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A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXAMINING THE LEADERSHIP
OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE BLACK MINISTERIAL
ALLIANCE OF GREATER BOSTON

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED BY

Joanne Lynne Allen-Willoughby, M.A.

In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

LESLEY UNIVERSITY
May 2004

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I DEDICATE THIS IN LOVING MEMORY
OF THOSE THAT
LED THE WAY, AND GUIDE MY PATH:

William H. Allen
Sarah D. Allen
Susan A. Boatswain Foster
Clovis A. Foster
Martha U. Greer
Ada Linzey
Revea Davis Hunter
Mabel Callender
Erving A. Foster
Doretha A. Foster
Kenneth Foster
Marques T. Foster
Charlotte Foster Parris
Floria Allen Julian Callender
Charlotte Taylor
James Foster

I thank you for your faith, leadership and love, which remain present in my life.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who have helped me achieve this goal. This journey was long, bumpy, and tested me, my family, and my friendships in ways I did not anticipate. Through it all I was inspired by their love and belief in me.

I would first like to acknowledge the profound blessing of having God in my life. His grace allowed me to complete this journey intact.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my parents Joseph H. Allen and Gwendolyn L. Foster Allen. Their strength, love, and support have been, and continue to be the foundation of my life. My sister, Susan D. Allen who has mentored me and been a role model to me throughout my life. My mother-in-Law, Susan Fenton Willoughby who serves as a model for me. My sons Daishawn Joseph Allen Willoughby, Michael Kenneth Allen Willoughby and my niece Tameika Greer Allen whose spirit and never ending energy keep me inspired and focus me. My Aunts Ellenor H. Allen, Ida Callender Foster, Constance Callender and Uncle Fredrick Foster who unconditionally believe in me. My husband Gerald M. F. Willoughby whose love and commitment to our family and me enabled me to complete this journey.

A special thank you to my friend and sister, Dr. Sandras M. Barnes who began this journey with me and never left my side. Thanks to my doctoral committee Dr. William Dandridge, Dr. Donald Brown and Dr. Marjorie Jones for challenging me and supporting me.

Finally, I thank the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston for allowing me the opportunity to work with them.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine leadership in the faith-based community from the perspective of six members of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston. Using portraiture methodology the research qualitatively examined leadership through the lived experiences of four male, and two female members of the board by:

- defining leadership.
- examining the role of the Black Church as an institution.
- investigating the personal and professional influences that affect leadership.
- examining the role the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston as an organization has on ones leadership.
- determining what, in terms of leadership, led to development of the Victory Generation After-School Program.

The study found common treads, which formed the leadership of these six men and women, and made recommendation on how the faith-based community can enhance its role in the development of leaders and its leadership.

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

This chapter provides the historical context for this study. The study will qualitatively examine the leadership of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance (BMA) of Greater Boston as both leaders of the BMA and as individuals in leadership positions.

People of African descent have resided in North America for over 400 years. Although their mostly forced arrival in this country culminated in their enslavement, the brain trust, educational values, and faith in a higher power which allowed them to create the great civilizations of Africa continues to manifest themselves then and now.

Throughout history, people of African descent residing in North America have held two fundamental beliefs: first, that through education they could uplift themselves and raise their future generations up from poverty, and second, that their faith in God would enable them to rise above any obstacles. This combination of beliefs sustained them through slavery and other forms of oppression with the mental and physical resilience, which empowered them. The development of faith-based organizations and schools was is born of this impetus for survival and proved a major force in charting and maintaining this resilience.

Faith-based schools were established early in the history of Blacks in America. Enslaved and free people used churches and safe spaces throughout the North and South to learn to read and write. One example of early elementary and secondary education is The Piney Woods School, established in 1901. The Piney Woods School was born deep

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in the woods, when one day Laurence C. Jones agreed to teach a half-grown, barefoot boy to read. The next day, the young boy not only arrived eager for his second lesson, but also brought two friends. Jones welcomed the newcomers and began the day's lesson by singing the doxology, *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*. Piney Woods School survives as one of three historically Black boarding schools in America (http://www.pineywoods.org). African traditions and influences reinforced most, if not all, of these schools. Many of these faith-based, church site schools have grown and are now recognized as some of the most prestigious Historically Black Colleges.

Morehouse College, established in 1867 just two years after the Civil War ended, is another example of an educational institution developed in the faith-based community. Originally named Augusta Institute, it was founded in the basement of Springfield Baptist Church in Augusta, GA. As with many historically Black institutions Morehouse College, is responsible for the nurturing and development of much of the Black leadership within the faith-based community. (http://www.morehouse.edu)

Historically, Black community has deeply valued and sought out education. However, statistics on the academic achievement of Black children in the year 2002 show that the goal of a quality education may be unattainable for many. The following charts show the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test scores reported by the City of Boston for the year 2002. The two Boston Public Schools (BPS) represented are not anomalies; they reflect a majority of the City's school scores. It should be noted that these scores represent all students within the Boston Public School system, comprised of 85% students of color, 48% Black and 15% who identify themselves as white. (http://www.Bostonk12.ma.us)

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MCAS Test Scores as Reported by the Boston Public School

Department 2002

Boston: Madison Park High School								
Grade/ Subject	Students tested	% Advanced	% Proficient	% Needs improving	% Failed (tested)	% Failed (absent)	Scaled score	Rank
10th English	418	0	4	26	57	13	218	321 of 341
10th Math	423	0	1	15	75	9	215	314 of 341
Boston: Phyllis Wheatley Middle School								
Grade/ Subject	Students tested	% Advanced	% Proficient	% Needs improving	% Failed (tested)	% Failed (absent)	Scaled score	Rank
6th Math	126	0	1	15	84	0	213	588 of 60
7th English	81	0	14	52	30	5	226	430 of 45
8th Math	92	1	7	26	64	2	218	393 of 45
8th History	92	0	0	14	84	2	214	398 of 45

(http://www.boston.com/education/macas/scores200/boston.htm)

As the test scores indicate, many of the public schools that Black children attend have not adequately met the academic and social needs of the children and families they are meant to serve. The system has also failed to positively impact these children's, abilities to master the necessary skill sets to take the standardized test that will ultimately determine their future. The children's inability to master these skills coupled with other social influences; find many in the Black community at an academic, social and economic disadvantage. This is especially true of Black youth.

In a 1950 study conducted by the University of Michigan, and repeated in 1980 and 1994, researchers found the following factors to be major influences in the lives of Black children. (http:www.meeproductions.com) The study looked at five areas of

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influence: home, school, church, peers, and television to determine how these impacted the children's lives.

The chart below outlines their findings:

1950	1980	1994
1. Home	1. Home	1. Peers
2. School	2. Peers	2. Rap Music
3. Church	3. Television	3. Television
4. Peers	4. School	4. Home
5. Television	5. Church	5. School

The 1994 study indicates that the major influences in the lives of Black children shifted from home to peers and television. This shift is significant because many homes in the Black Community no longer include extended families, which provided the nurturing necessary for children to develop in accordance with the culturally relevant norms set by society. These results also demonstrate the influential power of the media and peer groups on today's youth. If we take into account the fact that much of what young Black children relate to on television or hear on the radio is negative, it stands to reason that they may begin to view themselves and their peers in a negative manner. What is most significant in terms of this 1994 research is the fact that the Church (a major influence in African American society since 1620) has lost its position as one of the top five influences in the Black community only to be replaced by Rap music. In the past, the "Black Church" provided spiritual, emotional, and social stability to the Black community through its ministry and social activism. Social Activism, such as the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement and social policy issues addressed by the

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Nation of Islam are only the tip of the iceberg in terms of grassroots movements that changed the course of American Society (http://www.meeproductions.com).

Though the findings in the Michigan study demonstrate that the church no longer has a major influence on the daily lives of the majority of Black children, the study does not indicate that Black children no longer believe in God. The study does, however, bring into question the impact of the religious community and its leadership (the Church) on the social and educational outcomes of Black youth.

After several years of research on the impact of education on children of color in the city of Boston several members of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance, (a multi-dimensional group of 70-plus pastors from the greater Boston area, all of whom hold individual memberships to the organization), established the Victory Generation After-School Program (VGASP). The acknowledgement of their individual membership and the fact that the decision to develop the program was made by a small group of Executive Board members are important because these facts speak to the organization's decision-making process. The purpose of VGASP was to provide a quality academic, faith–based, after-school program for children and families within the Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan neighborhoods of Boston. The program was also created as a supplement to the public school system.

As a result of nationwide political mandates for all children to meet certain academic standards (President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" Policy), leaders within Boston's academic community have focused the educational debate on low MCAS scores among Black youth. In addition, they identify truancy, lack of parent involvement, and behavioral issues as the reason Black students do not achieve social and academic

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success. (Personal Communication, Cox, 2001) Children within the Black community are dropping out of school and failing out of the educational system at an alarming rate. Current MCAS scores indicate that this year, 2003, hundreds of students of color will leave school without high school diplomas. Even more disturbing is the fact that an estimated 1,400 students from the predominately Black neighborhoods of Boston will drop out of the Boston Public School system in 2003. (Extra Credit, 2001, p 4).

The graph below, taken from a report prepared by the Boston Public School Department (2001), shows that although test scores have risen slightly for 10th graders since testing began in 1998, 70% of all students are either failing or need academic improvement.

Grade 10 Performance Level Results 1998 to 2001

Failing   Passing

English Language Arts

Year	Failing	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Advanced
2001	40%	30%	22%	9%
2000	56%	22%	18%	4%
1999	55%	26%	17%	2%
1998	57%	24%	17%	1%

Mathematics

Year	Failing	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Advanced
2001	47%	25%	15%	13%
2000	66%	12%	11%	11%
1999	73%	12%	9%	6%
1998	75%	13%	10%	3%
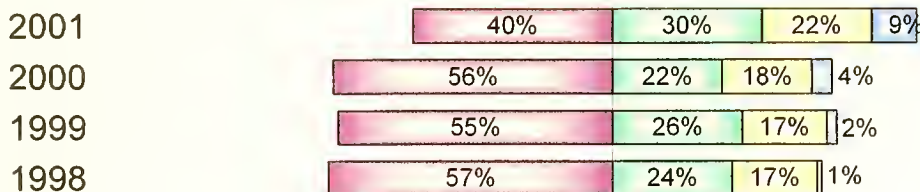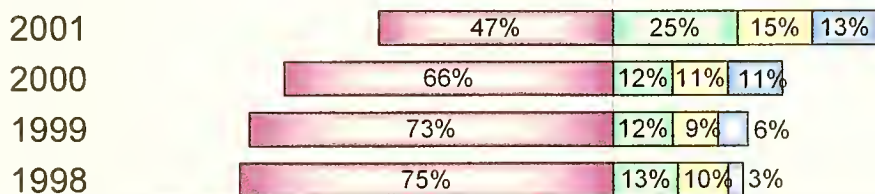
☐ Failing   ☐ Needs Improvement   ☐ Proficient   ☐ Advanced

(http:// bostonk12.ma.us)

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As a result of these scores and other educational challenges confronting the City of Boston, the BMA determined that its role in educational reform would be to develop a holistic, multi-site, faith-based after-school program that would focus on the academic needs of the children and families in the Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan neighborhoods of Boston. These three communities were chosen because of low socio-economic status, a predominately Black population and recent standardized test results (MCAS). Without intervention the BMA recognized that the children in these communities would not reach their academic potential.

At the time of the program's inception, the BMA believed that a holistic, faith-based education was one viable way to re-focus young Black students to view themselves as positive resources for their communities and society as a whole. (Dare Mighty Things, 1999) The goal was to expose students to a positive educational experience and belief system that would place them, their families and their community at the center of their, intellectual and spiritual being. The program acknowledged the significant contributions of the whole self (mind, body and soul), and made the students and their future a vital part of the success of our society. Students were encouraged to make a spiritual and moral connection with God, family, community, and themselves.

The research that follows is a qualitative study that examines the leadership of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance as individuals and as an organization. In doing so, it explores the following questions:

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Statement of Research Questions:

1. How has the history of the leadership role of the Black Church as an institution shaped the leaders of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston as individuals and as a group?

2. What manifested itself in the life experiences of the individual leaders of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, which directed them, as a body to develop an educational initiative such as the Victory Generation After-School Program?

For the purpose of this study the following terms will be defined as follows:

Black Church- a collective name for a myriad of Christian churches and denominations African-Americans created to worship as they please." (Lutz, 2001, p.11) In using this term scholars have agreed that the term "Black Church" or prior to the 1960's, "Negro Church," refers to seven major historical denominations: the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.); the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (A.M.E.Z); the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (C.M.E.); the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Incorporated (N.B.C.); the National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated (NBCA); the Progressive National Baptist Convention (P.N.B.C.); and the Church of God In Christ (CO.G.I.C.). (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990, p.1)

Leadership- ability to influence the behavior of others toward a group goal by setting a clear vision and communicating that vision in a way that is respectful, thereby allowing those who follow to do so with a clear understanding of their freedom.

Faith-based – A faith-based program founded on "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". Hebrews 11:1 (King James Version of the Bible). It seeks to build upon the scriptural belief that the impossible can be accomplished through practice in an active faith in God.

Academically Focused – Based on a curriculum designed to enrich the child's day school academic experience through culturally relevant material that meets the academic grade standards set by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Holistic – To acknowledge and incorporate one's internal and external being (social, emotional, spiritual, and economic) to create a life-long strategy for success.

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Internalized Racism- Occurs when people targeted by racism are, against their will, coerced and pressured to agree with the distortion of racism. The targets of racism come to mistrust oneself and other members of the group in the same ways that they have been mistreated. (http://rc.org/user)

This study examines in depth how the executive leadership of the BMA determined to create such a program personally, professionally and collectively and how the history of the Black Church as an institution influenced that decision. The study also touches on some external factors that influenced the project.

This study was conducted using the portraiture method of qualitative research. Interviews were conducted with six members of the BMA Executive Board. Through their roles as board members, or their interests in education, these members played a direct role in the BMA's decision to create the Victory Generation After-School Program. The ensuing interview questions and discussions allowed the subjects and the interviewer to engage in a dialogue designed to capture the richness, complexity, and full dimensionality of human experience in a social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the interviewer and the subject as they negotiated the shared experience. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p10).

The use of a portraiture methodology allows both the voice of the interviewer and the subject to be heard as essential parts of the evaluative process. This also allows the interviewer's voice to become an authentic part of the research.

As part of this approach, I used open-ended questions to encourage more in-depth responses and to capture the lived-experiences of the subjects. The major tasks of this methodology are to explore and build on the participant's responses, and to get historical

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as well as current perspectives on their participation in a faith–based, after-school program. In following the portraiture methodology, I conducted one 90- minute interview with each pastor: each interview focused on the pastors' life experiences, the factors leading to their participation in the VGASP, and their role within the VGASP.

The next four chapters offer the following: Chapter Two, a literature review focusing on the role of the church in the education of Black Americans and examining the church's role in the social development of people of African descent (focusing on the pre-Civil war, post-Civil War (1900 –1950) and 1950 through 2002). Chapter Three describes the methodology. Chapter Four profiles the executive leadership of the BMA, and Chapter Five presents the findings, implications, and recommendations for organizations such as the Black Ministerial Alliance.

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Chapter 2

The Role of the Black Church as an Institution

In the Education of Black Americans

Literature Review

Introduction

The Black Church's role as an institution in educating Black Americans has a long and unprecedented history. To fully appreciate the relationship of the church and the education of Black people one must view the term "education" in its broadest definition. The *Webster's II New College Dictionary*, 1999 edition defines Education as the knowledge or skills obtained or developed by the exposure to information. For the purposes of this study one must go further and define "education" as a tool through which one advances him/herself spiritually, intellectually, and socially. This broad interpretation of education and the Pastor's role in the social and spiritual education of his or her flock set the framework for social change within American society and in the educational advancement of the Black community.

In a survey conducted by C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya for their book, The Black Church in the African American Experience (1990), Black clergy responded to the questions regarding their ministry and the mission of the Black church as follows:

> One cleric said: Black people have different needs; different
> concepts of what the church ought to do. Since we are oppressed
> (we) have to deal with more than what religion means. We have to
> deal with particular needs." "Black folk have a different religious
> orientation from white folks. White folks work from the building
> of their educational departments, but black folk operate from the

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pulpit as great preaching stations. (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990, p.170)

Another pastor stressed the independence of the Black Church and its central role in the community. The Christian ministry in a Black denomination was different, said one Methodist preacher:

> Because of what the church means to the community as a center for Black caring and social-political nurturing.... It is the one 'free' institution in the Black community and lends the pastor the freedom to respond to problems and issues without fear. (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990, p.170)

Black Americans view the church and education individually and collectively as their salvation. In many cases, pastors and leaders within the church community set the social and political agenda for the community and the nation. In terms of the intellectual or academic enrichment of the community, it is a common perception that the Black Church and its leadership were the vanguards of success. From its inception, the mission of the Black Church utilized the word of God as an instrument of literary instruction. Members would receive and learn the word of God.

The Black Church, in its role as a cultural and community center, has served as an educational resource and the foundation from which social activism and political change within the Black and mainstream communities were fertilized and took root. The Black Church in many instances throughout the 20th century informed the mainstream community of the social ills and injustices that plague our nation. Although most churches did not and do not have the same formal educational activities as schools (with the exception of Sunday School), they teach and inform their congregations of pertinent community and world events through their ministries. The ministries feed the spiritual, social, and intellectual needs of those they serve.

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In much narrower terms, people of African descent in this country have used both the church and the educational system to advance themselves spiritually and intellectually. The Bible was used not only to deliver the word of God, but as a textbook from which they expanded their academic knowledge base. Black Americans became literate through reading the word of God.

This review of the literature will look at the Black Church's role in the education of Black America during the time period of Pre-Civil War, Reconstruction, Great Migration and the Civil Rights Movement, and give examples of the church's current role.

Pre-Civil War

To fully appreciate the relationship of the Black Church and education, (in terms of the academic and social enlightenment of its members) one must understand the foundation on which the "Black Church" was created. One must also fully understand how and why the Black population within the United States of America was created. The majority of Blacks first came to America as slaves. *"Slavery, the state of servitude as the property of a slaveholder or household."* (Webster 1999)

The White Church

The slave trade of the 17th and 18th centuries was the most important source of European wealth. (Lutz, 2001, p.9) The shipment of human cargo from the continent of Africa to the Western Hemisphere and the Northern and Southern parts of the United

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States (as well as other parts of the world) supplied free labor to work large and small farms, and provided the foundation for the economy of the United States.

Slavery was the stage on which the African-American community was introduced to America and Christianity. Although most slave masters considered themselves to be "good Christians", the institution of slavery was nonetheless a harsh reality for enslaved African-Americans. White Christian slaveholders' moral and spiritual justification of slavery is illustrated by a Christian master in his speech to a group of enslaved African-Americans:

> You must not think hard of me for telling you the truth
> about yourself and the Whites. The great God above
> has made you for the benefit of the Whiteman, who is
> your lawmaker and lawgiver... You must understand
> you are just the same as the ox, horse, or mule, made
> for the use of the Whiteman and for no other
> purpose... If you don't do what is right by me, why,
> my duty is to kill you... That is the law that you must
> go by." (Hopkins, 2000, p.53)

The process of enslaving people of African descent was more than just the physical act; it was a process of dehumanization. This dehumanization was essential not only for the slaves, but for the slaveholders. In order to justify the conflict/ tension between slavery and one's Christian beliefs, slaveholders had to mentally and emotionally dehumanize African people for themselves. The dehumanizing of the African enabled the slave masters to view slavery as God's will.

These newly enslaved people were deliberately denied verbal and written means of communication (a means of not educating). They were also denied their dignity, their ability to think for themselves, and their ability to see themselves as a social unit. A study conducted by Philip D. Curtain (1969) estimates that some nine and one half million

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Africans were captured from Africa and forced to live as slaves in the Caribbean and the Americas. (Lutz, 2001, p.9) These nine and one half million Africans were captured, and herded together in "baracoons"[1] on their home soil where the process of dismantling their complex culture and familiar social customs began. After being purchased, they were crammed into the holds of ships with barely enough room to lie down. They were shackled and shipped as cargo to America. On most shipments, which took weeks, and in some cases months, more than half of the human cargo died in transport. The survivors arrived at their American destination and were sold to large and small farms throughout the North and South. The close knit family and tribal associations that had developed over the centuries--and had created some of the greatest civilizations mankind has ever known--were destroyed through a system which decentralized family units, language, culture and religious customs.

Although slavery continued in the United States well into the 19th century, Northern Blacks fared slightly better than their Southern counterparts. Many Northern Blacks were able to buy their freedom and/or marry a freed Black, which insured their freedom. Others were born into freedom to freed Black parents or were the offspring of bi-racial relationships, and in some cases freed as children by their white fathers. By the end of the 18th century all states north of Delaware had passed legislation-emancipating slaves. This legislation dismantled slavery in the North as it was originally designed in this country and gave root to a climate in which the Black church flourished.

---

[1] Concentration camp

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The Black Church

During this time the "Black Church" as an institution focused its membership on the enlightenment to the word of God rather than extensive teachings as a prerequisite for salvation. Itinerant preachers emphasized the development of an experience with God. (Lutz 2001, p.16) One used the Bible as a textbook to understand the word of God as well as a learning tool. The message that these religious leaders sent to their membership was clear: their personal relationship with Jesus as the Son of God spoke to their triumph over slavery, renewed their self-worth and transcended the power of their earthly master which was essential to their mental stability.

Black religious scholars have consistently underscored the fact that Black churches were one of the few stable and coherent institutions to emerge from slavery. Slaves not only worshipped with their masters or under the conditions of their masters' control in the North and South during slavery, they held secret, independent worship services in the backwoods and bayous of plantations -- and sometimes in their own slave quarters: a phenomenon which E. Franklin Frazier called the "invisible institution". (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990) These invisible institutions allowed, African-Americans for the first, time to interpret the word of God in a way that legitimized their existence and determined their future. These institutions were unlike the church system designed by whites for slaves, a system that intended to socialize the entire race into an abject, groveling state of absolute obedience. It instilled the illusion of the white race as God on earth (Hopkins, 2000, p.135).

Founded in 1794, the Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was such an "invisible institution". Created from the Free African Society and mutual aid

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society (founded by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones in 1787), the church was instrumental in developing the first Black community in Philadelphia. Mother Zion and Abyssinian Baptist in (New York City) and First African Baptist Church of Boston were also instrumental in the development of Black communities in their respective cities. Thomas Paul, an African American preacher from New Hampshire, established the First Baptist Church of Boston in August of 1805. The church later became known as the African Meeting House and moved from the West End of Boston to the Beacon Hill section of Boston in 1806, where it stands today. The church was not only a religious institution -- it served as a school, a community center, and a center for cultural expression for the Black community.

Similarly, in Boston, the Black church served as the community's foundation, equipped with schools, banks, insurance companies and low-income housing. Not only did the church give birth to these institutions, it provided an academy and an arena for political activities; it nurtured young people's talent for music, drama, and art. E. Franklin Frazier's aptly descriptive phrase, "nation within a nation," pointed to these multifarious levels of community involvement in the Black Church, as well as the traditional concerns of worship, moral nurture, education and social control. (Lincoln & Mamiya 1990, p. 8) By exposing its membership to these experiences, the church revealed the talents and potential of a new generation.

This period, coined the "Great Awakening" by Jonathan Edward in the 1730's, was the first of two religious waves in the Black community. The "Great Awakening" took place in the North, and the "Second Great Awakening" then arrived in the South during the late 1780's setting the stage for Blacks to separate from their white religious

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counterparts and to develop churches and communities which would meet the religious and social needs of the newly freed and soon to be freed Blacks.

The term "Black Church" does not refer to any one institution; instead it is a collective name for a myriad of Christian churches and denominations African-Americans created to allow them the religious freedoms to worship as they please. (Lutz, 2001, p.11) In using this term, scholars have agreed that the term "Black Church" (or prior to the 1960's "Negro Church") refers to seven major historical denominations: the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church; the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E.Z.) Church; the Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church; the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Incorporated (NBC); the National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated (NBCA); the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC); and the Church of God In Christ (COGIC). (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, p.1) All of these churches were, and are currently, Black controlled in terms of leadership and membership. Although formal education in most cases within the church was reserved for the clergy, the pastoral message of one's relationship with God provided the catalyst to create formal and informal education throughout the newly formed Black communities.

Reconstruction

It is difficult to grasp fully the vital importance of the institution of the organized church in the lives of Blacks during the era between the Civil War and the turn of the 20th century. There were no longer laws to prevent Black preachers from preaching or that required whites to supervise Black services. The Black Church was the sole institution

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that belonged completely to African-Americans; it became their cultural, social, and political center. (Lutz, 2001, p.25)

After the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 and the end of the Civil War in 1865, Black Americans faced a profound problem. For the most part they were uneducated, displaced, and "free" in a country whose majority-- white citizenry--did not see them as equals. In the months that followed the war, African-Americans held several conventions in the North and South to improve their conditions: fair wages, measures for the relief of suffering, and the abolition of the Black Codes, laws that restricted the civil rights of ex-slaves. (Lutz, 2001, p.24)

Even though the white leadership in the South moved very little on this issue private organizations in the North coerced Congress to send financial support to Blacks in the South. As a result of this aid the Freedmen's Bureau was established. The Bureau provided medical services, developed schools, and created a contractual system of payment for work between ex-slaves and their employers.

The Freedmen's Bureau made great strides in creating educational opportunities for Blacks. Many Black teachers came from the North to set up new schools. These included day schools, Sunday schools, industrial schools, and colleges. In addition to the work of the Freedmen's Bureau, the North's Black churches established schools. (Lutz 2001) In 1808, the African Meeting House of Boston, the oldest Black Church structure still standing in the United States, opened its doors to the city's first Black grammar school. The school was originally housed in the home of Prince Hall in the Beacon Hill section of Boston, and moved to its new location to accommodate the growing population of school-aged Black children. The Hall school was established after an eleven-year

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struggle with the Massachusetts Legislature. The Legislature consistently denied Black parents the right for their children to attend public schools or to open separate schools funded by the state.

In addition to social activism, Blacks became very involved in the electoral process, sending members from newly formed communities to the congress and the senate. In South Carolina, the first legislature following the war was made up of 87 Blacks and 40 whites. South Carolina also had two Black Lieutenant Governors and two Black speakers of the house. (Lutz, 2001, p.27) Many of the men that formed this new political base were members of the clergy.

By 1876, the political and social gains made by Blacks began to unravel. In the national election, the results in Florida, South Carolina and Louisiana were contested because of the political gains made by the Black community. To elect a president, the Republican Party agreed that if the South allowed Rutherford B. Hayes's election to the presidency, he would in turn dismantle the gains made by Blacks in the South by removing federal troops and leaving the South to itself.

In 1883 the Supreme Court outlawed the Civil Rights Act of 1875, allowing southern states the right to ban Blacks from white hotels, restaurants, and theaters. Southern states also enacted "Jim Crow" laws. As a result of new legislation requiring the segregation of Blacks and Whites, separate schools and public facilities were established throughout the South.

It should be noted that while the Republican Party and the Supreme Court outlawed the legislative gains made by Blacks, the first and second Morrill Act Land-

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Grants were established, paving the way for Black Colleges to be established. These

Land-Grants stated:

> **First Morrill Act (1862)** -- An act donating public lands to several states
> and territories to provide colleges for the benefit of teaching agriculture
> and mechanic arts.
> **Amendment to the First Morrill Act (1866)** -- An act to extend the time
> within which the provisions of said act shall be accepted and such colleges
> established.
> **Second Morrill Act (1890)** -- An act to apply a portion of the proceeds of
> the public lands to the more complete endowment and support of the
> Black colleges for the benefit of agriculture and mechanic arts established
> under the provisions of an act of Congress approved July 1862.
> *http://www.federalgrants.net*

As previously stated, education in the African-American experience is closely

intertwined (and in some cases inextricable) with religion. Although education was tied

initially to the learning of the Bible and moral teachings from the Scripture, (with a brief

taste of political and economic power), Blacks began to view education as a way of

advancing themselves both individually and collectively as a people.

Reconstruction enabled Northern teachers sent by church organizations to move

South and to provide education to the children and adults of the region. In addition,

many of the Black men who graduated from denominational colleges in the North

returned to their communities to build schools and churches. As a result of newly passed

legislation, this commitment to the community was essential because little public funding

was allotted to communities for the education of Black children.

The commitment of the Black Church and its leadership to educate Black children

became even more crucial in 1896 when the Supreme Court ruled on the Plessy vs.

Ferguson case. The court's decision stated that the separation of facilities for Blacks and

Whites was legal as long as they were equal. The impact of this decision was felt deeply

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in all areas of public life in the South. Hospitals were separate, trains and buses were separated by seating, and most noticeably schools were separate-- and in most cases, not equally. As a response, the Black church took the lead in providing space and trained staff to educate the children of their communities.

With the end of Reconstruction and the enactment of new laws and Supreme Court decisions, African-American political leaders returned to their communities. These past preachers who had formed the political leadership during Reconstruction returned to their communities as headmasters, college presidents, and pastors. The skills gained through their experiences in politics enriched the church community and made it politically astute and academically advanced. The importance of the church as an organization grew, changing what was once known as the "invisible institution" to a "nation within a nation". (Lincoln & Mamiya 1990, p.8)

The Great Migration

Novelist Richard Wright wrote in his book *12 Million Black Voices*: "It is only when we are within the walls of our church that we are wholly ourselves, that we keep alive a sense of our personalities in relation to the total world in which we live" (Lutz 2001 p. 51). This statement spoke to the feelings of Northern and Southern Blacks during this time period.

With the start of World War I, European laborers returned to Europe in record numbers to help their countrymen fight the war. Northern industries whose labor force was mostly European, suddenly found itself in the midst of a labor shortage. For Black Americans, Europeans' migration to their mother countries offered an opportunity to

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move North and improve their circumstances through employment and education. During the years of the first Great Migration from 1910–1930, 1.2 million Blacks left the South. The steady trickle of 10,000 migrants yearly prior to 1910 became a flood, changing the Northern Black Church's numerical and social population.

This migration had an impact on both the Northern and Southern Black Church and community. Leaders within the Black community were divided on how and why the migration should happen. Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois were the most vocal in regards to this phenomenon were. Washington felt it was dangerous for Blacks to leave their homelands in the South and venture North on the mere promise of an unknown future. This was in direct contrast to DuBois, who felt that the South had mistreated its Black citizenry and their only recourse was to leave for a better life. DuBois argued that a mass exodus was the "only effective protest that the Negroes in masse can make against lynching and disfranchisement." (Lutz, 2001, p.40)

The war also had a dramatic affect on the psyche of the Black men who fought in it. Black solders returned to America feeling that they had proven themselves to be true Americans. They returned home believing that they had fought for, and won, equality for themselves and their people. What they found, from many Whites, however, was the resentment and scorn they hoped was a thing of the past. These resentments manifested in the insurgence of lynching and rise of the Ku Klux Klan, which grew in membership to over 10,000 people.

These factors played a dramatic role in redefining the role of Black's in America. The end of the war and the migration of Blacks from the South significantly lessened the Black labor force. Combined with the growing Black population in the North, cities were

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ill equipped to meet the employment needs of its population due to the down turn in industry. As a result, riots erupted in cities throughout the North and South. The years following the end of World War 1 became some of the most violent times in the history of America.

As a response to the violence, the Black Church and its leadership established social action organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League. Heavily influenced by the church, both organizations educated the community about the social concerns of the day. Most organizational meetings were held in local Black Churches and drew most of their member from the church community. Although the official mission of these organizations was to act as social advocates, they also served as educational resources for the community and attracted well-educated church members to the cause of social change.

Civil Rights Movement

In September of 1950, Oliver Brown, a part-time preacher from Topeka, Kansas, advocated for his daughter's right to equal education. It was Mr. Brown's contention that his daughter should not have to walk past a school designated for white children to an all Black school that was not only outside her neighborhood, but was inferior in terms of facilities and academic resources. Brown's visionary stance would change the course of education for Black children throughout the United States. Along with 13 other parents, Brown sought help from their local branch of the NAACP. The NAACP legal team, led by Thurgood Marshall, took the case to the U.S. District Court of Kansas. The judges defeated their petition, ruling to uphold the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision. However,

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unwilling to settle with the lower court decision, Brown and the NAACP took their case

to the Supreme Court of the United States. On May 17, 1954, the court ruled in favor of

Brown, thereby reversing the Plessy v. Ferguson decision and declaring for the first time

that segregation in the United States was illegal. The Brown v. Board of Education

decision was the first of several monumental events that changed the course of Black

Americans' day-to-day life in America.

Another significant milestone came on December 1, 1955, when Mrs. Rosa Parks,

a community leader and former secretary of the Montgomery Branch of the NAACP, was

arrested on a Montgomery city bus for refusing to give up her seat to a white man. This

incident triggered what many believe to be the official birth of the Civil Rights

Movement. On December 4, 1955, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., pastor of the Dexter

Avenue Baptist Church, met with community leaders and pastors to plan a large-scale

boycott of the city's bus system in protest of Mrs. Parks' arrest. The boycott lasted for

nearly a year and the leaders of the boycott -- including Dr. King and Mrs. Parks -- were

terrorized with threats of violence to them and their families. On November 13, 1956, the

Supreme Court of Alabama declared that the local law requiring that buses be segregated

was illegal. This hard- fought victory galvanized the Black community and set the stage

for Dr. King as the leader of the movement.

With the Black Church as its birthplace, and the religious influence of Dr. King,

the Black Church began to have a profound effect on the tone and structure of the Civil

Rights movement. King's philosophy was to "be militant enough to keep my people

aroused to positive action and yet moderate enough to keep this fervor within controllable

and Christian bounds." (Lutz, 2001, p.57) In 1957, some 60 church people gathered at

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Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, the church of Dr. King's father Martin Luther King Sr., and founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The organization's principles were rooted in the doctrines of Christian belief. At a conference soon after its inception, the leadership addressed the African-American audience with the message that "non-violence is not a symbol of weakness or cowardice, but as Jesus demonstrated, non-violent resistance transforms weakness into strength and breeds courage in the face of danger." (Lutz, 2001, p.57)

Although the Civil Rights Movement's mission was one of non-violence based on Christian principles, there were Black religious leaders who did not agree with the movement or its goals. Dr. Joseph H. Jackson, president and leader of the National Baptist Convention, viewed Dr. King and the other pastors involved in the movement as a problem. Jackson felt that the role of a pastor was to preach the gospel and create change only by exemplary conduct. Jackson did not see the movement or the Black Church as an educational tool, to move the race to a higher level of consciousness; he saw his role only as one who professed only the word of God as a text.

Other ministers throughout the country viewed King and the movement as a kind of salvation. Rev. Leon Sullivan, pastor of Zion Baptist Church in Philadelphia, was one such believer. Although the state of Philadelphia did not face the same blatant forms of racism as in the South, Sullivan and 400 other pastors throughout Philadelphia felt unsatisfied with the lack of meaningful state employment for their Black constituents. To address this issue, Sullivan and his fellow pastors organized the "Selective Patronage" boycott. Under Sullivan's leadership, Blacks throughout Philadelphia refused to do business with companies that refused to hire Blacks. The objective was to end job

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discrimination by activating the latent power of the Black Church and bringing it to bear against the concerted power of big business. (Lincoln, 1974, p. 120) The "Philadelphia Four Hundred," as they became known, led their segregated churches in a successful three-year fight to end job desegregation in Philadelphia. This method of protest soon spread to Atlanta, Detroit, and New York.

After this success the ministers went one critical step further. Realizing that few Blacks were prepared for jobs that were now being made available to them, the Black Church established "Opportunities Industrialization Center" – the first one housed in an abandoned jail – and provided Black people with the skills and training needed to fill the jobs created through the Selective Patronage boycott. (Lincoln, 1979, p.121) The training taught them Black history and self-esteem and focused on the trainee's moral commitment to their jobs. By 1980, OIC was operating in more than 160 cities, and made job placements for nearly 700,000 people.

In 1962, Sullivan introduced an economic investment project called the Philadelphia Community Investment Cooperative. The cooperative encouraged church members to contribute $10.00 a month for 36 months. This move effectively illustrated to the church membership the power of their dollars. After just a year and a half, the cooperative was able to purchase the land within the City and build the Progress Plaza Shopping Center, the first Black-owned and operated shopping center in the nation.

Although much was gained during this time period, it must be noted that much of the white community viewed this progress as negative. Most, if not all, non-violent protests were met with violence including sit-ins to desegregate lunch counters or while waiting for a ride to work during the bus boycott. Blacks were harassed, beaten, and put

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in jail. As voter registration drives took place in the South the Ku Klux Klan stepped up their reign of terror. Blacks were murdered, crosses were burned and between 1962 and 1965, 93 churches were either bombed or burned.

Fortunately, out of this evil came some good. Because the majority of white Americans saw the images of Blacks being brutalized by white mobs and police on television, President Johnson introduced the Voting Rights Act to Congress. It was quickly enacted into law in 1964.

In 1965, America witnessed the single most powerful statement of Black unity and power with the March on Washington. Much violence ensued prior to and after the march, which left many Blacks, particularly Black youth, disenfranchised with the non-violence movement. Young men such as James Forman, Eldridge Cleaver, Stokely Carmicheal, and Bobby Seale established groups such as the Black Manifesto and the Black Panthers. These groups did not adhere to the non-violence form of protest. They believed that if white men were unwilling to share the wealth and power of this country, they would take it from him. Even groups such as Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which had been a strong advocate of non-violence, grew wary and began to rethink their non-violence doctrine.

Although the Black Church had been the sole nexus of power in the Black community throughout history, the concept of *Black Power*, which began as a slogan created by young Black militants' such as the Black Panthers and SNCC -- created great division within the church and Black community. (Lincoln, 1979, p.129) The chants of Black Power and the symbolic clenched fist left the church and its constituents conflicted. The Christian teachings of non-violence that had been embraced by the civil rights

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movement and its leadership were tested. Black America was now introduced to a new

form of instruction, one that released decades of pent-up frustration that expressed itself

in many negative ways including internalized racism on the part of Blacks and fear on the

part of Whites.

In response to this change in attitude and approach, Dr. Nathan Wright observed:

> People who heard the cry when it was first raised reported
> feelings of both understanding and apprehension. Clearly
> the powerless black people... throughout the land needed
> power. Yet this was a new cry. It represented a new stance,
> which under the potentially explosive conditions in the
> rural South and urban slums, could herald a threatening
> imbalance in the power relationship through which
> progress had been previously charted.
> The continuation of the cry quickly made clear that the fears
> were justified, at least in part. Old mechanisms for the purpose
> of work for racial justice were being challenged and judged
> ineffective. Under the banner of Black Power, and in the
> manifest breakdown of patience, long-trusted and acknowledged
> Negro leaders were being by-passed, if not disclaimed... There
> was a breach in the tried and timeworn mechanisms for
> communication. (Lincoln, 1974, p.126)

The rift between the Black community and its leadership impacted not only the Black

community, but also the mainstream white community and the way it interacted with both

sides of the leadership.

Ironically, the Black Church, which always heralded the power of Black people

and provided the sole power base within the community, now questioned how that power

should manifest itself. Historically, the Black Church had seen its role as educator of its

people and facilitator of the divide between the Black and white communities. Many

African-American religious leaders felt the cry for "Black Power" *by any means*

necessary contradicted their Christian beliefs and compromised their positions within the

white community.

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This divide within the Black community, along with the significant legislative and moral victories achieved by Blacks, set the stage for a shift in leadership and focus. In April of 1968, the Civil Rights Movement and the influence of the Christian leadership suffered what many believe was its final blow with the assassination of Dr. King. The Black community, which was for the most part isolated from mainstream white America, found itself in a precarious position. They had legally won many of the rights, which would make them full-fledged Americans, but the support system and leadership that had always come from the Black church were now questioned, and, in some cases, rejected.

Over the next three decades, the Black church saw a decline in its membership and influence. This had a variety of effects on the Black community. For many, it left a spiritual void and for others it disengaged them from the Black community. Physically and emotionally, it also left them with a cultural void and an inability to engage the social and emotional support that the Black church has historically provided.

Very recently the Black church has again attracted young Blacks who realize that their need for spiritual and emotional uplifting is a key component in their lives. To fill this void many bring their families back to the community on Sunday but return to their suburban homes afterwards, leaving those that live in the community to fend for themselves. The role the church can and will play in integrating these two Black communities is still undetermined; however, it is a challenge the leadership must recognize to regain its historical influence.

Black Church Schools

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In recent years, some Black churches have expanded their role in the intellectual development and mainstream education of the Black community, from simply providing Sunday School instruction to opening academic-based day school and after school programs. These day schools and out-of-school programs, in addition to teaching the gospel, serve as a formal educational system for students and families.

Unlike the original church schools organized by slaves and ex-slaves and designed to teach its membership to read for the sole purpose of spreading the word of God, today's schools are designed to teach its participants the skills needed for academic success in society. Although these schools remain committed to the teaching of the Gospel and the moral and spiritual influences of Christianity, the curriculum is academically based and focuses on literacy, arithmetic, history, and science both social and technical.

In Massachusetts, the Eliot Enrichment Center in Boston and the Henry Buckner School Inc. in Cambridge are examples of this type of school. Each school is designed to prepare its students to meet the academic standards set by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Both schools are housed within church facilities and are influenced overtly and covertly by church doctrine. In the case of the Eliot Enrichment Center, the school is in the same building as the church and is staffed by Office of Child Care Services-licensed members of the church and local community. The Henry Buckner School Inc. is housed in a Community Center owned and operated by St. Paul A.M.E Church. The staff is OFC qualified and is made up of church and community members. Like the Eliot Enrichment Center the philosophy of the Henry Buckner School Inc. is to:

> "Seek to improve the quality of children in our society
> through education. The school provides a staff that is

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conscientious, sensitive, knowledgeable and ever seeking to develop each child to his/her fullest potential. Our goal is to provide an environment that enhances the child's spiritual, emotional, social, physical, historical and academic development. It is through the achievement of these goals, that each child will have a meaningful experience." (Henry Buckner Inc., 2002)

In the case of each school the leadership works to meet the social as well as academic needs of its communities. Each program offers extended day programs that are meant to meet the day-to-day needs of the families they serve. Both programs also encourage parental involvement in the program, encouraging families to be full participants in their child's school experiences.

For the purposes of this study the church's role in education focused on the Victory Generation After-School Program (VGASP), a program of the Black Ministerial Alliance (BMA) of Greater Boston. This program, like most of the day schools created by Black churches, is faith-based and has a mission to:

Improve the academic performance, enhance the self-esteem and maximize the social and emotional potential of children ages 5-14 residing in the Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan sections of Boston. (BMA, VGASP, 2002)

Although the details in terms of curriculum and literary text may differ from program to program, the focus and the purpose of the church's role in education historically remains the same -- to provide the community with the social and spiritual framework needed for individuals within the Black community to succeed socially, emotionally, and academically. How and why the religious leadership within the Black community continually chose as its main goals to make educational services available to their constituents is examined in the following chapters.

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Summary

From 1620 through the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Church maintained its clear and solid standing as both spiritual and community leader for American Blacks. One area where the church took a significant leadership role was in education. From the legislative gains in education as a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1875 and the Morrill Act II of 1890 through the setbacks of the Haynes administration (the 1883 outlawing of the 1874 Civil Rights Act) and the Plessy vs. Ferguson decision of 1896, the Black Church was instrumental in ensuring Black communities full access to education.

The Civil Rights Movement and the continued work of the Black Church in this area brought about the landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954 that continues to benefit the Black community to this day. However, the Civil Rights Movement also created a significant challenge to the role of the Black Church as leader of the community. The Black Power Movement helped Blacks to challenge the internalized racism that they had been victimized by slavery. It also empowered members of the Black community to develop personal power and the ability to leave the segregated confines of the Black community. Thus the neighborhoods surrounding the churches changed. The newly self-empowered community, while still needing the spiritual guidance of the church, had less need to be dependent on the Black church, which lessened the church's role as leader of the community.

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Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study uses the portraiture method of research analysis to provide a qualitative study to examine the leadership of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, from September of 1999 through June of 2002.

Portraiture research developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, Ed.D, Harvard University, is designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspective of the people who are negotiating those experiences. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p.3) Lawrence-Lightfoot states that portraiture research is:

> Shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and
> the subject, each one participating in the drawing of
> the image. The encounter between the two is rich
> with meaning and resonance and is critical to the
> success and authenticity of the rendered piece
> (Lawrence-Lightfoot, Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p.3).

In other words, the use of portraiture methodology allows the subject and the researcher, in this case members of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance and the researchers, to participate in the exploration and understanding of the history and motivation of the leadership to direct the organization in the way they did during the above mentioned time period. Through this method of qualitative analysis it is possible for the researcher's view to add to the authenticity of the results.

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Portraiture methodology allows for the blurring of traditional lines of qualitative research and seeks to record and interpret the perspectives of those studied. It documents the voices and a vision of those studied and incorporates the voice and vision of the portraitist, each negotiating the discourse and ultimately shaping the outcome. The relationship between the portraitist and the interviewee is:

> Rich with meaning and resonance and becomes
> the arena for navigating the ethical dimensions of
> authentic and compelling narrative (Lawrence-
> Lightfoot, Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p. xv).

For the purposes of this study, it is essential that a portraiture qualitative methodology be used because it authentically allows the voice and vision of the portraitist to be legitimately heard and validated within the context of the research. Voice is defined as the individualistic impression of the researcher on the subject. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p. 106) Jessica Hoffmann Davis, a developmental psychologist says that voice as a result is:

> …omnipresent, ubiquitous, and most difficult to
> isolate in the disassembly of the methodology of
> portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot, Hoffmann Davis,
> p.106).

Like every element of portraiture, voice imprints both the product--the research as a finished narrative--and the mutually informative aspects of the portraiture process: the collection of data and the analytic shaping of the final portrait. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p. 106)

In this study the voice of the portraitist is needed because the program, which brought the Executive Board of the BMA together and inspired the examination and motivation of their leadership was designed and implemented by the portraitist. As a

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result the voice of the portraits is an essential part of legitimacy of the documentation

for this process.

> Regarding this voice, the methodological question
> that the researcher must repeatedly ask of the
> process is how (to what extent) does the disposition
> of my voice inform (give shape to but not distort)
> the product (the developing research)? And the
> question that portraitists must repeatedly ask of
> product is how (to what extent) does the articulation
> of my voice inform (clarify but not mislead) the
> process (the developing understanding)?
> (Lawrence-Lightfoot, Hoffmann Davis, 1997,
> p.106)

The incorporation of these questions into the framework of the qualitative analysis

enables the portraitist to produce a document that validates the research findings while

acknowledging the researcher's input into the end product.

Another critical benefit of portraiture research is the analyses of this study is that it

allows the subject and the researcher to examine parts of themselves they may be

unaware of. It allows the researcher to enter into a relationship with the subject which

is empathetic and critical, revealing a view of the subject that may not be recognized by

the subject himself or herself.

It is important to note that when interviewing the subjects for this study the

questions and interview structure were formed using a phenomenological methodology.

After an initial review of the data collected it became clear that the phenomenological

method of analysis would not be the most appropriate in terms of accurately reporting

the findings. Although the questions and pursuing dialogue were designed to focus

solely on the subject and their lived experiences, throughout the process the interviewer

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was drawn in by the subjects to issues relating to the after-school program as a resource and reference.

Although the portraiture method of qualitative research was not a part of the original data collection, the data collected is still valid because portraiture allows for and anticipates changes in research and is attentive to the cues. This attention may force the researcher to adapt to changes that are important in the collection of the data.

Additionally, because the interviewer was a participant as well as observer much of the developmental process from which the program was ultimately crafted, the importance of the interviewer's voice became clear. This combination of factors indicated that the voice of the interviewer was a significant piece of the data being collected and could not legitimately be left out of the discourse.

The use of a portraiture methodology allowed me to critically and accurately report on how and why the leadership of the Black Ministerial Alliance envisioned the Victory Generation After-School Program.

The Setting and Sample

Participants

Six of the twelve members of the BMA Executive Board were selected to take part in a 90-minute interview. Nine of the twelve Executive Board members were contacted regarding their participation in this study. Due to scheduling conflicts only six participated. The NON–Numerical Unstructured Data Indexing and Theory-Building (NUDTD) data analysis program was used to analyze the interview data. The six were chosen based on their positions on the board and their knowledge and participation in

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the initial decision by the BMA to undertake the development of an after-school program. All are senior pastors of their churches and work full-time in that capacity. All six churches are located in the Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan sections of Boston. Two of the six Pastors are female and four are male. In all cases, the pastors described their church size as moderate to large (150 to 600 plus) and the majority of their membership population as Black. They all considered their church to be a "Black Church," even though only two represent denominations that can be described as a "Black Church" by definition. To reiterate this definition the "Black Church is comprised of the seven major historic Black denominations: African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church; the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E.Z.) Church; the Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church; the National Black Baptist Convention, USA Incorporated (NBC); the Progressive National Baptist Convention (P.N.B.C); and the Church of God and Christ (C.O.G.I.C). The following chart shows the subjects by denomination:

Participant
Church Denominations

Pastor	Denomination	Church Denomination Officially Defined as a Black Church
A	United Methodist	No
B	Second Congregational Church	No
C	African Methodist Episcopal	Yes
D	National Black Baptist	Yes
E	Presbyterian	No
F	United Methodist	No

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Although the theological definition of a "Black Church" is clear, it is limited in its scope. For this reason it is important to note that the perception of what a "Black Church" is differs from community to community and person to person within the church. Scholars such as E. Franklin Frazier and C. Eric Lincoln have studied and written at great length on this subject. Their research, though conducted separately and unilaterally, expands the theological definition and redefines its meaning. In his study that took place over 40 years, Frazier (1974) categorizes the "Black Church" as follows in terms of its impact on the Black community and its definition. The "Black Church is:

- A Nation within a Nation

- An agent of Social Control

- The Economic Foundation to the Community

- Educational Advocates for the Black Community

Historian C. Eric Lincoln defines it as a "dialectic between the communal and the privatistic" (Billingsley, 1999, p.10). The communal orientation "refers to the historic tradition of the black churches being involved in all aspects of the lives of their members, including political, economic, educational, and social concerns." On the other hand, "The privatistic pole of this dialectic means the withdrawal from the concerns of the larger community to focus on meeting only the religious needs of its adherents" (pg. 10).

Frazier and Lincoln broaden the definition of the "Black Church," making it more inclusive. They use the demographics and the mission of the church to assist leaders in defining a "Black Church."

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The following chart demonstrates the social services and ministries reported by the Pastors on their Pastoral Questionnaire Cover Sheet:

Social Service/Ministries

Pastor	Education Youth	Education Adult	Housing/ Economics	Food Programs	Health
A	X	X	X		
B	X	X			
C	X	X		X	X
D	N/R*	N/R*	N/R*	N/R*	N/R*
E	X	X		X	X
F	X	X	X	X	

N/R* = No Response

The demographic information to follow details the qualifications and characteristics of pastors interviewed in this research study and compares these demographics to a nationwide study conducted by Lincoln and Mamiya in 1989.

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This chart details each pastor's demographics as reported on their individual interview information cover sheets:

BMA Executive Board Demographics

Pastor	BMA Title	Years of Membership in the BMA	Years in the Ministry	Size of Church Membership	Gender
A	Chair Youth	7	26	N/A	Male
B	Corresponding Secretary	6	10	100	Female
C	Chairperson Human Services Committee	20	29	650	Male
D	President	8	23	600+	Male
E	Chairperson Spiritual Life	7	16	150	Male
F	Treasurer	10	10	99	Female

Of the clergy in this sample all have earned undergraduate degrees and five have earned advanced degrees. The ages of the interviewees range from late 30's to mid 60's.

The following charts are designed to show how the demographics of this interview sample compares to the demographic studies of pastors conducted by C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya (1998) in the areas of clergy education and church size.

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Clergy Education

(The total number of responses was 1,531)

Years of Schooling	Total
Grammar (1- 6)	23 (1.5%)
Grammar (7-12)	386 (25.4%)
College/Graduate School	1077 (70.2 %)
No Response	45 (2.9%)

(Lincoln, Mamiya, 1998, p.131)

Size of Church

Total number of responses 2,150

Size of Membership	Number of Churches (Total Sample)
1 to 99	564 (26.2%)
100 to 199	381 (17.7%)
200 to 599	576 (26.8%)
600 plus	349 (16.3%)
No Response	280 (13.%)

(Lincoln, Mamiya, 1998, p.143)

In both cases, the interviewees fared above average when compared to a nationwide study of their peers.

Interview Process

Nine of the twelve Executive Board members of the BMA were initially contacted by phone to request their cooperation in this study and to participate in the interview process. Of the nine potential subjects contacted, six subjects participated in interviews. In the case of the three potential subjects that did not take part, scheduling conflicts were cited as the reasons for not participating. All six interviewees were sent follow-up letters confirming the date, time, and location of the interview. An

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attachment including a sample of the questions (Appendix A), Pastoral Questionnaire

Cover Sheet (Appendix B) and Written Consent (Appendix C) form were included in

the mailing. Each packet was sent well in advance of the interview either by mail or e-

mail.

On the day of the interview, pastors were contacted by phone to confirm their

availability. Two of the originally scheduled interviews were rescheduled due to

scheduling conflicts on the part of the pastor. Five of the six interviews averaged 90

minutes in length. One interview took 2 1/2 hours and was conducted in two parts.

Each interview began with the interviewer providing the interviewee with an

overview of the project and an opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions.

Interviewees were asked to complete the Pastoral Questionnaire Cover Sheet and sign

the Written Consent Form. (None of them had done so in advance of the interview.)

Interviewees were asked verbally if they had any objection to the interview being taped.

There were no objections. With the exception of one interview, all were taped without

interruption. In the one case, the interviewee asked to speak off the record and have the

tape recorder turned off. The request was granted and taping resumed when the subject

felt comfortable.

Interviewees were offered verbal invitations to revise any of their responses at

any time.

Data Analysis

The researcher interviewed all six subjects, taping the interviews and taking

notes, which detailed facial expressions and the body language of the subject. All tapes

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were transcribed by a professional transcriber and were imported into the NON-

NUDIT qualitative computer software program.

The software allowed the researcher to sort and code the data revealing themes,

which will ultimately provide the answers or give insight into the questions asked in

Chapter 1.

1. How has the history of the leadership role of the Black Church as an institution shaped the leaders of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston as individuals and as a group?

2. What manifested itself in the life experiences of the individual leaders of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, and directed them, as a body, to develop an educational initiative such as the Victory Generation After-School Program?

The use of portraiture methodology allows for the development of emerging

themes and reflects the portraitist's effort to bring interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny,

and aesthetic order to the collection of data. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, Hoffmann Davis,

1997, p.237) The themes that emerge from the data are meant to shape and inform the

research. The additional insight of "voice," provided by the portraitist, is incorporated

into the analysis and adds to the outcome of the research.

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Chapter 4

Findings

Overview

This chapter provides a working definition of leadership and analyzes the definition of the Black Church by reviewing a variety of definitions, including the personal definitions of the participants in this study. It also reviews the personal influences of their "lived experiences," the shaping of the leadership, and the impact they had on the creation of the Victory Generation After-School Program.

The six participants of this study are Black. With the exception of one, they are all African American. One pastor was born and raised outside of the United States. Two of the six pastors are female and two of the six represent the same denomination. Their ages range from mid 30's to late 60's, and the size of their churches vary from mid to large (150 to 600 plus). All of the churches are located in the Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan sections of Boston.

The focus of this chapter is the pastors' collective and individual motivations for ideologically conceiving the Victory Generation After-School Program as well as their lived experiences-- i.e., the historical structures of the Black Church, people, and events that influenced them as leaders and drew them to the educational ministry. The term "lived experiences" as defined by Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot (1997) in "The Art and Science of Portraiture" describes those experiences, which impact one's life and are reflected in the way one lives his or her life. Through the recollection of their lived experiences, the pastors:

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- Provided personal definitions of what the "Black Church" is, how it as an entity affects them, their parishioners and their community.
- Defined leadership and examined it in terms of their service to the community and their ministry.
- Discussed the personal influences and history that shaped their ministries and their concept of leadership.
- Examined their thoughts on the Black Ministerial Alliance as an organization in terms of its leadership role in the community and how education in general and the Victory Generation After-School Program became its major initiative.
- Explored how and why a faith-based, academically focused after-school program was developed, what it means to them and their interpretation of how it works.

Definition of Leadership and The Black Church

Throughout this chapter the term "leadership" is used to describe the pastors' ministries. Ministries mean the active measures of their service to the church and the greater community, and their roles as members of the BMA leadership. Three scholarly definitions of leadership are combined to create a definition appropriate for the specifics of this research.

Warren Bennis, distinguished professor of Business Administration and founding chair of the Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California, defines leadership in terms of the individual capability of the leader: "Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential." (Bennis 2000) Bennis's definition is used to emphasize the issue that individual ministers must effectively balance their leadership roles within the BMA infrastructure while managing the needs of their individual churches and themselves.

John Maxwell, former pastor, founder and chairman of the INJOY group, defines leadership simply as "an influence - nothing more, nothing less." (Maxwell 1999) For

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Maxwell this moves beyond the position of merely defining a leader to emphasizing the ability of the leader to influence others--both those who would consider themselves followers, and those outside the circle of influence. Indirectly, it also builds leadership character, since without maintaining integrity and trustworthiness; the ability to influence will disappear. Here, Maxwell speaks to the influence, the power, and the privilege that are inextricably connected to the title and role of the pastor.

For the purposes of the Leadership Development Process, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester defines leadership as "the process of influencing the behavior of other people toward group goals in a way that fully respects their freedom." The Diocese's emphasis on respecting freedom is one they feel must be the hallmark of Christian leadership. They argue: "Jesus influenced many diverse people during his ministry but compelled no one to follow Him." (Diocese of Rochester, 2002) The Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester's emphasis on respecting one's freedom addresses the issue of responsibility that comes with being a religious leader. For them, a religious leader is one who is able to lead in a way that enables followers as a whole or an individual to take another path when necessary.

For the purpose of this paper, leadership is defined as the ability to influence the behavior of others by setting a clear vision and communicating that vision in a way that is respectful to those who follow. Quality leadership allows those who follow to do so with a clear understanding of their freedom while keeping in mind the needs of the whole.

Through the use of a portraiture methodology, I integrate my perspective on these issues and the above definitions of leadership into the analysis of the material provided

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through the interviews. To begin the analysis I offer a definition of the Black Church and examine the Pastor's responses to the question, *"How do you define the Black Church?"*

Theologians and scholars define the Black Church as "a collective name for a myriad of Christian churches and denominations African-Americans created to worship as they please." (Lutz, 2001, p.11) In using this term, scholars have agreed that the term "Black Church" or prior to the 1960's "Negro Church," refers to seven major historical denominations: the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church; the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E.Z) Church; the Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church; the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Incorporated (NBC); the National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated (NBCA); the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC); and the Church of God In Christ (COGIC). (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990 p.1)

All data examined in this study was analyzed in the context of the Black Church and leadership as defined above. The following section examines the personal and professional definitions of the Black Church and leadership through the thoughts and lived experiences of the pastors.

The Black Church As Defined by the Pastors

> It means power, because the Black Church, of course, is our own, our very own institution. It is the one that we owned even when we were enslaved. It was the one place by which we obtained power, and accrued power, you know for ourselves, and it continues to be the place where we're able to accrue power, both good and bad. (Pastor A, personal communication, June 20, 2002)

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This quote by Reverend A reflects the sentiment of the majority of pastors interviewed for this study. Although the definition of the Black Church, addressed by Lincoln and Frazier in Chapter 2 must be expanded to reflect the current realities of our society there is a consensus that the Black experience uniquely influenced the religious experience of people of African decent.

> According to Reverend E:
>> Part of the body of Christ is that it is uniquely defined from an ethnic standpoint by the African culture whether from Haiti, the West Indies or African Americans from the South. It is that body of Christ that has an ethnic signature. (Reverend E, personal communication, May 23, 2002)

In the case of those pastors whose churches fall outside the scholarly definition of a Black Church, Pastor B summarizes their justification:

>> The Black Church is defined by the body of people you serve. Who is your constituency? Who are you serving? (Pastor B, personal communication, June 1, 2002)

Pastor E further states that what makes a Church a "Black Church" is the "relationship" among its members, even when the church's denomination falls outside of the scholarly definition. He continues by expanding the definition of the Black Church as:

>> Our approach to family, our understanding of God, our understanding of relationships, diversity of creativity that we impart in our music, in our interactions, in our preaching, in our singing.

>> This emphasizes the unique oral component that makes us basically an oral people in terms of history and contemporary culture, whether it's rap, whether it's gospel, whether it's how we preach. And in the relationship piece – you're much more likely to find hugging and sharing in a deeper way, and the church is less formal, less stilted, more interactive. It's

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relationship driven. (Pastor E personal
communication, May 23,2002)

These pastors speak to the definition offered by E. Franklin Frazier. Frazier defines the

Black Church as "a nation within a nation". (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990, p.8) By using

this term Frazier refers to the holistic role the Black Church plays in the spiritual and

religious aspects of Black life.

All the pastors agreed that historically the Black Church shaped the vision of the

Black community. According to Pastor D, it is:

>The oldest and perhaps most important, or at least
>most respected institution in the Black community. It
>has always been there to help Black people to move
>forward. Without that, they [Black people] could not
>have gotten through the horrors of slavery and the
>post-slavery period. So the Black Church is the
>institution that the Black community has depended
>upon most throughout history.
>
>It has had a great history of founding economic
>institutions and educational institutions. In fact, most
>of the early Black schools were founded in Black
>Churches, in the basements of Black Churches. Black
>people without much education recognized that their
>children needed to be educated, and that's the only
>way they could have access to the larger society if
>they had an education.` (Pastor D, personal
>communication, June 23, 2002)

It is this historical context, which provides the pastor's impetus for the development

of the Victory Generation After-School Program. Pastor D describes it succinctly:

>The Black Church is a multi-dimensional institution, which
>addresses all of the needs of the Black community, not just
>the spiritual needs. So anything that affects the life of the
>community is of concern to the Black Church because it is
>the mouthpiece, as it were, for the community, the
>gatekeeper, the gatekeeper of the community. So anything

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good that has happened in the Black community, the Black Church has had a role in it. (Pastor D, personal communication, June 28, 2002)

As this quote demonstrates, many of the pastors believe that the Black Church continues to be a major force within the Black community, and in fact, defines the community in many ways. Unfortunately, the suggestion by the University of Michigan survey that Rap Music has replaced the Black Church as a leading influence on the Black community indicates that this perception no longer holds true for the greater community.

One controversy regarding the definition of Black Churches came about when the question was asked, *"Are churches who maintain a congregation whose membership is predominantly Black considered a Black Church even if by charter it does not meet the other Black Church membership requirements previously mentioned?"* An example of this can be seen in the conflicting definitions of the Black Church given by the African Methodist Episcopal pastor and one of the United Methodist pastors. When asked to define the term "Black Church" the pastor of the only AME church in the group interviewed replied:

The Black Church would be those persons of African descent who come together to worship God out of their own experience as a people. It's different, from say, a white church. We worship God because of God's liberating power, and our experience, and how He has brought us through, through that act of liberation. So when we praise God, it's different—so they call that the Black experience. But it's basically Black folk coming together, to worship God in their own unique style of worship. (Pastor C, personal communication, May 30, 2002)

However, when asked, *"Would you consider a United Methodist Church a Black Church?"* Pastor C replied *"No."* When asked about the difference, he stated:

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Based on the founder, the founder of the AME Church was
Richard Allen, who was a Black slave who won his
freedom. And because of the discrimination in what was
then called the Methodist Church, which we know today as
the United Methodist Church. But there was a lot of
discrimination. Blacks had to sit in a separate place of
worship. And so as a result of that kind of discrimination,
and separatism in the house of God, Richard Allen walked
out, and started what we know as the African Methodist
Episcopal Church, which is different from the United
Methodist Church, or the Methodist Church, which was
begun by John and Charles Wesley as a result of their break
away from the Anglican Church in England, which they felt
was not giving them spiritual nurturing. So that's what is
different. (Pastor C, personal communication, May 30,
2002)

Pastor A of United Methodist Church was asked similar questions: *"As a Pastor
in the United Methodist Church, what is your relationship with the AME Church? Do you
see any correlations? Do you see any distinction? If so, what is it in terms of its
relationship to being a Black Church?"*

Pastor A replied:

Well, yes, I certainly do see a commonality, you know,
the most obvious being that we are all children of
Wesley. We have that basic Wesleyan doctrine as a way
of responding in our Christian faith to the world. There
are certain similar features about our policy that proceed
out of the Wesleyan doctrine. We are different, certainly
in that – I mean, the most obvious difference is our racial
composition. And that, may have, to an extent, a great
influence on the direction of the ministry. I see the
United Methodist Church still struggling with issues of
inclusiveness. Although the United Methodist Church
has chosen to make it a priority, I see it still struggling
with that.
I think that some of the difference is marked in the style
of worship. The United Methodist, of course, seems to be
still overwhelmingly Eurocentric, although more
immigrants, more traditions of the new immigrants are
creeping in. And I say creeping because they're still not

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being used to the extent that our demographics warrant."
(Personal communication, June 20, 2002)

When asked, *"Do you, as a Black Pastor, feel that there is any conflict with you being in the United Methodist Church versus the AME?"* Pastor A stated:

> Ultimately, no....I hasten to say, though, at the same time that the times I feel most awkward about being United Methodist is with other Black Methodists—I mean other Black denominations. A.M.E's, A.M.E. Zion's, and sometimes C.M.E.'s who make you feel like, you know, you are not really Black -that you have defected, or that you are conflicted. Or you don't really know the Black Church. We're the real "thing" (A.M.E., A.M.E. Zion, C.M.A.). That kind of thing. So I feel that much more there (with other Black Methodists) than I do within the United Methodist camp. (Pastor A, personal communication, June 20, 2002)

Although the issues raised by these two pastors may not clearly be seen as addressing the topic of defining the Black Church, the concern that it raises is important to the definition and future of the Black Church. As the demographics of our communities change and the Black community becomes a global one, it is important to remain focused on the history Black America's relationship to the Black Church and its leadership. The Black Church was founded because of the need to choose one's own form of worship. Allowing internalized racism to influence the relationship within the Black religious community is detrimental to its spiritual growth.

Pastor F serves a United Methodist Church whose membership is predominately Black. When asked *"Would you define a Black Church as the people who attend the church, or do you think there is something much more symbolic that needs to create a Black Church?"* Pastor F responded:

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Both. Actually. The community defines the church. And by that I mean there are people who will never step their foot in the door of the church, but they'll say I live on such and such a street where such and such church is. So in that sense it's that kind of ownership about the church. Or I live on the street where so and so is the pastor of the church. So in that sense the community defines it.

But on the other hand, the church has always been the conservative element of the community. So there is this tension that exists about the church, kind of like what we wish the church was and what the church really is. And somewhere in between that, is the church acting, and she vacillates from one end of the continuum to the next, at least that's been my experience. (Pastor F, personal communication, May 21, 2002)

Although Pastor F takes a very different view in terms of defining the Black Church the tension that she speaks about is very real and is mentioned when addressing many aspect of the church.

As previously mentioned, the tension of which Pastor F refers to are the tensions between the theological and scholarly definition of the Black Church versus the description of the Black Church as the community it serves and the community as a whole. The conflict is fostered not only by those who founded and attend the church, but also in the way that the church responds to the needs of the community it serves. For instance, defining a church as a Black Church begs the question: How does the church and its "leadership" lead or influence the community? If we are to believe Pastor D's description, as stated earlier, that:

Anything that affects the life of the community is of concern to the Black Church because it is the mouthpiece, as it were, for the community, the gatekeeper, the gatekeeper of the community. So anything good that has happened in the Black community, the Black Church has had a role in it. (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

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Than, it is important to ask: What impact and responsibility does the Black Church really have to the community it serves in the 21st century? This question is complicated by the fact that the demographics of the Black community have changed over the last decade. The pastors themselves verify this point. All of the pastors agreed that a majority of their congregations are Black in membership; they also stated that the majority of their parishioners are not from the neighborhoods where their churches are housed. The question then becomes: How do we define the Black community of the 21st century and which community does the church and its leadership serve? Technology has afforded the 21st century parishioner the ability to travel to the church of his/her choice. The access to personal and public transportation no longer limits a person's choice of church due to distance. In addition, the lifestyles of many families have changed. Blacks living in the suburbs can choose to attend services in their home communities. When asked, "Does the surrounding community affect your church and your ministry?" Pastor D responded:

> Not as much as I would like, largely because of the nature of the Black community. There was a time when most of the people who came to church were from the surrounding community. So when the bell rang people would know and start to come.

> However, in the process of time, people tend to go where they have better service. So they move out of let's say the South End at one time toward Mattapan and Dorchester; not only there but they have moved to the suburbs. And the thing about Black folk is that they still want to maintain connections with the community and people who look like them.

> So though they may live in a white community, they still come back on Sundays. Which means that they (the Black Church) have people coming in from all over. So

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it's both a community church as well as a commuter.
(Pastor D, personal communication, June 28, 2002)

The changing complexion of the Black community is also reflected in the fact that the community is not monolithic. Pastor F defines her church community as:

> An African church in the Diaspora. Because we have
> seven Caribbean Islands represented in that church
> community, African-American, and Anglos. We have had
> Anglos and we have had Filipinos. And it's a Black
> Church, but in sort of the broadest sense of that. Because
> we also have, as I say, Africans, Ghanaians and we've had
> … Nigerians and Haitians. So it's like when you move in
> that kind of community and there is no one dominant
> group, it's such a mixture that you really have to attend to
> the cultural aspects, or you lose your audience. (Pastor F,
> personal communication, May 21, 2002.)

These demographic changes affect the influence of the "Black Church" on its home community and impact the leadership capability of the pastor for that community. These changes also affect the "nation within a nation" concept, which allowed the church to be the catalyst for change in the community because it represented the community.

Leadership

> Someone said that if you say you're a leader and no
>
> one is following you, then all you're doing is taking a walk.
>
> (Pastor D. Personal communication, May 28,2002)

In terms of Pastor D's description of "leadership" there was consensus among the pastors. All of the pastors saw themselves as leaders in the community and their churches. Words such as integrity, vision, influence, and empowerment were consistently found in all six of the interviews. Several pastors spoke about their concerns,

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about being perceived as "power hungry" and people's perceptions of the "Black

Preacher," both negative and positive.

The following chart describes the outreach ministries that they lead in their churches

and the greater community.

Church Ministries

	Pastor A	Pastor B	Pastor C	Pastor D	Pastor E	Pastor F
Youth Prog.	X		X	X	X	X
Education	X	X	X	X	X	
Mentoring	X		X		X	
Housing	X		X			
Prison Ministry		X		X		
Food Prog.		X	X	X		
Adult Prog.		X	X	X	X	X
Missionary Outreach			X			
Bible Studies		X	X	X	X	X

Education, housing, prison ministries, food pantries, and outreach ministries involve

programs the churches offer to the greater community.

The pastors also spoke about what it means to be a "religious leader" this often

entails mentally and emotionally managing intimate information received from others.

They all indicated this issue was a challenge for them and one that they work on daily.

Note Pastor A's response:

> Yes, well that is a constant challenge. I mean, you've got
> to pray. You've got to pray constantly. You've got to
> displace a lot of that stuff with prayer. It's when you begin
> to understand, you know, take my yoke upon you, and for
> me, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. You
> cannot become the repository, you know for this world's
> ills. You've got to help—you've got to be a signpost, and

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help people understand that they can make contact with
God. That God lives in them. And God is just as available
to them as us. The only difference between us and them is
that we have chosen to make this our fulltime profession.
(Pastor A, personal communication, June 20, 2002)

In regards to this same issue Pastor B stated:

I process it as I'm driving home. And then the only way
I'm able to do it is with the Holy Spirit. To be able to
totally purge it, and say, Ok, this isn't going to keep me up.
Because the things you hear on both sides, it's only the
Holy Spirit that can keep you intact. (Pastor B, personal
communication, June 1, 2002)

This study did not pursue the question of whether or not the pastors believed that

being a "religious leader" made their leadership different from other leaders in the

community, namely appointed or elected community leaders. It should be noted,

however, that this was the one question regarding leadership that the ministers (with one

exception) spoke of their reliance on God.

It should also be noted that when asked to define leadership and their roles as

leaders, they were asked:

- Do you consider yourself a leader?

- How does your leadership style affect your ministry?

When asked whether or not they considered themselves leaders not only of their

churches but also of the community, Pastor D stated:

Now, I do. Being the president of the Black Ministerial
Alliance, which I didn't particularly want, my colleagues
pushed me into it and they probably knew more that I
knew. The things that I do (as a leader), and I think there
are certain things, which characterize a leader, you have to
have a sense of direction or vision of where to go and how
to get there. There is a certain amount of professionalism
that a leader has to maintain, such as being a person of the

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word, to be trustworthy, being on time, get things accomplished. Perhaps the most important thing is that others regard me as a leader. Because anybody can say they're a leader, but it's really what others say. (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002).

When asked if he thought it was his integrity that made him a leader, Pastor D responded:

Integrity. The ability to develop a relationship, to see, to have people trusting me as a person, that I'm not going to say one thing to them and then do another thing behind their back. I think my colleagues have confidence in me. (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

Pastor D goes on the say that:

The thing about a leaders is that they [leaders] empower people. So I have empowered my colleagues and I don't try to take credit for anything. I allow them to shine. I stay in the background because I'm not interested in power. (Pastor d, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

When asked if she considered herself a leader, Pastor B stated:

Yes. I know I have the ability; I have a gift to influence and to be able to get folks to be able to accomplish a task. And you are a good leader because you learn to be a good follower. I think I have the ability to be, to see, to be able to accomplish a task. And I have the ability to be able to get a group of folks to be able to believe in that task and be able to get it done. (Pastor B, personal communication, June 1, 2002)

When asked if she considered herself a leader, the following dialogue ensued between Pastor F and the interviewer:

Pastor F: Yeah, I do. I don't think everybody else does. (laughter)

Interviewer: And why is that?

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Pastor F:

Because if you look at the definition of leadership, most people say if you're a leader, then you have followers. That is one of those serious organizational definitions. Then I look at the Biblical characters and I realize that not everybody followed the leaders that were chosen. I mean, they had great conflict around their leadership. That's something I wrestle with.

And it's a challenge to stay focused, and a challenge to identify what it is that you're moving your people towards. And you realize that hey, it's not everybody that moves with you all the time. Sometimes there is just this remnant that are just on fire, and they go. Then there are other people that just kind of follow.

I don't know for other people, but I found in our community that is so vital; just to be encouraged or stroked. So even when you're encouraging them and stroking them they're resisting because they're like why are you saying those things to me? What do you really want from me? And you're like no, I really want you to go forward. I know that you have these gifts and talents. Don't be afraid. Do it. (Pastor F, personal communication, May 21, 2002)

Interviewer: Do you think this is unique to the Black community?

Pastor F: (sigh) Not really. But I think it's compounded in our community because of our history. (Pastor F, personal communication, May 21, 2002)

In this dialogue Pastor F speaks to the struggle leaders within the Black community face in helping those they are meant to lead understand their role in that leadership.

The history of the Black community and its relationship to the church were raised in several interviews. In the interview with Pastor C, he discussed how Boston's Black community affects his ability to lead.

I work out in the community, with the BMA, and other groups within the area and the greater area to see that we fight the good fight. Recognizing that there's something

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unique about Boston, which is inherently racist, at every level of our society here. I look at education, employment, housing, everything. It's Boston. And we have to fight to get a fair share. Unfortunately, our problems here are unlike other cities like Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, the Blacks here don't vote, and could care less. Now it's one thing to be ignorant, and you just don't know. Black folk here know, and couldn't care less. I've talked to people who have lived here a long time, and they say, for some reason they make up excuses, and whatnot. And so it's so hard. (Pastor C, personal communication, May 30, 2002).

In summary, Pastor C felt that his ability to lead the greater community was affected by the community's apathy. It is his faith and his belief in his leadership as the Shepard of his flock that motivates him to "fight the good fight." He, as did all of the other pastors, links his leadership directly to his ministry. He states, "My ministry has a lot to do with my leadership. And my leadership involves my ministry." He goes on to say that:

Just the concept of what ministry is: to serve, to help, to be a servant. And so I have to provide leadership. I have to be the Shepherd. The Shepherd is the leader of the flock. And that's what the Shepard does constantly. The role of the Shepherd is to lead because the sheep, they feed on the soil, and after awhile the soil becomes eroded. A sheep can dig so deep into the ground they take out the root. And so over a period of time, that which was grassy becomes barren. And so it's the Shepherd's job to constantly keep the sheep on the move so that they will not destroy the soil. And so he leads them into green pastures. And so the shepherd, a modern day shepherd, has to constantly lead people into a better way. (Pastor C, personal communication, May 30, 2002)

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Personal Influences

> My first understanding of leadership came from watching
> my dad operate at a church. (Pastor E, personal
> communication, May 23, 2002)

All of the pastors talked about people within the church communities where they

were raised who influenced them to become ministers. The persons of influence varied

from the pastor of their home church or fathers and uncles who were preachers, to a

vision by one pastor's mother when he was a small child. All were raised in the church

and considered it their second home, and with the exception of one pastor, all were

encouraged by their parents to enter the ministry. Of the six pastors interviewed, four

were raised by parents who were ministers. However, all felt they were raised in

religious homes. Only one pastor was raised outside of the United States. His experience

in the church, however, was similar to those raised in the United States, with one

exception: his spiritual mentor was a white missionary. All spoke unanimously of the

security they felt in their church communities and the encouragement of members of the

community throughout their lives, even when they seemed to be going astray.

In terms of the effect their role models had as leaders, all of the pastors spoke about

their personal influences in relation to their leadership ability. When Pastor A was asked

if he considered those who influenced him to be leaders, the following dialogue ensued:

> *Interviewer*: Would you consider those men leaders?
>
> *Pastor A*: Oh yes.
>
> Interviewer: In what sense?
>
> *Pastor A*: They were leaders in that they were able to tap
> into -- and help people see -- their talents, and use their
> leadership in the church. Sometimes it was manipulative I

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have to admit, but I would say the net effect was for the good of the church.

Interviewer: So what specifically, would you say, made them leaders?

Pastor A: Their ability to perceive gifts in others, perceive gifts in the people in their congregations. And help them use those [gifts] for leadership themselves. That to me was the greatest thing about their being leaders. (Pastor A, personal communication, June 20, 2002)

All of the pastors recognized the fact that those who influenced them most did so because of their integrity, their ability to articulate their vision, their eloquence and their ability to recognize and develop these gifts in others. When speaking about his own leadership ability, Pastor D. states:

The thing about a leader is that it [s/he] empowers other people. So I have empowered my colleagues and I don't try and take credit for anything. I allow them to shine. I stay in the background because I'm not interested in power. And this is really the only thing that I think enables the organization (BMA) to gel. (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

One issue that stood out for the majority of pastors was the struggle they faced in accepting their callings to the ministry. Two of the pastors began their careers in other fields and came to the ministry later in life. When discussing her journey to the ministry and her initial unwillingness to recognize her calling, Pastor B states:

If I can be real honest with you, it's always probably been there. I always ran from it, probably my first consciousness was that I'd be somewhere in the ministry. (Pastor B, personal communication, June 1, 2002)

Pastor A's journey to the ministry was not a straight or unblemished one. His story is as follows:

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Well, my mother claims that I was perhaps marked for the ministry when she realized that she was pregnant with me, because as soon as she realized that she was pregnant with me she prayed the prayer of Hannah, and dedicated me, you know, to the Lord. But the time between my birth and my actual call -- at least as I've heard it -- was far a field of that idea, I have to tell you. Because I, in all honesty I have to tell you that I was truly the Prodigal Son. I mean, there was a long, long -- not a long, but I would say there was a great -- I mean, there was a sojourn there into, you know, the demi-world of, you know, drugs, the theater, New York's Lower East Side, you know, all the trappings of Bohemia until I just kind of finally did this little whirling dervish that landed me in the gutters, literally, of New York. And so when I woke up, when I came to with the grit of New York's filth in my mouth I determined that, you know, this is not what God made me for. (Pastor A, personal communication, June 20, 2002)

Although pastor A's description of his journey to the ministry was by no means typical, it demonstrates, as did all of the pastor's journeys, their personal commitment and faith in God.

Each pastor's story of his or her ascent to the ministry was different. For instance, Pastor C and Pastor D accepted their calls to ministry "willingly." When asked to describe his journey to the ministry, Pastor C replied, "It was just an easy walk. It was a progression." (Personal communication, May 30, 2002) Pastor D explains:

"I was probably about eight, nine or ten when my parents asked what I wanted to do when I grew up and I said I wanted to be a minister because the minister was the person who I felt was the best model of what I would like to be." (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

The people and the lived experiences of these pastors shaped who they are and how they lead through their community and ministerial work today. Their desire to be affiliated with the Black Ministerial Alliance is shaped by their drive to lead.

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Black Ministerial Alliance

> The Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston is
> witness, witness. That there is a place in the Body of Christ
> where Pastors who are driven by personal ambition and
> individual church agendas and their own unique take on the
> community can come together and find a commonality, and
> say we're going to work together for the good of the
> community. What greater witness for Christ than that?
> (Pastor E, personal communication, May 23, 2002)

Background

With 70 plus member pastors serving over 20,000 congregation members, the

Black Ministerial Alliance describes itself as an organization with a history of advocating

on behalf of African-Americans in political and social arenas in the City of Boston for

over 40 years.

The BMA sees its underlying core values as emphasizing integrity, accountability,

collaboration, and openness. They believe their ministry activities reflect their

commitment to these values, which makes the organization the moral compass for the

community. They view themselves as an ally in the area of education and have focused

others on the problems that face the public school system. Operating within the historical

and political context of the Black church, they have set the tone and texture, allowing

educators, parents, and political leaders to come together for a shared purpose: the

improvement of academic and social success of community children.

Black Ministerial Alliance / Leadership

All of the pastors viewed the BMA as an important cohesive force in the Black

Church community. It should be noted that individual Pastors hold membership in the

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BMA, not their churches. In other words, the pastors represent themselves as individual members of the BMA-- not as spokespeople for their churches. As a result, individual pastors can make statements that address a political or social agenda. The pastor's views differed regarding the impact of the group on the church community, the pastoral community, the Black community, and the greater community. Each had a different view of the organization when asked to define it as an entity. When asked, "How would you describe the BMA?" Pastors B and C replied:

> I think that it's still –I'm not sure if it's in the embryonic stage. I think we're a little bit farther than that. I think we're in a metamorphosis that we're changing. I think we're changing, we're trying to still define ourselves. There needs to be more study on precisely who we are, what we are, because it changes by the principles and the people. And that shouldn't be what dictates it (the mission). (Pastor B, personal communication, June 1, 2002)

> Now it's a viable organization, as a result of the Victory Generation. Prior to, it was just one of many. It was those preachers—I mean, the Black Ministerial Alliance has been around since the fifties in Boston. But it was just basically a group of ministers who came together, the fellowship. But they were never really involved in community issues per se. (Pastor C, personal communication, May 30, 2002)

In response to the same question, Pastor A responded:

> 'I would say that the ethos is overwhelmingly male. And the Black Church culture, of course, is the prevailing culture. The historical -- what we know as being the historical Black Church culture is very much in evidence in the Black Ministerial Alliance -- it's conservative.' (Pastor A, personal communication, June 20, 2002)

When addressing the issue of how the BMA affects its Pastoral community, Pastor C spoke of a Covenant that was signed by all members of the BMA in 2000.

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When asked directly, "How significant do you think the Covenant was in terms of the leadership?" Pastor C replied:

> "Really significant, in that Reverend -- well, Bishop
> ******* was the one who was really the architect of that.
> It really helped us to come together as brothers and sisters
> in Christ, and as pastors, to realize that even though we
> have separate congregations that we pastor, yet we must be
> -- I hate to say brotherly. We have to be brotherly or
> sisterly. We have to be -- we have to understand that we
> shouldn't proselytize. I mean, what you have is what you
> have. What I have is what I have. And I think it was out of
> that covenant because, see, there has always been too much
> division in Boston. And I think we all realize now, and I
> think, you know, there's just a lot of folk who still have not
> come together yet. That folks just need to start being
> together. See, you have -- and you've still got ministers,
> even within the group, in a nice slick way they still like to
> be a Lone Ranger. They like to be in the paper. (Pastor C,
> personal communication, May 30, 2002)

Although the covenant sets a standard by which the pastors can and should respond to

each other it does not address the vision or mission of the BMA. Other than the fact that

the focus of the BMA was education, there was no clear understanding or articulation of

the mission of the group. When asked, "Does the BMA have a mission statement? A

mission? Pastor B responded:

> I think it's probably got one—there was one. I mean, there
> was one, probably, a long time ago, but I honestly probably
> couldn't pull it out for you. And I have a problem with
> that, because I should know the mission. And the mission
> should be clear. And here again, it's defined by probably
> who is in the room at that time. (Pastor B, personal
> communication, June 1, 2002)

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It is also not clear how the greater Boston community, the community outside the Black Church community views the Black Ministerial Alliance. Pastor F reported that the BMA gets "mixed" reviews from the outside community:

> In fact, pastor ****** even did research on that for us to see if people would be willing to work with us in different agencies. So we had a mixed review, I mean depending upon which agency you were working with. I think we had gotten a small track record in the grant making community because of some of our work with the Black Church Capacity Building Program. So that gave us some credibility.
>
> We had a track record with the Mayor because we kind of worked with him around some pertinent issues in the community.
>
> Then various organizations in the community, sometimes people like us, sometimes they don't. Sometimes they want us to a stronger political stance, and I think individual pastors take those stances, but as an organization that was never a mandate. (Pastor F Personal communication, May 21, 2002)

When asked if the success of the BMA hinged on the BMA's ability to take a stand or a position, Pastor F responded:

> It's hard to say, because I'm not sure -- based on where we are right now and where we're positioned to go in the future. To become a political organization puts all of us, well, to become political in sort of an incorporated sense, means that we threaten our independence. (Pastor F, personal communication, May 21, 2002)

The independence that the BMA feels it currently exhibits along with the fact that the organization has no written mission makes it unique.

The lack of a written or clearly articulated mission is further illustrated. Pastor D was asked, "Why did the BMA choose to focus on education?"

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Pastor D: We decided that it was most; it would be helpful if we undertook just one major programmatic initiative. We were at a retreat, and in the process of a discussion, we decided that education would be the area that we could play the greatest role, basically because the Boston Public School was failing a lot of our children, and some of them were graduating functionally illiterate. The dropout rate was quite high, and we needed to ensure that our kids have the opportunity to learn, because we know that they can learn. So that was what we were thinking about theoretically.

I thought well, since we have decided that education would be our focus, when we said it would be our focus we did not know exactly how we would approach it. I decided that we needed to find a way in which we could develop a program that would help our kids. (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

Pastor D goes on to state that he was encouraged to pursue education as a programmatic theme after discussions with a prominent foundation head. The person told him that whatever program the organization developed in this area, they should "think big."

Pastor D: It [the program funding] came about in a sort of providential way. The ****** Foundation recognized that we didn't have any infrastructure at all, and that my role as president was such that I needed some assistance, perhaps an administrative assistant. I had spoken with them about giving us funds for an administrative assistant.

They set up a meeting with me and told my colleagues to come and discuss the need as when you want funding. It was, Reverend XXXX, Reverend YYYYY and myself were on our way to ******* and I simply made the suggestion why not ask them for a planning grant rather than for the resources to have an executive, not an executive director, but an administrative assistant?

So on the way there we shifted, and we went there and told them that it would make more sense at this point for us to have a planning grant of $25,000 to begin to do the research and planning for an education initiative (the Victory

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Generation After-School Program). (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

Pastor D documents how the concept of the Victory Generation After-School Program was born. His description of the events that led up to the decision to ask for funding of the program indicated that they (those requesting the funding) did not have a long term plan to financially or physically sustain the program. The actual design of the program came later, with the hiring of the Director of the program. Although the details of the program were designed and implemented by the Director, the Executive Board of the BMA established criteria that the After-School programs be housed in local churches and maintained an academic and faith-based focus. In response to the question as to why the program would be located in churches and have an academically faith-based format, Pastor D responded:

> Well, from the outset we recognized that we had certain assets. One, we had buildings. We had human resources, (different) people. We had the history of churches, you know, being involved in education. So it never occurred to us to do an after school program outside of our local churches. So we wanted the program to be in the churches so that you know, we can make a statement that this is something that we are doing from the start, but the faith-based aspect of it was critical from the outset. We would never have done a program without it being a faith-based program. And we were not interested in doing a program, which was not academically based, perhaps because of my own educational background. I mean, I recognized a need. I see the opportunities that there are, and education has been important for me throughout my life. So it is perhaps the reason I went into this area was that my focus is heavily on education, just out of my own experience as a teacher. (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

The Victory Generation After-School Program

> I'm convinced the best education, best thing we can do for our kids, is living in a language of the church, saved

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sanctified lives, Christ is very much real and very present.
So that's our number one priority. (Pastor E, personal
communication, May 23, 2002)

Background

The Victory Generation After-School Program (VGASP), which became the

"educational program" of the Black Ministerial Alliance, first opened in January of

2000. The program's mission was to provide a holistic, academically focused faith-

based after-school program for the children and families who reside in the Dorchester,

Mattapan, and Roxbury sections of Boston. The curriculum incorporated an Afrocentric

philosophy much like the Freedom Schools of the 1960's, which were developed by the

Children's Defense Fund. (VGASP Handbook 2000) At its peak, the VGASP operated

its programs in 11 churches throughout Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, and served

nearly 300 children and families.

All of the pastors clearly stated in their interviews that they supported the

education initiative (i.e., VGASP) set forth by the BMA. They were in agreement that

the after-school program was developed to fill a much-needed void in the lives of the

children they served. Several pastors cited statistics that children were in the most danger

of becoming involved in illegal acts during the hours of 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm. They also

agreed that the traditional education system in Boston was failing the children and

families of the City at alarming rates. Pastor C further explained why the BMA chose to

develop the VGASP:

We felt that because the education system here, public
education is horrendous. It's the worst in the country. It's
deplorable. When you look at the stats we fall, our kids fall
far below, in reading, math, in every thing. (Pastor C,
personal communication, May 30, 2003)

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When asked why he became involved in the after-school program, Pastor E stated:

> I had always intended to have an after-school program. I
> could not, not have an after school program, given what God
> had done in my life; I had to, to be there for our kids. So I
> saw that the corporate collaborative strategy that would kind
> of bring churches together to partnership, to develop quality,
> academic-based after school program it made sense. That's
> what we need to do. It gave our church and opportunity to
> step up to the plate a little quicker. (Pastor E, personal
> communication, May 23, 2002)

The majority of pastors mentioned the need to give back to their community as the personal driving force in wanting to be a part of the education initiative. They referred to teachers and mentors that had made a difference in their lives and in some cases had turned their life around. In several cases, they talked about the importance of our children having positive, pro-active Black education-based role models. In relation to this fact Pastor E recalled an incident with a teacher who had a dramatic impact on him. The dialogue that follows describes that incident.

> Pastor E: My reputation was so terrible, she (the teacher)
> stopped the class and came out, and (called me my color).
> Older lady—pushed me up against the locker, and said, you
> come into this class and start cutting a fool, I will kill you.
> Don't play like you've been doing in all those other classes.
>
> Interviewer: She's Black?
>
> Pastor E: She's Black. Says something about Black women
> who know how to handle kids. So after about fifteen or
> twenty minutes in class I raised my hand. I was going to say
> something extremely funny in response to one of her
> questions. And to my complete and everybody else's
> complete surprise, I don't know, out came the right answer.
> And after everybody got over the shock, including myself,
> the teacher took what felt like three of four minutes,
> affirming me. (Pastor E, personal communication, May 23,
> 2002)

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This experience speaks to the Black Church, the Black community, and the role a program developed from these communities can have on a child of African decent. When asked what impact the BMA would like for the VASP to have on the community, Pastor D responded:

> What I want to see is in addition to giving them the opportunity to view life in a different way as persons of worth beyond just grades. That's important because that's the only way you can evaluate what's going on. We need to see them doing well educationally. In other words, if they were getting a C and they can move to a B, that's measurable and you know what's going on.

> But the other piece is that they have a healthy self concept. That they realize that they are a part of a community of persons who love them and support them. So it is really a holistic approach to education because education without love and support and going beyond just the impartation of information, would not work very well. You can know as much as you can think of and nothing necessarily really happens. So whatever they are doing, both in terms of the education they are receiving and the context in which they are receiving that education, ought to change your behavior patterns, give them a sense of who they are, give them an ambition to achieve. (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

Although the VGASP was a faith-based program by definition, it is not a religious school program in the traditional sense. Children did not participate in Bible study, although all sites participated in a daily prayer activity. Students and staff also participated in Harambee, an African ritual of sharing. This allowed students and staff to share their feelings of the day with the group either through a dialogue or in many cases through prayer. When asked to describe what faith-based meant in relation to the after-school program, Pastor D said:

> It means that both the environment in which the students function and the quality of the personnel would indicate that

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faith is and important aspect of one's life. That kids would understand about God and about themselves, and that knowledge would be translated into the raising of self-esteem, self-worth because of who God is. If we are God's image bearers, then we must be worth something.

What we were attempting to do is to place education within the context of loving, caring relationship as a result of our faith in God (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

It was the hope of all the pastors that the Program would have a positive impact on the children and families it served. When asked, " *In terms of the Victory After-School Program, and the Black Ministerial Alliance, what impact would you like to see them have on the City and the children and families of Boston?* " Pastor A replied:

Well, I certainly would like for the BMA to be a major purveyor of the faith. Then I would like, as with all my ministries, for the BMA to make the children, especially poor children and their families stakeholders in this city. Not bigger consumers, but stakeholders, wiser consumers, maybe, but stakeholders. In seeing themselves as children of God, they take their proper ownership as citizens of this city. (Pastor A, personal communication, June 20, 2002)

Summary

This chapter examines five major themes and explores them through the interviews of the pastors. The major themes of this study are:

- The Black Church as a institution

- The definition of leadership

- The personal influences on the individual leaders

- The BMA as a leadership organization

- The Victory Generation After-School Program as evidence of the

  leadership of the BMA

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The themes established in this chapter attempts to understand the inner workings of the

BMA as an organization and the individual leadership of the men and women who run it.

It also examines the role of the Black Church as an institution in the development of their

leadership. Through their words, they illustrate how their individual and collective

leadership was influenced by lived experiences to create the Victory Generation After-

School Program.

Final Note

The Victory Generation After-School formally ended in June of 2002.

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research conducted in this study of the leaders of the Black Ministerial Alliance (BMA), and their leadership of the Victory Generation After-School Program (a program of the BMA). The study also makes recommendations that may guide the successful implementation of future projects similar to the Victory Generation After-School Program. The two fundamental research questions guiding this study are:

1. How has the history of the leadership role of the Black Church as an institution shaped the leaders of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston as individuals and as a group?

2. What manifested itself in the life experiences of the individual leaders of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, which directed them, as a body to develop an educational initiative such as the Victory Generation After-School Program?

These questions were developed to examine the role of the Black Church as an institution, and the lived experiences and personal influences of the leaders impacted this group in terms of leadership ability, style, and the development of the Victory Generation After-School Program (VGASP). In analyzing the data it was critical to have a clear understanding of "leadership" as it relates to this study. The question of leadership and its definition were essential in determining the motivation of the leaders of the BMA to develop the education initiative the VGASP. This definition was also crucial in understanding the criteria through which the success of the program was judged.

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For the purposes of this study, leadership is defined as the *"ability to influence the behavior of others toward a group goal by setting a clear vision and communicating that vision in a way that is respectful, thereby allowing those who follow to do so with a clear understanding of their freedom."* To address these research questions, five subject areas were established to examine the key factors that motivated the BMA to undertake the education initiative. The areas covered were:

- The Black Church as an institution
- The Definition of Leadership
- Personal Influences on Individual Leaders
- The Black Ministerial Alliance as a Leadership Organization
- Victory Generation After-School Program as evidence of to the leadership of the BMA

Throughout the study, the consistent theme of "leadership" was examined in the context of the questions and the areas covered during the interviews. Through the use of a portraiture methodology, five major findings emerged from the study.

Findings and Recommendations

The Black Church

Findings

The historical importance and power derived by the Black community from the "Black Church" as an institution was a key point mentioned by all of the pastors. Each pastor defined the Black Church as the *"oldest and perhaps most respected institution in the Black community."* (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002) Although this statement remains true, to some extent it should be noted that the church's influence on the community has changed over the years. Though the Church remains a powerful

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influence on the greater community, within the Black community its influences are wide-ranging. Due to the changing demographics, the Black community is no longer monolithic or geographically confined. Unlike several decades ago (until the 1980's), when the Black community of Boston was corralled into the Dorchester, Mattapan, and Roxbury sections of Boston and was made up of Blacks mainly from the Southern United States and the West Indies, Blacks have now moved to the suburbs. They come from all over the world. These changes have changed the church and its ministry. The Black Church is now "*such a mixture that you really have to attend to the cultural aspects, or you lose your audience.*" (Pastor F, personal communication, May 21, 2002) For two churches this means that Sunday services are conducted in two or three languages. Independent churches of other denominations use their facilities. These independent churches design ministries to specifically address the different cultural needs of their parishioners.

Additionally, with the logistical shifts in demographics, churches are no longer surrounded by the communities they serve. In most cases the majority of the church parishioners no longer live in the immediate neighborhood, which impacts the relationship of the church with the surrounding community and its influence on that community. The reality for most churches is that the community they serve is no longer the community in which they are housed. The impact of this is multi-fold:

- The church's clear political and social influence on the community once immutable no longer exists.
- The pastor's and church's political leadership or clout no longer exists due to the fact that for the most part the constituents of the community don't attend the

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church in their community. For many reasons, the parishioners live in different areas of the city and in the suburbs -- a different political structure. Although parishioners have access to all services provided by the church no matter where they reside, the political leadership is aware that the community church no longer has a strong local voter base, which limits it political clout.

- Church/Community conflicts ignite, e.g. parking. Churches located closer to downtown Boston find parking difficult and it is difficult for parishioners to gain access to the church facilities. Several churches located in the South End of Boston do not have facility parking. As a result they are forced to use limited on-street parking. This makes it difficult to participate in programs offered by the church during weekdays.

- Often pastors no longer live in the community where the church is located and may not be viewed as part of the community. In some cases there is an additional tension between the pastor and the community because s/he refuses to live within the community in a house that the church owns.

- The ministries of the church have changed. Ministries, which once focused on the needs of inner city people, must expand their ministries to accommodate diverse congregations.

Racism is another issue that the Black Church must deal with. It manifests itself in the greater society. From its inception, the Black Church addressed the specific spiritual and educational needs of enslaved Blacks in America. *"It has always been there to help Black people to move forward. Without that they (Black people) could not have gotten*

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through the horrors of slavery and the post-slavery period. So the Black Church is the institution that the community has depended upon most throughout history." (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

Although enslaved Blacks formed secret churches based on Christianity, they infused their African traditions into their religious ceremonies through music, biblical interpretation, preaching styles and *"God's liberating power,"* creating a religious atmosphere in accordance with their understanding and relationship to God. (Pastor C, personal communication May 30, 2002) With the end of slavery, Blacks practiced religion in the open. However, they found that in most cases they were not viewed as equals within the greater church community. As a result, Blacks developed several denominations to allow them to worship God as *"Part of the body of Christ that is uniquely defined from an ethnic standpoint."* (Pastor E, personal communication, May 23, 2002)

In this study, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) is an example of this break. The AME church, whose roots are grounded in the doctrine of the United Methodist Church, is one of the seven authentic "Black Churches" as defined by theologians and scholars. This study reveals the view, by some pastors within the AME church, that a United Methodist Church led by a Black pastor, with a majority of Black parishioners is not considered a Black Church. As a result a tension developed within the Black religious community. This belief also led to internalized racism within the church community, which manifests itself in the Black religious leadership community. Black religious leaders within the United Methodist Church state that the greatest tension they feel regarding their race within the Methodist community comes from African Methodist

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Episcopal (AME), African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) and Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) churches that view them as not the "real thing" in terms of being an authentic Black religious organization.

Recommendations

As one of the major institutions within the Black community today's Black Church must be the catalyst for organizing and setting the agenda. This means that it must re-define the "community" to include those living and working outside of traditionally delineated Black communities as well as those who live within the community. It must connect more effectively with those who live within the "Black community" by acknowledging their needs in relation to the religious community and social policies that are created by the greater society. Pastors should be physically present in the community, not just at public meetings or when making public statements. The church and its parishioners should be open and welcoming to the community for non-church-related activities. The church must also acknowledge that neither of these groups is monolithic in terms of their culture, education, economics, or social agendas; and as such, should work to unify the groups on the basis of their commonalities.

By focusing on God and the Black experience as it relates to the unique relationship between parishioners and the Almighty, the church could have a major influence on the internal and external communities' perception of the Black community. By creating a bridge through which the two groups find common ground, the BMA would empower the community and the church to influence the social agenda as in the past. It would also be an arena in which the skills of both groups (church and community) could be united for the greater good.

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The tensions between the AME Church and the United Methodist Church are important to document in this study because they speak of the issue of internalized racism within the Black Church. It is important when discussing this issue to remember the foundation on which the Black Church was built. Its roots are the passion people of African descent felt in terms of expressing their faith in the Almighty on their own terms, by following their own belief system. Bishop Richard Allen founded the AME Church as a result of his unwillingness to be seen as a second-class citizen in the house of God. He and his followers felt passionately that all men should be treated as equals within the religious community. When we step away from this belief system and define one another using only one set of standards, we trample on the foundation of the Black Church.

Leadership

Findings

All of the pastors spoke about the fact that they considered themselves leaders of the church and the greater community. Several spoke of the unique responsibility they felt as religious leaders. The pastors spoke of the burden of other's views and responses to them not only in their role as leaders but in terms of the many perceptions that they somehow have a closer connection to God. In several cases pastors described their inner struggle when others reveal intimate and sometimes troubling information to them. Unable to share these revelations with others, they depend on their faith, and place these burdens in God's hand -- allowing them to function emotionally.

They also used terms such as integrity and influence, not only in leadership styles, but also in terms of what they look for in other's leadership skills. As leaders of medium to large congregations, much of their time is spent identifying the leadership potential of

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members of their congregation. All acknowledge that the success of their church hinges on the ability to discern and groom the leadership skills of others -- to *"empower people to allow them to shine."* (Pastor E, personal communication, May 23, 2002) Pastors spoke about their ability to build trust, to influence individuals and groups toward a common goal. They also defined leadership in terms of *"what God calls you to do."* (Pastor C, personal communication, May 30, 2002) Pastors accept and understand the fact that without a clear vision and a clear articulation of this vision, the majority of the congregation will not follow the leader. They acknowledged that as religious leaders they needed to accept and understand that there are those that will follow without question. Therefore, as their leader you have responsibility for them.

Several pastors discussed their effectiveness as leaders within the context of Boston, Massachusetts. They felt that their effectiveness to lead and have influence on the greater Boston community was hampered by racism that manifests itself in a way unique to Boston. They blamed the Black community's consistent unwillingness to participate in the election process as a major issue. They also believed that apathy and the lack of strong Black political leadership negatively affected their scope of influence.

They also argue that they remained steadfast in their leadership because they viewed ministry as synonymous with leadership. They all viewed their leadership and ministry as serving and helping -- as being servants. They all saw themselves as leading or shepherding their flock, their people to "a better way." (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

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Recommendations

Leadership and the skills of leadership are best taught by example. Pastors should be consistent in terms of their integrity, and use their influence in a fashion that is consistent with their stated calling; a calling which instructs them "*to serve, to help, to be a servant*" to God and his children (Pastor B, personal communication, June 1, 2002). The Black religious leadership of Boston has been criticized by the Black community for their inability to take a unified stand on issues of concern to them. On many occasions, the BMA leadership stated that they do not take a political stand and that they are not a political organization (Pastor E, personal communication, May 23, 2002). The BMA-- as its name suggests-- could be an ally to the Black community of Boston. In order to do this they must first work to gain the trust of the community by:

- Opening their doors to those outside the church

- Including all religious denominations in their membership

- Working at a grassroots level

- Understanding and acknowledging the diversity of culture and social status within the Black community

- Holding the political leadership of color as well as white leaders, accountable for the inequities in the Black community

In order to have any influence on the greater Black community he BMA should make a concerted effort to regain community trust through community-based ministries that address these issues.

Equally important is their commitment to fostering the next generation of leaders. Although the pastors regarded the identification of leadership skills in others as a key

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element of effective leadership, none mentioned involvement in a ministry or program designed specifically to address this issue. As stated by one pastor:

> All the churches face the issue of leadership, and we cannot expect to have good, healthy churches without a strong core of leaders. And the churches basically are not developing leaders, therefore we need to provide opportunities for people to understand more about leadership, the skills, commitment, how to function in situations." (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

A major focus of the group should be to establish leadership-training programs and to provide ministries that support the pastors as well as the greater community. These programs should not only provide training for leadership within a religious setting but should include areas such as politics and social service. The BMA could and should be the training ground for tomorrow's leaders.

Personal Influences

Findings

Pastors spoke of the profound influence of the church as an institution and its leadership role in their lives as children. They also spoke of the church and those within the church shaping their ministry and leadership today. Interestingly, those identified by pastors as influential leaders in the church were not necessarily the pastors or the deacons but members of the church who took them under their wing, and kept them on the "straight and narrow." Here, too, the pastors spoke about the importance of integrity. They viewed their primary influences as people who had integrity. They all acknowledged that those that influenced them saw something in them (their leadership

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potential) that they did not see in themselves. For most, it was the persistence of an individual that prompted them to accept their calling.

Although each was raised in the church, only one pastor stated that he knew from an early age of a calling to the ministry. The road for most was bumpy and forked at best. Two of the pastors came to the ministry after other career success. Both stated, however, that once they accepted God's calling, it became clear that it had always been there -- they had just been unwilling to receive it.

Two of the pastors (one recalls a childhood experience and the other as an adult) described their journey to ministry as rebellious and self-destructive. Each spoke of a turning point in life when he realized that he either needed to change his lifestyle face death. What was significant in igniting this change in behavior was that each pastor had someone who believed in him and never gave up on his potential.

For each pastor the ultimate guiding influence in life is God. Although various people and circumstances influenced them throughout their life to be a religious leader, they believed that as ministers to God's people you must "*die to yourself and commit to Him*". (Pastor B, personal communication, June 1, 2002) You must give yourself and your ministry to God in order be an effective Pastor.

Recommendations

As the average person, particularly a young person, struggles to find his/her way, it is important that these leaders share their stories of struggle and success. These stories can provide a connection to a population that may otherwise be disenfranchised by the religious community, i.e., drug addicts, or those on the wrong side of the law. Through

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the pastors' words it is evident that the adults in their lives were committed to them and their success. It is important, particularly in their work with youth, to follow the example of their role models.

By serving as positive models, through personal contact and ministries specifically designed to attract and mentor youth, the pastors and the BMA could serve as examples. Their life experiences, coupled with their vocations, is critical in *"helping people understand that we're [all] called to be faithful in our personal lives, in how [we] conduct themselves, their behavior; how they affect relationships."* They can show " *the need for ongoing grace and forgiveness and empowerment, because we keep rising and falling trying to do this thing right. "The power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives transforming us. "* (Pastor E, personal communication, May 23, 2002)

The transformation of which they speak refers to the total change one makes in the personal as well as spiritual components of one's life through faith. Through their lived experiences, pastors could demonstrate the power of God's grace and model how God's forgiveness empowers everyone to be better.

Black Ministerial Alliance

Findings

The Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston is a multi-denominational organization that has been in existence for over 40 years. It describes itself as an organization with a rich history of advocating on behalf of the African-American community regarding political and social issues. Throughout its history, it has undergone several transformations in name and structure. Although the organization professes to be

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multi-denominational it consciously excludes members of the Muslim community (the Nation of Islam), even though they have demonstrated a commitment to the urban community through the purchase of real estate and the ability to attract a following from the disenfranchised.

It should be noted that pastors hold individual membership in the BMA. A church cannot hold membership in the organization. Pastors are not allowed to speak on behalf of the BMA unless authorized by the President of the BMA. Pastors are also discouraged from making political statements or initiating a social agenda in their roles as members of the BMA.

The BMA describes itself as "*the moral compass for the community*", however, it has a stated (verbal) policy not to become a political organization. As one Pastor states, "*To become a political organization puts all of us at, well, to become political in sort of an organization sense, [and that] means that we threaten our independence.*" (Pastor E, personal communication, May 23, 2002) This is illustrated by the organization's unwillingness to make public statements on issues of concern to the community, i.e. welfare reform, housing, and so on.

One area that the BMA has taken a stand on is the issue of school reform. They have spoken out against the current MCAS graduation requirement and developed the after-school program in response to the low academic achievement of children in the Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan sections of Boston.

The BMA is unclear as to how they are viewed by the community for which they serve as the "moral compass." After conducting research to determine the communities' view of the organization, the results came back mixed. Although there were community-

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based organizations that were willing to work with them, many were unsure and uncertain of the BMA's purpose.

Although the BMA's purpose is clear to its membership, the organization's formal mission is unclear. The BMA has no written mission statement and its vision seems to be driven by the current leadership. Although the pastors stated their discomfort with the apparent lack of a clear written mission statement, they did not feel that it affected the organization's effectiveness.

The result of an unclear mission for the organization is further illustrated in the way that the education initiative developed. As stated by one of the pastors, "*We were at a retreat and in the process of a discussion, we decided that education would be the area that we could play the greatest role.*"(Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002) The education initiative was never taken to the full membership for a vote or brought to the group for discussion.

The ideological decision to create the Victory Generation After-School Program occurred in a similar fashion. With a verbal suggestion to "*think big*" from a leading foundation, three members of the BMA leadership decided in route to a meeting with the foundation for another purpose to ask for a planning grant for an education initiative.

> "So we didn't even know what we were going to do. So as a result of the research, talking to middle school principals, and to parents and to other in the community, the recommendation was that the greatest need was for an after- school program, and an after-school program that would be educational in nature" (Pastor D, personal communication, May 28, 2002)

The entire leadership of the BMA was brought into the discussion process after the grant was received, and the full membership was informed of the decision later.

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The Director of the program and her staff ultimate designed and implemented the

Victory Generation After-School Program. The Director was not a member of the

Executive Board but attended Board meetings beginning, in September 1999. The criteria

that the program be a multi-site, faith-based, academically-focused program housed in

churches was set by the Executive Board prior to hiring the Program Director.

On June 21, 2002, the Victory Generation After-School Program as it was

originally designed, closed. Of the 11 sites that ended the academic year 2001-2002, four

returned in September of 2002 as after-school homework centers.

The result of an unstated mission and major decisions left in the hands of a few

leaves the BMA vulnerable to manipulation on several levels. First, because it does not

allow the entire group to invest in programmatic plans of the organization. Second, the

organization makes its programmatic decisions based on the recommendation of funding

sources. This means that outside sources set the BMA's agenda.

These concerns, coupled with the fact that the leadership has had no formal training

in terms of leadership or in the management of an organization, (with a budget of over a

million dollars), it relies on outside input, which may not share the best interest or agenda

of the organization or the community it serves.

Recommendations

The Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston must develop a written mission

statement that clearly articulates the goals of the organization. The BMA has the potential

to be a proactive agent of change in the City of Boston. The leaders and members of the

organization are poised, politically and socially, to improve the conditions of people and

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facilities in the community. However, to act effectively on this potential, many issues must be addressed that are directly related to the fact that it has no stated mission.

First, it must be acknowledged that the membership of the BMA did not fully understand or believe in the programs established by the group's leadership. The leadership must make an effort to bring its members into the decision-making process early on. To accomplish this the BMA should dedicate at least two of the monthly meetings to soliciting input from the membership regarding current programs and any new programs. In the least this would give them feedback on the entire group's commitment to its programs.

Second, a stated mission would provide outside organizations with a clear understanding of the purpose and vision of the BMA. Currently, a number of funding organizations are able to sway the BMA in its philosophy and programs. This influence manifests itself in the BMA's inability to commit to one initiative. By following the whims of the funding community, the BMA is routinely forced to create programs that follow the current agenda of the funding community-- not their constituents. Although most missions are broad enough to allow an organization to accomplish many goals that allow for more than one initiative, the lack of any mission statement at all creates an atmosphere that encourages and allows outside agencies to influence the agenda of the BMA.

Third, a stated mission would frame the philosophy and set the impetus for which all initiatives are created. Criteria should be set which would examine the success of the program by how well it reflected the mission and the goals of the organization. All initiatives should be designed with a long-term plan in mind.

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Finally, as the group develops its mission, it should also create leadership/business training opportunities for its leadership and members. Most pastors will admit that they received little or no leadership/business training in the Seminary. However, they are expected to run major organizations and churches, now structured like major corporations. The lack of technical skill in these areas has a tremendous effect on their ability to meet the needs of their churches and the organization. Without training, it will be very difficult for the BMA or individual pastors to lift the organization or their churches to the next level-- financially or developmentally.

Victory Generation After-School Program

Findings

Similarly, the mission or goal of the education initiative the Victory Generation After-School Program (VGASP) was never clearly articulated. Further complicating this was the fact that the membership of the organization was not brought into the decision-making process nor was it ever clear that they fully invested in the program even though this cooperation was essential to the program's success.

As articulated by the pastors interviewed for this study it is clear that they saw the after-school program and the education initiative as a way of giving back to the community. Congruent with the history of the Black Church, the pastors hoped to fill an educational void for the Black community. The emphasis on a holistic approach was meant to address the social as well as academic needs of the children it served.

The program was also intended to help the Black Church and the families that the VGASP served to become stakeholders and leaders in the educational process of the children and to make them wise consumers. In addition, as the program grew, they would

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have a critical mass of children from the community attending the program. This would make the VGASP a vital entity in the academic and social success of the Black community.

Recommendations

In order for a program dependent on the cooperation of the church community to succeed, it is essential that the community understand and agree not only with the mission of the program, but also willingly accept their responsibility and role in ensuring the overall success of the program. By not involving the full membership of the BMA or the greater church community in the initial decision, the BMA set itself up for ridicule and misunderstanding.

As the program design unfolded, it was clear that the general membership--although interested in education as an initiative--was unprepared for the financial and personnel requirements of the individual churches. Through an open process many of these issues could have been clarified beforehand, thereby allowing churches to make decisions based on the reality of their individual situations rather than on the desire of an individual Pastor to address their concerns regarding the educational success of children.

As stakeholders, it is important for members to demonstrate a financial as well as social commitment to an issue. To do this, the BMA must commit financial resources to the program. This will not only make the BMA significant stakeholders in the political arena, but also in the funding community. As a financial contributor to the program, the BMA will have a stronger say in setting the agenda and encouraging the funding constituencies to make a long-term commitment the program and its mission.

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End Notes

In summarizing the findings of this study and making recommendations in relation to these findings, it is important to note that the Black Church was not meant to be a stagnant institution. It was meant to grow and nurture its community in a relevant way. To keep the traditions of the Black Church alive, its leadership must adapt to the needs of the multiple communities it serves. This can be done by embracing the history of all denominations and working together to ensure the future success of the communities. In a review of these findings regarding leadership, two Biblical passages come to mind. The first comes from the Gospel of Matthew:

> Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples. The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the Scripture. So Practice and obey what they say to you, but don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach. They crush you with impossible religious demands and never lift a finger to help ease the burden. Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear wide prayer boxes with scripture verses inside, and they wear extra long tassels on their robes. And how they love to sit at the head of the table at banquets in the most prominent seats in the synagogue! They enjoy the attention they get on the streets, and they enjoy being called Rabbi. Don't ever let anyone call you Rabbi, for you have only one teacher, and all of you are on the same level as brothers and sisters. And don't address anyone here on earth as "Father," for only God in heaven is your spiritual Father. And don't let anyone call you "Master," for there is only one master, the Messiah. The greatest among you must be a servant. But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble will be exalted. (Matthew 23:2-12, New Living Translation)

This passage puts into perspective the role of the pastor in a community. Pastors are not God. They are servants of God, just as all of us are. To anoint them with any special power or to view them as having a closer connection to God is a mistake. These

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men and women work and struggle through many of the same issues that all of us face. Their personal and professional decisions are based on lived experiences and personal and spiritual interpretations of God's word. They should guide us and allow our own lived experiences and personal connection to God to influence us as individuals.

Their leadership would be most effective if defined as *"the ability to influence the behavior of others toward a group goal by setting a clear vision and communicating that vision in a way that is respectful, allowing those that follow to do so with a clear understanding of their freedom."* All followers must have a clear understanding of individual freedom and make decisions based on a clear vision of spiritual and personal goals.

This view of leadership, and the straying away from it, affirms the following passage from Proverbs:

> Where there is no vision, the people will perish: but he that keepeth the law happy is he. (Proverbs 29:18, King James Version)

With no clearly articulated mission, the Black Ministerial Alliance has no clear vision. In order to survive the organization can and will be dictated by individual leaders and forced to follow guidelines set by funding sources. This is unhealthy for the organization and will ultimately lead to its demise. A viable organization must have a mission:.

> Seest thou a man that is hasty with his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him. (Proverbs 29:20, King James Version)

In order to achieve the ultimate goal of the BMA, to glorify God through both its programs and ministry, the organization's, Executive Board must clearly define it mission. This will allow the leadership as well as the membership to have a clear

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understanding of the organization's purpose and role in the community. It will also guide the organization and focus them in developing programs and individual and collective ministries. Equally as important, it will give outside organization's a clear understanding of effective ways to work with the BMA as it fulfills its goal of glorifying God and they fulfill the goals of their organization.

As stated in Nehemiah 6:15 (New Living Translation, an application of the scripture):

> They said it couldn't be done. The job was too big, and the problem to great. But God's men and women, joined together for special tasks, can solve huge problems and accomplish great goals. Don't let the size of a task or the length of time needed to accomplish it keep you from doing it. With God's help it can be done.

With a clear vision of the job at hand and with God's help, the task, whatever the BMA determines it to be can be done.

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Written Consent Form

To: Interview Participants

From: Joanne L. Allen-Willoughby

As a doctoral candidate at Lesley University, Cambridge MA, I, Joanne Allen L. Willoughby and conducting my doctoral research on a " Qualitative Study Examining the Leadership of the Executive Board of the Black ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston."

As part of this study I an conducting one 90-minute interview with members of the executive leadership of the Black Ministerial Alliance to determine the following:

1. How has the history of the leadership role of the Black Church as an institution shaped the leaders of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston as individuals and as a group?

2. What manifested itself in the life experiences of the individual leaders of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, which directed them, as a body to develop an educational initiative such as the Victory Generation After-School Program?

The data compiled from these interviews will be analyze and incorporated I the study to determine the role the BMA leadership has played in the establishment of the Victory Generation After-School Program.

In all written materials and oral presentations in which I might use materials from your interview, I will not use your name, the manes of people mentioned, or the names of your church. Each interview will be audio taped and transcribed by a typist who will be committed, as I am to confidentiality. For my identification purposes transcripts will be typed using participants initials and all forms of the transcript will use pseudonyms.

You may at any time withdraw from the interview process. You may withdraw your consent to have any specific excerpt of the interview used, by notifying me at the end of the interview. If at any time in the future I wish to use this material for any other purpose I will notify you to receive additional written consent.

I, _____ have read the above statement and agree to participate as an interviewee under the conditions stated above.

Signature of Participant   Date

Signature of Interviewer   Date

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Pastoral Questionnaire
Cover Sheet

Date of Interview: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Church: _____

Role in Black Ministerial Alliance: _____

Number of Years a Black Ministerial Alliance Member: _____

Number of Years in the Ministry: _____

Size of Church: _____

Population of Congregation: _____

Total Members: _____

Male: _____ Female: _____

Total Youth under age 18 _____

Male: _____ Female: _____

Please list the different ministries of your church:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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Joanne L. Allen-Willoughby
3 Surrey Lane
Milton, MA 02186

Name:
Title
Address

May 17, 2003

Dear XXXX:

As we discussed in our telephone conversation I am in the process of conducting a qualitative research study on the Victory Generation After-School and the leadership of the Black Ministerial Alliance for the final stage of my doctoral program. As part of my research I will conduct portraiture-based interviews with the leadership of the Black Ministerial Alliance. These interviews will focus on two areas:

1. How has the history of the leadership role of the Black Church as an institution shaped the leaders of the Executive Board of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston as individuals and as a group?

2. What manifested itself in the life experiences of the individual leaders of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, which directed them, as a body to develop an educational initiative such as the Victory Generation After-School Program?

I have enclosed an informational cover sheet, which I would like for you to complete prior to our meeting on _____ at _____. Also included in this packet are 5 questions, which will give you an idea of the type of questions I will be asking during the interview. I anticipate that the interview will take approximately 90 minutes.

Please know that the information collected during this interview is for the sole purpose of my dissertation research and will not be published for public distribution.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Joanne L. Allen-Willoughby

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Sample Interview Questions

1. Who or what was the main influence, which lead you to the ministry?

2. How would you define your ministry?

3. What do you see as the major concerns of the religious community you serve?

4. Why did you choose to take a leadership role in the Black Ministerial Alliance?

5. What impact would you like to see the Victory Generation After-School Program have on education in the City of Boston?

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Pastor Questions

1. How would you define the term "The Black Church"?
2. Were you raised in the church?
3. How would you describe that experience?
4. Who in the church was your major influence as a child?
5. Would you consider that person a leader?
6. What made them a leader in your mind?
7. How do you define leadership in general?
8. At what point in your life did you know you were called to the ministry?
9. How would you describe that experience?
10. Who or what was the major influence in your life in terms of becoming a Pastor?
11. How did that person(s) and or experience influence you, and inform your ministry?
12. How long have you been a Pastor?
13. What are your other Pastoral experiences?
14. Do you consider yourself as a leader?
15. What makes you a leader?
16. Describe your leadership style?
17. How would you describe your ministry?
18. What is the focus of your ministry?
19. How would you describe your church community?
20. How would you describe the community surround your church?
21. In terms of your church community how would you define your role?
22. In terms of the surrounding neighborhood community how would you define your role?
23. What do you see as the major concern of the two communities you serve? Are they the same?
24. How would you describe the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston as an organization?
25. Why have you chosen to take a leadership role in the organization?
26. Why did the BMA choose to focus on education?
27. How would you define term "faith-based, holistic education"?
28. Why did the BMA choose to develop a faith-based after-school program?
29. What impact would you like to see the Victory Generation After-School Program have on education with in the city of Boston?
30. What impact do you see the victory Generation After-School Program having on education with in the City of Boston?

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Internet Resources

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http://www.morehouse.edu

http://www.bostonk12.ma.us

http://www.boston.com/education/macas/scores2000/boston.htm

http://www.meeproductions.com

http://www.federalgrants.net

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