshipping performance of the church. (However, according to my interviews, it is not credited with being a magnet of attraction.) This church uses traditional spirituals as its music choice. Contemporary gospel is not favored by the congregation.

According to one of the founding members, an older African-American woman, "We are not contemporary! Our founding pastor told us not to bring rock and roll [to the church]; rock and roll is secular. Let the secular world have rock and roll. We are not trying to influence the young people to come in because of the music we play." This old-fashioned, or traditional, music is meant to uplift people. The music is said to be in *common meter* which is a little soulful. Common meter is a "four-line stanza with eight syllables in lines one and three, and six syllables in lines two and four (8.6.8.6.)" (Lincoln and Mamiya 2005: 355). Some of the spirituals that are sung were taught by the founding pastor to the older members. An example of such spirituals can be seen in the hymn "Guide Me Over Great Jehovah." The title of this song provides the first line

of the song and it is eight syllables. Then the next line is very soulful and is sung by the audience. Some of the spirituals that are sung were taught by the founding pastor to the older members. Additionally, other founding members of the church brought spiritual to the congregation that they had heard previously.

The goal of the music in this church is to reach the *spirit* of the man and not move the emotions of the man. This is the core reason why the church does not have drums; this instrument focuses on the movement of the body, a *secular* action. One of the founding members explained that "People are not just moved by the beat of the drum." Another female, and one of the founding members, explained that the music "can be soothing and very comforting to a lot of people. The words of songs can reach the situation of a person that they may be experiencing. It is a message within itself." The spiritual foundation of the music is aimed to reach the *spirit* of the congregation.

6.1 Devotional

At the beginning of Sunday school, Sunday service, and Bible Study, the congregation is lead into a form of worship called devotional. Devotional includes singing approximately two spirituals and a prayer from a member of the congregation. The devotional begins with a song, followed by a prayer, and ends with another song. The leaders, usually two congregants, begins singing and then the other congregants join in and also may start clapping or stomping their feet. These songs may not include a piano accompaniment, but instead rhythm is kept by clapping or stomping. It is important to note here that the songs are not chosen by the leading pastor. Instead, the songs are chosen by the people who are leading devotional; the songs are not chosen based on the Pastor's sermon because no one is aware of his speech until he preaches.

Prayer, another aspect of devotional, involves thanking God for all He has done for the congregant giving the prayer and others in the congregation. There is no set structure or rubric to the prayer; it is told from the heart of the one giving the prayer. Additionally, there are no requirements necessary for prayer; it can be anyone in the congregation who would like to perform the prayer. The order of praying is as follows: the member walks to the front, not the pulpit, and shakes the hands of the members leading devotional. During the time, the congregation stands, an action that shows respect and happens often throughout service. The congregants stand until the praying member kneels and has his arms and hands in a praying position on the gray chair that is provided in the front of the church. The congregation usually hums to the first song of devotional during the beginning of the prayer. After the humming, and once the prayer has reached its high point (when the person who is praying is at his/her most emotional state), the congregation can be heard yelling out words such as “Amen,” “Yes,” Say it,” and “Thank You.” This section is usually led by members of the Deacon Board; the Mother’s Board leads devotional every third Sunday service. (The deacons are responsible for leading devotional during all of the other spiritual gatherings.)

The purpose of devotional is to get everyone ready for the gospel. One member, a middle-aged mother of two, described devotional as being an appetizer. “It gets you ready for the main dish.” Another young member, who is in her early twenties, explained that devotional “is the time where you sort of forget about the week or the problems that you had. This is the time to concentrate on what God has done for me this week or if it is a song, how does this song apply to my life?” Devotional also helps with the reception of the gospel. According to another young woman in her early twenties, “It stirs your spirit up and help you remember what God has done for you.”

The audience is very engaged in devotional. Some congregants respond in various ways during this part of service. Most members have been at Washington Missionary Baptist Church for years; therefore, they are very familiar with the songs and sing along enthusiastically. Not all of the congregants participate in this aspect of the service because they are either visitors and/or they may not know the song. Due to the fact that I am new to this church, I do not know the songs that are performed. I may know portions of the songs because of my Baptist background, but I do not know enough to sing along. The church has hymnals, for people who are not familiar with the spirituals. Unfortunately, not all of their songs are provided in the hymnal. Furthermore, although some of their songs are in the hymnal, they are not always referenced by the devotional leaders. Therefore, there are times when others are singing and I feel left out because I am not a part of one of the most important aspects of the church. However, I spoke to a young member of the congregation about my concerns and she replied, “That’s bad and we need to do something about that.” I appreciated this concern. Some members have also helped me get words to some of the songs.

6.2 Missionary Offering

In addition to devotional, the congregation also sings during the missionary offering, which is the money collected by the church to help its members and people in the local community. The song that is most often performed here is entitled “You Can’t Beat God’s Giving.” The lyrics to the song are as follows:

Chorus:
You can't beat God's giving, no matter how you try.
And just as sure as you are living
and the Lord is in heaven on high.
The more you give, the more He give to you,
but keep on giving because it's really true
that you can't beat God's giving, no matter how you try.
Verse 1:

Should we receive and never give,
the Savior died that we might live.
His life on Calvary, He gladly gave,
our sinful souls to save.
Chorus
Verse 2:
He gives me health, He keeps me strong,
He guides me when I would go wrong,
He gives me everything that I need,
my ever hunger feeds.
Chorus
Verse 3:
He gave me peace, He made me whole,
and when in sin He saved my soul.
And what I gave would never be compared
with the blessing that I share[1]

The particular song is sung by the congregation during the Sunday song as the collection plate is passed around by the deacons to the congregation. A pianist plays as everyone sings, including the deacons as they walk down the aisles. The song is appropriate because it explains how God will bountifully bless someone if he/she gives generously. ("Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven…" [Mark 10:21].) The song also explains how God has done so much for his people that no matter how much we give, we can never beat His giving.

6.3 Choir Performance

Following this missionary offering, a member of the leadership, such as a reverend or co-pastor, reads the scripture, announcements are made, and the reverend or co-pastor then introduces a choir to sing a selection or two. Also during the second collection, which is dedicated to raising money for the building, a choir may perform another selection. There are three choirs—

[1] Music Lyrics. www.music-lyrics-gospel.com/gospel_music_lyrics/you_cant_beat_gods_giving_5205.asp

Choir # 1, Choir # 2, and Choir #3—that include various members of the church that are interested in singing. They are chosen to participate in a particular choir based on their availability and relationships. For example, a husband and wife will be in the same choir. Additionally, there is the Club of Faith choir, which rarely meets but is formed from the members of the club. There is also a children's choir that consists of the children of the church. Lastly, there is the men's choir that includes the men of the church. The choirs rotate each Sunday. However, more than one choir may perform on a specific Sunday; for instance, Choir #1 sing one selection and Choir # 3 perform one selection. It is important to note here that there are no auditions necessary to join any of the choirs. If someone is interested and has the time to dedicate to the rehearsals, which occur mainly on Fridays and Saturdays, then they can join..

During the musical performances, the audience acts in a variety of ways. Most times, some congregants will stand, clap, and sing along, Even though others may not stand, there are a few who will sit down and sing. If the audience is familiar with the song, they will react with interest and enthusiasm. Additionally, if the singer becomes emotional during his/her performance, the audience then grows excited as the selection progresses and proceeds with clapping, standing and singing along. Another reason that the audience may act in excitement is if the lead singer does not have a good voice but is moved by the spirit and sings the entire song, from the lowest to the highest of notes. Sometimes members, mostly women, of the congregation catch the *Holy Ghost*. A middle-aged woman explained that *Holy Ghost* "is a feeling that comes over you. You get it from God. It is a spirit of God." Some people cry, jerk their bodies, have a series of yells—such as "Thank you," which is in reference to God—and sometimes all three are done at the same time. However, such reaction does not happen with every selection that is performed. If the audience is not moved by the performance, it is noticeable. They may not sing along, clap, or

have any other bodily expressions that show interest in what they are seeing and hearing. This does not happen often.

The musical performance by the choir is important to have before the pastor's message because it prepares the people with what is to come. An older woman, over the age of forty, explained that "It helps the people and it helps the minister when he gets up and preaches. If [the pastor] got a good choir to sing a good uplifting song, a good spiritual song, it makes the job easier for the minister to get up to bring his message 'cause people are ready." This moment has been described as a pep rally, where people get excited and pumped for the message. I have noticed such a feeling. The congregation would get enthusiastic during the song and begins their worship through the music. Therefore, when the Pastor stands to begin his message, the people are excited, just as a pep rally gets student pumped about the game. The older woman further explained that "You get them started on a high note so they ready for something else better and then he gets up and brings the message." When I hear the music and feel the vibe of the other congregants, I become excited about the message as well. As mentioned previously, the songs are spiritual and have their foundation in the Bible, or Word of God. The words of the songs invite me into the spiritual realm of the church; in other words, I become moved by the message in the songs and am prepared to receive the gospel.

During the Sunday sermons, the time in which *the gospel is preached*, the Pastor oftentimes asks for a musical performance. To be more specific, he may ask for a particular song to be sung by the entire congregation or ask a particular congregant to perform. The Pastor would introduce his message to the congregation and then ask for someone to perform. For example, he has often asks an older gentleman, over the age of forty, to lead the congregation in a song. This

gentleman usually sings "Guide Me over Great Jehovah." He leads and the congregation sings as follows:

> **Leader:** "Guide Me over Great Jehovah" (This can be described as speaking versus singing)
> **Congregation:** "Guuuiiiiiiiddddeeee Mmmmmeeeee Oooovvverrrrrrr Grrrrreeeeaaaaaat Jehhhhhhoooooovaaaaaah." (This is an exaggerated version of the leader's words, but it is sung.)

Additionally, if there are visitors who enjoy singing, the Pastor, if he is aware before service, will ask them to sing either that particular Sunday or another day. At the end of service, the Pastor or other reverends would say a prayer and the entire church body will in the prayer by sing Amen in concert.

Musical performances are also present during special programs at Washington Missionary Baptist Church. At communion, a celebration done in the remembrance of Christ, a musical selection is performed before and after the congregants drinks the blood and eats the body of Christ. Another example of a special function including music is the Christening of a newly born baby. A Christening is a dedication of the baby to God. The Pastor dips his hand in water and rubs the baby's head three times (in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit). Then he begins to sing a song and the congregation joins him.

6.4 Music and the Church Community

The music of Washington Missionary Baptist Church not only prepares the audience for the message, it also affirms community in the church. According to Lincoln and Mamiya (1990), collective singing is a method of temporarily reducing social alienation and forming a momentary sense of community. The singing is not simply an effort to create a community, but to reaffirm a bond that has suffered a separation during slavery. This is one of the main reasons that African

Americans find it difficult to meaningfully participate in white churches during the slave era; they were unable to express themselves or celebrate their bond through congregational singing.

Washington Baptist Church's musical performances bring people together. There are numerous visitors that attend the church who may not be familiar with its customs. However, they are familiar with the traditional songs or are able to locate them in the hymnal. This allows them to sing along and not be alienated by just listening. As mentioned previously, when I first attended the church, and sometimes now, I felt like an outsider because I was not familiar with any of the songs and would not sing along with the hymnal. However, once I learned some of the songs, and as some of the congregants encouraged me to sing, I began to sing and feel a part of the community.

This sense of community is definitely reinforced in the choirs, which includes most of the church's members. By getting together and worshipping the Lord, the people, both in the choir and in the audience, they form a fellowship because everyone is singing for one goal, which is to glorify the Lord. Also, as opposed to the sermon and other individual performances, the communal singing allows the audience to fully engage in the services of the church. Due to the fact that communal singing occurs frequently throughout Sunday service, Bible study, and Sunday school, it takes the focus off of solely the Pastor, or any quest speakers, and invites the congregation into the activities, reinforcing community in the church.

6.5 Analysis/Conclusion

The traditional music of Washington Missionary Baptist Church uplifts its congregation and reaches the spirit of its members. It also prepares the congregation for the gospel that is preached by the Pastor. The spirituals that are performed have their foundation the Bible. Music is performed often, during devotion, offering, the sermon, special events, and other occasions.

Usually the performances involve the entire church singing a particular song together; such action reaffirms community in the church. The music has the ability to unite people from different churches and backgrounds in their musical worship of God. As described in this chapter, musical performances are integral in the worship and sustainability of community at Washington Missionary Baptist Church.

While using the shared leadership model, the Pastor gives another group the authority and decision-making powers over the musical selections. Traditionally, music is heard throughout the church services, such as during devotional, important events, offerings. Although the Pastor may request a song to be sang and ask someone to sing during the service, he gives the deacons and the choirs control over the songs that is performed during the service. The deacons or members of the Mothers' Board who lead devotional are given the authority to choose the songs that are performed during that time. Additionally, the choirs, the director or members, have the power to choose the songs they wish to perform. The pianist also has an important role in choosing the songs and teaching them to the choirs. Shared leadership is effective in that it takes advantage of people's talents, such as the pianist who has the skills to teach the choir and play along with the song. She has the power to decide if the songs are performable or should be discarded. The decentralization of power gives people with musical skills the authority over this aspect of the service.

7 BUSINESS

> [4]For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:
> [5]So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.
> [6]Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith… (KJV, Romans 12: 4-18).

The Washington Missionary Baptist Church's offices and the economic relations are structured as a business. Professionally, it is characterized as a non-profit organization and is listed as such by the Secretary of State. In order to be considered as a non-profit organization by the government, certain positions are necessary. Additionally, in order for the church to sustain itself, the business affairs must be handled properly. The business of the church is handled during the church conference, which is conducted every quarter. I was able to be a part of the two conferences, one in October of 2009 and the other in January of 2010.

Based on the bylaws of Washington Missionary Baptist Church, the church conference "shall be held during each month of the year, or every quarter of the year, to hear the reports of the Officers, the Boards, the Church Organizations for the past calendar month or year; to elect Officers, Boards, and Committees; to adopt a budget; and to transact such other business as may come before the meeting." The conference includes the pastors (main and assistant), ministers, church clerk, treasurer, and representatives of the Boards, Committees or other church group. During the conference, the activities of the church and the financial business are discussed. They are open to the church members and anyone else who would like to observe how the church functions. When I attended the conferences, the Pastor thanked me for coming, acknowledging my presence. This was a unique experience for me because I have never experienced firsthand the business process of a church. One of the middle-aged men stated that "I have never seen a

church ran like this before. I have been to conferences and the people would start fighting and everything. But this is more structured, more orderly." I am not familiar with church conferences either; however, I did not expect the church to be as organized as it was as far as its business. It is very organized and informative.

The conference begins with devotional, which is the time of musical worship and prayer, followed by a scripture read by the main pastor. During the conference, the Pastor is known as Brother Moderator and everyone, when presenting on their auxiliary or other church business, refers to him as such. If the presenter does not address, or say, "Brother Moderator," he will mandate that they stop there speech and address him. After being addressed, the Pastor will respond by saying "Brother" or "Sister" then the last name of the person. For example:

Member: Brother Moderator

Pastor: Sister Johnson

Member: I would like……..

Following the prayer, Brother Moderator asks the church clerk, a female who has been in the church for about twenty years, to read the minutes of the last quarterly to the members. According to the bylaws, which is filed with the Office of the Secretary of State and is in the church library, the church clerk is responsible for keeping minutes and providing the agendas for any of the congregational and business meetings of the church. The clerk maintains a record of church membership and the baptisms and provides an annual report.

After the clerk reads the minutes to the congregation, Brother Moderator asks the church "You've all heard the reading of our last conference meeting, what can I hear?" Then someone responds: "Brother Moderator, [Pastor--Sister/Brother Last Name] I motion that we accept……" After the first person stands, another person stands and says the following: "Brother Moderator,

[Pastor—Sister/Brother Last Name], I second that motion. Brother Moderator then says that the motion has been second and the conference minutes will be adopted. (Anyone can motion; it is not something that is assigned to a particular person.) He then asks if there are any questions or corrections that need to be made. Then if there are none, Brother Moderator asks if all is in favor of the minutes being adopted, respond by saying the word "I" (the members who agree says "I" at this time); then he explains that the "opposers" have the same sign. If there are no "opposers," the conference minutes will be adopted as read.

Following the clerk's report, the financial report is read by one of the deacons, the financial clerk. The financial clerk provides information on the church's bank accounts; he states how much money is the accounts, the number of deposits, the number of withdrawals, monthly reports, and other manipulations to the accounts. After the reading of the financial report, as well as other subsequent reports, Brother Moderator says that everyone has heard the reading of the particular report that was presented, and asks "What can I hear?" A member motions to approve and adopt report, followed by a second motion from another member. As done with the clerk, Brother Moderator asks if there were any questions are corrections. During the October conference, the church clerk addressed an issue she had with the financial report; the financial clerk gave a balance since the last conference that did not match up with that of the church clerk. The financial clerk misspoke and apologized; he then gave the correct amount. This shows the strict nature in which the church handles its business practices. If the numbers did not match up, there would have been further discussion to explain the reason.

After everyone has accepted and adopted the financial report, the conference continues according to the agenda the church clerk and Brother Moderator discussed. After the report, financial business is discussed, such as the items that need to be purchased, services that needs to

be done, and anyone who needs to be paid or reimbursed. To be reimbursed, receipts are necessary. Additionally, if someone needs to get paid for a service, reasoning is provided and the amount is discussed by the members. At the January conference, Brother Moderator and the deacons recommended that one of the members get paid one hundred dollars for being there the entire time the contractors came to build a covering in front of the church. The audience was a little skeptical until more reasoning was provided by Brother Moderator. One member stood up and asked why he should receive that amount. He explained that the male member opened the church, maintained correspondence, and assisted the contractors. The expenditure was then approved.

It is important to note here that the members are reimbursed or paid for services, which is very rare, such as buying a printer or buy items for the annual Christmas play. No one, including the Pastor, gets paid to be a part of the church. Everyone who participates in the activities of the church is doing it voluntarily. Even though pastors are generally paid for their services, the Pastor of this church does not get paid for his guidance of the church; the founding pastor also did not get paid until he got much older and could not work, and, therefore, needed a small amount from the church. One older female congregant explained that "The leaders are not looking to get money or anything. They are here to help me and others and anyone that is in need." Brother Moderator wants to make sure that the majority knows and agrees with how money is spent. Financial business is further discussed later in the conference when the different organizations of the church present their financial report. Before that time, the Deacon Board presents their report.

The Deacon Board meets regularly, based on the schedule set in place by the entire Board. Before the conference, they prepare a report of concerns or topics that they feel are im-

portant to address with the conference. Their report includes any aspect of the church that needs to be discussed. For example, in the Deacon Board report, that is presented by one deacon, at the October and January conferences, they talked about updating the sign in front of the church, repairs that are necessary, pastor/co-pastor anniversary/recognition, fundraisers for church repairs and other church necessities, as well as in other recommendations. Each recommendation or concern is discussed among the members attending the meeting. Also, the Brother Moderator makes sure that the recommendation is motioned and second by two members before adopting the recommendation.

In addition to discussing the election of deacons, other offices are elected and changed; the committees are formed or changed as well. I was able to witness the elections during the January conference. The Deacon Board recommended that a member to be in charge of the clean-up committee and the members approved. This led to a need to discuss other offices and reelections and removals, which is based on the length of time someone has served and their schedule outside of church. Two important recommendations that were brought up by the deacons were the election of two more members to the Board of Directors and The Board of Trustees. The Office of the Secretary of State only recognizes these two boards, not any other auxiliary, when considering the church as a corporate system. The Board of Directors needed two more members and the Board of Trustees needed three. (Brother Moderator stated that a pastor should not be on the Board of Trustees.)

During the voting process, Brother Moderator asks for suggestions for the offices, which are discussed by everyone. Brother Moderator explains that they should be younger members so that when the older members are gone, they will continue the legacy and do not have to continue to reelect people. Also, the Pastor explained that there should be one man and one woman nomi-

nated for the Board of Directors and at least one female for the Board of Trustees. If there is a nominee that may be a problem, Brother Moderator would explain. For example, for one position, someone recommended that a young person to be on the Usher Board, a female group, and he said that she is in school and should not be considered. After the nominations, he asked the members to vote one time on the individuals that were nominated. The ones with the most votes are the ones who will take the positions. The election, renewal, and removal of persons from various positions in the church occurred that day, including the superintendent of the Sunday school auxiliary, the addition of people to the Usher Board, and the changes in the new members committee. The voting process is very structured and controlled by Brother Moderator, who ensures that everyone gets a fair chance to vote and be a part of the church business.

Following voting and the other matters of the church, the financial business is brought up again. At this time, each organization reports on the amount of money they received via collections, fundraisers, or other transactions. They must also report on the expenditures that they have had since the previous quarter. The reports are clear and detailed. During this time, if there is a question about the management of funds, any member has the ability to express concern. For example, during the January conference, a representative of the Evangelism Committee provided a report of the activities and its costs. However, they were taking money from the wrong fund. A member of the Banking Committee—a group of two members that receive the money collected from the church and deposit them into the bank—explained that the Evangelism Committee should not have taken money from that fund. Also, Brother Moderator, as well as some other members, expressed their dislike of how the committee was using the wrong money and explained that they need to raise money for their own committee. Furthermore, all of the money from the church is collected during the conference and three randomly selected members sit at

the table with the church clerk, financial clerk, and Brother Moderator and count the money that is given to them. The Banking Committee then collects the money and deposits it following the conference. They also collect money during the quarter so as not to have too much money to deposit at one time after the conference.

The monies that are collected during the church services are discussed during this time as well. This includes money that is collected during Bible study, Sunday school, and the Sunday service. The offerings taking during Bible study, Sunday school, and the second offering of Sunday service goes to the church and its upkeep, which includes bills, repairs, or any purchases that are necessary for the carrying out of the services. Money collected during the first offering of the Sunday service, the missionary offering, is used to help those in the church and community. The money collected during this time is strictly for missionary work and no other committee or particular members of the church take money from this fund for any reason. The Pastor as well as the deacons and those responsible for the offering discuss the ways in which the money can help someone; the ideas are then brought to the members.

During the January conference, the Deacons recommended that a portion of the missionary offering be used to help the college student members. Brother Moderator elaborated on this recommendation and explained how the students need help with books and food. The recommendation was approved by the congregation. Any money that is need for fun activities done outside of the church is not taking from the offerings or church fundraisers; the members who would like to participate in those activities, such as tickets to the circus or going on the cruise, must pay for them through their personal finances. However, there is someone that is chosen by the church who will be responsible for collecting the money for the event. For example, for their

cruise in July 2010, the members chose one female member to keep record of people's money in order to make sure that everyone has paid to go on the trip.

7.1 Auxiliaries, Boards, and Organizations of the Church

One organization that was mentioned previously is the Evangelism Committee. The members are nominated and elected at the church conference. The purpose of this group is "to assist the Pastor in providing the members of the Congregation with information concerning the national and international missions of the Church and to bring motives and insight of Christian faith to bear upon the critical social, economic, and political problems of our time" (Bylaws of Washington Missionary Baptist Church). The organization is also responsible for informing the church of agencies within the community and about the concerns of social welfare in the community. It is also responsible for finding ways to increase the membership of the church. Furthermore, the Evangelism Committee arranges "programs that will encourage increased support of benevolent causes and in any way promote the true mission of the Church" (Bylaws of Washington Missionary Baptist Church). I have witnessed some programs conducted by the Evangelism Committee. They conducted a food drive during Thanksgiving and gave bags of non-perishable food to families that were in need. Additionally, they had a toy drive during Christmas for low-income families in the community.

Another important organization of the church is the Mothers' Board, which is relatively new. This organization allows female members to contribute their services/talents to the "Christian Fellowship and the Mission Program of the Church." If there are candidate requests to be on the Board before the conference, they can be an unofficial member if ¾ of the existing members of the Board approves. Then during the conference, the candidates will be presented to the church for their approval. According to a middle-aged female member, "the core of the Mothers'

Board is around the mid-fifties. You don't have to have children to be on the Board. To be a mother is an obligation and responsibility. This is by scripture that the elder women would teach the younger women how to raise their children, how to love their husbands, how to keep their home. That's ordained in the Bible." The scripture in which the member is referring to is as follows:

> [3]Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. [4]Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, [5]to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God (KJV, Titus 2 3-5).

This scripture explains what the member expressed; the older women are to help or train the woman on how to be a wife, a mother, and a woman of God. However, based on my experience, this can prevent individuality among the women. For example, I could not dress in my style or act a certain way—the same goes for the younger women of the church—because it may conflict with what the Mothers' Board feel is best for women of God.

There are other auxiliary organizations in the church. The media/library committee centers on maintaining the church library; this includes inputting and checking out items for members or visitors. This committee consists of two female members. The clean-up committee has many subgroups (Clean-up Committee #1, Clean-up Committee #2, and Clean-up Committee #3) and include many members of the congregation. The purpose of this group is to make sure the church and its grounds are clean for the services. There is also the hospitality committee, which is divided in subgroups and is a female group. This group focuses on kitchen duties. They are responsible for providing refreshments to the members and visitors and kitchen tasks. The Pastor's Aid and Usher Board are also female jobs. The Pastor's Aid provides water during service or any other requests made by the Pastor or others in the pulpit. Lastly, the Usher Board

stands at the doors of the church and is responsible for the sitting of visitors, passing out programs, and providing any items to the congregants during service.

7.2 Analysis/Conclusion

Washington Missionary Baptist Church functions as a non-profit business. It has offices and different organizations that are necessary in the church operation. Most of the church business is handled during the quarterly conference, which is open to the public. Initially, I believed that the Pastor had complete and total control of the church organization. However, after conducting my ethnography and observing the quarterly conference, I discovered that the Pastor not only takes on the characteristics of a charismatic leader, he also encompasses qualities from the other types of authorities. As a leader of a church and a nonprofit organization, the Pastor must have charisma in order to appeal to a group of followers. He must, as Weber states, have a following that believes in his mission and feels he was sent to leave. The membership all rally behind his mission for the church, which is to serve the Lord and to bring others to His glory. If the group did not recognize this mission, the structure will collapse.

In order to maintain a successful nonprofit, the Pastor of Washington Missionary Baptist Church has to exhibit qualities of a rational authority as well. In order to be declared a nonprofit organization by the Secretary of State, the church must adhere to the requirements and be familiar with the laws of the State. For example, there must be a functional Board of Directors and Board of Trustees; the Secretary of State will only recognize these two Boards. The Pastor is aware of such laws and ensures that the Boards are acting accordingly. This is the duty of a chief executive in a nonprofit organization.

The chief executive has more experience and expertise in maintaining an organization; these skills are critical in forming groups of people who have the qualifications and willingness

to work together in a nonprofit organization. Additionally, although the Boards contain only a few members, the entire church is active in various duties. This is important because a successful nonprofit organization chare leadership tasks. There is also a decentralization of decision-making authority. There are subgroups, such as the Boards and various auxiliaries, within the communal authority; the Pastor, or chief executive, allows certain groups to make decisions for the church, but they must inform the Pastor and the membership. Previously, I was under the impression that the church was maintained by a vertically managed team, a hierarchal system; however, the power and decision-making authority is decentralized to other members who have the expertise to make the decisions on behalf of that individual auxiliary or the church. The teams also have the power to review the Pastor if necessary. If the Pastor is not performing accordingly, the members of the leadership have the power to discuss any problems with him and other congregants, particularly one-on-one or at the quarterly conference.

The Pastor also exhibit qualities of traditional authority. Due to the fact that the Pastor was trained by the founding pastor, he has some characteristics of the previous leader. Additionally, he maintains the original traditions of the church. For example, the Pastor still encourages the Christmas "Train." Also, the greetings (i.e. handshakes) are a tradition of the church that the Pastor encourages. Additionally, traditional authority is the belief in the sacredness of these traditions and that the authority is in power because of the traditions. The Pastor is legitimized by his following also because they know that he has been properly and traditionally trained according to the ways of the church by the founding Pastor.

Due to the fact that the Pastor exhibits characteristics of each form of authority, Weber's theory is faulty because it does not apply to all forms of leadership, particularly that of a nonprofit organization. This study adds to the literature critiquing Weber's theory on three pure legi-

timate authorities. Satow (1975) argues that Weber discussed four types of social action, but only three forms of authority. She argues that there is a fourth authority, value-rational, which is oriented toward the attainment of an ultimate goal. Other critics, as discussed by Toren (1976), have argued that Weber did not distinguish between hierarchal and professional authority; both of which are incompatible with each other. My research adds to these criticisms as it dispels the stereotypes of African American religious preacher by proving that the Pastor encompasses qualities from each authority, which is necessary in order to maintain a nonprofit organization.

8 CONCLUSION

This study examined the how the Pastor of Washington Missionary Baptist Church forms his congregation into a socioeconomic community. It answered the following question: How does the Pastor's leadership performance influence (a) the social interaction of his congregation, (b) the mobilization of congregants into members of a social group, and the development of his congregation into an economic system? I conducted ethnographic research from July 2009 to January 2010. During this time, I used the following methods for this research: participant observation, non-obtrusive observation, interviews, and content analysis.

Before I began my research, I believed that pastors of African American churches had complete control over every aspect of the congregation. Additionally, I thought that they were charismatic leaders that made their followers believe in their prophetic abilities. However, my research proved that the Pastor of Washington Missionary Baptist Church does not have complete control over the business of the church; he disperses his decision-making authority to other members who have skills to manage particular areas of the church business. Additionally, he has qualities that can be taking from all three pure forms of authority, not just charismatic. The Pastor has the charisma that encourages followers to support his mission. As a chief executive of the nonprofit organization, he must have qualities of the rational authority as well because he must follow the rules as established by the Secretary of State. Lastly, the Pastor has characteristics of a traditional authority because he was trained of the traditions of that church and still follows them.

This case study provides an in-depth understanding of the leadership in a Black Church. It adds to previous literature on leadership by dispelling the myths of the dictatorial leadership of the pastor and it offers a new model of authority, a communal leadership. Joseph R. Washington,

Jr. (1964) argues that the Black Baptist preachers dominate the church. The dictatorial authority of the preacher is supported by associate and assistant ministers. Washington explains that this empire-building system is filled with jealousy and it does not have room for anyone who is not under the spell of the cult. The preachers are surrounded by ministers who are given responsibilities when they are not at other churches preaching to gain their own congregation. These ministers are not usually in training; they are considered lesser men who have not been fortunate enough to gain a following (Washington 1964). My case study, on the other hand, provides another depiction of the Baptist church. Washington's interpretation pictures the church as a group of leaders with more of a business relationship instead of a friendly association. The Pastor of Washington Missionary Baptist Church does not maintain a dictatorial leadership over the congregation. Instead, he decentralizes power among other members based on their office and skills. Additionally, the co-pastor and other ministers of the church have responsibilities in the church that they genuinely handle. Although there are some who are in training, as opposed to Washington's model, to become a preacher, they are active in the church family and have legitimate interest in the growth of the church. Furthermore, neither the congregation nor the Pastor considers the ministers as being lesser men. Everyone is respected for their role in the structure of the church.

There are different members of the church who maintain the structure. As seen in my research, Lincoln and Mamiya explain in their study that the daily functioning and internal structure of the church is maintained by members other than the pastor. However, they argue these members who hold offices, such as the secretary, are paid salaries or given love offerings, such as special collections. Also, they may be given gifts for their services. My case study proved otherwise as the members who are proactive in the church do so voluntarily. They may receive spe-

cial gifts during Christmas, but the members are dedicated to the church and its mission and offer any necessary assistance to the church that is necessary, Lincoln and Mamiya also emphasize the paid custodian of the church (1990: 144-146). The members of Washington Missionary Baptist Church work as a community to maintain the physical structure of the church. They have clean-up committees that are composed of various members that clean the church.

The ethnography has affected my views of organized religion and the Baptist church. Before this study, I was skeptical of churches. I did not think they were really as supportive as they appeared to be of one another. Additionally, I assumed that some churches focused on getting money for personal. However, this church showed otherwise. My experience changed my perspective. I have come to learn that churches are true supportive units and can provide that family structure that people may need. For example, it was difficult for me to lose weight; however, after getting so much support from the members, I have lost over forty pounds. We were working out and losing weight together, including the Pastor. Whenever I am in need of any form of assistance, I am able to get help from the church members. Additionally, I have joined the church recently; this is the first time I have ever been an official member of a church. I have become more trusting of religious institutions, as the Pastor has proven that a true community can exist in a church.

After my experience with this small church, I would like to build on this research by focusing on larger churches, also known as mega-churches. I want to gain an understanding of the community of a mega-church and the leadership performances as well. It would be interesting to compare and contrast the leadership performances of the small and large congregations. Additionally, I would like to build on my research by focusing on gender roles and leadership perfor-

mance. Men are often seen as the leaders of the church; however, research should be done on female pastors as well as the roles of women in other aspects of leadership.

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10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix A

Interview with Pastor

Tell me about your church.

What is your goal for the church?

How did you become the pastor?

What type of music is played in the church?

Do you think it is important to have music in the church? Why?

What other forms of entertainment go on at the church, such as plays, etc.?

How do you develop your sermons?

Tell me about your preaching style, such as call-and-response. Do you predominately use Ebonics or Standard English?

The deacons lead the worship at the beginning of the service, correct? From your perspective, how does the congregation respond during this time? For example, do they sing along?

Why is this part of the service important?

The deacons also greet people before the service, while you are in the back. Do you feel that the congregation is close? Why? Is closeness important to you?

How does the church respond to visitors?

As part of its rituals, each service, even during events, the leaders pass out collection plates twice during the service. What is the purpose of the two separate collections?

Some of the money goes to community outreach (families in need of help and community service). How active is the church in the community?

Has the church been involved in any community actions such as voting or protests?

Do you think that Black churches play a major role in the actions of the Black community? If so, how?

10.2 Appendix B

Interview with Congregant:

Tell me about your church.

Why did you use this church to attend?

Do you have any responsibilities in the church?

What type of music is played in the church?

Do you think it is important to have music in the church? Why?

What other forms of entertainment go on at the church, such as plays, etc.?

Tell me about the preacher. What aspects of his sermon's deliverance appeal to you?

In what ways does he engages the audience?

The deacons lead the worship at the beginning of the service, correct? How do you respond during this time? For example, do you sing along?

Why is this part of the service important?

The deacons also greet people before the service, while the pastor and co-pastor are in the back.

Do you feel that the congregation is close? Why? Is it important to you?

How does the congregation respond to visitors?

Some of the money goes to community outreach (families in need of help and community service). How active is the church in the community?

Has the church been involved in any community actions such as voting or protests?

Do you think that Black churches play a major role in the actions of the Black community? If so, how?

10.3 Appendix C

Interview with Deacon:

Tell me about your church.

Why did you use this church to attend?

How did you become a deacon?

What type of music is played in the church?

Do you think it is important to have music in the church? Why?

What other forms of entertainment go on at the church, such as plays, etc.?

Tell me about the preacher. What aspects of his sermon's deliverance appeal to you?

In what ways does he engages the audience?

The deacons lead the worship at the beginning of the service, correct? From your perspective, how does the congregation respond during this time? For example, do they sing along?

Why is this part of the service important?

The deacons also greet people before the service, while the pastor and co-pastor are in the back. Do you feel that the congregation is close? Why? Is closeness important to you?

How does the church respond to visitors?

Some of the money goes to community outreach (families in need of help and community service). How active is the church in the community?

Has the church been involved in any community actions such as voting or protests?

Do you think that Black churches play a major role in the actions of the Black community? If so, how?

10.4 Appendix D

Consent Form:

Georgia State University
Department of Anthropology
Informed Consent

Title: Practices, Rituals, and Community in an African American Church

Principal Investigator: Kathryn A. Kozaitis, Ph.D

Student Investigator: Kaniqua L. Robinson

I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to understand the practices, rituals, and ceremonies of the Black Church from a cultural perspective. You are invited to participate because you are a member of this congregation. A total of 40 participants will be recruited for this study. Participation will require about 30 minutes to an hour of your time for an interview.

II. Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in a 30 minute to an hour interview. The interviews will focus on your experiences with the church. The interviews will be carried out after church, on its property, or on the phone.

III. Risks:

There are no risks to taking part in this project. Strict confidentiality will be maintained. Your name will not appear on any document, as I will use only a numerical code for identification.

IV. Benefits:

The most important benefit is that through this analysis we all may learn about the practices of the African American Church from an anthropological perspective, and understand more deeply the importance of the Church in the Black community.

V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is not required. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time.

VI. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. We will use a number rather than your name on study records. Only Ms. Robinson will have access to the information you provide. It will be stored in a locked storage case in her home. The information, including audiotapes, will be only available to Ms. Robinson. Code information used to identify the participants will be stored on a password-protected hard drive. Only Ms. Robinson will have access to the records. Telephone interviews will be conducted in a private room; only the student investigator and interviewee will be involved in the interview. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The results will be summarized and reported in group form. You will not be identified personally.

VII. Contact Persons:

Contact Dr. Kathryn A. Kozaitis, Chair of the Department of Anthropology, at kozaitis@gsu.edu, or by phone at 404.413.5151, and Ms. Kaniqua Robinson at krobinson23@student.gsu.edu, or by telephone at 404.384.7247 if you have questions about this study. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner in the Office of Research Integrity at 404.413.3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu.

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VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research and be audio recorded, please sign below.

_____ _____

Participant Date

_____ _____

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent Date