

# Du Bois on Religion



*Edited by Phil Zuckerman*

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# The Negro Church

Published in 1903, *The Negro Church* is not only the first extensive, in-depth sociological study of African-American religion specifically, but it is the first book-length sociological study of religion in general undertaken in the United States. Employing an array of historical, interview, survey, and participant-observation research methods, *The Negro Church* explores multiple aspects of African-American religious life in the early years of the twentieth century, from church finances to public opinion to denominational diversity to belief.

While he was at Atlanta University, Du Bois organized annual conferences in which scholars and specialists would come together to share their research on a variety of timely black issues, such as the Negro in business, the Negro American family, the Negro American artisan, and so on. From 1897 to 1914, in addition to organizing these conferences, Du Bois supervised, edited, and contributed to the subsequent publication of sixteen monographs following each conference.

Below are excerpts from the monograph published on the religion of African Americans. Several authors contributed sections to the monograph, including Du Bois himself. It is largely the sections written by Du Bois that are included here. Themes include the effects of the slave trade on African religion, the conversion process to Christianity, the conditions of various black churches through the country, and so on. Du Bois characterized the Black Church as the "first distinctly Negro American social institution" and illustrates the degree to which the religious organizations of African Americans can be considered social as well as spiritual centers.

The Negro Church is the only social institution of the Negroes which started in the African forest and survived slavery; under the leadership of priest or medicine man, afterward of the Christian pastor, the Church preserved in itself the remnants of African tribal life and became after emancipation, the center of Negro social life. So that today the Negro population of the United States is virtually divided into church congregations which are the real units of race life.

Report of the Third Atlanta Conference, 1898

1. *Primitive Negro Religion.* The prominent characteristic of primitive Negro religion is Nature worship with the accompanying strong belief in sorcery. . . . The slave trade so mingled and demoralized the west coast of Africa for four hundred years that it is difficult to-day to find there definite remains of any great religious system. Ellis tells us of the spirit belief of the Ewne people; they believe that men and all Nature have the indwelling "Kra," which is immortal. That the man himself after death may exist as a ghost, which is often conceived of as departed from the "Kra," as shadowy continuing of the man. So Bryce, speaking of the Kaffirs of South Africa, a branch of the great Bantu tribe, says:

"To the Kaffirs, as to the most savage races, the world was full of spirits—spirits of the rivers, the mountains, and the woods. Most important were the ghosts of the dead, who had power to injure or help the living, and who were, therefore, propitiated by offerings at stated periods, as well as on occasions, when their aid was especially desired. This kind of worship, the worship once most generally diffused throughout the world, and which held its ground among the Greeks and Italians in the most flourishing period of ancient civilization, as it does in China and Japan to-day, was, and is, virtually the religion of the Kaffirs."

The supreme being of the Bantus is the dimly conceived Molimo, the Unseen, who typifies vaguely the unknown powers of nature or of the sky. Among some tribes the worship of such higher spirits has banished fetichism and belief in witchcraft, but among most of the African tribes the sudden and violent changes in government and social organization have tended to overthrow the larger religious conceptions and leave fetichism and witchcraft supreme. This is particularly true on the west coast among the spawn of the slave traders.

There can be no reasonable doubt, however, but that the scattered remains of religious systems in Africa to-day among the Negro tribes are survivals of the religious ideas upon which the Egyptian religion was based. . . .

The early Christian church had an Exarchate of fifty-two dioceses in Northern Africa, but it probably seldom came in contact with purely Negro tribes on account of the Sahara. The hundred dioceses of the patriarchate of Alexandria, on the other hand, embraced Libya, Pentapolis, Egypt, and Abyssinia, and had a

large number of Negroid members. In Western Africa, after the voyage of Da Gama, there were several kingdoms of Negroes nominally Catholic, and the church claimed several hundred thousand communicants. These were on the slave coast and on the eastern coast.

Mohammedanism entered Africa in the seventh and eighth centuries and had since that time conquered nearly all Northern Africa, the Sudan, and made inroads into the populations of the west coast . . . and especially is it preserving the natives against the desolations of Christian ruin.

2. *Effect of Transplanting.* It ought not to be forgotten that each Negro slave brought to America during the four centuries of the African slave trade was taken from definite and long-formed habits of social, political, and religious life. These ideas were not the highest, measured by modern standards, but they were far from the lowest, measured by the standards of primitive man. The unit of African tribal organization was the clan or family of families ruled by the patriarch or his strongest successor; these clans were united into tribes ruled by hereditary or elected chiefs, and some tribes were more or less loosely federated into kingdoms. . . .

The power of religion was represented by the priest or medicine man. Aided by an unflinching faith, natural sharpness and some rude knowledge of medicine, and supported by the vague sanctions of a half-seen world peopled by spirits, good and evil, the African priest wielded a power second only to that of the chief, and often superior to it. In some tribes the African priesthood was organized and something like systematic religious institutions emerged. But the central fact of African life, political, social and religious, is its failure to integrate—to unite and systematize itself in some conquering whole which should dominate the wayward parts. This is the central problem of civilization, and while there have arisen from time to time in Africa conquering kingdoms, and some consolidation of power in religion, it has been continually overthrown before it was strong enough to maintain itself independently. What have been the causes of this? They have been threefold: the physical peculiarities of Africa, the character of external conquest, and the slave-trade—the "heart disease of Africa." The physical peculiarities of the land shut out largely the influence of foreign civilization and religion and made human organization a difficult fight for survival against heat and disease; foreign conquest took the form of sudden incursions, causing vast migrations and uprooting of institutions and beliefs, or of colonizations of strong, hostile and alien races, and finally for four centuries the slave-trade fed on Africa, and peaceful evolution in political organization or religious belief was impossible.

Especially did the slave-trade ruin religious evolution on the west coast; the ancient kingdoms were overthrown and changed, tribes and nations mixed and demoralized, and a perfect chaos of ideas left. Here it was that animal worship, fetichism and belief in sorcery and witchcraft strengthened their sway and gained wider currency than ever.

The first social innovation that followed the transplanting of the Negro was the substitution of the West Indian plantation for the tribal and clan life of Africa. The real significance of this change will not appear at first glance. The despotic political power of the chief was now vested in the white master; the clan had lost its ties of blood relationship and became simply the aggregation of individuals on a plot of ground, with common rules and customs, common dwellings, and a certain communism in property. The two greatest changes, however, were, first, the enforcement of severe and unremitted toil, and, second, the establishment of a new polygamy—a new family life. These social innovations were introduced with much difficulty and met determined resistance on the part of the slaves, especially when there was community of blood and language. Gradually, however, superior force and organized methods prevailed, and the plantation became the unit of a new development. The enforcement of continual toil was not the most revolutionary change which the plantation introduced. Where this enforced labor did not descend to barbarism and slow murder, it was not bad discipline; the African had the natural indolence of a tropical nature which had never felt the necessity of work; his first great awakening came with hard labor, and a pity it was, not that he worked, but that voluntary labor on his part was not from the first encouraged and rewarded. The vast and overshadowing change that the plantation system introduced was the change in the status of women—the new polygamy. This new polygamy had all the evils and not one of the safeguards of the African prototype. The African system was a complete protection for girls, and a strong protection for wives against everything but the tyranny of the husband; the plantation polygamy left the chastity of Negro women absolutely unprotected in law, and practically little guarded in custom. The number of wives of a native African was limited and limited very effectually by the number of cattle he could command or his prowess in war. The number of wives of a West India slave was limited chiefly by his lust and cunning. The black females, were they wives or growing girls, were the legitimate prey of the men, and on this system there was one, and only one, safeguard, the character of the master of the plantation. Where the master was himself lewd and avaricious the degradation of the women was complete. Where, on the other hand, the plantation system reached its best development, as in Virginia, there was a fair approximation of a monogamic marriage system among the slaves; and yet even here, on the best conducted plantations, the protection of Negro women was but imperfect; the seduction of girls was frequent, and seldom did an illegitimate child bring shame, or an adulterous wife punishment to the Negro quarters.

And this was inevitable, because on the plantation the private home, as a self-protective, independent unit, did not exist. That powerful institution, the polygamous African home, was almost completely destroyed and in its place in Amer-

ica arose sexual promiscuity, a weak community life, with common dwelling, meals and child-nurseries. The internal slave trade tended to further weaken natural ties. A small number of favored house servants and artisans were raised above this—had their private homes, came in contact with the culture of the master class, and assimilated much of American civilization. Nevertheless, broadly speaking, the greatest social effect of American slavery was to substitute for the polygamous Negro home a new polygamy less guarded, less effective, and less civilized.

At first sight it would seem that slavery completely destroyed every vestige of spontaneous social movement among the Negroes; the home had deteriorated; political authority and economic initiative was in the hands of the masters, property, as a social institution, did not exist on the plantation, and, indeed, it is usually assumed by historians and sociologists that every vestige of internal development disappeared, leaving the slaves no means of expression for their common life, thought, and striving. This is not strictly true; the vast power of the priest in the African state has already been noted; his realm alone—the province of religion and medicine—remained largely unaffected by the plantation system in many important particulars. The Negro priest, therefore, early became an important figure on the plantation and found his function as the interpreter of the supernatural, the comforter of the sorrowing, and as the one who expressed, rudely, but picturesquely, the longing and disappointment and resentment of a stolen people. From such beginnings arose and spread with marvelous rapidity the Negro Church, the first distinctively Negro American social institution. It was not at first by any means a Christian Church, but a mere adaptation of those heathen rites which we roughly designate by the term Obe Worship, or "Voodooism." Association and missionary effort soon gave these rites a veneer of Christianity, and gradually, after two centuries, the Church became Christian, with a simple Calvinistic creed, but with many of the old customs still clinging to the services. It is this historic fact that the Negro Church of to-day bases itself upon the sole surviving social institution of the African fatherland, that accounts for its extraordinary growth and vitality. We easily forget that in the United States to-day there is a Church organization for every sixty Negro families. This institution, therefore, naturally assumed many functions which the other harshly suppressed social organs had to surrender; the Church became the center of amusements, of what little spontaneous economic activity remained, of education, and of all social intercourse. . . .

4. *Slavery and Christianity.* The most obvious reason for the spread of witchcraft and persistence of heathen rites among Negro slaves was the fact that at first no effort was made by masters to offer them anything better. The reason for this was the widespread idea that it was contrary to law to hold Christians as slaves. One can realize the weight of this if we remember that the Diet of Worms and

Sir John Hawkins' voyages were but a generation apart. From the time of the Crusades to the Lutheran revolt the feeling of Christian brotherhood had been growing, and it was pretty well established by the end of the sixteenth century that it was illegal and irreligious for Christians to hold each other as slaves for life. This did not mean any widespread abhorrence of forced labor from serfs or apprentices and it was particularly linked with the idea that the enslavement of the heathen was meritorious, since it punished their blasphemy on the one hand and gave them a chance for conversion on the other.

When, therefore, the slave-trade from Africa began it met only feeble opposition here and there. That opposition was in nearly all cases stilled when it was continually stated that the slave-trade was simply a method of converting the heathen to Christianity. The corollary that the conscience of Europe immediately drew was that after conversion the Negro slave was to become in all essential respects like other servants and laborers, that is bound to toil, perhaps, under general regulations, but personally free with recognized rights and duties.

Most colonists believed that this was not only actually right, but according to English law. And while they early began to combat the idea they continually doubted the legality of their action in English courts. . . .

The question arose in different form in Massachusetts when it was enacted that only church members could vote. If Negroes joined the church, would they become free voters of the commonwealth? It seemed hardly possible. . . . Nevertheless, up to 1660 or thereabouts, it seemed accepted in most colonies and in the English West Indies that baptism into a Christian church would free a Negro slave. Massachusetts first apparently attacked this idea by enacting in 1641 that slavery should be confined to captives in just wars "and such strangers as willingly sell themselves or are sold to us," meaning by "strangers" apparently heathen, but saying nothing as to the effect of conversion. Connecticut adopted similar legislation in 1650 and Virginia declared in 1661 that Negroes "are incapable of making satisfaction" for time lost in running away by lengthening their time of service, thus implying that they were slaves for life, and Maryland declared flatly in 1663 that Negro slaves should serve "*durante vita*." In Barbadoes the Council presented, in 1663, an act to the Assembly recommending the christening of Negro children and the instruction of all adult Negroes to the several ministers of the place. . . .

It was not until 1667 that Virginia finally plucked up courage to attack the issue squarely and declared by law:

"Baptisme doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom, in order that diverse masters freed from this doubt may more carefully endeavor the propagation of Christianity."

Following this Virginia took three further decisive steps. In 1670, 1682, and 1705. First she declared that only slaves imported from Christian lands should be free. Next she excepted Negroes and mulattoes from even this restriction unless they were born of Christians and were Christians when taken in slavery. Finally, only personal Christianity in Africa or actual freedom in a Christian country excepted a Virginia Negro slave from life-long slavery. . . .

It is clear from these citations that in the seventeenth century not only was there little missionary effort to convert Negro slaves, but that there was on the contrary positive refusal to let slaves be converted, and that this refusal was one incentive to explicit statements of the doctrine of perpetual slavery for Negroes. The French Code Noir of 1685 made baptism and religious instruction of Negroes obligatory. We find no such legislation in English colonies. On the contrary, the principal Secretary of State is informed in 1670 that in Jamaica the number of tippling houses has greatly increased, and many planters are ruined by drink. . . .

In Massachusetts John Eliot and Cotton Mather both are much concerned that "so little care was taken of their (the Negroes') precious and immortal souls," which were left to "a destroying ignorance merely for fear of thereby losing the benefit of their vassalage."

So throughout the colonies it is reported in 1678 that masters, "out of covetousness," are refusing to allow their slaves to be baptized; and in 1700 there is an earnest plea in Massachusetts for religious instruction of Negroes since it is "notorious" that masters discourage the "poor creatures" from baptism. In 1709 a Carolina clergyman writes to the secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in England that only a few of 200 or more Negroes in his community were taught Christianity, but were not allowed to be baptized. Another minister writes, a little later, that he prevailed upon a master after much importuning to allow three Negroes to be baptized. In North Carolina in 1700 a clergyman of the Established Church complains that masters will not allow their slaves to be baptized for fear that a Christian slave is by law free. A few were instructed in religion, but not baptized. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel combated this notion vigorously. . . .

5. *Early Restrictions.* "In the year 1624, a few years after the arrival of the first slave ship at Jamestown, Va., a Negro child was baptized and called William, and from that time on in almost all, if not all, the oldest churches in the South, the names of Negroes baptized into the church of God can be found upon the registers."

It was easy to make such cases an argument for more slaves. James Habersham, the Georgia companion of the Methodist Whitefield, said about 1730:

"I once thought it was unlawful to keep Negro slaves, but I am now induced to think God may have a higher end in permitting them to be brought to this Christian country, than merely to support their masters. Many of the poor slaves in America have already been made freemen of the heavenly Jerusalem and possibly a time may come when many thousands may embrace the gospel, and thereby be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. These, and other considerations, appear to plead strongly for a limited use of Negroes; for, while we can buy provisions in Carolina cheaper than we can here, no one will be induced to plant much."

In other cases there were curious attempts to blend religion and expediency, as for instance, in 1710, when a Massachusetts clergyman evolved a marriage ceremony for Negroes in which the bride solemnly promised to cleave to her husband "so long as God in his Providence" and the slave-trade let them live together!

The gradual increase of these Negro Christians, however, brought peculiar problems. Clergymen, despite the law, were reproached for taking Negroes into the church and still allowing them to be held as slaves. On the other hand it was not easy to know how to deal with the black church member after he was admitted. He must either be made a subordinate member of a white church or a member of a Negro church under the general supervision of whites. As the efforts of missionaries, like Dr. Bray, slowly increased the number of converts, both these systems were adopted. But the black congregations here and there soon aroused the suspicion and fear of the masters. . . .

This made Negro members of white churches a necessity in this colony, and there was the same tendency in other colonies. "Maryland passed a law in 1723 to suppress tumultuous meetings of slaves on Sabbath and other holy days," a measure primarily for good order, but also tending to curb independent religious meetings among Negroes. In 1800 complaints of Negro meetings were heard. Georgia in 1770 forbade slaves "to assemble on pretense of feasting," etc., and "any constable," on direction of a justice, is commanded to disperse any assembly or meeting of slaves "which may disturb the peace or endanger the safety of his Majesty's subjects; and every slave which may be found at such meeting, as aforesaid, shall and may, by order of such justice, immediately be corrected, without trial, by receiving on the bare back twenty-five stripes, with a whip, switch, or cowskin," etc. . . . In 1792 in a Georgia act "to protect religious societies in the exercise of their religious duties," punishment was provided for persons disturbing white congregations, but "no congregation or company of Negroes shall upon pretense of divine worship assemble themselves" contrary to the act of 1770. Whether or not such acts tended to curb the really religious meetings of the slaves or not it is not easy to know. Probably they did, although at the same

time there was probably much disorder and turmoil among slaves, which sought to cloak itself under the name of the church. This was natural, for such assemblies were the only surviving African organizations, and they epitomized all there was in slave life outside of forced toil. . . .

In some colonies, like North Carolina, masters continued indifferent throughout the larger part of the eighteenth century. In New Hanover county of that state out of a thousand whites and two thousand slaves, 307 masters were baptized in 1742 but only nine slaves. . . .

6. *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.* "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" was incorporated under William III, on the 16th day of June, 1701, and the first meeting of the society under its charter was the 27th of June of the same year. Thomas Laud, Bishop of Canterbury, Primate and Metropolitan of all England, was appointed by his majesty the first president.

This society was formed with the view, primarily, of supplying the destitution of religious institutions and privileges among the inhabitants of the North American colonies, members the established church of England; and, secondarily, of extending the gospel to the Indians and Negroes. The society entered upon its duties with zeal, being patronized by the king and all the dignitaries of the Church of England.

They instituted inquiries into the religious condition of all the colonies, responded to "by the governors and persons of the best note," (with special reference to Episcopacy), and they perceived that their work "consisted of three great branches: the care and instruction of our people settled in the colonies; the conversion of the Indian savages, and the conversion of the Negroes." Before appointing missionaries they sent out a traveling preacher, the Rev. George Keith (an itinerant missionary), who associated with himself the Rev. John Talbot. Mr. Keith preached between North Carolina and Piscataqua river in New England, a tract above eight hundred miles in length, and completed his mission in two years, and returned and reported his labors to the society.

The annual meetings of this society were regularly held from 1702 to 1819 and 118 sermons preached before it by bishops of the Church of England, a large number of them distinguished for piety, learning, and zeal.

In June, 1702, the Rev. Samuel Thomas, the first missionary, was sent to the colony of South Carolina. The society designed he should attempt the conversion of the Yamosee Indians; but the governor, Sir Nathaniel Johnson, appointed him to the care of the people settled on the three branches of Cooper river, making Goose creek his residence. He reported his labors to the society and said "that he had taken much pains also in instructing the Negroes, and learned twenty of them to read." He died in October, 1706. He was succeeded by a number of missionaries. . . .

The society looked upon the instruction and conversion of the Negroes as a principal branch of its care, esteeming it a great reproach to the Christian name that so many thousands of persons should continue in the same state of pagan darkness under a Christian government and living in Christian families as they lay under formerly in their own heathen countries. The society immediately from its first institution strove to promote their conversion, and inasmuch as its income would not enable it to send numbers of catechists sufficient to instruct the Negroes, yet it resolved to do its utmost, and at least to give this work the mark of its highest approbation. Its officers wrote, therefore, to all their missionaries that they should use their best endeavors at proper times to instruct the Negroes, and should especially take occasion to recommend zealously to the masters to order their slaves, at convenient times, to come to them that they might be instructed.

The history of the society goes on to say: "It is a matter of commendation to the clergy that they have done thus much in so great and difficult a work. But, alas! what is the instruction of a few hundreds in several years with respect to the many thousands uninstructed, unconverted, living, dying, utter pagans. It must be confessed what hath been done is as nothing with regard to what a true Christian would hope to see effected." After stating several difficulties in respect to the religious instruction of the Negroes, it is said: "But the greatest obstruction is the masters themselves do not consider enough the obligation which lies upon them to have their slaves instructed." And in another place, "the society have always been sensible the most effectual way to convert the Negroes was by engaging their masters to countenance and promote their conversion." The bishop of St. Asaph, Dr. Fleetwood, preached a sermon before the society in the year 1711, setting forth the duty of instructing the Negroes in the Christian religion. The society thought this so useful a discourse that they printed and dispersed abroad in the plantations great numbers of that sermon in the same year; and in the year 1725 reprinted the same and dispersed again great numbers. The bishop of London, Dr. Gibson, (to whom the care of plantations abroad, as to religious affairs, was committed,) became a second advocate for the conversion of Negroes, and wrote two letters on the subject. The first in 1727, "addressed to masters and mistresses of families in the English plantations abroad, exhorting them to encourage and promote the instruction of their Negroes in the Christian faith. The second in the same year, addressed to the missionaries there, directing them to distribute the said letter, and exhorting them to give their assistance towards the instruction of the Negroes within their several parishes."

The society were persuaded this was the true method to remove the great obstruction to their conversion, and hoping so particular an application to the masters and mistresses from the See of London would have the strongest influ-

ence, they printed ten thousand copies of the letter to the masters and mistresses, which were sent to all the colonies on the continent and to all the British islands in the West Indies, to be distributed among the masters of families, and all other inhabitants. The society received accounts that these letters influenced many masters of families to have their servants instructed. The bishop of London soon after wrote "an address to serious Christians among ourselves, to assist the Society for Propagating the Gospel in carrying on this work."

In the year 1783, and the following, soon after the separation of our colonies from the mother country, the society's operations ceased, leaving in all the colonies forty-three missionaries, two of whom were in the Southern States—one in North and one in South Carolina. The affectionate valediction of the society to them was issued in 1785. "Thus terminated the connection of this noble society with our country, which, from the foregoing notices of its efforts, must have accomplished a great deal for the religious instruction of the Negro population."

7. *The Moravians, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians.* The Moravians or United Brethren were the first who formally attempted the establishment of missions exclusively to the Negroes.

A succinct account of their several efforts, down to the year 1790, is given in the report of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen, at Salem, N.C., October 5th, 1837, by Rev. J. Rhenatus Schmidt, and is as follows:

"A hundred years have now elapsed since the Renewed Church of the Brethren first attempted to communicate the gospel to the many thousand Negroes of our land. In 1737 Count Zinzendorf paid a visit to London and formed an acquaintance with General Oglethorpe and the trustees of Georgia, with whom he conferred on the subject of the mission to the Indians, which the brethren had already established in that colony (in 1735). Some of these gentlemen were associates under the will of Dr. Bray, who had left funds to be devoted to the conversion of the Negro slaves in South Carolina; and they solicited the Count to procure them some missionaries for this purpose. On his objecting that the Church of England might hesitate to recognize the ordination of the Brethren's missionaries, they referred the question to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Potter, who gave it as his opinion 'that the Brethren being members of an Episcopal Church, whose doctrines contained nothing repugnant to the Thirty-nine Articles, ought not to be denied free access to the heathen.' This declaration not only removed all hesitation from the minds of the trustees as to the present application, but opened the way for the labors of the Brethren amongst the slave population of the West Indies, a great and blessed work, which has, by the gracious help of God, gone on increasing even to the present day.

"Various proprietors, however, avowing their determination not to suffer strangers to instruct their Negroes, as they had their own ministers, whom they paid for that purpose, our brethren ceased from their efforts. It appears from the letters of Brother Spangenburg, who spent the greater part of the year 1749 at Philadelphia and preached the gospel to the Negroes in that city, that the labors of the Brethren amongst them were not entirely fruitless. Thus he writes, in 1751: 'On my arrival in Philadelphia, I saw numbers of Negroes still buried in all their native ignorance and darkness, and my soul was grieved for them. Soon after some of them came to me, requesting instruction, at the same time acknowledging their ignorance in the most affecting manner. They begged that a weekly sermon might be delivered expressly for their benefit. I complied with their request and confined myself to the most essential truths of scripture. Upwards of seventy Negroes attended on these occasions, several of whom were powerfully awakened, applied for further instruction, and expressed a desire to be united to Christ and his church by the sacrament of baptism, which was accordingly administered to them.'"

At the request of Mr. Knox, the English Secretary of State, an attempt was made to evangelize the Negroes of Georgia. "In 1774 the Brethren, Lewis Muller, of the Academy at Niesky, and George Wagner, were called to North America and in the year following, having been joined by Brother Andrew Broesing, of North Carolina, they took up their abode at Knoxborough, a plantation so called from its proprietor, the gentleman above mentioned. They were, however, almost constant sufferers from the fevers which prevailed in those parts, and Muller finished his course in October of the same year. He had preached the gospel with acceptance to both whites and blacks, yet without any abiding results. The two remaining Brethren being called upon to bear arms on the breaking out of the war of independence, Broesing repaired to Wachovia, in North Carolina, and Wagner set out in 1779 for England."

In the great Northampton revival, under the preaching of Dr. Edwards in 1735-6, when for the space of five or six weeks together the conversions averaged at least "four a day," Dr. Edwards remarks: "There are several Negroes who, from what was seen in them then and what is discernible in them since, appear to have been truly born again in the late remarkable season."

Direct efforts for the religious instruction of Negroes, continued through a series of years, were made by Presbyterians in Virginia. They commenced with the Rev. Samuel Davies, afterwards president of Nassau Hall, and the Rev. John Todd, of Hanover Presbytery.

In a letter addressed to a friend and member of the "Society in London for promoting Christian knowledge among the poor" in the year 1755, he thus expresses himself: "The poor neglected Negroes, who are so far from having money to purchase books, that they themselves are the property of others, who were originally

African savages, and never heard of the name of Jesus or his gospel until they arrived at the land of their slavery in America, whom their masters generally neglect, and whose souls none care for, as though immortality were not a privilege common to them, as with their masters; these poor, unhappy Africans are objects of my compassion, and I think the most proper objects of the society's charity. The inhabitants of Virginia are computed to be about 300,000 men, the one-half of which number are supposed to be Negroes. The number of those who attend my ministry at particular times is uncertain, but generally about 300, who give a stated attendance; and never have I been so struck with the appearance of an assembly as when I have glanced my eye to that part of the meeting-house where they usually sit, adorned (for so it has appeared to me) with so many black countenances, eagerly attentive to every word they hear and frequently bathed in tears. A considerable number of them (about a hundred) have been baptized, after a proper time for instruction, having given credible evidence, not only of their acquaintance with the important doctrines of the Christian religion, but also a deep sense of them in their minds, attested by a life of strict piety and holiness. As they are not sufficiently polished to dissemble with a good grace, they express the sentiments of their souls so much in the language of simple nature and with such genuine indications of sincerity, that it is impossible to suspect their professions, especially when attended with a truly Christian life and exemplary conduct. There are multitudes of them in different places, who are willingly and eagerly desirous to be instructed and embrace every opportunity of acquainting themselves with the doctrines of the gospel; and though they have generally very little help to learn to read, yet to my agreeable surprise, many of them by dint of application in their leisure hours, have made such progress that they can intelligibly read a plain author, and especially their Bibles; and pity it is that any of them should be without them.

"The Negroes, above all the human species that I ever knew, have an ear for music and a kind of ecstatic delight in psalmody, and there are no books they learn so soon or take so much pleasure in as those used in that heavenly part of divine worship."

The year 1747 was marked, in the colony of Georgia, by the authorized introduction of slaves. Twenty-three representatives from the different districts met in Savannah, and after appointing Major Horton president, they entered into sundry resolutions, the substance of which was "that the owners of slaves should educate the young and use every possible means of making religious impressions upon the minds of the aged, and that all acts of inhumanity should be punished by the civil authority."

Methodism was introduced in New York in 1766, and the first missionaries were sent out by Mr. Wesley from New York in 1769. One of these says: "The



number of blacks that attend the preaching affects me much." The first regular conference was held in Philadelphia, 1773. From this year to 1776 there was a great revival of religion in Virginia under the preaching of the Methodists in connection with Rev. Mr. Jarratt of the Episcopal Church, which spread through fourteen counties in Virginia and two in North Carolina. One letter states "the chapel was full of white and black;" another, "hundreds of Negroes were among them, with tears streaming down their faces." At Roanoke another remarks: "In general the white people were within the chapel and the black people without."

At the eighth conference in Baltimore in 1780 the following question appeared in the minutes: "Question 25. Ought not the assistant to meet the colored people himself and appoint helpers in his absence, proper white persons, and not suffer them to stay late and meet by themselves? Answer. Yes." Under the preaching of Mr. Garretson in Maryland "hundreds, both white and black, expressed their love for Jesus."

The first return of colored members distinct from white occurs in the minutes of 1786; White 18,791, colored 1,890. "It will be perceived from the above," says Dr. Bangs in his history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, "that a considerable number of colored persons had been received into the church, and were so returned in the minutes of the conference. Hence it appears that at an early period of the Methodist ministry in this country it had turned its attention to this part of the population."

In 1790 it was again asked: "What can be done to instruct poor children, white and black, to read? Answer. Let us labor as the heart and soul of one man to establish Sunday-schools in or near the place of public worship. Let persons be appointed by the bishops, elders, deacons, or preachers, to teach gratis all that will attend and have a capacity to learn." . . .

The first Baptist church in this country was founded in Providence, R. I., by Roger Williams in 1639. Nearly one hundred years after the settlement of America "only seventeen Baptist churches had arisen in it." The Baptist church in Charleston, S.C., was founded in 1690. The denomination advanced slowly through the middle and Southern States, and in 1790 it had churches in them all. Revivals of religion were enjoyed, particularly one in Virginia, which commenced in 1785 and continued until 1791 or 1792. "Thousands were converted and baptized, besides many who joined the Methodists and Presbyterians. A large number of Negroes were admitted to the Baptist Churches during the seasons of revival, as well as on ordinary occasions. They were, however, not gathered into churches distinct from the whites south of Pennsylvania except in Georgia."

"In general the Negroes were followers of the Baptists in Virginia, and after a while, as they permitted many colored men to preach, the great majority of

them went to hear preachers of their own color, which was attended with many evils." . . .

George Leile or Lisle, sometimes called George Sharp, was born in Virginia about 1750. His master sometime before the American war removed and settled in Burke county, Georgia. Mr. Sharp was a Baptist and a deacon in a Baptist church, of which Rev. Matthew Moore was pastor. George was converted and baptized under Mr. Moore's ministry. . . .

About nine months after George Leile left Georgia, Andrew, surnamed Bryan, a man of good sense, great zeal, and some natural elocution, began to exhort his black brethren and friends. He and his followers were reprimanded and forbidden to engage further in religious exercises. He would, however, pray, sing, and encourage his fellow-worshippers to seek the Lord. Their persecution was carried to an inhuman extent. Their evening assemblies were broken up and those found present were punished with stripes! Andrew Bryan and Sampson, his brother, converted about a year after him, were twice imprisoned, and they with about fifty others were whipped. When publicly whipped, and bleeding under his wounds, Andrew declared that he rejoiced not only to be whipped, but would freely suffer death for the cause of Jesus Christ, and that while he had life and opportunity he would continue to preach Christ. He was faithful to his vow and, by patient continuance in well-doing, he put to silence and shamed his adversaries, and influential advocates and patrons were raised up for him. Liberty was given Andrew by the civil authority to continue his religious meetings under certain regulations. His master gave him the use of his barn at Brampton, three miles from Savannah, where he preached for two years with little interruption. . . .

The number of Baptists in the United States this year was 73,471, allowing one-fourth to be Negroes the denomination would embrace between 18,000 and 19,000.

The returns of colored members in the Methodist denomination from 1791 to 1795, inclusive, were 12,884, 13,871, 16,227, 13,814, 12,179. . . .

8. *The Sects and Slavery.* The approach of the Revolution brought heart-searching on many subjects, and not the least on slavery. The agitation was noticeable in the legislation of the time, putting an end to slavery in the North and to the slave-trade in all states. Religious bodies particularly were moved. In 1657 George Fox, founder of the Quakers, had impressed upon his followers in America the duty of converting the slaves, and he himself preached to them in the West Indies. The Mennonite Quakers protested against slavery in 1688, and from that time until the Revolution the body slowly but steadily advanced, step by step, to higher ground until they refused all fellowship to slaveholders. Radical Quakers, like Hepburn and Lay, attacked religious sects and Lay called preachers "a sort of devils that preach more to hell than they do to heaven, and

so they will do forever as long as they are suffered to reign in the worst and mother of all sins, slave-keeping."

In Virginia and North Carolina this caused much difficulty owing to laws against manumission early in the nineteenth century, and the result was wholesale migration of the Quakers. . . .

Judge Sewall, among the Massachusetts Congregationalists, had declared, in 1700, that slavery and the slave-trade were wrong, but his protest was unheeded. Later, in 1770 and after, strong Congregational clergymen, like Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles, attacked slavery, but so democratic a church could take no united action. Although Whitefield came to defend the institution, John Wesley, founder of the Methodists, called the slave-trade the "sum of all villainies," and the General Conference in America, 1780, declared slavery "contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature and hurtful to society." From this high stand, however, the church quickly and rather ignominiously retreated. By 1780 it only sought the destruction of slavery "by all wise and prudent means," while preachers were allowed to hold their slaves in slave states. In 1787 the General Conference urged preachers to labor among slaves and receive worthy ones into full membership and "to exercise the whole Methodist discipline among them." Work was begun early among the slaves and they had so many members that their churches in the south were often called Negro churches. The church yielded further ground to the pro-slavery sentiment in 1816, but in 1844 the censure of a bishop who married a slaveholder rent the church in twain on the question.

The Baptists had Negro preachers for Negro members as early as 1773. They were under the supervision of whites and had no voice in general church affairs. The early Baptists held few slaves, and they were regarded as hostile to slavery in Georgia. The Philadelphia Association approved of abolition as early as 1789, and a Virginia Association urged emancipation in the legislature about the same time. In Kentucky and Ohio the Baptist Associations split on the question. The Baptists early interested themselves in the matter of slave marriages and family worship, and especially took spiritual care of the slaves of their own members. They took a stand against the slave-trade in 1818 and 1835. After the division on the subject of missions the Missionary Baptists began active proselyting among the slaves.

The Presbyterian Synod of 1787 recommended efforts looking toward gradual emancipation, and in 1795 the question of excluding slaveholders was discussed, but it ended in an injunction of "brotherly love" for them. In 1815, 1818, and 1835 the question was dismissed and postponed, and finally in 1845 the question was dropped on the ground that Christ and the Apostles did not condemn slavery. At the time of the war the church finally divided. . . .

13. *The Negro Church in 1890.* (From the Eleventh United States Census). There were in the United States in 1890, 23,462 Negro churches. Outside of these there were numbers of Negroes who are members of white churches, but they are not distinguished from others:

We may now consider these organizations by denominations:

#### REGULAR BAPTISTS (COLORED)

The colored Baptists of the South constitute the most numerous body of Regular Baptists. Not all colored Baptists are embraced in this division; only those who have separate churches, associations, and state conventions. There are many colored Baptists in Northern States, who are mostly counted as members of churches, belonging to white associations. . . .

The first state convention of colored Baptists was organized in North Carolina in 1866, the second in Alabama, and the third in Virginia in 1867, the fourth in Arkansas in 1868, and the fifth in Kentucky in 1869. There are colored conventions in fifteen states and the District of Columbia.

In addition to these organizations the colored Baptists of the United States have others more general in character: The American National Convention, the purpose of which is "to consider the moral, intellectual, and religious growth of the denomination," to deliberate upon questions of general concern, and to devise methods to bring the churches and members of the race closer together; the Consolidated American Missionary Convention, the General Association of the Western States and Territories, the Foreign Mission Convention of the United States, and the New England Missionary Convention. All except one are missionary in their purpose.

The Regular Baptists (colored) are represented in fifteen states, all in the South, or on the border, and the District of Columbia. In Virginia and Georgia they are very numerous, having in the latter 200,516, and in the former 199,871 communicants. . . .

#### AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION

A congregation of colored people, organized in New York City, in 1796, was the nucleus of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. This congregation originated in a desire of colored members of the Methodist Episcopal Church to hold separate meetings in which they "might have an opportunity to exercise their spiritual gifts among themselves, and thereby be more useful to one

another." They built a church, which was dedicated in 1800, the full name of the denomination subsequently organized being given to it.

The church entered into an agreement in 1801 by which it was to receive certain pastoral supervision from the Methodist Episcopal Church. It had preachers of its own, who supplied its pulpit in part. In 1820 this arrangement terminated, and in the same year a union of colored churches in New York, New Haven, Long Island, and Philadelphia was formed, and rules of government adopted. Thus was the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church formally organized.

The first annual conference was held in 1821. It was attended by nineteen preachers, representing six churches and 1,426 members. Next year James Varick was chosen superintendent of the denomination, which was extended over the states of the North chiefly, until the close of the civil war, when it entered the South to organize many churches.

In its polity lay representation has long been a prominent feature. Laymen are in its annual conferences as well as in its general conference, and there is no bar to the ordination of women. Until 1880 its superintendents or bishops were elected for a term of four years. In that year the term of the office was made for life or during good behavior. Its system is almost identical with that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, except the presence of laymen in the annual conference, the election of presiding elders on the nomination of the presiding bishop, instead of their appointment by the bishop alone, and other small divergences. Its general conference meets quadrennially. Its territory is divided into seven episcopal districts, to each of which a bishop is assigned by the general conference.

The church is represented in twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia. It is strongest in North Carolina, where it has 111,919 communicants. Alabama comes next, with 79,231 communicants. . . .

### COLORED METHODIST EPISCOPAL

The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1870 of colored members and ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Before the late civil war the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, did a large evangelistic work among the Negroes. Bishop McTyeire, of that body, in his "History of Methodism," says:

"As a general rule Negro slaves received the gospel by Methodism from the same preachers and in the same churches with their masters, the galleries or a portion of the body of the house being assigned to them. If a separate building was provided, the Negro congregation was an appendage to the white, the pas-

tor usually preaching once on Sunday for them, holding separate official meetings with their leaders, exhorters, and preachers, and administering discipline, and making return of members for the annual minutes." For the Negroes on plantations, who were not privileged to attend organized churches, special missions were begun as early as 1829. In 1845, the year which marks the beginning of the separate existence of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, there were in the Southern conferences of Methodism, according to Bishop McTyeire, 124,000 members of the slave population, and in 1860 about 207,000.

In 1866, after the opening of the South to Northern churches had given the Negro members opportunity to join the African Methodist Episcopal, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and other Methodist bodies, it was found that of the 207,742 colored members which the church, South, had in 1800 only 78,742 remained. The general conference of 1866 authorized these colored members, with their preachers, to be organized into separate congregations and annual conferences, and the general conference of 1870 appointed two bishops to organize the colored conferences into a separate and independent church. This was done in December, 1870, the new body taking the name "Colored Methodist Episcopal Church." Its rules limited the privilege of membership to Negroes. The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church has the same articles of religion, the same form of government, and the same discipline as its parent body. Its bishops are elected for life. One of them, Bishop L. H. Holsey, says that for some years the body encountered strong opposition from colored people because of its relation to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, but that this prejudice has now almost entirely disappeared.

### CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN (COLORED)

This body was organized in May, 1869, at Murfreesboro, Tenn., under the direction of the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. It was constituted of colored ministers and members who had been connected with that church. Its first synod, the Tennessee, was organized in 1871. . . .

17. *A Southern City.* There are in the city of Atlanta, Ga., the following Negro churches:

The Negro population of Atlanta (1900) was 35,727. This means one church to every 662 men, women, and children, or one to every 130 families. Half the total population is enrolled in the church, probably nearly two-thirds of the adult population. The active paying membership is much smaller.

There are 29 Baptist churches, with an active membership of over 5,000, and \$60,000 worth of real estate.

Three extracts, from the reports of first-hand young investigators, throw some general light on the general character of these churches:

From an old colored citizen of Atlanta, I learned of the marked advancement he has witnessed in the erection of church edifices and in the character of worship. Just after the war, when the colored people were in their bitter struggle for the necessities of life, he says the race worshipped in box cars frequently, for they could not always obtain houses. As conditions changed the churches were moved to better quarters. The people generally supported the church very well until finally the Negro began to pattern his churches after the white churches, building structures which were far too costly for the Negro's financial status at the time. It seemed very sad to this old man that the "worship of the good, old time" was not what it used to be.

The character of the pastors of the seven Methodist churches in my district seems, in every case, to be good. Such phrases as "you could not find any one to say anything against his character," express the sentiments of the members of these churches. The education of the pastors is fair, although there are exceptions. Among the schools represented by the different pastors, are: Bennet College, Clark University, Turner Theological Seminary (Morris Brown Theological Department), and Gammon Theological Seminary.

The education of the members seems to vary from fair to very poor. In the case of my largest church (membership 740) a large number of the members were graduates of Clark University, and nearly all have a fair education. However, in the smaller churches, having from 16 to 277 members, the education of the congregations was very meagre.

A great majority of the members of the smaller churches are common laborers and are quite poor. The members of the larger churches are in moderate circumstances, and although most of them are laborers, there is a fair percent of artisans and business men among them.

Most of the churches have relief societies to look after the charity and relief work. Some churches did no special relief work. One church, however, has a deaconess, who devotes her time to such work. The money expended in such work varied from nothing to \$100 in the different churches. That spent for missions varied from nothing to \$200.

The government of all Baptist churches is extremely democratic. Each member has the power of taking part in any of the general meetings and of voting. The financial and business matters of the church are attended to by the deacons' board. The power of the pastor varies somewhat according to the different congregations, and the difference of esteem in which the pastor is held sometimes governs his influence and sway over them.

All Baptists agree that each church is complete in itself and has the power, therefore, to choose its own ministers and to make such rules as it deems to be most in

accordance with the advancement of its best interest and the purpose of its existence. The time that a pastor is to serve is not fixed but varies according to the wishes of the people. If the people like the pastor, he is kept as long as he desires to remain, but if they do not, he is put out immediately.

The general condition of the ten Baptist churches in this part of the city shows that on a whole their work is not progressing very fast. Over half of them are very small, with very small memberships, and very ignorant and illiterate pastors. And certainly where there are ignorant leaders of ignorant people not very much progress or good influence can be expected to follow. The places of meeting are not comfortable, being poorly lighted and unclean most of the time, and in some cases the church was situated in an unhealthy place. These, however, represent the worst half; and on the other hand, the larger churches are progressing very fast and their influence is gradually but surely spreading far and wide, and includes all grades of society. Many of the most influential and wealthy Negro churches of the city are Baptist.

The pastors of the Congregational, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches have excellent characters, and are doing much towards lifting the moral standard and religious life of the people. Not only are they earnest workers, but they are also well equipped for their work. They are well educated, one being a graduate of Fisk and Yale Universities, another is a graduate of St. Augustine College, Raleigh, N.C., and took a post graduate course at Howard University, Washington, D.C., and one is a graduate of Lincoln University, who completed both the college and theological courses. They have excellent reputations, and are held in high esteem by their Alma Maters. The Yale graduate is well known North and South. The character of the members of these churches is good. They are quiet and intelligent, and there is no emotionalism in the churches. Most of the members of these churches are at least high school graduates, and a large per cent is composed of business and professional men and women. . . .

No. 24. Primitive Baptist—Active members thirty.

The pastor can read and write, but is not well educated. His character is good, but he will not do laborious work, which the members think he ought to do outside his church work. Most of the members were slaves, and the church is about twenty-eight years old. It has no influence except among its members and it began where it now stands, and was organized by most of the present members. No collection is taken except on communion day. The building is an old wooden one of rough lumber, raised about five feet from the ground. I looked through one of the cracks to get a view of the interior. Its seating capacity is about seventy-five. The benches are of rough lumber. The lamps (four oil lamps) are hanging from the shabby ceiling. I saw a large Bible upon an altar of dressed lumber. One of the oldest members told me that he gave all the coal and oil used this year. He

said that the church had a meeting once a month, and every three months communion and washing of feet. They believed in having no music, save singing. They believed in the pastor's working for his living just as the members did, and because the present pastor would not do this they were going to let him go. I could not find the pastor nor could they tell me where he or any of the other members lived.

This is an example of church communion among lowly ignorant and old people—a survival from the past. Such groups tend to change—to absorption into some larger group or to degenerate through bad leaders and bad members. Two other specimens of this type follow:

No. 5. Baptist—Fourteen active members.

The old store, which is used for church purposes, is a very shabby building. A few chairs, two lamps, and a small table and a Bible make up the furniture. All of the members are old and ignorant. There is no Sunday-school connected with the church. The church government is a pure democracy, the pastor and the active members governing the church. The members are ignorant and of questionable character. The pastor is an old and ignorant man, but is fairly good. He went away two years ago and left his flock because they did not give him the proper support. The church did not split but degenerated. Very little charitable work is done. When one of the members is sick he is given aid if he asks to be aided. There are several ignorant Negroes living in the vicinity of the church.

No. 26. Baptist (Missionary)—165 active members.

The education of the pastor is fair, but his character is not good. He has the reputation of being very immoral. He is, however, a good speaker. There are a few intelligent members, but the larger portion of the members are very illiterate. There is connected with the church an organized body of women (Woman's Mission) which looks after the poor, the old, and the sick. The church was organized in 1878, in the old barracks of this city. It has had eight pastors since its organization, and it is very influential over a large number of people in the vicinity. The church building is large and was once a beautiful wooden structure, but at present it is very much in need of repairs. It is furnished fairly well on the inside, and is situated in one of the black belts of Atlanta. There is an official board appointed by or elected by the church. This official board attends to the affairs of the church. The pastor presides over the meetings. The pastor now in charge was once forced to give up his charge and leave the city, so the general report goes, because of his immorality. There were seven preachers called during his absence and two church splits, brought about through the pastors who were leading. Then the first pastor was recalled. While many of the members and the pas-

tor bear the reputation of being immoral, they are also said to be very good to the poor. The entire collection of every fifth Sunday goes to the poor. There is a fairly good Sunday-school connected with the church, and the Sunday-school has recently purchased an organ for the church. The church debt is \$400.

To reform a perverted group like this is extremely difficult, and yet the work is slowly going on.

No. 30. Colored Methodist Episcopal—Fifty active members.

The church was first begun with one family, at the old barracks, in a one-room cabin. From there it was moved to Peters street, to Shell hall, where it was joined by a second family. Then it was moved to Markham street, where it was joined by others; then to Hunter street, in a white church, where it was burned. It was then re-established at Taylor street, in a store house, from whence it was moved to its present site. It now has a fair brick building, which cost about \$3,000, and is fairly well-furnished inside. The present building and parsonage were built largely by the co-operative labor of its own members. The pastors are noisy but of pretty good education.

No. 34. Methodist Episcopal—115 active members.

The pastor has attended Clark University, and is a graduate of Gammon. He is well-liked by his parishioners. The church recruits its members from the railroad hands and their families, who are for the greater part uneducated. Some charitable work is done by different societies in the church. Such, for instance, as aiding paupers. The church is nineteen years old. It is not in debt, and has a large membership. Its influence is wide-spread, being one of the largest churches in this particular section. The church has connected with it a Woman's Home Missionary Society and an Epworth League. Through the missionary society and through the help department of the league, much charitable work is being done in the community. I am told that during this year a poor woman was taken and given a decent burial whereas otherwise the county would have had it to do. There is also a parsonage adjoining the church, which, together with the church, is estimated to be worth \$1,500.

The services in churches of this type are calculated to draw the crowd, and are loud and emotional. . . .

No. 42. African Methodist Episcopal—600 active members.

The pastor is of good character and education, a graduate of Howard University Theological School. The members vary from the old, poor, and respectable, to the young and well educated. In 1866 this church was organized by Rev. J. J. Wood; the membership increased steadily until 1868. The church moved into a new building. This old structure itself is yet sufficiently well preserved to show what a nice building it was. . . . The present structure is a handsome one, with a

beautiful interior. The building is granite and is finished inside in yellow pine. Beautiful glass windows adorn the church and there are electric light fixtures and theatre chairs in the auditorium, while a \$2,500 pipe organ also adds to the beauty. The church is very large, having a seating capacity of 3,000. The total membership is about 1,400, and is composed of some of the most influential and cultured colored people of the city, a considerable number being school teachers and property owners and respected people. The church is valued at \$50,000 and a statement of the money paid out during the previous year shows a total of \$4,964.86, which includes \$984.86 for salary to the pastor and \$3,020 for the church debt. This church does a great deal of relief work among the indigent members. Last year the amount expended was \$200 for such work and \$360 for missions; \$500 was given to the general connections.

The growth of such great Negro institutions involves much effort and genius for organization. The greatest danger is that of the "split;" that is, the withdrawal of a dissatisfied minority and the formation of a new church. . . .

No. 54. Christian—Thirty active members.

The leader and pastor is a man of questionable character. The members are mainly the middle working classes of average intelligence. Very little charitable and relief work is done because the church has a hard time to keep on its feet. The church drew out of No. 37 in 1897 and established this church, and since that time the young church has been struggling for existence. The church building is a large barn-like structure, roughly finished on the outside and rather crudely furnished on the inside. It will accommodate about 400 people. . . .

32. *Negro Laymen and the Church.* Some 200 Negro laymen of average intelligence, in all parts of the country, were asked a schedule of questions and answered as follows. The states represented are Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois and Pennsylvania. The answers of a few ministers are included:

So far as you have observed what is the present condition of our churches in your community?

Very good	23
Good	49
Progressing, improving, prosperous	16
Heavy financial burdens hindering spiritual conditions	9
Fair financially, low spiritually; more intelligent	3
Not so well attended as formerly, but attendants more devoted	2
Good, bad and indifferent	6
Fair, with vast room for improvement	13

Well attended, but mostly in financial straits	12
Poor, bad; not what they should be	12
Here and there a sign of improvement	1
Too much involved with financial efforts	5
Lack of piety and true missionary spirit; need of earnest preachers	2
At a standstill spiritually; not influential enough among the young	2
As far as general improvement is concerned, would say, Congregationalists, the Methodists, then Baptists	1
Retrograding spiritually	4
Can't say, don't know; not answered	5

Is their influence, on the whole, toward pure, honest, upright living on the part of the members?

Yes	71
To a very large extent	13
To some extent	17
Room for improvement	5
Not so on account of preacher	1
Belief and doctrine advocated too much to have influence for good, upright living	1
Purport simply to bear good influence over the people	1
Not sufficient emphasis laid on Christian living	2
Influence good, but members do not live as they should	2
Cannot say positively yes, though there are exceptions	3
No	17
Generally so; much advancement	6
Not answered	5

Are the ministers usually good men? If not, what are their chief faults? Cite some specific cases, with or without names:

Yes	37
Generally good men	10
Majority good; some exceptions. Faults: Intemperance, dishonesty, careless living, selfish ambition, sexual impurity	31
Some good, some bad	9
Some good, majority bad	4
Few good, majority bad	3
Not intelligent	6

Fairly good	3
Chief faults: Selfishness and dogmatism	4
Fault of some: Immorality	8
Fault of some: Deceptiveness	1
Fault of some: Too great love for money	3
Moral status low	1
Faults: Lack of earnestness, sexual impurity, intemperance, love of worldly things	6
Proportion of good ones is increasing	2
Fault of some: Bigamy	1
Only a few whom I have not heard rumors about	1
Appear good, but do not know how to influence the young	1
"No better than they ought to be"	2
Some good, but among others the chief faults are sexual impurity, improper attention to women, and selfishness	4
No, not generally so	6
Miscellaneous	7
Unanswered	5

Of the ministers whom you know, how many are notoriously immoral? What direction does their immorality take: sexual impurity, dishonesty in money matters, drunkenness, or what? Cite some particular instances, with or without names:

None immoral; all good men	28
Very few immoral	2
Some few are not what they should be; do not come up to the true standard	4
One or more are lax in financial matters	8
Some few are sexually impure and dishonest in money matters; majority good	12
Intemperate	8
Some intemperate; some cannot be trusted in money matters	1
Chief faults of some: Sexual impurity and intemperance	8
Chief fault: Sexual impurity	12
Many guilty of all	6
Not answered	17

Some of the answers are:

### ALABAMA

I can name a few who are said to be immoral, but cannot say from personal knowledge that they are notoriously immoral.—*Girard*.

I believe we have some ministers who are guilty of every fault named in question four, but I think that one of their worst habits is in their tearing down good church buildings; and in their rebuilding they don't seem to have any care for the strain they place upon their members.—*Mobile*.

I think proselyting and exaggerating minor doctrinal differences a real hindrance. Also the loose methods in vogue of conducting church finances—both in collecting and expending—a serious drawback.—*Mobile*.

Two at present in the city. I know others, but they are not preaching here now. Sexual impurity. They are the only ones in the city with the degree of D.D.—one a Methodist, the other Baptist. They both ruined the good names of two young women.—*Mobile*.

### COLORADO

I know some 500 ministers. Of that number probably about 100 are immoral; 10 percent of the 100 are sexually immoral, 20 percent dishonest, 70 percent drink.—*Colorado Springs*.

### FLORIDA

I know of no minister who is notoriously immoral. Yet occasionally there comes a little confusion in the churches here because when money is collected for one purpose, through the minister's influence it is used for another. Such actions always do cause church fuses which last for some time.—*Gainesville*.

I know of five around this city who are grossly immoral. Their immorality takes these directions: intemperance, sexual immorality, and dishonesty in money matters. Two cases of gross immorality came to light recently on two preachers. One preacher has recently been dropped for dishonesty in money matters.—*Jacksonville*.

## GEORGIA

I cannot say how many; perhaps twenty. Women and unfair dealings in money matters. I have known comparatively few who drink, and still fewer who drink to excess.—*Atlanta*.

About one-tenth of all the ministers in that community (Perry, Ga.) are notoriously immoral, especially in the direction of sexual impurity, dishonesty and drunkenness.—*Atlanta*.

One of the most common and general faults against preachers is their failure to pay promptly financial obligations. I know a few who are said to be guilty of sexual impurity, some others who get drunk.—*Atlanta*.

I know ten and could name more if I would strain my memory who are notoriously immoral. Some of these are sexual impurity, dishonesty in money matters and drunkenness. I have seen this on the streets of Albany. I have not seen any preacher drunk on the streets here in Brunswick.—*Brunswick*.

By common report, yes. Sexual impurity, dishonesty in money matters lead in order given. I know ministers who drink, but they never to my knowledge become intoxicated.—*College*.

I could name as many as ten who drink whiskey and are untruthful. Many are dishonest in money matters. There is a preacher near my home who is a downright drunkard. He first led his members astray by indulging them in this evil habit, so that now it is a corrupt church.—*Jewells*.

What is the greatest need of our churches?

An earnest, consecrated, educated, wide-awake, intelligent ministry	24
An educated, well-trained Christian ministry	25
A good, pure ministry	6
True conversion, practical religion, true Christianity	4
Honest, upright leaders, both preachers and officers	9
Earnest, educated, consecrated Christian workers	5
Consecrated ministers and faithful members	5
More money and better preachers	5
The spirit of Christ and the Holy Ghost	2
Finance	3
Unity and practical Christian living	1
Do not know	1

Some answers are:

I think there is need of improvement in intellect and in a financial way.—*Vincent, Ark.*

A practical knowledge of right and wrong.—*Mobile, Ala.*

Regard for spiritual ideals.—*Mobile, Ala.*

A more perfect knowledge of the requirement of Jesus upon his followers.—*Colorado Springs, Col.*

Downright seriousness and actual missionary spirit and efforts.—*Denver, Col.*

High-toned Christian ministers in the pulpits and teachers of the same kind in Sunday-schools.—*Atlanta, Ga.*

Able and pure men as pastors and a warm oratory to reach and hold the masses.—*Atlanta, Ga.*

I should say more spiritual life. This lack is very general in our churches of today.—*Atlanta, Ga.*

First of all, better men in the ministry. It would follow that the members would be better.—*Augusta, Ga.*

The greatest need is to live up to what we preach. Do away with so much emotion and do practical work. "If ye love me keep my commandments."—*Brunswick, Ga.*

1. Properly trained ministers. 2. Upright, cultured and Christian officers who possess business knowledge. 3. Bibles for congregational reading. 4. Song books for congregational singing.—*Macon, Ga.*

Decidedly, an educated ministry and a higher standard of morality.—*Rome, Ga.*

1. Pure ministry. 2. Less costly edifices. 3. More charitable work. 4. Practical sermons, i.e., how to live, etc.—*Savannah, Ga.*

Thoughtful workers.—*Thomasville, Ga.*

Moral ministers who are able to chastise immorality.—*Princeton, Ky.*

1. The Holy Spirit's power. 2. Clean, heroic, unselfish pastors who love God, righteousness and souls. 3. Deacons who fill the scripture standard. 4. Members who fear God because they are really new creatures in Christ.—*Jackson, Miss.*

The continued emphasizing of intelligent worship, spirituality instead of formality and efforts to keep them from substituting respectability and high social forms for Christian piety.—*Allegheny City, Pa.*

Good preachers, who read, study, and can apply what they read. Thinkers who will make the churches attractive. Church boards composed of those who are not afraid to hold their preacher to a certain standard or get rid of him.—*Darlington, S.C.*

33. *Southern Whites and the Negro Church.* The difficulty of getting valuable expressions on the Negro churches from Southern white people is that so few of them know anything about these churches. No human beings live further apart than separate social classes, especially when lines of race and color and historic antipathies intervene. Few white people visit Negro churches and those who do go usually for curiosity or "fun," and consequently seek only cer-



tain types. The endeavor was made in this case, however, to get the opinion of white people whose business relations or sympathies have brought them into actual contact with these churches. A few of the names in this list are of Northern people, but the great majority are white Southerners. The circular sent out was as follows:

Your name has been handed to us as that of a person interested in the Negroes of your community and having some knowledge of their churches. We are making a study of Negro churches and would particularly like to have your opinion on the following matters:

1. What is the present condition of the Negro churches in your community?
2. Is their influence, on the whole, toward pure, honest life?
3. Are the Negro ministers in your community good men?
4. Are the standards of Negro morality being raised?

We would esteem it a great favor if you would give us your opinion on these points.

R. B. Smith, County School Commissioner of Greene County, Woodville, Ga.:

1. Not good.
2. No.
3. No.
4. No.

I have given you my candid opinion of such churches and ministers that I know. There are some exceptions to the above. 1. There is a Presbyterian Church in Greensboro that has an intelligent pastor who is a good, true man. 2. I also think that the Methodist Church of same place is also doing pretty good work. A large portion of the ministers are ignorant and in some instances are bad men. I am truly sorry to have to write the above, but it is too true.

W. J. Groom, Princeton, Ky.:

1. Very slow, if any advancement.
2. No.
3. Very few.
4. No.

I regret to say, in my opinion, the Negro race has not advanced religiously, morally or financially. They have some few commendable ministers, but the majority are immoral and dishonest. . . .

A Real Estate Agent, Florence, S.C.:

The Methodist Episcopal Church, North, and the Baptist Church: these churches were well attended, and one reason was that the ministers were their political leaders. Of late years a good many men who have learned to read and write have been going about preaching, some I know of no character. The consequence has been that many new congregations have been started, and although not large, the tendency has been to do more harm than good. These Negro ministers (so-called) are too lazy to work, and make their money in an easy way, principally from the most ignorant Negro women. At present, I think the Negro ministers at the established Methodist Episcopal Church, North, the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Baptist Church are very good men; have not heard anything against their characters. But my opinion is that for real religious training of the Negro the Episcopal Church and Roman Catholic Church would be the best for the Negro, the first named from the example and training, and the latter the confession they would have to make to the priest—the latter more from fear. My opinion, again, is that the Negroes are more immoral, as they read and know what has been done and is being done by the immoral, unreligious white men of the country, and I believe that the example set by the white men of low character has been the greatest cause for the immorality of the Negro. Take for example that crime of rape. I don't know of a section where the whites are refined, nice people and treat the Negroes nicely, but let them know their places, where such an attempt has occurred. How can you expect the Negro women to be virtuous when the white men will continue to have intercourse with them? How can you blame the Negroes for committing murder when the example is set them by the white man?

We must face the truth. If any dirty work is to be done a white man hires a Negro to do it for him. If a member of a church does not wish to be seen going to buy whisky he sends a Negro. If these are facts, what an example to set to an inferior race! And they are facts and a shame on our white race. It seems to me that the Negroes are more immoral here than they used to be and the fault is due mostly to the example set them by the white men. . . .

Wm. Hayne Leavell, Minister, Houston, Tex.:

I am sorry to have to answer you that since coming to Texas I have not been able to know anything of the Negroes or their churches. Out here they seem to be a very different sort from those among whom I was brought up, and in whom I have always been interested, and by whom always been well received. Here they are altogether to themselves, and I do not think I know personally a solitary

Negro minister. It is true I have for ten years been a man basily driven, but the one or two attempts I have made to help the Negroes have not encouraged me to try again. I know only that there are very many church organizations of the various denominations, but of their quality I know nothing. . . .

E. C. Moncure, Judge County Court, Bowling Green, Va.:

First, I have great sympathy with the Negro race and my opinion if anything, I fear, will be a little biased in their favor.

The Negro seems to be naturally a very religious person, full of emotion and human sympathy, mixed up with some superstition and suspicion.

The Negroes are devoted to their churches and will undergo many privations to contribute to church building. They have great pride in their churches, and to be turned out of church is the most humiliating condition in their minds. A Negro convicted of larceny will suffer under the burden of his humiliation from being "turned out of the church" much more than from his disgrace of criminal conviction. Of course that remark does not apply to those who are the leaders of the church. Twenty-five years ago the Negro churches were controlled by much inferior men than to-day. The Negro churches in any community of to-day are quite well organized, with well-attended Sunday-schools, and are progressing. They have an over-zeal in building church houses, and are striving to emulate the white people in having good and neat houses. Their church discipline is rather loose. This, in a measure, comes from the great number of unconverted persons in their churches, for all Negroes must belong to the church; and a great many of their preachers are not educated and not of the highest character, so that they are not particular enough in receiving candidates into their communion. But, in my opinion, the Negroes are gradually improving along many lines. The trouble is with us white people, who, setting a judgment on their progress, expect and demand too much in a small space of time. But the influence toward pure, honest lives, upon the whole, is good; that is, the preponderating influence.

Of the colored registered vote lately voting on local option in my county, the abridged electorate, consisting principally of the educated and owners of property, nearly as a unit voted against whiskey.

Not all of the Negro ministers of my community are good men. In the main, they are, but some are ignorant and superstitious. But with all this, I am clearly of the opinion that the standards of Negro morality are being slowly and gradually raised.

To sum up, I do not think that Negro education and evangelization are failures by any means. In my acquaintance there are some noble examples of progress, faithfulness and devotion to principle.