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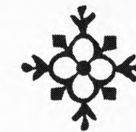
The Black Churches of Brooklyn



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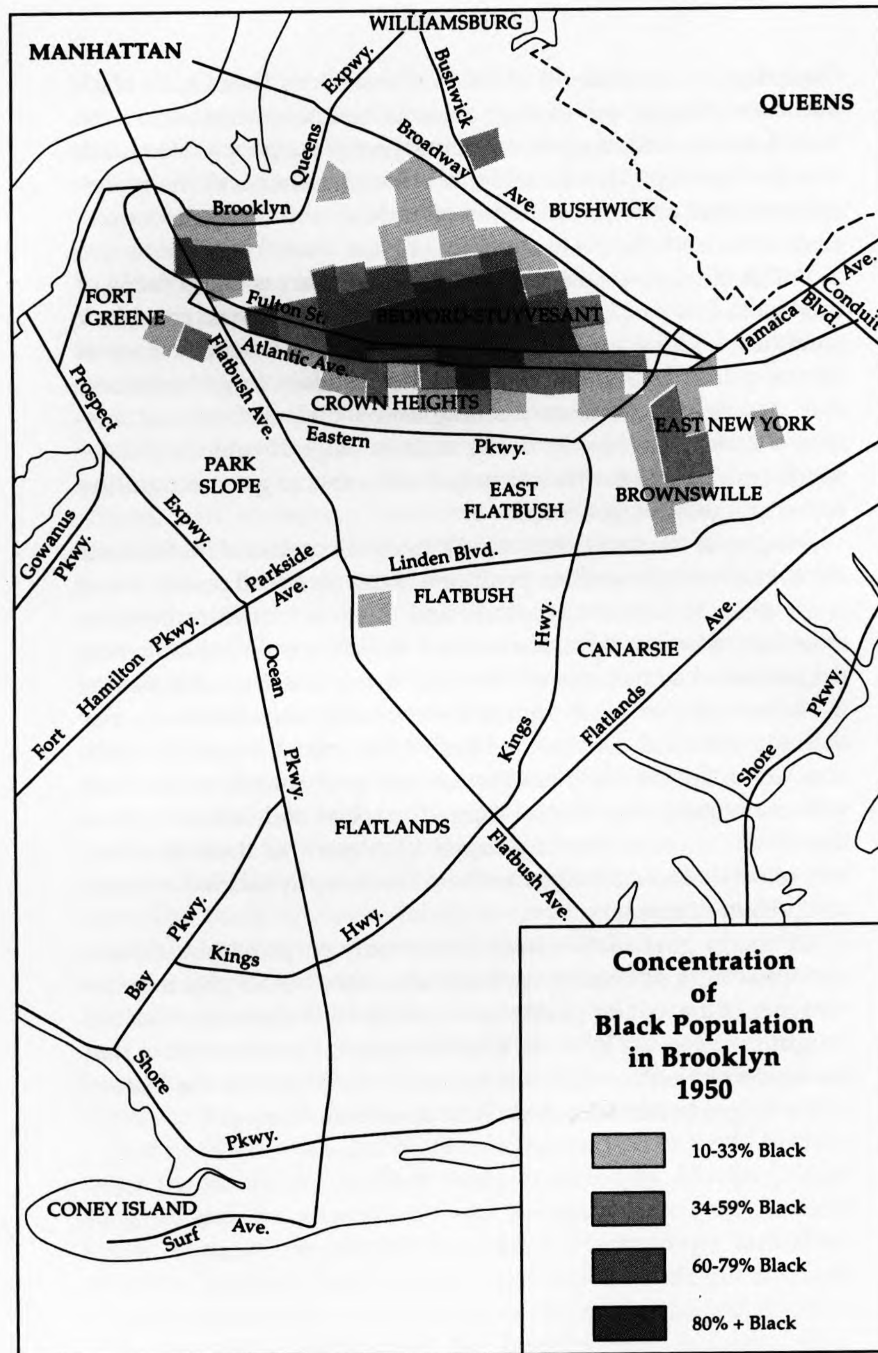
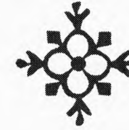
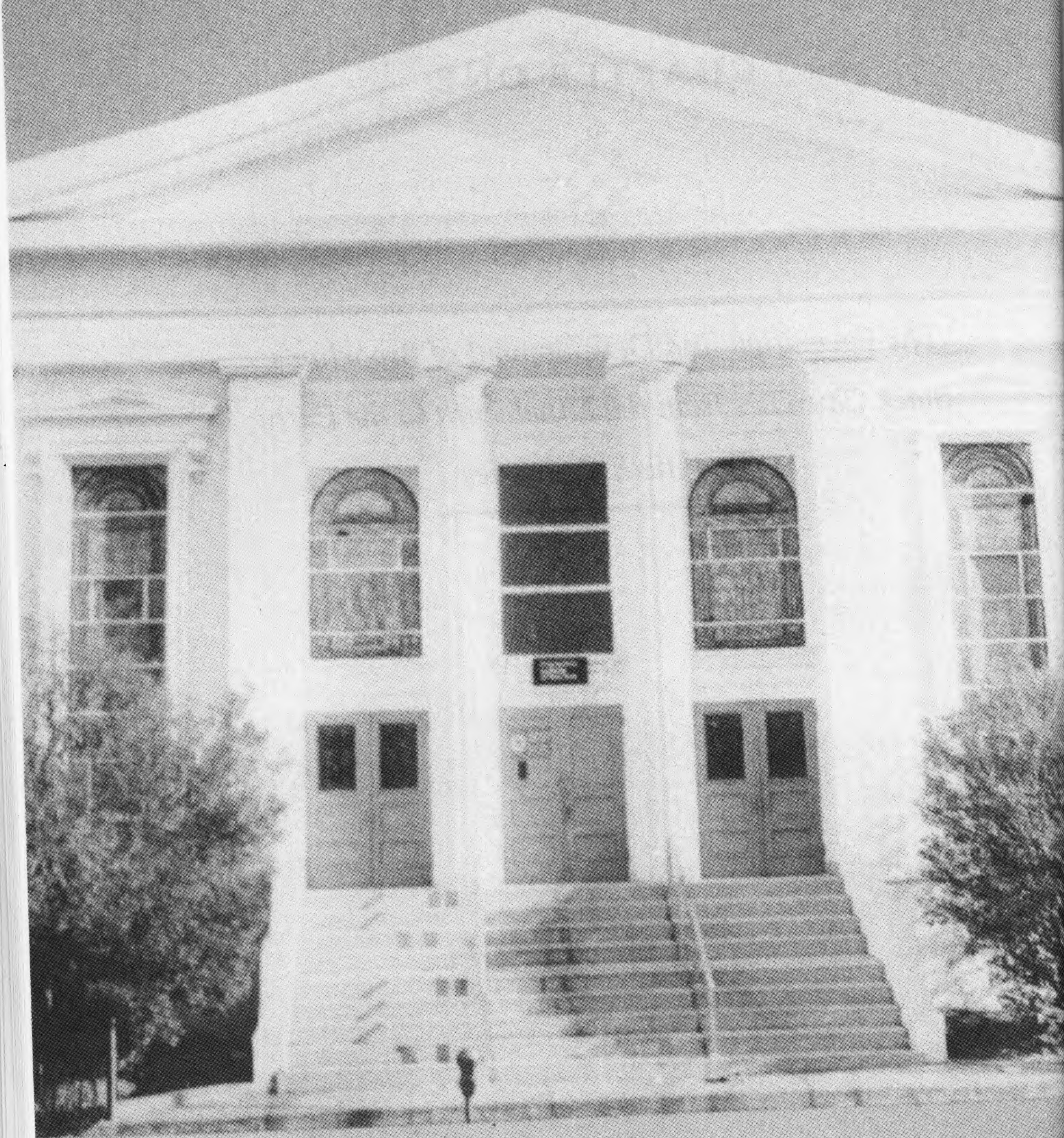


The Black Churches of Brooklyn

CHAPTER ONE



The Formation and Development of Brooklyn's Black Churches from the Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries



In November 1885 the Bridge Street African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church (AWME) of Brooklyn gave a concert celebrating the purchase of a new pipe organ. The organist of Brooklyn Tabernacle Church played the "William Tell Overture," the choir sang "As Mountains Around His People," and two members of the congregation performed a violin and piano duet of "Could I Teach the Nightingales." However, the highlight of the evening was the performance by Edward G. Jardine, owner of Jardine and Sons, who built the $3,000 instrument.

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

The event highlights more than the incorporation of secular elements into the services of Brooklyn's black Protestant churches. From the first half of the nineteenth century, black Brooklynites began to establish religious institutions that would address their needs in an urban society. Parishioners were exposed to classical music and architecture, literature, elocution, fine art, and scholarly sermons stressing intellectualism, self-improvement, and how to cope in the larger white society. However, church leaders and members were not merely imitating the larger white society. Instead they were seeking strategies to address their needs as African Americans. Brooklyn's black churches continually sought approaches to alleviate blacks from the yoke of white oppression. Culture was one important arena used by the churches.

This cultural attitude in the black churches has been attacked by scholars who contend that these institutions did little to oppose racial inequality in the early twentieth century and, rather than lead the struggle, merely promoted decorous religious culture. For example, the theologian Gayraud Wilmore contends that

by the end of the first World War the Independent Black churches were becoming respectable institutions. Having rejected the nationalism of [African Methodist Episcopal Bishop Henry McNeal] Turner they moved more and more toward what was presented by white churches as the model of authentic Christian faith and life. The dominant influence of the clergy in the social betterment and civil rights groups helped to keep these organizations on an accommodationist trajectory.[2]

Without a doubt these churches accommodated the dominant society. However, just because churches accommodated the hegemonic order does not mean that they were not useful to African Americans. The significance of black church culture must be understood in its historical context. Until recently, little has been written about the culture of urban black churches in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[3] Here I explore their emergence, with emphasis on their values, sacred worldview, and impact on the black public. I examine how urban African Americans asserted their social, economic, and cultural independence, implemented strategies for moral and economic uplift, and challenged their image in the eyes of the dominant society.

Western nations justified slavery by claiming to save the souls of slaves from damnation by delivering them from the heathen practices. However, many slaveowners refused to attempt to convert their slaves because they thought that blacks did not have the mental capacity to understand Christian principles; they feared Christianity would lead to slave rebellions and cared little about the spiritual life of their chattels. As for the slaves, many rejected Christianity because it stressed literacy (memorization of verses and catechisms), lacked drama, and condemned certain African practices including spirit powers, voodoo, and conjurers or magic men.[4]

But in the Great Awakenings, beginning in the 1740s and antebellum decades, large numbers of African Americans converted to Christianity. During these eruptions of religious fervor, fiery ministers challenged Christianity and offered salvation to all, regardless of social and economic position. These awakeners contended that salvation did not come through a priestly class or

through formal knowledge. Instead, one found God through conversion by faith or rebirth, as evidenced by trances, visions, shouting, dancing, "fits," and other ecstatic acts. The conversion experience was appealing to both whites and blacks whose illiteracy limited their involvement in the Episcopal, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches, all of which required followers to be well versed in the Bible. Many African Americans attended evangelical revivals and took part in the conversion experience.[5]

As African Americans embraced evangelical Protestantism, they reshaped its form and content to accommodate their own needs. They accepted the basic doctrine of conversion through faith, but their sacred worldview included a God who could deliver them from slavery; thus the Old Testament was essential because its narratives stressed the theme of faith and deliverance. When singing about the Hebrews' deliverance from bondage because of their faith in God, slaves played out their own deliverance from oppression. Like the peoples of all preliterate societies, slaves made little distinction between words and action.[6]

By seeing themselves in the context of sacred time and sacred space, African Americans in bondage were able to invoke the presence of God anytime and anyplace. Worship was not limited to a church; it could take place in the fields, by a campfire, or when the individual was alone during the day. The sacred time and sacred space created by African Americans in bondage helped keep them permanently in contact with god. Thus they were able to make sense out of a chaotic and hostile environment. Emotional behavior—ecstatic dancing, shouting, moaning, sobbing, fainting, and singing in the fields as well as in places of worship—was seen as proof of the Holy Spirit's perpetual presence in an individual or a congregation.[7]

Moreover, African American services were communal, using these and other practices to involve the entire congregation. One such practice was call and response: when an individual sang or preached, the congregation responded. The response could be a shout, a word or statement, clapping, an emotional outburst, and other forms of replies to the preacher or singer. Another practice was the ring shout, where a group of congregants would dance in a circle, singing a continuous chant. The participants stamped their feet and clapped their hands to the music, usually working themselves into a frenzy. Shouts of encouragement were heard

throughout this activity. Blending the individual voice with the communal helped create a corporate identity in which the leader's role was not more important than that of any congregant.[8]

Although sermons were delivered by preachers considered leaders of congregations, the preacher's role in worship did not supersede that of the congregation. Sermons were not scholarly lectures but rituals intended to evoke an emotional response from the congregation. Ecstatic behavior evidenced the presence of the Holy Spirit. Without an emotional outpouring from the congregation, sermons would be meaningless.[9]

The ritual style of African American religion continued after slavery. Many late nineteenth-century observers commented on this highly emotional and communal aspect. For example, the black abolitionist William Wells Brown recalled visits to numerous black Baptist churches in Tennessee between 1879 and 1880:

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

However, when urban black communities developed and the education and socioeconomic position of some African Ameri-

cans improved, they began to reinterpret religious life. Rejecting "uncultured" antebellum religious practices, many blacks began creating institutions that stressed a worldview different from traditional African American Protestantism. This new worldview is exemplified by the churches of Brooklyn, New York.

Brooklyn's Black Population

People of African origins have resided in Brooklyn since the seventeenth century. During the colonial era, most blacks in Brooklyn were slaves on farms owned by the early Dutch settlers. Harold X. Connolly notes that in the first comprehensive census of New York, taken in 1698, 15 percent of Kings County's population (296) consisted of African slaves. No free blacks were listed in the county's six towns of Brooklyn, Bushwick, Flatlands, Flatbush, Gravesend, and New Utrecht. By the early eighteenth century, the slave population had grown rapidly, making Kings the "heaviest slaveholding county in the state of New York." By the mid-century, one-third of the county's population was of African origin.[11]

Kings County was an agricultural community that relied heavily on slave labor. By 1790, 60 percent of all white families residing in Kings County were slaveholders, and it became known as the "slaveholding capital" of the state. This fact explains why there were so few free blacks in the county. Although one-fifth of New York State's black population was free, by the end of the century only 3 percent (or forty-six) free blacks resided in Kings County, the smallest number in the state.[12]

Between 1800 and 1870 the population of Kings County increased from 5,720 to 419,921. Eventually, Brooklyn would absorb the other five towns. By the second half of the nineteenth century, Brooklyn had come to dominate Kings County with 396,099 residents in 1870. Although it did not grow as dramatically as the white population, the black population increased from 1,811 to 5,653 between 1800 and 1870—and 4,931 of the county's 5,653 blacks resided in Brooklyn.[13]

Connolly points out that by the mid-nineteenth century some blacks were engaged in a variety of skilled and semiskilled occupations such as "barbers, tailors, carpenters, painters, butchers, shoemakers, coopers, and ropemakers, as well as holding employment

as domestic servants, waiters, and sailors." Census data show that some blacks were also brick masons, veilmakers, gardeners, cooks, milliners, musicians, cabinet makers, and dressmakers. A small number held middle-class positions such as ministers, clerks, teachers, and doctors. However, census data also reveal that the overwhelming majority of blacks were engaged in menial jobs such as washing clothes and domestic work for women, and as farm laborers, coachmen, porters, servants, waiters, and seamen for men.

Throughout the nineteenth century, no individual neighborhood claimed a majority of Brooklyn's black residents. In 1827 New York State abolished slavery, thus allowing for the development of black communities. During the 1830s, blacks purchased land in an area in the Ninth Ward, founding the communities of Weeksville and Carrsville. These two independent black communities were located within a mile of one another within the boundaries of present-day Bedford-Stuyvesant: Atlantic Avenue on the north, Ralph Avenue on the east, Eastern Parkway on the south, and Albany Avenue on the west. By 1875, 650 blacks resided in the Weeksville-Carrsville communities. There was another large black concentration within the Fourth Ward, which included Fulton Street on the west, Sands Street on the north, and Bridge Street on the south. By the 1830s one-third of Brooklyn's blacks resided in this area.[14]

Formation of Black Churches

Except for the family, the black church became the most important institution among African Americans. Churches helped them to gain independence, met their religious, educational, and social needs, and alleviated the impact of racism; churches also provided a satisfying community life. As Brooklyn's black communities developed, so did numerous churches, the first of which was established early in the nineteenth century. The number of free blacks increased in Brooklyn, both from blacks who had gained their freedom through manumission and blacks who had moved into the downtown area after the building of the first steam ferry between Manhattan and Brooklyn in 1814.

As the black population of the downtown area grew, many newcomers sought places of worship. Some joined the predominantly white First Methodist Episcopal Church of Brooklyn, popularly known as Sands Street Methodist Church (although the increase in black membership caused great alarm among the white membership). Responding to white resentment to the increase of black members, church officials charged people of African origins ten dollars per quarter to worship at Sands. In addition to this humiliation, the pastor of the church, Alexander McCaine, publicly defended slavery and would later publish a pamphlet entitled "Slavery Defended from Scripture."[15]

Deciding that it was better to form their own congregation than endure insults and attacks on their humanity, blacks collectively withdrew from Sands and held religious services in their homes. This action demonstrated the determination of African Americans to oppose racism and their desire for independence. They sent a delegation to Philadelphia to meet with Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), to seek recognition in the African Methodist Episcopal body and a minister for the new congregation. The male members of the new congregation selected a trustee board, which applied for and received official recognition from the state of New York as the First African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church (AWME). By taxing each member fifty cents a month, the new congregation raised enough money in 1819 to purchase land on High Street and build its first church. In 1854, after moving to Bridge Street in Brooklyn, the church changed its name to Bridge Street African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church.[16]

Soon after, other African Methodist churches were organized. Sometime between 1827 and 1835 the black community of Williamsburg organized what eventually became the Union African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (in 1894), joining with the newly formed African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion had broken off from St. John's (Methodist Episcopal) Church, and its black members had left in 1800 to form their own church because they had been forced to worship separately from white members. The new body added Zion in order to distinguish itself from the African Methodist Episcopal Church established by Richard Allen in Philadelphia in 1796. In 1844 the Mount Zion African Methodist Society was created, and in 1847 the Weeksville community organized the African Methodist Episcopal Bethel Church (later known as

Bethel Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Church). Union AME Zion moved to Ralph Avenue in 1909 and changed its name to Ralph Avenue AME Zion; in 1949, it assumed the name Varick Memorial AME Zion.[17]

By the second half of the nineteenth century other African Methodist churches had been formed. In 1850 Williamsburg blacks established the First African Methodist Episcopal Church; in 1852 blacks founded an AME church in Flatbush. Fleet Street African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was founded by fifteen members of an AME church relocating to Atlantic Avenue, who applied for and won recognition as a church body in the AME Zion connection in 1885. The congregation, located on Fleet Street near Myrtle Avenue, was forced to move in 1905 to Bridge Street after the second floor of the Fleet Street church collapsed in 1904, killing ten and injuring forty. Once on Bridge Street, the church changed its name to the First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Incorporation records note the establishment of a Saint Peter's African Church in 1837 and a Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1885, although there is no information on these bodies.[18]

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

In 1847 six members of Manhattan's Abyssinian Baptist Church who lived in Brooklyn met at the home of Maria Hampton on Fair Street. Their mission was to create a Baptist church in their own community, eliminating the hardship of traveling across the East River every Sunday to worship. The small but growing band of worshipers hired Samuel White, formerly of Abyssinian Baptist Church, as pastor, purchased two lots on Concord Street near Duffield, and built the Concord Street Baptist Church of Christ.[20] The racially integrated Berean Missionary Baptist Church, located

in Weeksville, became the second black Baptist church in Brooklyn when its white membership abandoned the church in the early 1850s. Before the end of the century other Baptist churches had been established, including Mount Calvary in East New York, Brooklyn, in 1875, Bethany in 1883, and Holy Trinity in 1899.[21] The African Methodist and Baptist denominations made up the largest congregations in Brooklyn, but they were not the only ones. The same year that Concord was established, James Gloucester (son of John Gloucester, the founder of black Presbyterianism in Philadelphia) started a Presbyterian mission on Fulton and Cranberry streets. After moving to Prince Street in 1849, Gloucester was granted permission from the Brooklyn Presbytery to organize the Siloam Presbyterian Church.

Both the Congregational and Protestant Episcopal churches also made inroads in Brooklyn with the founding of a Colored American Congregational Church in 1853 and the Nazarene Congregational Church in 1873. The small black community of Canarsie established the Plymouth Congregational Church in 1888.[22]

In 1875 a small group met at the home of businessman Kellis Delamar to organize a Protestant Episcopal Church. During the first year, services were held in the Delamar home at 417 State Street; Prince T. Rogers, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, was selected pastor. The following year the group received official mission status from the Protestant Episcopal Diocese and named their group the St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal Church. The parishioners received official parish status in 1890.[23]

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

Except for Concord Baptist and the African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal, membership remained small. As late as 1889 many had less than one hundred members, with Berean reporting thirty-five, Nazarene forty-six, St. Varick fifty-two, and St. Augustine eighty-six. Fleet Street AME Zion and Bethany Baptist each reported slightly more than one hundred members.[25]

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

The churches employed various techniques to raise revenue. The most common, the Sunday collection, proved a steady source of income. Some churches in financial straits turned to desperate measures. Siloam Presbyterian rented pews to its members, and the AWME imposed a mandatory fee of fifty cents per member. Usually, black churches used more innovative methods to raise money. Both St. Augustine and Siloam charged admission to annual excursions and bazaars. AWME, AME Zion of Williamsburg (Varick), and Siloam held concerts; Fleet Street charged admission to its annual picnic. Bethel AME organized color-coded groups to compete with each other in raising money for the church.[27]

In addition to becoming self-supporting organizations, free from outside pressure, black churches of this era became important institutions in the struggle for liberation. During the antebellum period, Brooklyn's black churches emerged as active agencies in the struggle against slavery. Both Bridge Street AWME and Concord Baptist churches became sanctuaries for runaway slaves, while Siloam Presbyterian Church created a fund for the Underground Railroad.[28] Clergy and church officials participated in the fight for African American freedom. Some became active in

black conventions, such as the Christian Union Convention organized by ministers of Manhattan and Brooklyn. The convention met on January 14 and 15, 1861, to "take into consideration of our present oppressed condition and to take measures to invite Christians throughout the United States to observe a day of fasting and prayer to Almighty God for his interposition in our behalf in these times of trial and peril." Among the organizing ministers were Samson White, pastor of Concord Baptist Church, and L. C. Speaks, pastor of Bridge Street AWME.[29]

Brooklyn's black churches also contributed to the drive for literacy. Concord, Bridge Street, and Siloam established Sunday schools whose purpose was educational as well as religious. The *Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Brooklyn Sabbath School Union* for 1858–59 points out that Sabbath schools were well-organized departments, staffed by teachers and managed by superintendents. Bridge Street AWME had nine teachers, Concord ten, and Siloam seventeen. Bridge Street Sabbath School serviced forty-four, Concord sixty-five, and Siloam 154 students in 1859. The report indicates that the classes were not only for children: ninety-six of the students attending classes at Siloam were adults, with nine at Concord, and with no children at Bridge Street AWME—all forty-four students there were adults. Both Concord and Siloam had libraries, reporting forty-five and one hundred books, respectively.[30]

As black churches multiplied in Brooklyn during the post–Civil War period, they joined in creating Sunday schools. In some cases Sunday school enrollment was more than half the size of the church's membership. Concord reported 696 church members in 1891 and a Sunday school enrollment of 430. Bridge Street AWME had 874 members and 542 Sunday school members. Union Bethel AME had 89 Sunday school members out of 107 church members.[31]

However, many black church schools reported having more Sunday school members than regular churchgoers. In 1892 Mount Calvary Baptist's congregation numbered 354, but its Sunday school membership was 550. Siloam had 175 church members and 210 Sunday school students. St. Augustine had 170 Sunday school members and only 150 church members. In 1886 Berean Missionary Baptist Church had only 60 members, but 165 people were enrolled in Sunday school, while Nazarene Congre-

gational Church reported 1,342 Sunday school members and only 102 church members in 1900.[32]

Sunday schools attracted students outside the churches because they combated illiteracy and gave religious instruction to African Americans. Many in Brooklyn's black communities took the opportunity to gain tools for advancing in an urban society.

The Growing Significance of Brooklyn's Black Middle Class

As the black population in Brooklyn grew, social and economic differences within communities developed. By the end of the Civil War most Brooklyn blacks were relegated to the lowest positions in the labor market with little chance for advancement. As noted, the 1870 and 1880 censuses reveal that the vast majority of African Americans were manual laborers.

Despite harsh discrimination and a rigid class system, urban society offered occupational and educational opportunities denied to blacks in rural life, thus promoting the development of a small yet significant black elite. Some members of this group were from families that occupied high positions among the black population before the Civil War. They were usually the professionals: doctors, lawyers, and educators. Other blacks moved into this group by becoming involved in activities that relied on the support of a black clientele such as business owners, ministers, and skilled workers including a number of dressmakers, undertakers, carpenters, barbers, butchers, gardeners, tailors, brick masons, shoemakers, musicians, and clerks.

It should be noted that the notion of class was not well defined in the black community. The historian Allan Kulikoff notes that "classes are formed when discrete groups of people with similar levels of wealth and similar relations to the dominant means of production come to understand their place in the social order and develop coherent ideologies to legitimate or challenge that place."[33] Unlike the larger society where classes formed coherent ideologies to justify their economic and social position, Brooklyn's black elite did not have such an ideology. They justified their position in the black community by arguing that the race could advance through social, economic, and moral uplift. However, this ideology was not shared by them exclusively. Many working-class African Americans shared this belief. Moreover,

unlike the elites of the larger community, the black elite did not create segregated institutions. Although the black elite was identified by churches it attended and by the secular organizations it operated, for the most part these churches and organizations were not class segregated.

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

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

Dr. Susan Smith McKinney-Steward (1847–1918) became the first African American woman to practice medicine in the state of New York and only the third in the country. She attended New York Medical College for Women, graduating in 1870 as valedictorian. McKinney was the founder of the Women's Hospital and Dispensary in Brooklyn, later the Memorial Hospital for Women and Children. She was active in both the women's suffrage and temperance movements. According to the *New York Times*, her house on Dekalb Avenue was located in the "midst of the fashionable quarter of the Hill," and the *New York Sun* asserted that Dr. McKinney had a "handsome bank account." Historian William Seraile notes that she financially supported her husband, stricken with apoplexy in 1890, and six other family members living with her on Dekalb Avenue.[37]

Maritcha Lyons (1848–1929) became one of Brooklyn's most prominent black educators of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lyons was the daughter of Abro and Mary Lyons, whose house was a station on the Underground Railroad. Fleeing

New York City during the Draft Riot of 1863, the Lyons moved to Providence, Rhode Island, where Maritcha was the first black to graduate from Providence Public High School. In 1869 Maritcha began teaching at Colored School No. 1 (later Public School number 67) under the supervision of the noted black educator Dr. Charles A. Dorsey. Later, she became an assistant principal, training new teachers for elementary school service.[38]

Among the elite were several ministers, including Rufus L. Perry (1834–1895), who was born a slave in Tennessee and later attended a school for free blacks. In 1852 he escaped slavery and began to study theology at a seminary in Michigan. Graduating in 1861, he became an ordained Baptist minister and served as pastor in Ann Arbor, Ontario, Buffalo, and finally Messiah Baptist Church in Brooklyn. He founded and edited the *National Monitor*, a monthly religious publication, and wrote *The Cushite; or, The Children of Ham* (see note 73).[39]

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

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

T. McCants Stewart (1852–1923) became one of the most prominent and influential citizens of Brooklyn. Born of free parents in Charleston, South Carolina, Stewart attended Howard University from 1869 to 1873 and later the University of South Carolina, where he received both an A.B. and an LL.B. in 1875. After practicing law briefly in South Carolina, Stewart studied at Princeton. In 1879 he was an ordained minister, becoming pastor

of Bethel AME Church in New York City. In 1883 Stewart gave up the ministry to become a teacher at Liberia College for two years. In 1885 Stewart moved to Brooklyn, becoming the corresponding editor of the *New York Freeman*; in 1886 he resumed his law practice as attorney for Bridge Street AWME Church. He was appointed to the Board of Education in 1893.[42]

Evidence suggests that intraclass marriage was common among Brooklyn's black elite. For example, in 1874 Dr. Susan McKinney, then Susan Marie Smith, married the Reverend William McKinney, a "modestly wealthy man" who owned a building valued at $6,000. Two years after her husband's death in 1896, Susan married the Reverend Theophilus Gould Steward, who was a well-known minister, chaplain of the Twenty-Fifth U.S. Colored Infantry and professor of history at Wilberforce University in Xenia, Ohio. Susan's older sister was married to famed abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet, and Susan's daughter Annie married M. Louis Holly, son of the Bishop of Haiti.[43]

Brooklyn's black elite also had numerous social affairs, featuring European-style artistic forms including concerts, dances, and literary events. For example, a testimonial was held for M. Albert Wilson. The "leading citizens" from both Brooklyn and New York attended. The event was a "notable artistic and social success. Mr. Walter F. Craig, Mme [first name unreadable] Jones, and M. Wilson were the bright particular stars of the occasion and acquitted themselves in brilliant style, the Li Trovatore Fantasia by Mr. Craig being especially well done." The Henry Highland Garnet Republican Club gave a concert in Brooklyn and "the program was as follows: Part I: organ solo, Mr. Melvelle Charlton; soprano solo, Mrs Estelle Pinckney Clough; piano solo, Miss Bertha Bulkley; selection, Nashville Quartet, Philip Parlock and W. H. Tucker, tenors, and N. B. Collins and J. F. Delyons, basses; violin solo, Miss Marie A. Wayne; and baritone solo, Mr Burleigh."[44]

By the late nineteenth century newspapers had recognized the existence of Brooklyn's black elite. In 1892 the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported on a social affair of the "Colored four hundred of Brooklyn," the "elite of Brooklyn's colored citizens." In 1895 the *New York Times* asserted that Brooklyn attracted a number of wealthy blacks: "As soon as negro men amass a comfortable for-

tune, they move from this city across the East River, because they can find in Brooklyn more economical and satisfactory investments."[45]

Besides social and cultural events, Brooklyn's black elite was active in a number of activities to uplift African Americans. Businessman Samuel Scottron became an outspoken advocate on the issue of "self uplifting" of African Americans. Expressing a view that blacks must help themselves (a view shared by a large number of the black elite), Scottron contended:

> The Negro has advanced rapidly and seemingly beyond all comparison. He is moving along with the age and it would be impossible for him not to advance. . . . But it remains for him to show that he is contributing to the force that moves things! That he is not dead weight, simple ballast, clinker in the furnaces, but good coal affording light and heat. . . . What can the Negro do for himself and what is he doing? Are the all-important questions, and in the answer of these lies the future of the American Negro.[46]

Scottron was also a crusader for the abolition of slavery abroad. Along with Henry Highland Garnet, Professor Charles A. Dorsey, Rev. William T. Dixon of Concord Baptist Church, and Rev. A. N. Freeman of Siloam Presbyterian Church, Scottron was a member of the American Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.[47]

Maritcha Lyons was an outspoken advocate for women's rights and African American equality. She was active in the Women's Club movement of the late nineteenth century and a member of the Women's Loyal Union. An outspoken integrationist, she attacked the evils of segregation, arguing that denying blacks participation in the larger white society had impeded their progress and jeopardized America's democracy.

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

> The abuses that exist are the outcome of unscientific, unscrupulous propaganda on the part of those who have abrogated to themselves the right to obstruct the path of the colored American. These obstacles, illogical assertions, preconceived notions, false premises, specious reasoning—must be cut down or dug up by the keen blade of unprejudiced opinion; must be burned away by the ardent glow of an unquenchable reverence for humanity.[48]

Many members of Brooklyn's black elite became advocates of educational facilities for blacks. In a speech celebrating the opening of a new building for one of Brooklyn's "colored schools," schools that serviced African American children, Professor Richard P. Greener, who held a degree from Harvard and became a well-known black educator, contended that the colored schools of Brooklyn were needed because they instilled pride. In addition, black teachers made black children aware of their rich heritage, and in order for African American children to become "useful" they "must be trained by sympathetic heads and hearts of their own race."

In 1883 when the Board of Education contemplated closing the "colored schools" in Brooklyn, Rev. Rufus Perry, Charles A. Dorsey, Rev. William T. Dixon, and a number of other members of the black elite spoke out against the board's decision by noting the need for such schools.[49]

By the second half of the nineteenth century, Brooklyn's black elite were operating institutions that attempted to make poor African Americans economically and socially independent. In order to prepare African Americans for success in society, they stressed moral and social uplift, education, and the fight against racism. Two such organizations were the African Civilization Society and the Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum. Established in the 1850s, the African Civilization Society was made up of prominent blacks: Daniel Payne, president of Wilberforce; abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet; the Reverend J. Sella Martin, acclaimed by the weekly *Anglo-African* as a most promising preacher; the Reverends Rufus Perry and A. N. Freeman, both Brooklynites. The society's objectives were to "promote civilization and Christianization of Africa and of the descendants of African ancestors in any portion of the earth," to destroy the African slave trade, to make people of African origins industrious "producers as well as consumers," and to elevate "the condition of the colored population of our own country and of the other lands."[50] After emancipation the Society dedicated its entire effort to establishing and maintaining free schools in the South. At its sixth annual meeting in 1865, the Society reported

that it had hired twenty-four teachers and supported ten day and night schools, working with hundreds of men, women, and children.[51]

The Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum opened in 1866 and was incorporated in 1868. According to the Asylum's constitution, its objective was to "shelter, protect, and educate destitute orphan children of Colored parentage and to instruct them in useful trades." Besides giving shelter to more than three hundred children and educating them with a professional teaching staff, the institution provided the orphans with medical care. Its medical staff included an ear, eye, nose, and throat specialist, stomach and intestine specialists, a genito-urinary specialist, dermatologist, and a dentist.[52]

Although it received financial support from whites until 1902, the Howard Colored Orphan Asylum had a predominantly black board of directors and an all-black staff. According to historian Carleton Mabee, all of Howard's superintendents were black. After 1902 prominent blacks still led the organization. The Board of Trustees included Rev. William T. Dixon of Concord, W. T. Timms, pastor of Holy Trinity Baptist, and L. Joseph Brown, pastor of Berean Baptist Church. The Women's Auxiliary of the Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum, established in 1904, was responsible for fund-raising and providing clothes and bed linen and "other comforts" for the children; members included Maritcha Lyons, Mrs. Charles Dorsey, and Verna Waller, wife of physician Owen Waller.[53]

The Black Middle Class and the Black Churches of Brooklyn

The institutions most clearly demonstrating the involvement of the black elite were the churches. Although there are few records for Brooklyn's black churches in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, available information strongly suggests that the black middle-class played a leading role in these institutions. Of the twenty officers of Siloam Presbyterian Church in 1899, twelve of the seventeen whose occupations could be ascertained were employed in middle-class and lower-middle-class positions, the majority as clerks. The board of trustees of Bridge Street AWME Church in 1918 was dominated by prominent middle-class men, including a real estate and insurance broker, a machinist, and the

treasurer of the Howard orphanage. The secretary of the board, James E. Bruce, was listed by the Brooklyn Daily Eagle as a member of Brooklyn's "Colored 400." Of the twenty-four officers listed for Concord Baptist Church in 1918, only eleven could be identified by occupation. Eight of the eleven held middle-class positions, including six clerks, an undertaker, a realtor, and a carpenter. Of the five trustees whose names appear on the charter of Bethany Baptist Church, at least two had middle-class occupations—engineer and carpenter. Leading members of St. Augustine Episcopal Church included its founder William J. Delamar, Maritcha Lyons, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Dorsey. It should be noted that some men held jobs in the larger community as janitors and servants while acting as officials of the church. This indicates that Brooklyn's black churches became important centers where classes could mix and working-class people in many cases could share positions of power with the elite.[54]

As middle-class blacks gained prominence in Brooklyn's black churches, they used these institutions to develop their own image as rational, urbane, literate community leaders, addressing the demands put on blacks in an urban society. They shaped the religious institutions to reflect the new urban setting, which demanded accommodation to values of the larger society. These churches emphasized a rational understanding of Christian traditions, elaborate ceremonial practices, an appreciation for architecture and music, seminary training for their ministers, and a deep concern for personal success, achievement, and liberal values in the secular world. Hence, secular concerns took on a greater significance.

There is evidence that black Baptist churches carried on some early Southern practices well into the twentieth century—rituals such as revivals, shouting, "falling out," and other ecstatic behavior. However, as in the white-affiliated denominations during the postbellum period, there was a trend toward formality, elaborate services, decorum, restraint, scholarly sermons, and architectural beauty. As Carter G. Woodson observed of African Methodist and Baptist churches in the late nineteenth century:

> Preaching became more of an appeal to the intellect than an effort to stir one's emotions. Sermons developed into efforts to minister to a need observed by careful consideration of

the circumstances of the persons served, hymns in keeping with the thought of the discourse harmonized therewith, and prayers became the occasion of thanksgiving for blessing which the intelligent pastor could lead his congregation to appreciate and of a petition for God's help to live more righteously.[55]

Architectural and interior beauty was an important expression of black church culture—a way to demonstrate an urbane, polished style of worship, identifiable with the European cathedrals. According to the minutes of the twenty-third Quadrennial of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Churches (1908): "Architecture is the art of building according to principles which are determined, not merely by the ends the edifice is intended to serve, but by consideration of beauty and harmony."[56] This was especially evident in the black churches of Brooklyn.

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

Sometime between 1890 and 1914, during the pastorship of Rev. L. Joseph Brown, Berean Baptist Church on Bergen Street purchased a brick building with high arches, stained glass windows, and a small garden. Shortly thereafter, the church's building committee adopted a plan to add two elaborate wings to the church. St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal also purchased a two-story castle with a large tower and stained glass windows. In 1899 St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal Church purchased St. Mary's Chapel on Canton Street, a large brick building with an extended entryway and high arched, stained glass windows. Moreover, at least six churches claimed that they had edifices that could seat three hundred or more worshipers.[57]

One of Brooklyn's most elegant churches was the Bridge Street AWME Church, located at 309 Bridge Street, formerly the estate of Edward and Margaret Pierrepont, who signed the property over to the First Congregational Church. In 1854 Bridge Street AWME bought the building from the First Congregational Church for $12,500. The church had two wooden pillars in the

entrance porch and a "spacious gallery." The main hall seated twelve hundred people comfortably. The *New York Freeman* described the woodwork and upholstery as "substantial and neat." By the turn of the century Bridge Street had added a thirty-light chandelier, made of oxidized brass, to its decor.[58]

Great care was also given to the decoration of the churches to establish the proper atmosphere for Sunday morning worship. The *New York Globe* reported that on one Sunday morning the Bridge Street AWME Church had flowers that were "tastefully arranged. . . . The Bible desk was covered with beautiful white silk cover, trimmed on either side with silk cord and silk moss fringes. In the center was a cross of lilies of the valley. Behind the pulpit was suspended a large cross of choice flowers." The *New York Freeman* proclaimed that the flowers for a Sunday morning service at Siloam Presbyterian Church on Prince Street were "quite elaborate, perfuming the church with their fragrance." The First AME Zion Church of Williamsburg had a lecture room garnished with flowers; the major attraction was the pastor's harvest table located in the auditorium, "heavenly laden with choice fruits, flowers, vegetables, wheat, etc." Many churches established floral committees during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[59]

Lecture rooms were important cultural features as well as academic centers of the churches. Concord Baptist, Bridge Street AWME, First AME Zion of Williamsburg, Fleet Street AME Zion, and other elite black churches of Brooklyn built lecture rooms, which became centers of cultural events, lectures, literary endeavors, and classical music programs. Concord's lecture room was used for lectures by noted black figures such as journalist Ida B. Wells; T. Thomas Fortune, editor of the *New York Age*; and T. McCants Stewart, noted author, attorney, pastor, and organizer of numerous black literary societies. On several occasions, the Guitar and Mandolin Club of the local YMCA performed in the lecture room of the church.[60]

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

gious institutions limited it to a house of worship, giving the secular a greater role. They deemphasized the mystical and reinforced worldliness, materialism, and aesthetic beauty.

Like architecture, music was also intrinsic to the style of Brooklyn's black church worship. Although information about the music performed during services is limited, newspaper advertisements, announcements of church concerts, and church anniversary books give indications. In traditional African American Christianity, music was spiritual and participatory, involving singing, dancing, and shouting from the congregation as well as the performers: however, Brooklyn's black churches of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries incorporated European classical music (which was more temporal than spiritual), shunned congregational participation, and emphasized exactness in performance.[61]

On a Sunday service at Holy Trinity Baptist Church, the choir sang "anthems," while St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal Church began its Sunday service "promptly at 11" with the church choir singing "Onward Christian Soldiers." It was not uncommon for churches to sponsor recitals, cantatas, and concerts featuring prominent artists. During its centennial celebration in 1918, Bridge Street AWME featured two soprano solos and a violin performance. In a benefit concert held for Bridge Street, Nellie Brown, the famed New York soprano, sang "La Stella" by Arditi and the "The Last Rose of Summer." At one of its gatherings, the Concord Literary Circle featured a violin duet and a vocal performance of "Love's Golden Dream." An evening dinner held for the benefit of the Nazarene Congregational Church, featured a solo from C. C. Clarke, a baritone from Denver, Colorado; a performance from Professor Charles Johnson, a tenor from Brooklyn; and Edward Wood, violinist, also from Brooklyn.[62]

Moreover, the black churches relied on musical experts for polished and professional performances. All church choirs were trained by choir masters or musical experts. The *New York Age* noted in 1908 that "Chorister" Charles F. Monroe of Concord Baptist was busy training the voices of the church's choir while the music of St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal was "making splendid progress under the direction of Mr. D. J. Edgeworth." Some choirmasters were even given the title "professor of music." On some occasions, choirs held competitions for the best perfor-

mance. For example, in the summer of 1905, Bridge Street AWME, Fleet Street AME Zion, and Concord Baptist competed for the "silver cup" award for best performance. "Choir professor" W. B. Berry of Fleet, "Professor" Albert Myers of Concord Baptist, and "Professor Richardson," leader of Bridge Street AWME, were contestants. "All three choirs showed excellent training, but the honors of the evening were given to Concord."

The churches purchased large pipe organs and hired trained organists; among the best known was Dr. Susan McKinney, musical director of Bridge Street AWME Church, and the organists of the Turner Lyceum and the Siloam Presbyterian Church. The music of Bach, Handel, and Brahms set the tone for Sunday services in some churches. Recalling an earlier period, before gospel music became a dominant force at Berean Missionary Baptist Church, Myra Gregory, a member of the church since 1913, noted that Baroque music was commonly heard.[63]

Music was no longer a participatory ritual but a performance that parishioners appreciated solely for its artistic value. Parishioners responded to performances as though they were attending concerts. Instead of the traditional African American response of clapping and shouting to music, they listened and applauded at the end of the performance. Describing a concert given by the Hyers Sisters at a black church in Brooklyn on August 18, 1884, the *New York Globe* reported that the audience "attentively listened and were enthusiastic in their applause." The *New York Freeman* described a benefit concert for Bridge Street AWME Church as a financial success and noted that the audience was "an appreciative one" and "applause and encores were generously bestowed."[64]

The black churches also moved toward a well-trained ministry. Early on, the black Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Congregational denominations required their ministers to receive seminary training at institutions such as Fisk University in Tennessee, Trinity in Alabama, Lincoln in Pennsylvania, and Biddle in North Carolina.[65]

This educational requirement was later established in the African Methodist churches. As early as the 1840s, AME state conferences passed resolutions calling for the establishment of seminaries. The first significant African Methodist school was Wilberforce in Ohio, established in 1856. Less than three decades

later other schools followed, including Allen College in Columbia, South Carolina, Morris Brown in Atlanta, Georgia, and Paul Quinn in Waco, Texas. Due to the shortage of trained ministers, the AME established a rotation policy by which the few educated ministers circulated among the congregations. In 1908 the twenty-third Quadrennial General Conference of the AME called for a well-trained ministry:

> If proper endeavors are not put forth there is great and impending danger of the respectability and influence of our Church being seriously lessened. The constant advancement of culture in the pew renders absolutely imperative the demand for equal advancement of culture in the pulpit. We are persuaded that our ministry is so well aware of these truths that no argument is needed to enforce the admonition to scrutinize with care the candidates for admission to our Conference and to insist on a high standard of qualification.[66]

Although the Baptists did not have general educational requirements for ordination, the elite Baptist churches became discriminating. Before the Civil War, institutions run by other denominations educated the elite. Historian Carter G. Woodson notes that both Lincoln and Biddle (Presbyterian colleges) graduated men who later joined both Methodist and Baptist churches probably because there were more Methodist and Baptist churches, thus less competition for ministerial positions. However, after the Civil War, the Baptists established their own educational institutions to train ministers, such as Shaw University in Raleigh in 1865, Morehouse in Atlanta and Roger Williams in Nashville in 1867, and others.[67]

Among Brooklyn's notable educated Baptist ministers were Francis Blair of Bethany Baptist Church, who received both his B.A. and Ph.D. from Lincoln University; Rufus L. Perry, who received his Ph.D in theology from Michigan Seminary; William T. Dixon of Concord Baptist Church, a former school teacher and principal who graduated from Arkansas University; S. E. Lee of Shiloh Baptist Church, who held a B.D. from Virginia Seminary.[68]

As more educated clergy appeared in Brooklyn's black church pulpits, their sermons became scholarly. A detailed analysis of sermons of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is

difficult since virtually none survived. However, the black press of New York did occasionally summarize sermons delivered by Brooklyn black ministers, providing some evidence. These sermons were not impromptu speeches but well-planned, scholarly, biblical lessons based on an exegetical outline. Citing a biblical passage and critically analyzing it, the preacher would usually conclude with practical applications. This approach cut across denominational lines: Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal, Congregational, African Methodist, and Baptist churches.

A sermon delivered by Rev. J. W. Gloucester at Bridge Street AWME illustrates the style. Selecting his text from the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy, Gloucester told the congregation that Moses presented "life with its attendant blessings to people, as the condition of proper obedience to the divine law; or death with its curses as a result of disobedience" and cautioned the parishioners to choose. Gloucester contended that "man possesses the ability to choose right or wrong; to accept Christ or reject him."[69]

The emphasis on scholarship rather than emotion was evident in the weekly press descriptions. The newspapers referred to the sermons as "informative discourses," "scholarly," "practical," "full of instruction," and "eloquent." For example, the *New York Globe* described a sermon given by Rev. C. C. Astwood at Bridge Street AWME as "an intelligent and pertinent discourse." A sermon by Rev. L. Joseph Brown, pastor of Berean Baptist, was described by the *New York Age* as "scholarly and instructive."[70]

Besides being scholarly, the ministers' sermons of the elite black churches possessed a moral and ethical dimension. Unlike early African American Christianity, where one came to God through a mystical or emotional experience, the ministers of these churches stressed that one reached God through knowledge and reason.

In addition, the ministers never lost their zeal for politics; however, they were much more accommodating of the cultural hegemony of the dominant society. Ministers of the elite black churches advocated a mainstream approach: individuals must actively improve their lives in this world. Many preachers focused on proper behavior, ethics, and hard work as a means of improving the moral character of African Americans, not as a requirement for heaven but for a successful existence on earth.

Dr. Rufus Perry's sermon at Bridge Street AWME entitled "Our Progress" illustrates this point. Perry contended that, twenty years after emancipation, blacks had made strides in the fields of real estate, business, journalism, and religion through hard work. He urged blacks to continue to work hard in order to progress as a race. In another example, a Sunday morning sermon given in 1886 by Rev. Dickerson of Siloam Presbyterian Church pointed out the progress of blacks. Entitled "Prospects of the Colored People of the South," Dickerson spoke of the "noble men of the race," referring to Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and John Gloucester, founder of black Presbyterianism. He reminded people of African origins that they had a great historical past, and he encouraged them to improve their status through hard work.[71] While the black church was adopting a Eurocentric culture, the minister's role was changing drastically. In African American evangelical Protestantism, the preacher shared control of the worship with his congregation. The ministers of the black elite religious institutions were for the most part seminary-trained professionals, helping parishioners gain an understanding of the Bible and Christian doctrine necessary for salvation. In some sense, the pastor became an intermediary between God and the individual, thus decreasing the congregation's active involvement in service.

Literary Societies and the Push for Moral and Social Uplift

Some of the most important organizations within the black churches of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were literary societies. The organizers and members of these societies promoted erudition, hoping to challenge the notion of black inferiority and to define blacks as rational human beings, able to appreciate literature, to think abstractly, and to advance socially and economically.

The Brooklyn Literary Union of Siloam Presbyterian Church, organized in 1886, became one of the most well-known societies in Brooklyn. Soon after the establishment of the Brooklyn Literary Union, other literary groups were formed, including Concord Baptist Church's Literary Circle, St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal's Literary Sinking Fund, Nazarene Congregational Church's Literary Society, Union Bethel AME's Young People's Literary

Society, Bridge Street AWME's Turner Lyceum, St. John's African Methodist Episcopal's Star Lyceum, and Fleet Street AME Zion's Progressive Literary Union.[72]

These societies sponsored debates, lectures, elocution contests, recitations, musical recitals, and discussions of pertinent issues facing black America. At a meeting of the Concord Literary Circle, attended by publisher T. Thomas Fortune and Rev. Rufus Perry, attorney William Edwards spoke on "Improvement: The Order of the Age." At another Literary Circle program, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported that journalist Ida B. Wells spoke about the "Afro-American in Literature." Mrs. E. Saville Jones sang "L'incontra," H. H. Butler sang "I'll Await Your Smiling Face," and Miss Helen Thompson "read a very commendable essay on Patriotism." At the Literary and Sinking Fund Society of St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal Church, a member read from Mark Twain, and a violin solo and singing duets were performed. Referring to Brooklyn's black church literary groups, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* contended that "there is no other city in the union that possesses as intelligent a community of young people as the City of Churches."[73]

The Brooklyn Literary Union's constitution and by-laws indicated a high level of organization, sophistication, and intelligence. The group, meeting the first and third Tuesdays of each month from eight to ten in the evening, followed a prescribed agenda that included singing and prayer, reading of the minutes, report of the board of managers, and literary exercises (lectures, reading of papers, debates, and general business). According to its constitution, either the group's president or an invited guest was obliged to give a lecture. Anyone giving a paper or participating in a debate had to follow certain guidelines.

1. No paper read before the Union shall exceed twenty minutes, except by special vote.
2. In stated debates there shall be four disputants, each of whom shall be limited to ten minutes, and there shall be no transfer to time.
3. All papers and stated debates shall be followed by a general discussion, which shall not exceed forty-five minutes: and stated debates shall be decided in the affirmative or negative by vote of the Union.[74]

Brooklyn's black elite was active in the literary societies. The Brooklyn Literary Union included among its distinguished honorary members Frederick Douglass and author and poet Frances E. W. Harper. Its officers included attorney and minister T. McCants Stewart, who was president of the union, and publisher T. Thomas Fortune; the board of directors included Professor Charles A. Dorsey and Maritcha Lyons, both principals of Brooklyn "colored" schools; M. P. Saunders, treasurer of the Howard orphanage's industrial school; Frederick B. Watkins, listed along with Charles A. Dorsey as a member of Brooklyn's "Colored 400"; C. H. Lang, also a member of Brooklyn's "400" and one of its wealthiest black residents; and Dr. Susan McKinney. Other members included Rev. William T. Dixon and Rev. Rufus Perry.

The chairman of the board of the Turner Lyceum was Walter S. Durham, an accomplished singer. The president of the Star Lyceum was R. M. Brown, a general commission and export merchant; and J. Howard Wilson, president of the Progressive Literary Union, was a member of Brooklyn's "400."[75]

The organizers and members of these literary societies saw themselves as part of what W. E. B. Du Bois called the "Talented Tenth," the best and brightest of the race, obligated to uplift the black masses by exposing them to the best literature, music, oratory, and keeping them informed on the issues that confronted the race. The *New York Age*, published by T. Thomas Fortune, a major organizer of New York's literary societies, contended that the masses of blacks were in "need of the superior contact which an intellectual and enlightened mind can give. . . . Those of the race who have had intellectual and mental training are to be the levers with which the masses are to be lifted. A literary society in Brooklyn organized with a view to the mental uplift of the community is an imperative necessity."[76]

Using culture to lift the underprivileged was not unique to black churches but was part of a larger movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A wave of new immigrants, mainly from eastern and southern Europe, as well as blacks from the southern part of the United States, moved to northern cities, replacing a mostly white native-born work force and bringing their own unique cultures into the workplace and urban centers. The period witnessed the formation of labor unions and the rise

of dime novels and other forms of popular culture. According to historian Daniel Walker Howe, the American gentry was "mostly middle-class, mostly Whig-Republican, literary men and women," who wanted to humanize the new industrial-capitalist order by "infusing it with a measure of social responsibility, strict personal morality, and respect for cultural standards."[77]

This middle-class esteemed Victorian virtues—hard work, sobriety, sexual repression, and the postponement of personal gratification—as a means of molding the new work force. Lawrence Levine notes that museums, art galleries, opera houses, theaters, and symphony halls became "active agents in teaching their audiences to adjust to the new social imperatives in urging them to separate public behavior from private feelings, in keeping a strict reign over their emotional and physical process."[78]

The churches emphasized that blacks could accomplish the best in art, literature, intellectual pursuits, and music; they went against a wave of opinion contending that blacks were mentally and morally inferior. Through a flood of pseudoscientific literature, songs, magazines, motion pictures, and other forms of popular culture, people of African descent were portrayed as innately shiftless, lazy, childish, stupid, amoral, oversexed, violent, beastly, as natural gamblers, and as dangers to American society.[79]

D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) is a good example of this type of propaganda. Based on Thomas Dixon's 1902 novel *The Klansman*, the film portrays Africans liberated from the domesticating influence of slavery as beasts. Once the loyal Black servants team up with the notorious carpetbaggers, they destroy the social fabric of the South. Black Union soldiers beat up decent white Southerners; black brutes lust after and attempt to rape white Southern women, and black mobs kill anyone who stands in their way. Once blacks gain control of South Carolina's state legislature, they make a mockery of the legislative process. Black buffoons eat chicken, drink whiskey, take their shoes off and pick their feet, and horrify whites by passing a bill that legalizes interracial marriages.[80]

The popular image of African Americans as brutish and dangerous had political implications. Southern states disenfranchised African Americans, amending their constitutions and adopting various voting qualifications such as the grandfather clause, the poll tax, and the white primary. States and local gov-

ernments passed legislation segregating public facilities as a means of excluding blacks from the larger society. These regulations, popularly known as Jim Crow laws, denied African Americans equal access to railroads, schools, libraries, hotels, hospitals, restaurants, parks, playgrounds, water fountains, toilets, and cemeteries. The North also imposed restrictive covenants; neighborhood improvement associations, municipal ordinances, and blockbusting by realtors forced blacks into Northern ghettos.[81]

This pattern was not limited to local governments. Between 1873 and 1898, the U.S. Supreme Court voted to strip African Americans of their constitutional rights. In the Slaughter House cases of 1873, the Court voted to curtail privileges and immunities protected by the Fourteenth Amendment, giving states the green light to restrict the rights of blacks. In 1883 the Court declared the 1875 Civil Rights Act unconstitutional because the Fourteenth Amendment did not grant Congress the power to outlaw discrimination practiced by individuals. In 1898 the Court ruled that separate-but-equal facilities were constitutional in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Such decisions sent a clear message across the nation that the highest judicial body would not oppose the crusade to lock blacks into a caste system.

Violence was also used as a means to enforce Jim Crow. Between 1886 and 1900 twenty-five hundred people were lynched, the great majority of them Southern blacks. From 1900 to World War I, eleven hundred blacks were lynched in the United States. Moreover, an epidemic of race riots hit both Northern and Southern cities, including Atlanta, Brownsville, Texas, East St. Louis, and Chicago.[82]

To suggest that struggle can take only one form limits our understanding of the human reaction to oppressive conditions. Wilmore and others who argue that black churches did little to oppose racial oppression ignore culture as a mode of resistance. In a racist environment, the black churches promoted social equality and human rights for African people. As arbiters of culture, the black churches attempted to create an image of African Americans as intelligent, scholarly, and artistically accomplished within the terms the dominant white culture had set. This image directly challenged the mainstream racist view of blacks as beastly, lazy, childlike, stupid, and menacing. By making their churches literary and artistic arenas, these religious

institutions countered the popular stereotype of blacks. The strategy used by the black churches was a race-conscious solution stressing pride in the ability of blacks to achieve success in the larger society.

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

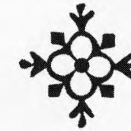
> Then there is a third class representing quite ten thousand, who are simply cutting didoes and bellowing like an untamed animal of the Balaam specie while their thousands of followers scream like they are being stung by wasps, and shout until the building rocks in self-defence. Men of this type have no business in the pulpit. They split churches, break up homes and demoralize the communities in which they live and move and have their being. The poor people put their money into church property, pay the pastors' salaries, but have no knowledge of the real work of the Church of God. Their dilapidated, ramshackle, greasy buildings are parodies on clean, restful, sacred places, where the people, like David, are glad to go to meet God.[83]

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

When black churches defined legitimate culture through their literary societies, educated clergy, and scholarly sermons, they denied the full variety of religious expression, making many feel uncomfortable and unwelcome. Some sought other religious forms, such as Holiness-Pentecostal churches, the earliest of which appeared in Brooklyn in the early 1900s; they increased dramatically during the heavy black influx of the 1930s.

Although the churches stressed uplift and challenged social Darwinism, they failed to provide a stronger critique of an oppressive white society that had relegated most blacks to the lowest economic and social positions in society. The strategy of uplift put the burden of improving the conditions of African Americans on the victims. Social and moral uplift assumed that the reason for failure of black people was because they lacked the ingredients for improvement. This was a no-win tactic, especially for poor blacks struggling in a system that denied them social and economic success. Moral and social uplift was a class-bias solution that could not effectively counter a racist and oppressive society bent on dehumanizing blacks. The churches needed to give a stronger critique of the larger society and to challenge the forces of discrimination collectively. By the 1930s new religious institutions would appeal to the growing working-class black population of Brooklyn by offering them just such a stronger critique of the dominant society.

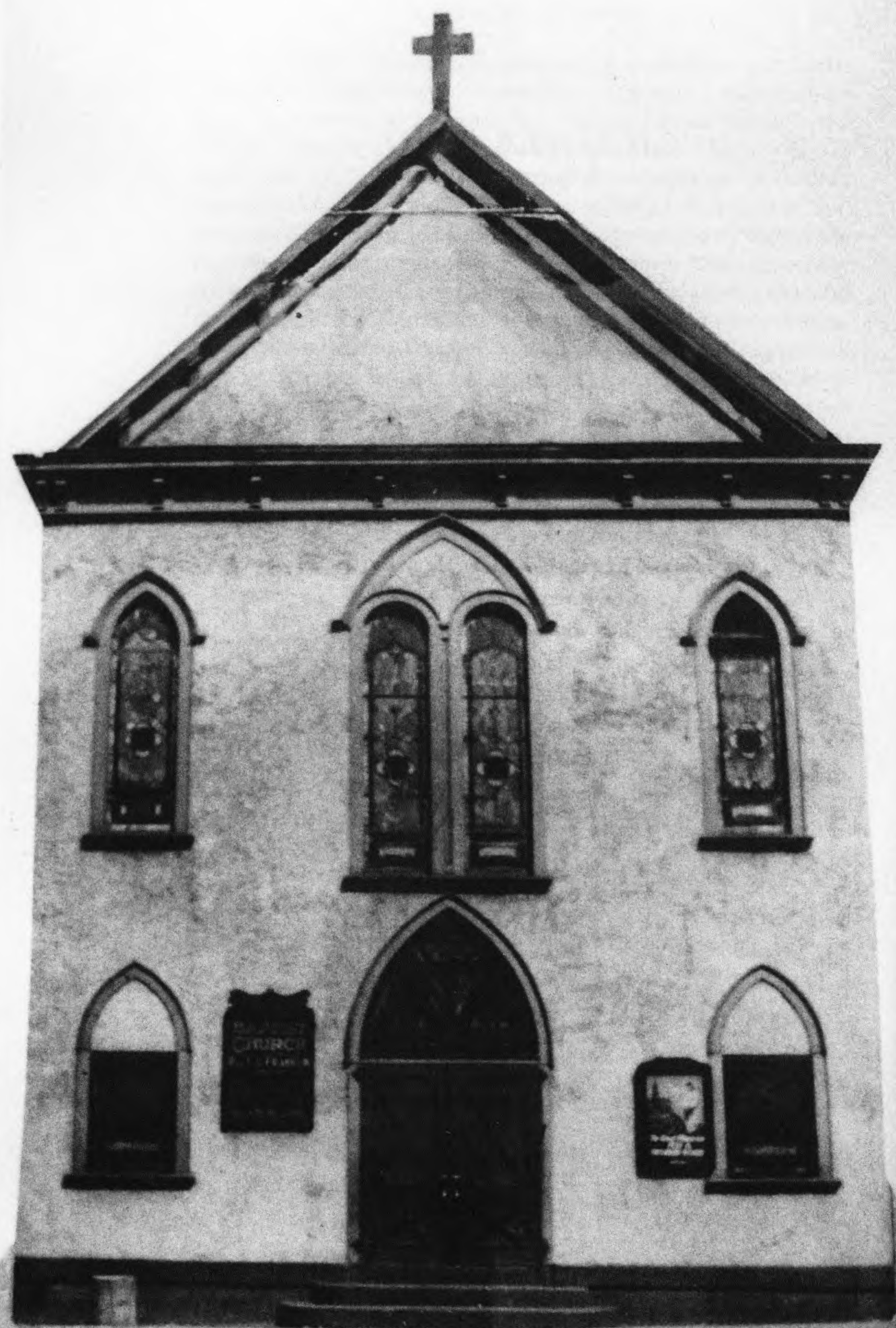
CHAPTER TWO



The Rise of Black Holiness-Pentecostal Culture in Brooklyn

But when the Lord saves you He burns out the old Adam, He gives you a new mind and a new heart and then you don't find no pleasure in the world, you get all your joy in walking and talking with Jesus every day.

—Elisha speaking to John in James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (p. 54)



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

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

These two news articles point out that by the 1930s Brooklyn's mainline black churches were not its only religious institutions. As the black population increased, the major denominations began sharing space with other religious groups, including Holiness-Pentecostals. Most scholars who write on Brooklyn ignore the existence of Holiness-Pentecostal groups or label them as mere storefronts.

It is a mistake to so label Holiness-Pentecostal religious institutions without making distinctions among denominations. Moreover, many black churches in Brooklyn started as storefronts, in someone's apartment, or as a small operation. Included among those with modest beginnings were Concord Baptist, Cornerstone Baptist, Brown Memorial Baptist, Holy Trinity Baptist, Mount Sinai Baptist, Mount Lebanon Baptist, Bethany Baptist, and St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal. In his 1931 study, George Hobart uncovered sixty-eight storefronts, including twenty-four Baptists, one Protestant Episcopal, one African Methodist Episcopal, and one Methodist. Yet to label all Holiness-Pentecostal churches as storefronts is misleading, for by the mid-1950s some of these churches in Brooklyn were well-established institutions with large edifices, claiming hundreds of members.[3]

As the twentieth century progressed and Brooklyn's black population increased, Holiness-Pentecostal churches grew dra-

matically, attracting mostly the working poor. They became the fastest-growing religious institutions in the black community. Their growth raises many questions. What do we know of these organizations? Why did they grow? What was the relationship between these institutions and the socioeconomic conditions of Brooklyn's black working class? This chapter examines these questions and presents the cultural and social significance of black Holiness-Pentecostal churches in Brooklyn. Holiness-Pentecostalism stressed a doctrine of otherworldliness, a belief that members should divorce themselves from secular activities and attempt to live a life without sin. This did not mean that Holiness-Pentecostalism was apolitical. The struggle for power takes place on many levels and in many arenas. The otherworldliness doctrine was used by black people in Brooklyn in order to resist an attempt to dehumanize them by the larger white society. Black Holiness-Pentecostal culture countered the cultural hegemonic order by promoting a theory of human value giving African Americans an alternative avenue to gain status and self-esteem. Although it offered a critique of the values of the dominant society, black Holiness-Pentecostals promoted a strict code of behavior that helped instill certain values of a capitalist society. Black Holiness-Pentecostal culture both resisted and accommodated the dominant culture.

Origins of the Holiness-Pentecostal Churches

The Holiness movement in the United States had its origins in the post–Civil War South. It was sparked by a growing dissatisfaction with the movement toward a refined way of worshiping in the established mainline churches, especially the Baptist and Methodist denominations. Many accused the mainline churches of moving away from God by promoting secular activities. Holiness followers based their belief on John Wesley's notion of a "second blessing" by God. It is the belief that through divine grace and the will of the believer, he or she could reach the state of sanctification or sinlessness.[4] In 1867 a group of white ministers of various denominations, who advocated living a life of holiness, "heart religion," and "spirited congregational singing," modest dressing, and dwelling in the Holy Spirit, held a camp meeting at Vineland, New Jersey, and formed the National Holiness Association.

Calling for a return to Christian fundamentalism, Association ministers held revivals that helped spread Holiness beliefs throughout the nation, especially the South. By the 1890s a number of "comeouters" (people who had left the Methodist Church) formed their own denominations, traveled, and held camp fire meetings advocating "theological and ethical purity." They became a significant element in the Holiness movement. Eventually some of these groups became Pentecostals, emphasizing emotional behavior such as shouting, crying, and fainting. They claimed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, manifested by speaking in tongues of men or angels, was an essential experience in the lives of the faithful.[5]

Anthropologists Hans Baer and Merrill Singer as well as others have noted that the distinction made between white Holiness and Pentecostals may not apply to African Americans.

> Specific Black religions refer to themselves as either "Holiness" or "Pentecostal," but the distinction between the two forms is not clear-cut from a social-scientific perspective. As Washington observes, "Whether they are identified as Holiness or Pentecostal, the roots of these groups are identical." Indeed, within the African American community, there is a strong tendency to lump these two categories together by referring to them as "Sanctified churches."[6]

By the turn of the century, African Americans became a major force in the formation of the Holiness-Pentecostal movement. Several founders of Holiness-Pentecostal sects were former Baptist ministers who complained about the inertia in the religious services of their churches and advocated a personal experience with God. They stressed experiencing the spiritual baptism of the Holy Ghost (the belief that the Holy Spirit dwells in believers). This spiritual baptism was manifested by speaking in tongues, dancing, shouting, uncontrollable body movements, and other forms of ecstatic behavior.

A prominent figure in the Holiness-Pentecostal movement was William J. Seymour, born in Centerville, Louisiana, in 1870. Seymour received little formal education. Although little is known about his early religious development, sometime in 1900 Seymour moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, and came under the influence of the Evening Light Saints, a Holiness sect that traveled through-

out the South spreading its message. After confessing and asserting that he was sanctified, attempting to live a life without sin, he was baptized by the Evening Light Saints and became a traveling evangelist.[7]

Seymour was probably influenced by the teachings of Charles Parham, a white Holiness minister from Kansas who established a Bible school in Topeka in 1900 and conducted revivals in the South. Parham later established another Bible school in Houston, Texas, in 1906. Seymour applied to Parham's Bible school to gain greater religious training. Parham, a segregationist, refused to let Seymour attend classes or study with his white students in the main classrooms. According to a Seymour scholar, E. Myron Noble, Seymour and other blacks "were sent to an anteroom where they could hear lessons taught through an adjoining door." It was probably at Parham's school that Seymour adopted the idea that speaking in tongues was evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, an idea advocated by Parham and his students in 1900.[8]

In 1906 Seymour was invited by an acquaintance to preach at a Holiness church in Los Angeles. Seymour accepted the invitation, but his advocacy of speaking in tongues caused the church leader to deny him further access to the building, forcing him to seek another place to conduct services in that city. After Seymour was denied access to the church, a husband and wife, members of the church, invited him to hold services in their home, and several people claimed to have received the Spirit and spoke in tongues. Seymour attracted an enormous following and was forced to seek larger quarters. The preacher found an abandoned building on Azusa Street where he conducted a huge Pentecostal revival, receiving press attention and attracting people throughout the nation. This event, known popularly as the Azusa movement, although not the first recorded act of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues among black Holiness-Pentecostals, was significant because it attracted crowds nationwide, lasted for three years, and motivated others in the Holiness-Pentecostal movement to adopt Seymour's message.[9]

Other African Americans, including Charles Harrison Mason and Charles Price Jones, organized Holiness-Pentecostal churches. Mason, born in Tennessee in 1866, became a Baptist minister in 1893 and established a Baptist church in Arkansas. Soon after

this, Mason became discouraged with "the strict Calvinistic teachings of the Baptist faith" and left the denomination in search of a closer relationship with God. He traveled to Mississippi, where he soon came under the influence of Charles P. Jones and other black ministers who advocated sanctification or living a holy life at all times, and divine healing. In 1896 Mason and Jones founded the Church of God, and in 1897 the name of the religious group was changed to the Church of God in Christ (COGIC).

Hearing of the Azusa Mission, Mason visited the revival in 1907 and accepted the tenets of Holiness-Pentecostal doctrine, including speaking in tongues, the washing of the feet of the saints (which was a sign of reverence and respect for those considered holy), and divine healing. The doctrine of speaking in tongues divided Mason and Jones; eventually the latter left COGIC and formed a new religious group.[10]

Jones, born in Georgia in 1865, became a Baptist minister in the late 1880s. By 1894 Jones became dissatisfied with his own personal experience and began adopting the beliefs and practices of the Holiness movement, such as sanctification and the outpouring of the Spirit, while attempting to remain a Baptist preacher. His Baptist brethren (at a regional meeting) voted him out of the Baptist Association. After fasting and praying, Jones responded to his ouster by calling for a convention of all those interested in Holiness. Jones eventually merged with other "sanctified" groups from Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky and formed the Church of Christ Holiness.[11]

Black Holiness-Pentecostal groups were also influenced by the racial attitudes of white Holiness-Pentecostal organizations. The Church of God in Christ started as an interracial group. However, whites who were ordained as COGIC ministers and who did not want to be under black control formed their own Pentecostal group, Assemblies of God in 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas. The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW) and the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas are also good illustrations. Founded as an interracial body sometime during or right after the Azusa movement, and advocating sanctification and speaking in tongues, the PAW experienced a change in racial composition during the 1920s. Blacks, many migrating from the South, joined the ranks of the PAW. Motivated by racism, many white members left and formed a new organization called Pente-

costal Churches, Inc. Although claiming to be an interracial body, by the 1930s the PAW was dominated by blacks.[12]

A racial split caused the formation of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas. During its early history it was an association of the predominantly white sect, the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, formed in the last decade of the nineteenth century. According to census records, Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas was established as an independent body because of the "growing prejudice that began to arise among the people outside" against the association. In 1908 the association and the larger organization agreed to separate.[13]

By the middle of the twentieth century, there were numerous black Holiness-Pentecostal or "sanctified" groups. Some of the most well known were the United Holy Church of America, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Free Church of God and Christ, Church of Christ Holiness USA, Church of God and Saints of Christ, United Holy Church of America, Inc., Mount Calvary Holy Church of America, Inc., the Church of the Living God, House of Prayer for All People, Church of Our Lord Jesus, United Pentecostal Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., Pure Holiness Church of God, Glorious Church of God in Christ Apostolic Faith, Churches of the Apostolic Faith Association, and Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God.[14]

Despite the differences in black Holiness-Pentecostal groups, they adhered to similar doctrine and practiced common rituals. All asserted that the Bible was the highest authority. Like mainstream Protestant denominations, all black Holiness groups claimed that their doctrine, including baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, faith healing, sanctification, and other tenets of Holiness doctrine, was based on the scriptures. Moreover, the Bible was used to justify the restrictive lifestyle that many Holiness groups adopted, including dress codes, dietary restrictions, and the taboo on recreational activities. They attacked practices of mainstream churches, claiming that they were not "scriptural." As the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World note: "The denomination stresses belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures, as the only sufficient rule of faith and practice, and does not practice, and does not emphasize systematic theology." While the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas "utterly oppos-

es the teachings of the so-called Christian Scientists, Spiritualists, Unitarians, Universalists, and the Mormons, it denies as false and unscriptural, Adventism, immorality, antinomianism, annihilation of the wicked, the glorification of the body, and many other modern teachings of the day."[15]

Black Holiness-Pentecostal groups accept the universal Protestant concepts of repentance and conversion with rebirth when a person accepts Jesus as his saviour. They believe that, to be saved, a person must accept the tenets of faith, acknowledge a past sinful life, and resolve to lead a new life. The believer "dies," letting go of his old sinful practices and beliefs, and is reborn as a Christian, beginning a new spiritual life. He is in the world but not part of the world.[16]

Closely related to conversion is the concept of sanctification, a spiritual maturing beyond conversion. In this ongoing process the converted attempt to live a "Holiness-Pentecostal" life, free of sin and the pleasures of this world, and to follow the teachings of the scriptures. The believer becomes "sanctified" or "pure" and prepares for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to save the soul from eternal damnation.[17]

After conversion and sanctification comes the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holiness-Pentecostals claim that the Holy Spirit enters the body of the sanctified. According to Holiness-Pentecostal groups, this is the ultimate level a believer can reach because God has taken over the body as a sacred temple. As scholar and theologian William Lovett asserts: "It is the baptism where Jesus, the baptizer, exercises his sovereign will, control and possession of us through the person of the Holy Spirit." The believer becomes a stronger witness for Christ.[18]

As noted earlier, the manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues (or glossolalia). The practice of glossolalia among black Holiness-Pentecostal groups had its origins in the Azusa movement. Groups such as the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Church of God in Christ, Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, and the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas assert that a sanctified person may be taken over by the Holy Spirit, leading to a trance or an altered state of consciousness. The believer is said to have no control over his body and begins speaking in a foreign language or a language of "angels." The Church of God in Christ contends that

"speaking in new tongues" and the gift of healing, proof of the miracles of God, are a consequence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.[19]

Many other practices and rituals of black Holiness-Pentecostal groups are also very similar. Although the songs of the Holiness-Pentecostal churches were written in the style of hymns and anthems during their early years, they were upbeat, similar in tempo to jazz and the blues, encouraging clapping in time with the music. This music, referred to as gospel music by the late 1920s, promoted participation and recaptured African American Christian rituals practiced during slavery. Call and response, an antiphonal practice, was used (and is still used today). It is a dialogue between singers and their audience. The singer or singers shout, sing, or state a word or phrase, and the congregation responds to the singers by singing, shouting, and dancing. It is not unusual for singers and members of the congregation to claim possession of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. In *Protest and Praise*, Jon Spencer notes that singing in the early black Pentecostal churches was "tongue singing":

> During the Azusa Revival the activity that further differentiated Pentecostalism was "singing in the spirit' or singing in tongues. Indeed tongue-singing had occurred previously among such religious groups as the Shakers and Mormons, but only during the Second Pentecost did it procure a well-wrought interpretation that secured worldwide promulgation through Pentecostal publications.[20]

Early Pentecostals contended that the Holy Spirit filled the church, taking possession of the parishioners and leading them to sing in glossolalia. Jennie Moore, a participant in the Azusa Revival asserted that during the Revival she was led by the "Spirit" and sang in tongues. "I sang under the power of the Spirit in many languages, the interpretation both words and music I had never before heard."[21]

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

> While many churches within the black community sought respectability by turning their backs on the past, banning the shout, discouraging enthusiastic religion, and adopting

> more sedate hymns and refined, concertized versions of the spirituals, the Holiness churches constituted a revitalization movement with their emphasis upon healing, gifts of prophecy, speaking in tongues, spirit possession, and religious dance. Musically, they reached back to the traditions of the slave past and out to the rhythms of the secular black musical world around them. They brought into the church not only the sounds of ragtime, blues and jazz but also the instruments. They accompanied the singing which played a central role in their services with drums, tambourines, triangles, guitars, double basses, saxophones, trumpets, trombones, and whatever else seemed musically appropriate.[22]

However, the music of black Holiness-Pentecostal churches, unlike the slave spirituals which concentrated on the Old Testament, focused on the New Testament and the key role Jesus played in salvation. This was illustrated in Bishop Garfield Thomas Haywood's "Jesus the Son of God," written in 1915:

> God gave Him a ransom, Our souls to recover, Jesus the
> Son of God. His blood made us worthy His Spirit to hover;
> Jesus the Son of God.[23]

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

> There's nothing so precious as Jesus to me;
> Let earth with its treasures be gone;
> I'm rich as can be when my Saviour I see;
> I'm happy with Jesus alone. I'm happy with Jesus alone,
> I'm happy with Jesus alone; Tho poor and deserted,
> thank God,
> I can say I'm happy with Jesus alone.[24]

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

Like Going On," Charles Price Jones's "Jesus Has Made It All Right," R. C. Lawson's "God Is Great in My Soul," and Mrs. S. K. Grimes's "Since the Comforter Came" all reveal the testimonial nature of these songs. Mary Tyler's study of 104 gospel songs of Charles Henry Pace, an early pioneer of Pentecostalism, claimed that many of the songs were personal testimonies as well as personal counsel to listeners.[25]

The lyrics of Mrs. S. K. Grimes's "Jesus" illustrate the bond believers had with their Christ:

> When I was bow'd by distress and grief, Jesus, the Joy of my soul came to my heart and brought sweet relief, Jesus, the Joy of my soul.[26]

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

> If the preacher senses that her words are not getting over, or that there is a lassitude creeping over the congregation, she will cry out, "Help me!" or she will plead, "Holy Ghost, speak through me!" At various times during the sermon a single member or a group of members will rise suddenly and speak in tongues and perhaps dance about either in place or through the hall.[27]

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

to bring me out of the crowd and into the Church, He had to pull me out of the world, He had a way of doing it." As a teenage preacher, Bishop Smallwood Williams wrote that "other times I introduced my evangelistic sermons with a personal testimony of my preteen experience of salvation by saying `After spending twelve long years in sin, God saved me.'"[28]

Along with music and sermons, testimonials are common in Holiness-Pentecostal churches as a means of reinforcing beliefs. During the testimonial period, members take turns speaking to the congregation of the blessings they have received from God and how He has worked miracles. Testimony is also antiphonal, involving a response from the congregation as a member "gives testimony."[29]

Black Holiness-Pentecostal Churches in Brooklyn

As blacks migrated to the North they attempted to create a viable community life, building institutions that expressed their customs and traditions. These included the Holiness-Pentecostal churches. In *Black Chicago*, Allan Spear notes: "Of all aspects of community life, religious activities were most profoundly changed by the migration." According to Spear, migrants established a large number of Holiness-Pentecostal churches: "The migration, however, brought into the city thousands of Negroes accustomed to the informal, demonstrative, preacher-oriented churches of the rural South. Alienated by the formality of the middle-class churches, many of the newcomers organized small congregations that met in stores and houses and that maintained the old-time shouting religion."[30]

Like Chicago and other urban areas with a large influx of black migrants, Brooklyn, New York, became the site of many black Holiness-Pentecostal churches. It is difficult to determine when Holiness-Pentecostal churches began to appear in Brooklyn, since many located in apartments and storefronts went unrecorded. Also these institutions did not leave records. A study published by the Protestant Council of Churches in 1931 noted that the Holiness-Pentecostal churches represented a small segment of Brooklyn's black population in the early 1930s. According to the study, there were at least fifty-four mainline Protestant churches in Brooklyn, with a combined membership of 28,260. The council

listed only three Churches of God in Christ, with an estimated population of 354; three "Pentecostal" churches, also estimated at 354; two Church of God institutions, with a population of 236; and three Church of the Nazarene (a Holiness sect established in 1908), with a combined membership of 242. The number of members belonging to another twenty-six unidentified churches was estimated at a little over two thousand.[31]

When compared to other groups, the number of Holiness-Pentecostal churches was small. By 1952 there were at least thirty-seven black Baptist churches in Brooklyn. Of the thirty-seven, sixteen reported a combined membership of 34,125. The second largest Protestant group among blacks was the African Methodist Episcopal and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches. Of the six AME churches, five reported a combined membership of 5,358 while two of the three AME Zion reported a total membership of 4,456.

However, throughout the 1940s and 1950s the number of Holiness-Pentecostal churches and their membership grew dramatically. Many were located in Bedford-Stuyvesant, including the Life and Time of Jesus Pentecostal Church, St. Mark's Holy Church, St. Paul's Church of Christ Disciples, the Elect Church, Mount Hope United Holy Church of America, the Church of God and Saints on Gates Avenue, the Faith Tabernacle Church of God at 573 Gates Avenue, House of Prayer for All People on Sumpter Street, Jesus Christ's Triumphant Church of the Apostolic Faith on Quincy Street, Glorious Pentecostal True Holiness on Fulton Street, True Holiness on Fulton Street, and the Pentecostal Church of All Nations on Gates Avenue. According to the *Amsterdam News*, by the 1950s Pentecostal churches were the "fastest-growing churches" in Brooklyn.[32]

The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) became the largest Holiness-Pentecostal sect in Brooklyn. In 1952 the Protestant Council of Greater New York listed twelve COGIC institutions, three with a combined membership of 1,250. The first group was established in 1925 by Frank Clemmons, a native of Washington, North Carolina, who had converted to the Church of God in Christ in 1914. Forced to leave school to help support his family, Clemmons soon began preaching. In 1918, after a few months in the army, he moved to Brooklyn and began worshiping with Peter J. F. Bridges, a minister of the Pentecostal group Church of Our Lord

Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith (COOLJC) and a close friend of Clemmons. However, Clemmons was unsatisfied with the doctrine of COOLJC and decided to establish a COGIC church in Brooklyn.[33]

Clemmons and his wife Polly began holding prayer services in their apartment, attracting a loyal following. As the prayer group grew, they moved to Rochester and Dean streets in Bedford-Stuyvesant, renting a storefront. By 1939 the group had raised enough money to purchase a church at 1745 Pacific Street, in the rapidly growing black community of Bed-Stuy.[34]

Three years after the first COGIC, a second COGIC was established. No early records exist for the church, making it difficult to reconstruct its early history. The church was located in a storefront at 29 Lafayette Street. Ulysses Corbett, one of the church's earliest members, recalls a storefront seating only a few dozen. Taffie Brannon, another founding member of the church, recalls that the church was on the ground floor of a walk-up. The founder and pastor of the church, a Reverend Cartwright, lived with his family above the church.[35]

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

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s more COGIC congregations were organized in Brooklyn, including at least two in East New York, one in Brownsville, and another in the Coney Island section. But the majority—nine of the twelve reported by the Protestant Directory of Metropolitan New York—were found in Bedford-Stuyvesant.[37]

The best-known COGIC established in Brooklyn in the 1950s was Frederick D. Washington's Washington Temple. Washington was born in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1903, the son of a minister in the Church of God in Christ. Following in his father's footsteps, Washington began preaching in Arkansas before his teens and became a minister in the COGIC before adulthood. He eventually settled in Montclair, New Jersey, where he became pastor of the

Trinity Temple COGIC from 1933 to 1951. Claiming a divine order to go to Brooklyn, he left Montclair after eighteen years of service and in July 1951 established a canvas cloth tent service on Fulton Street in a vacant lot at the corner of Grand Avenue. Accompanied by his wife Ernestine, a well-known gospel singer, and Alfred Miller, an organist and choral master, Washington held nightly revivals delivering fiery sermons and prayers, "healing" the sick, and baptizing by water those who converted to the faith. Washington's tent, known as the "Sawdust Trail" because of the sawdust covering the floor, grew rapidly. Between July and October 1951 many volunteered to serve as ushers, choir singers, deacons, ministers, and nurses. During its first public baptism, eighty converts appeared, and crowds overflowed into the streets. Eventually, the nightly tent services were filled to capacity, forcing Washington to move first to a storefront at 26 Reid Avenue, and then to another storefront at 1142 Herkimer Street, where Washington paid $110 a week in rent. Through members' efforts, in 1952 Washington was able to buy the Loews Theater on Bedford Avenue and convert it to a house of worship.[38]

Besides the Church of God in Christ, other sanctified groups were established in Brooklyn before World War II. A Jesus Christ's Triumphant Church of the Apostolic Faith at 289 Quincy Street was founded in 1938, a Glorious Pentecostal True Holiness Church in 1932, the Elect Church in 1936, several Churches of God in the late 1920s and early 1930s, a United Holy Church of America, two Daddy Grace's Houses of Prayer for All People in 1932 and 1937, a True Holiness Church, and a Pentecostal church of All Nations, Inc., at 402 Gates Avenue.[39]

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

Unable to finish school, Bridges went to work as a laborer; he married and left the South seeking better economic opportunities. He became involved with R. C. Lawson and the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, although it is unclear when he first joined. Under Lawson he was ordained and established his first church in his Bed-Stuy apartment in the late 1930s. Through tithes, special offerings, and money contributed by Bridges from his salary, the members purchased a church on Marcy Avenue, selecting the name Beulah COOLJC. From this branch other ministers were trained who established churches in Brooklyn.[40]

By the end of World War II, black Holiness-Pentecostal churches in Brooklyn had multiplied. There were several churches of the Apostolic Faith, at least three Apostolic Overcoming Holiness Churches of God, a Church of God and Saints, and a United Holy Church of America, Inc. By the mid-1960s there were four COOLJC and at least a dozen Churches of God. In addition, the number of COGIC institutions had dramatically increased to thirty-one, with twenty-eight located in Bedford-Stuyvesant. There were also new organizations such as the Deliverance Evangelistic Center and the Tabernacle Prayer for All People. Most of these black Holiness-Pentecostals practiced conversion, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues.[41]

Probably the most dynamic Pentecostal minister in Brooklyn during the post–World War II period was Arturo Skinner (1924–1975), who was born in Brooklyn and educated in the New York Public School system. As a young man, he felt trapped in a life of despair and turned to drugs. Skinner claims that while he was walking in the streets of New York and contemplating suicide, God spoke to him, convincing him to dedicate his life to God. Skinner began attending Pentecostal churches, including Mother Rosa Artimus Horn's Pentecostal church on Lenox Avenue in Harlem, but moved to New Jersey. Adopting the style and structure of Pentecostal churches, Skinner established by the late 1940s a Pentecostal church in a Newark apartment. As his congregation grew, Skinner moved to larger quarters, renting storefronts and eventually buying a place of worship in the 1950s and naming it the Deliverance Evangelistic Center. Skinner soon opened another center on Dekalb Avenue in downtown Brooklyn.[42]

Although not affiliated with any major Holiness-Pentecostal groups, Skinner's Deliverance Evangelistic Center borrowed liberally from them. This group advocated sanctification, speaking in tongues, washing of the saints' feet, divine healing, and the Trinity. Prayer services, a testimony period, and gospel singing continued to be a part of every service. Despite the similarities

between Deliverance Evangelistic and other Holiness-Pentecostal groups, the major emphasis and attraction of Skinner's group was divine healing. According to Skinner and his followers, God had given him the special gift of healing. The healer was said to be in direct communication with God, practiced the laying on of hands (the healer has the power to heal by touching the inflicted area), and called on God in an assertive voice to heal the invalid. As proof of his power, Skinner decorated the walls of his church with the wheelchairs, canes, and crutches of the people he claimed to have healed. In his *Nine Gifts of the Spirit*, Skinner asserted, "We do not attempt to negate the ethics of the medical profession. If you don't have faith in God, you had better get a good doctor. We simply believe in God's Word." For Skinner, healing meant that

> life triumphs over death. God bless doctors! but they do not have the final say. They cannot command sight into blinded eyes. Through the means of surgery, cripples have been made to walk; but when God heals, he leaves no scars! Psychiatrists with all their logic, cannot restore minds, or speak peace to a troubled and tormented soul. Nor is there a psychiatrist who can renew a right spirit within man. The Gift of healing is a supernatural expression of the HEALTH OF GOD.[43]

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

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

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

Huie Rogers's Greater Bibleway Temple of Brooklyn was another important Holiness-Pentecostal church. Born in Georgia, Rogers was converted to the Holiness faith at an early age and became a preacher at fourteen. Migrating to Brooklyn, he joined the newly established Bible Way Church. An ambitious man, Rogers rose through the ranks of the organization and in 1959 was appointed president of the Bibleway General Young People's Congress, winning fame as a hard worker. In 1967 Rogers became pastor of the Bibleway Temple on Gates Avenue, which soon became one of the largest Pentecostal churches in Brooklyn.[47]

The Significance of Holiness-Pentecostal Churches in the Black Community

According to interviews, the early members of Holiness-Pentecostal churches were poor. Taffie Brannon, who joined COGIC in the late 1920s, asserted that the early members of her church were poor and had "nowhere to go." Maritcha Harvey, a member of Beulah Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith and daughter of its founder, Peter J. F. Bridges, noted that the first members of her father's church were working-class poor people. "Many did domestic work" and there were "no professional" people in the early church. On many occasions when members of Beulah could not meet the financial obligations of the church, Pas-

tor Bridges would have to assist. According to his daughter, "The church did not take care of him, he took care of the church."[48] Similarly, Frank Clemmons, founder of the First COGIC, had to work at various jobs in order to meet the expenses of his church because the congregation was unable to provide the money. Morry Bryant McGuire, a member of Church of God and Christ on the Hill and daughter of Rev. John Bryant, notes that when she was a young child growing up in the church, many people were poor and suffered greatly during the Depression. She recalled that many members of the church turned to Reverend Bryant for financial assistance, and "he did all that he could in order to help." Many people joining Holiness-Pentecostal churches were poor southern migrants.[49]

Nettie Kennedy was one of those poor migrants joining a Holiness-Pentecostal church in Brooklyn. Born in North Carolina in 1903, Kennedy stopped attending school at the age of nine in order to "go to work on a farm" picking cotton to help support her family. Like many blacks working in the cotton fields, she received less than a dollar a day. Kennedy married in North Carolina and had four children. However, the relationship with her husband deteriorated and she decided to end her marriage. Left alone with four children and little opportunity to advance economically, Kennedy decided to move North. She had relatives living in Philadelphia and New York and had corresponded with them. They had informed her that opportunities were great in the North and race relations were better. Moreover, Kennedy read a rural southern magazine called the *Grit* that informed her of the great opportunities in northern urban centers. Convinced that she could improve her economic condition and get a better education for her four children, Kennedy became part of the large wave of migrants who set out for the North, and she headed for Philadelphia in 1929.[50] Despite her optimism, life was rough in Philadelphia during the Depression. Although she stayed with her aunt, Kennedy found it difficult to make ends meet. She was unable to find a job and soon decided to leave Philadelphia and move to Brooklyn. Kennedy stayed with a cousin on Herkimer Street in Brooklyn and soon found work as a domestic servant. "I was sleeping in white folk's houses and working." Kennedy also joined a small Pentecostal church. "This church was like a family," according to Kennedy. Many members had migrated from

the South and were poor. But they banded together for worship and social events. The members met on Sunday for services and during the week for prayer meetings, choir rehearsal, and club meetings. For Kennedy, the church was an important institution in her life. "I watched children grow up in the church and have children. It means so much."[51]

Brooklyn's black residents, like blacks in other urban areas, had few economic and political choices. Although social and economic conditions handicapped blacks, their plight did not stop them from seeking ways to improve their lives. The creation of the Holiness-Pentecostal churches illustrates a conscious effort by blacks to establish an identity and self-worth. Through these religious institutions, people of African descent created an identity by defining Christianity, asserting important theological issues and doctrine, and expressing a unique view of God, heaven, and earth.

Many contended that they were uncomfortable in the large churches and were unable to express themselves as they did in Southern churches. Their style of worship differed from the mainline churches that many found boring and too formal. U. L. Corbett, born in North Carolina in 1894, migrated to Brooklyn in the 1920s. Corbett, who joined a COGIC on Fulton Street in 1928, asserted that "there is but one Church, the Church of God and Christ. People use the word churches when talking about the other churches but these churches are not real."[52]

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

> The world for Black holiness-pentecostals is viewed as human society without Christ, or may refer to human behavior which reflects fallen man and does not conform to the image of Christ as revealed in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. 1 John 2:15 is the bedrock for the belief concerning the world. Members of the movement are constantly exhorted to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, and if any man love the world, the love of

the Father is not in him." Within Black holiness-pentecostalism the individual is exhorted to "give up worldliness" as a part of the sanctifying process.[53]

For the most part, black Holiness-Pentecostals in Brooklyn, like Holiness-Pentecostals in other communities, cut themselves off from the outside world by rejecting many aspects of urban life including mass culture. They established a strict code of behavior that included aspects of dress, language, and proper etiquette in and outside of church. Holiness-Pentecostals condemned contemporary secular fashion and popular entertainment and were puritanical about speech and behavior. They insisted that at all times members must live a clean life. Samuel Gibson, who joined Arturo Skinner's Deliverance Evangelistic Center in the early 1950s, notes that dancing, gambling, drinking, smoking, and other "pleasures of the World" were rejected by the "saints." According to Gibson, the only dancing allowed in church was dancing to "praise the Lord." Maritcha Harvey lamented over the modern ways of today's members. During the early period of the church, people were faithful to holiness; they did not participate in secular social affairs. "The Apostolic church today is not as strict as it was fifty and sixty years ago. When I got saved, I promised the Lord I would not go to the movies anymore. So I don't go to the movies. Today, there is a change. Some are on the fence. I don't want to be on the fence."[54]

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

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

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

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

This strict code of behavior among black Holiness-Pentecostals revealed a theory of human value, a doctrine that attempted to restore the dignity, self-worth, and humanity of African Americans. In order to gain self-esteem and a sense of humanity, Holiness-Pentecostals attacked a society that measured success by the rational accumulation of goods, education, and job status. In a racist society in which African Americans were unable to meet the demands for success because they were closed out of the avenues to upward social and economic mobility, black Holiness-Pentecostals in Brooklyn, as elsewhere, labeled these criteria demonic. Sinners were attempting to be successful in Satan's camp but failed because they did not put God first. According to black Holiness-Pentecostals, the criteria for success in the larger society was a diversion from true salvation because people were in the world but not of the world. They asserted that by living a sanctified life one could become a saint and part of God's kingdom, the highest achievement for any person.

Moreover, Holiness-Pentecostals stressed virtues that offered a solution to alienation in an urban society. They advocated egalitarianism by asserting that all were equal before God and reached salvation in the same manner, and by stressing a sense of community and belonging, of mutual obligation and commonality.

By rejecting aspects of the dominant culture, Brooklyn's black Pentecostals were attempting to make sense of the world. By not accepting the values of the hegemonic culture, they limited their involvement with the larger community and created their own community. Thus, they helped each other cope with their environment. It helped bring order to their disordered world and provided them with a support system. They gained solidarity with each other.

Mother Taffie Brannon of COGIC on the Hill recalled coming to Brooklyn from the South in the late 1920s with her daughter.

She came upon a Church of God in Christ located in a storefront on Lafayette Avenue led by a Pastor Cartwright. Brannon began attending services and became part of the church community. The pastor and his wife invited Brannon and her daughter to stay with them in the storefront. "The Cartwrights treated me like a daughter," Brannon said.

Brannon noted that the services were always special events. They lifted her out of the humdrum and brought her closer to God and the members of the congregation. Brannon asserts that many people were attracted to the church because they were allowed to participate. Many were poor and had nowhere to go. The church was a home where people could gather, laugh, and have a good time.[57]

Services were held every Sunday morning and during weekdays in the evening. The Sunday service began at 11:00 A.M. and lasted till 3:00 in the afternoon, while the evening services began around 7:30 or 8:00 and sometimes would last until early in the morning. The services included gospel singing, prayer and testimony period, the sermon, and devotional. According to Brannon, the services were lively events involving the participation of the congregation in every aspect of worship. The services helped people escape their problems by joining members in "fellowship."[58]

Because the members of the Beulah Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith met several times a week for services, Maritcha Harvey asserted that the congregation was like a family.[59]

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

> I remember what good times a few saints used to have, old and young. The age didn't mean anything to the young ones, as long as we were saved. That's what was important. We worked together and had a good time in the Lord. At Herkimer Street I remember in the contests we used to have with the Red and Blue teams. What a time on Thanksgiving night when we had the program. When the team raising the most money was announced we would shout for joy in sweet fellowship. No fuss! What we raised helped to purchase 404 Lafayette Avenue in a sweet spirit.[60]

Bessie Smalls, also a member of Lafayette Church of God since 1944, remembered "coming to Lafayette in 1944. I found some beautiful young people consisting of the Yearwoods, Boyces, McConnells, Coulthursts, Turpins, the Marshalls and their children. We had some wonderful times in the Lord. I am still at Lafayette enjoying the Lord."[61]

Some members lived above the churches in crowded quarters, thus helping create additionally close bonds. Darlington Coulthurst recalled living as a child in the same building in which her church was located.

> I remember that Rev. Marshall used to keep his bicycle chained to the radiator on the first floor at 426 Herkimer Street. I used to pass it every day when I came home from school to have my lunch. The Marshall Family lived in the apartment above the church and we lived on the floor above them. My father used to take care of the house. In the winter time Pop would bank the fire at night and in the morning, around 6 a.m., it was my job to fix the fire and close the furnace door so that the heat would come up. I had to go downstairs two flights, pass the door at the back of the church and then go down into the cellar.
>
> I can remember going downstairs on the mornings following a funeral in the church. The body would remain in the church overnight. The open casket was placed near the door that I had to pass on the way to the cellar. I had to go downstairs, but I was scared to go past the open door, scared to be down in the cellar by myself, scared to come back up past the door again, but I was more scared not to take care of the fire because I'd have to answer to my father.[62]

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

The story of Penny Hooks is just one of many examples that Holiness-Pentecostals used to prove how faith in God delivered them from worldly tribulations. It also illustrates their personal

relationship with God. As a young woman living in Harlem in 1962, Hooks was stricken with multiple sclerosis, which left her unable to walk. Her family took Hooks to several doctors, and she was eventually admitted to hospitals for treatment. However, Hooks's condition grew worse. She lost control of her body, and her mental state deteriorated. She had screaming fits and threatened family members with bodily harm. After a brief stay at home, Hooks became deranged and violent and was finally admitted to the Psychiatric Ward at Harlem Hospital.[63]

One Sunday Hooks's mother met an old friend who told her about Arturo Skinner and how God worked through him to heal people. Mildred Hooks traveled to Brooklyn and spoke to Reverend Skinner, who assured her that everything would be all right and then went to the hospital to meet Penny Hooks. On February 21, 1963, Hooks was released from Harlem Hospital, and the Hooks family began attending Sunday services at Deliverance Evangelistic Center in Brooklyn. Eventually Hooks's family began accepting the notion that her suffering was due to spiritual not medical reasons. According to her sister Esther Hooks, "Penny was demon possessed." Skinner used prayer and anointed her with oil. Gradually Hooks began to improve. By October 1963 her mental faculties were restored. She regained her speech and the violent outbursts stopped. By the fall of 1964, Hooks began to walk.[64]

The Penny Hooks story, like other Pentecostal stories of supernatural healing, reveals both an individual and a communal relationship with God. The roots of all human problems are said to be spiritual; therefore, if a person accepts God and attempts to live a sanctified life, God will personally take care of the needs of his saints. At the same time, healing confirms for the community of saints that their doctrine and practices are legitimate. It is a paradigmatic act, confirming that the world described in the Bible is authentic. For Pentecostals there is only good and evil. If one has faith, no matter what the circumstances are, God will deliver. There was no need to turn to the practices of a society that rejected their humanity. As Maritcha Harvey contends, "Healing makes the Bible real."[65]

As noted earlier, Holiness-Pentecostalism stressed an otherworldly doctrine, rejecting many values of the larger community. However, despite Holiness-Pentecostalism's counter hegemonic

features, black Holiness-Pentecostals shared many values with the larger society, including moral orientation, seeing the world in terms of right and wrong, and progress, and a belief that things in the future will improve. Sociologists assert that these are core values shared by the majority of Americans.[66]

Scholars argue that adherence to a strict code of behavior "motivates individuals to work hard and spend their limited resources prudently." The economic success of some Holiness-Pentecostal members suggests that elements of Holiness-Pentecostal beliefs equipped them with values (such as seeking economic independence) that helped them adapt to a capitalist society, thus keeping them from being part of the growing urban underclass. So while sanctified churches rejected "the world," they attempted to instill virtues that were helpful in the dominant society. When Peter J. F. Bridges migrated from Washington, North Carolina, he had only an elementary school education and was relegated to manual labor. However, according to his daughter, he believed that "you could not get rich working for anyone." He saved and invested his money in real estate. Near the end of his life, Bridges owned five houses.[67]

Samuel Gibson of Deliverance Evangelistic Center, although working as an unskilled laborer and as caretaker of the church, managed to save some money and, with a loan from the church, purchased a home in Bedford-Stuyvesant.[68]

Ruby Richards's life also demonstrates this drive for economic independence. Born in 1928, Richards came to New York at an early age with her parents and moved to Bedford-Stuyvesant. Richards grew up in a religious home. Both her parents were ministers and operated a storefront church on Marcy Avenue. However, they lost the church when the city decided to build a public high school in the place where the church stood. Her parents were so discouraged they decided to join another Pentecostal church instead of operating their own. They joined St. Mark's Holy Pentecostal Church founded by Eva Lambert. Richards loved the church and developed a close relationship with Bishop Lambert. She remembers the bishop referring to her as "my little girl."[69]

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

a Baptist, Richards refused to give up the Pentecostal church. Ruby and Alva reached a compromise. They decided they would not interfere in each other's religious practices. Each would attend the church of his or her choice.

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

Because Alva Richards did not earn much as an assistant pastor, he applied for public housing. The application was accepted, and the family moved to a housing project in Brownsville, Brooklyn. But tragedy soon struck the Richards household. In 1960 Alva developed prostate cancer and died less than a year later. Ruby Richards suddenly found herself alone with three children and no income. She decided to look for work. Although her oldest was sixteen, the two girls, eight and six, needed supervision; therefore, she could only take part-time work. In her search for employment, she passed George Gershwin Junior High School on Van Siclin Avenue and Linden Boulevard in Brooklyn and decided to apply for any available position. She was hired as a school aide for four hours a day. It was a hard struggle, but she managed on her small income. While working at Gershwin as a school aide in the late 1970s, Richards learned about a career ladder program for paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals earning college credits would be promoted and receive a raise. Richards decided that this was a great opportunity. Her children were getting older and were able to take care of each other. Richards first applied for a paraprofessional position and was accepted. She worked during the day and attended Brooklyn College in the evening. Eventually Richards earned enough credits and moved from educational assistant to educational associate, the highest level of a paraprofessional.

Richards believes that her decision to involve her children in the Pentecostal church may have set them on the right track. The

structure and discipline demanded by the church and the number of church social activities that the children were involved in helped keep them out of trouble and "focused on positive things." Rudy became a butcher and eventually moved into a supervisory position for the Atlantic and Pacific Company. Debra became a traffic violation patrol officer, and Janet is employed by the Traffic Department as a computer programmer.[70]

The collective effort of members of several congregations to economically improve their churches also reflects the desire among Holiness-Pentecostals to achieve economic independence. In 1931 the Protestant Church Council reported that neither of two Church of God congregations nor the three COGIC churches owned property. However, by 1939 the second COGIC established in Brooklyn was able to purchase a building valued at $20,000. Although the first COGIC did not report property throughout the 1940s, by 1952 the church reported having $25,000 in property. Jesus Christ's Triumphant Church of the Apostolic Faith had had humble beginnings in 1938, but by 1947 it reported having $17,000, and by 1952 it had $35,000 in property. St. Paul's Church of Christ Disciples had also had "humble beginnings," starting out as a storefront operation; but due to the fund-raising efforts and savings of its members, it purchased a theater on Gates Avenue for more than $100,000 and converted it into a church. Between 1938 and 1944 Beulah's pastor, Peter J. F. Bridges, used money from tithes and offerings from his congregation and put a down payment on a church building on Marcy Avenue. The congregation of St. Mark's Holy Church managed to raise $7,000 in four weeks in order to pay off the remainder of its mortgage.[71]

These illustrations of individual and collective efforts, avoidance of worldly pleasures, and stress on discipline suggest that Holiness-Pentecostals developed an appreciation for hard work, a desire for economic independence, and respect for ownership. This in turn created a culture that helped black Holiness-Pentecostals adjust to the demands of the larger society and to avoid becoming members of a socioeconomic underclass increasingly identified by its involvement in violent crime and a cycle of unwed pregnancies and welfare dependency.

The search for economic independence among black Holiness-Pentecostal church members was not in contradiction to the

notion of human value. The search for economic independence never interfered with the goals of being saved and maintaining the good of the larger church community. In fact, it complemented them. When church members acted collectively to become independent, it was in order to be able to be in complete control of a place of worship. The ownership of a church removed the dependency on others outside of their community who could decide their fate. In addition, individual efforts to be personally independent were not primary objectives of Holiness-Pentecostals. They saw it as part of their obligation to remain morally upright and protected from temptation. If one is dependent, it leaves the person vulnerable to the temptations of the world. According to Pentecostals, when people put luxury and extravagance before God and use it to measure success, they are committing sin.

In his study of an urban Pentecostal church, Melvin Williams notes that it "serves as a place where members take refuge from the world among familiar faces. It is a source of identity and a matrix of interaction for the members it recruits. It is a subculture that creates and transmits symbols and enforces standards of belief and behavior." Williams goes on to note that, besides conferring social status, the Pentecostal church gives "meaning, order and style to its members' lives, and provides for social mobility and social rewards within its confines."[72]

What Williams found is also true of the black Holiness-Pentecostal churches of Brooklyn. These institutions should not be seen as inconsequential, evidence of social disorder, or as Joseph Washington asserts, " exhibit little or no ability to contribute to the religious dimension of the Negro."[73] Like the black mainline churches, black Holiness-Pentecostal churches were used by both black men and women to define their lives and the world despite the attempt by the larger society to depict people of African origins as savages or brutes, incapable of improving their lives. Black people of Brooklyn, like African Americans in other urban areas, used black Holiness-Pentecostal churches to express their humanity and protect themselves against racism. They see the world as a hostile place, in Satan's camp. This worldview is a shield against the harsh realities of the larger society. In addition, people who are denied the social and economic mobility valued

by the larger society seek alternative ways of improving themselves. People in the Pentecostal churches of Brooklyn have gathered together for support, making their environment meaningful and stable. These churches provide what Williams contends is a meaningful human interaction. Holiness-Pentecostal churches established "new forms of community life relevant to the residents' present social and economic plight. Responding to the threat of a fraudulent, remote, or incomprehensible social order which is beyond real hope or desire and invites apathy, boredom, and even hostility, these Blacks are creating bounded groups which give them a stake in a social order."[74] Thus, black Holiness-Pentecostal culture opposed the racist images and oppressive practices of the dominant order that hedged in so many working-class blacks.