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Growing Gaps: Children's Experiences of Inequality in a Faith-based Afterschool Program in the U.S. South

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GROWING GAPS: CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF INEQUALITY IN
A FAITH-BASED AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM IN THE US SOUTH

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DISSERTATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

Caroline Ellender Compretta

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Deborah L. Crooks, Associate Professor of Anthropology

Lexington, Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

GROWING GAPS: CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF INEQUALITY IN
A FAITH-BASED AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM IN THE US SOUTH

This ethnographic research examines the social service encounter between private providers and child recipients involved in a faith-based afterschool program located in a southern US city. I specifically focus on the tensions and divisions that developed between staff members and participating families in daily programmatic interactions and rhetoric. I highlight how race, class, and gender intersected with age to shape children's different experiences of the afterschool program and their lives beyond the agency. I also show how these social categories converged in local stories of religious poverty relief, which build upon cultural narratives about American welfare, to blind staff to the realities of children's lives. These issues resulted in a program where staff members sought to transform children away from imagined social ills they associated with guardians to ideologically and programmatically isolate children from their families. I explore these conditions to draw attention to some of the ways structural inequalities can be reproduced and maintained in private service provision. It is in this context that I examine the increasing prominence of faith-based organizations within domestic poverty policy and relief services.

KEYWORDS: Political Economy, Privatization, Faith-based Organizations, Intersectionality, Children

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December 4, 2012_____
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By

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_____

Their friendship has buoyed me through every stage of graduate school and I am in their debt for the humor, wine, and encouragement that helped me survive the isolation and frustration that I felt at times.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One

Introduction

Jessica[1], an honor roll student in 4th grade, sat cross-legged on the floor outside the Home Mission gymnasium. We were playing with her baby sister and waiting to be allowed into the gym, which had been transformed from a simple basketball court into a decorative dining hall. It was the annual Thanksgiving feast when the Home Mission afterschool program invited participating families to eat a Thanksgiving dinner prepared and served by more than fifty volunteers from local evangelical churches. The small foyer outside the gym quickly filled with other families as we waited. At last, a Home Mission employee opened the double doors and called us inside. Jessica was excited to show her baby sister the decorated gym and pulled the small child to her feet as she impatiently motioned to her mom and dad to follow. As we entered the gym, there was a long line of tables covered with chaffing dishes beside which stood almost 30, predominately white volunteers who waited to bring plates of food to the families. About 25 feet to the left of the food line were numerous round tables each decorated with a small pumpkin and artificial autumn leaves. As families trickled in, all of which were African American, they were directed toward the round tables where the children and adults happily chatted across tables with friends and family before sitting down.

I joined Jessica and her family at a round table and we talked about the impending holidays as we waited for the event to begin. A sound system had been set up by the food tables and soon Scott, a middle aged, Euro-American man who was Home Mission's Executive Director, stood in front of the crowd with a microphone in hand. He thanked the volunteers for decorating the gym, making the food, and taking a night out of their

busy schedules to help serve the meal. He then thanked the families for attending the dinner and mentioned that God's love was present in this place as they shared a meal together in gratitude for the Lord's blessings. He then asked everyone to bow their heads in prayer. A collective movement rippled through the gym as everyone bent their heads in silence. The Executive Director blessed the food and afterward motioned to Katelyn, the afterschool program director, to start the meal. Katelyn quickly divided the mass of volunteers into groups. Some stepped behind the food tables to form an assembly line making plates while others delivered plates of food and pre-poured drink to the families sitting across the room.

At our table, Jessica proudly went to the drink table to retrieve several glasses of iced tea for her parents, siblings, and me. She bypassed the volunteers who were also delivering drinks and pretended to be our waitress as she placed the drinks on the table. "Can I get you something else?" Jessica laughed and reminded us, "Don't forget to leave a tip!" Jessica then ran to the adjacent table and tapped Shakela on the shoulder while ducking to the other side to trick her. Shakela and Jessica giggled at the joke and talked until a tall man delivered plates to our table. Lesley and Marvin, Jessica's parents, motioned Jessica back to the table while continuing to tell me about their family's plans for the holidays. Lesley had a large, extended family and they all got together during the holidays. She was responsible for bringing several pies to this year's gathering, but despite all the cooking, she enjoyed being with her family and felt blessed to live so close to them. Lesley and Marvin were both college graduates in their early forties who had met at church and had been married for over ten years. They were the proud parents of three children, had professional jobs, and were still very active in the same church where they first met.

Soon all the families had their food and a low, happy chatter could be heard as people conversed over the meal. The volunteers went back to their places along the food line and stood ready to serve seconds if need be. Only a few children and guardians went back for more, leaving most of the volunteers to wait and watch as the participating families ate. A few agency staff members got plates of their own and sat at a table to themselves. The room became lively as children finished eating and went to visit and play with their friends before their parents decided to leave.

Amidst the festivities, I noticed that staff and volunteers were on one side of the decorated space and families sat on the other, creating a clear distinction between service recipients and providers. It was then that I realized the physical divide separating these groups also represented a social and racial divide which I was beginning to see emerge in my ethnographic work in the Home Mission afterschool program. As I reflected on the Thanksgiving feast during and since the year I conducted dissertation research, I have come to think about that 25 foot separation as a signpost that directed me to much larger and more complex divisions and contradictions in the ways Home Mission personnel imagined service recipients, and the actual lived realities of children and families.

I examine these divisions and their practice in this dissertation, which details eleven months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Home Mission[2], a faith-based social service organization located in a southern U.S. city. I specifically investigated the Home Mission afterschool program to achieve two primary research goals: (1) to investigate how faith-based social service providers interpret the needs of low-income children and families to create and implement an out-of-school children's program, and (2) to examine how race, gender, class, and age intersect to shape staff constructions and the lived experiences of participating children and guardians.

In this dissertation, I address my first goal by providing a short history of private and public social service provision in the U.S. to historically and culturally contextualize service provision at Home Mission. In so doing, I interrogate contemporary claims by policy makers that private social services, and faith-based organizations (FBOs) in particular, are better positioned than government programs to address social problems due to their effective use of resources and community knowledge (see Hefferan and Fogarty 2010; Wuthnow 2004 for an outline of these claims). Specifically, I examine how local stories of religious poverty relief intersected with cultural narratives about American welfare programs and recipients to produce a tension between how staff viewed those in need and the lived realities of participating families. I show how this tension emerged in the agency I studied as staff members sought to transform children away from imagined social ills they associated with guardians to ideologically and programmatically isolate children from their families.

To address my second goal, I explore how children and guardians discussed their everyday worlds and their participation in a faith-based organization to show (1) the diversity of children's lives, and (2) that their program participation was but one resource families used to encourage children's success. In fact, children's involvement in the afterschool program functioned as an extension of religious and cultural values children and families already possessed, which led families to use the program for different reasons than those intended by the agency. Here, I pay close attention to the ways race, class, and gender intersected with age to shape children's home lives and their different experiences of the afterschool program. Finally, I examine children's resistive strategies to show that while children actively participated in the program, they did not holistically internalize agency messages.

This dissertation follows other critical anthropological works and social science scholarship that examine the effects of domestic welfare policy on the lives of the poor, especially since the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) or welfare reform (Albelda and Withorn 2002, Blank and Haskins 2001, Goode and Maskovsky 2001, Kingfisher 2002, Morgen and Maskovsky 2003). I build upon this work by investigating the increasing role faith-based organizations have taken in national and state relief agendas since welfare reform (Wuthnow 2004). After the passage of PRWORA, many scholars turned their attention to the punitive measures taken in welfare-to-work programs that further eroded the social safety net for poor families (Burnham 2001, Davis 2004, Gordon 2002, Mink 1998, Morgen, Acker, Weight 2010, Morgen and Weight 2001, Piven 2001, 2002). In subsequent years of continued welfare cuts, private agencies, specifically faith-based organizations, have increasingly stepped in to fill this gap (Hefferan et al. 2009). Consequently, scholars have recently turned their attention to the fragmented array of privatized services that currently makes up a large piece of domestic social assistance (Adkins et al. 2010, Bane et al. 2000, Hefferan and Fogarty 2010). My work builds upon and expands this scholarship by investigating a faith-based organization aimed at helping low-income, urban children.

While religious charitable societies have a long history of service provision in the U.S. (Skocpol 2000, Thiemann, Herring, and Perabo 2000), it has not been until the later half of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries that faith-based organizations have played such a prominent role in domestic social welfare. In the wake of welfare reform, policy makers pointed to nonprofits and faith-based organizations in particular to fill the gap in assistance left from the shrinking welfare state (Bartkowski and Regis 2003, Black, Koopman, and Ryden 2004). With the passage of the 1996 Charitable Choice

Provision and the establishment of the White House Office of Faith-based Initiatives in 2001, faith-based agencies received unprecedented federal and state support and funding. Both policy initiatives championed the efficacy of faith-based organizations to deal with social problems and sought to put them on equal footing with secular philanthropies. Many faith-based organizations have embraced the task of providing services to those in need since welfare reform, and most emerging research and rhetoric highlights the benefits of private religious social programming (see Bornstein 2005, Clarke and Jennings 2008 for a discussion of this research). Moreover, FBO supporters argue that religious agencies are morally superior to government institutions and secular philanthropies given their religious orientations and are thus better at transforming the poor into productive, moral citizens.

However, little investigation has taken place on the fundamental questions of how and why domestic faith-based organizations create and implement social services for those in need amidst a rhetorical and political climate that blames the poor for their own impoverishment (Adkins et al. 2010, Hefferan et al 2009). The current political acceptance and promotion of FBOs obfuscates the contradictory forces at work in such agencies that often dually employ benevolence and judgment when dealing with those seeking services (Bartkowski and Regis 2003, Omri 2008). In addition, religious organizations are not separate from the political and social rhetoric surrounding the poor, but are embedded in the neoliberal imperatives of individualization, production, responsibility, and privatization, which influence the creation and practice of private social services (Abrahamsen 2004, Goode 2006, Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009). By examining the practices of a faith-based organization in this dissertation, I attempt to highlight how these larger issues influence private service provision.

In this work, I specifically examine a faith-based afterschool program for impoverished children to understand how the criterion of age also shapes the service encounter. Age is theorized in this research as life stages or those periods associated with childhood and children; teens and youth; and adults or adulthood. I recognize that these designations are not static categories, but are fluid, transitory stages, historically and culturally bound. Yet, conceptualizing age in this way allows me to examine how race, class, and gender intersect with the life stage of childhood to target certain children and not others for service. In so doing, I seek to add to current research by examining how U.S. poverty policy, evangelical religion, and the intersections between race, class, gender and age affect the service encounter for children and providers involved in a faith-based out-of-school program.

I conducted research in the Home Mission afterschool program during the 2009-2010 school year. I interviewed and implemented storytelling sessions with 32 out of a total of 36 children who attended the afterschool program during the year. A subsample of 24 children participated in a photography exercise and follow-up photo interview to further discuss their worlds using images. I conducted a family survey and guardian interview with the parents of the 32 children who participated in my research resulting in 21 guardian surveys and interviews. Throughout this dissertation, I use the terms *parents* and *guardians* interchangeably to denote the custodial parent or family member who is the primary caregiver. Finally, I interviewed all agency staff members who worked in and/or directed the Home Mission afterschool program. In total, the data analyzed in this dissertation consist of approximately 85 interviews with children, guardians, and agency staff, 20 family surveys, photographs taken by 22 children, storytelling sessions with all participating children, and my fieldnotes.

These data were analyzed to elucidate the service encounter at Home Mission and children's lives outside the agency. Specifically, staff interviews were analyzed to explore how Home Mission created and implemented programs, and how service providers daily interpreted and addressed children's and families' needs. I analyzed children's interviews, photographs, pictorial interviews, and stories to examine how children spoke about and represented their lives in and beyond Home Mission. Finally, family surveys and guardian interviews were analyzed to determine familial demographics such as household income, marital status, guardian occupations, educational attainment, geographic location, and church affiliation. In addition, I analyzed guardian interviews to determine the socioeconomic and religious reasons families chose to use Home Mission services.

The analysis of these data reveals a deep divide between the assumptions staff members made about their clients and the lived realities of participating children and families. Staff pointed to parents and other adult family members as problems that children must overcome with staff help. Here, children became the backdrop against which staff reproduced stereotypical images of low-income parents as morally deficient and inconsistent caregivers. Consequently, staff spoke of being children's sole religious guides who sought to instill morality in children; a view that assumed children lacked moral guidance elsewhere in their lives. Political transformation thus combined with moral reformation as staff members sought to save children from their parents or becoming like their parents while saving children's moral souls.

Yet, research data show that children's everyday lives were unlike staff constructions, and children, in fact, had consistent and loving caregivers. Demographic data also reveal that participating families were socioeconomically diverse and highly

religious. Moreover, children understood Home Mission as one place of support among many in their lives including extended family networks and churches.

This research, thus, teases apart the shifting and varying ways that program personnel combined stories of moral and political transformation to uphold popular images of the urban poor and highlights the often unexamined tensions and consequences that arise in contemporary religious social services. Furthermore, this dissertation shows how children and families do not uniformly or wholly embody staff constructions. Rather, they have their own ways of understanding their participation in such programs and the place these programs have in their overall lives. In light of these contradictions, the contemporary call for private, religious benevolence work comes into question by showing how Home Mission, despite its good intentions, supports individualized, racial, and gendered constructions of the poor in its work with children and families.

I structure my analysis of these issues according to the three research questions that have guided this work and which correspond with the three participating research groups involved in my ethnographic study. First, I examine the creation and implementation of a faith-based afterschool program by asking: how do agency staff construct the needs of participating children and families and how are these understandings practiced in the Home Mission afterschool program? Second, I investigate children's lives by asking, how do children verbally and pictorially represent their lives within and beyond Home Mission and do these representations differ from or affirm staff constructions of children's lives? Lastly, I consider children's home lives by asking, what are the demographic characteristics of children and families participating in Home Mission and why do guardians utilize faith-based out-of-school care? I address these questions in the following chapters.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Frameworks and Research Methods

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework that informs my project and the methodological strategies I employed in this research. Three theoretical bodies influence my work, which include political economy of U.S. poverty, intersectionality theory, and the anthropology of childhood. First, I use a political economic perspective on domestic poverty to historicize and examine the development of contemporary poverty conditions, social constructions of the poor, and public and private social service responses. Specifically, I employ this framework to understand the political, social, and economic processes that identify poor individuals, not economic structures, as the causes of poverty and that promote private assistance as appropriate means for addressing social concerns. Second, I utilize intersectionality theory to investigate how age intersects with race, class, and gender to shape service provider's images of children and families in need and to examine why certain children and not others are targeted for social and moral transformations. Intersectionality theory also provides the lens through which I examine the multiplicative and interactive processes of race, class, gender, and age that shape children's experiences and resistance of social marginalization within Home Mission. Finally, my research is shaped by the theoretical position that children are active social actors who are worthy research participants. I utilize this perspective not only to elucidate what children say and do in Home Mission, but also as the framework for understanding how such programs use narratives and images of impoverished children as the vehicles through which to express their own religious and political messages. In this chapter, I explain how each theoretical body of work has informed my research questions

and outcomes. Finally, I describe how my research in turn contributes to these bodies of literature by elucidating the complex web of relationships and assumptions that exist between children, families, and staff involved in a faith-based out-of-school program.

I also discuss in this chapter the methodological techniques I employed throughout this research. I outline my methodological plan, which combined traditional anthropological methods including participant observation, interviews, and surveys with child-centered approaches including storytelling and a photography exercise. I discuss the methodological considerations I undertook to craft the methodology for this project, especially those techniques I employed with children. Moreover, I explain how these strategies were used in the field, the data they generated, and the unexpected benefits and problems that arose in their use. I describe how I employed these methodological tools in my daily interactions in Home Mission's afterschool program, special events, and in the homes and neighborhoods of participating children and families.   Finally, I attend to my presence in this research by (1) addressing my decisions to conduct research in Carlisle and (2) the ways my position as a white, middle-class female researcher may have affected research participants' responses.

Chapter Three: A Brief Historical Overview of Domestic Social Service Provision

In Chapter 3, I give a brief history of social service provision in the United States during the last four hundred years. Specifically, I highlight public and private social assistance since the colonial era to the contemporary period. This chapter not only documents changes in social service policies, but also how attitudes about the poor shift through time and influence changes in service responses. Throughout the chapter, I attend to the roles religious organizations have played in poverty relief and how poor

children's needs have been conceived and addressed through time. This chapter historically and culturally contextualizes private social service responses, specifically faith-based organizations, to better understand the factors influencing current federal and popular support for FBOs and their role in afterschool care for low-income children. This historical survey also provides a longitudinal perspective from which to pinpoint recurring themes in U.S. social service provision that continue to shape contemporary experiences of inequality and service responses like Home Mission.

Chapter Four: Carlisle, Carlisle Baptist, and the Heights: The Making of Home Mission

After providing a historical overview of national social service provision, I narrow my focus to briefly examine the regional and local dynamics that influenced the development of Home Mission in the Heights, the low-income, African American, urban neighborhood where the agency is located. First, I discuss the regional legacy of slavery and segregation that continue to influence contemporary race relations throughout the area. I also briefly outline current processes of impoverishment and urbanization as experienced in Carlisle. After highlighting these issues, I examine the creation and development of Home Mission by a large, evangelical church with a predominately white, suburban congregation. I discuss the ideological reasons that agency supporters used to pinpoint the Heights as the place in which to build Home Mission. I address the tensions that emerged between the agency and surrounding community to highlight the ways staff members dismissed these tensions to justify Home Mission's presence and purpose. Lastly, I detail Home Mission services and facilities.

Chapter Five: The Development and Practice of a Faith-based Service Response for Low-Income Children in a Southern U.S. City

After discussing the historical development of Home Mission by Carlisle Baptist Church, I outline Home Mission's philosophy of service and its practice in this chapter. Specifically, I examine how Home Mission staff articulated the needs of the Heights neighborhood and its residents to mark urban community members as socially and morally deficient. This section discusses how race, class, gender, and age influenced staff understandings of these issues and how inequalities became practiced in the daily operations of the afterschool program. For example, I describe how staff used racialized and feminized portrayals of low-income, minority parents to describe them as inconsistent caretakers. These representations worked to pinpoint children as in need of moral and social transformations away from negative guardians through the benevolent work of Home Mission staff. Yet, staff members did not attempt to reform children equally and rather targeted 3rd to 6th grade girls for more intense social and moral transformations than similar age boys and younger children. Here, I show how race, gender, class, and age coalesced to shape children's different experiences of the afterschool program.

Chapter Six: Children's Voices and Images about the Service Encounter and Their Worlds At Large

This chapter explores children's words and pictures regarding their home lives and participation in Home Mission programs. Children discussed and photographically represented their home and church lives as active and supportive. Children's words and images about their lives juxtaposed to staff assumptions discussed in the previous chapter reveal inaccuracies in the conceptualization and implementation of services in Home

Mission. Rather than confirming staff portrayals of "deficient" families, many children talked about supportive homes and active participation in local African American churches beyond Home Mission. Children's comments also revealed that many were part of the growing Black middle class in Carlisle. Continuing to complicate the service encounter, children discussed their involvement in the afterschool program as a tool their families used to pursue recreational, educational, and occupational goals, reasons that did not resemble transformative programmatic notions. In light of these incongruences, this chapter pays close attention to children's resistive acts to further examine the relationships and tensions between children and staff.

Chapter Seven: "I Need Somebody to Reinforce What I'm Teaching:" Guardians' Understandings and Use of a Faith-based Out-of-School Program

This chapter examines participating families' lives outside of Home Mission from guardians' perspectives. I detail demographic data from family surveys to show that families inhabited a socioeconomic and geographical range in areas such as marriage, education, income, occupation, and home location. I also examine parental interview data to show that female and male guardians were actively involved in both local churches and in the lives of their families. These data again reveal that staff beliefs about irreligious, single parents were misguided. In light of the socioeconomic diversity of participating families, I examine potential reasons why an afterschool program aimed at helping impoverished families allowed working and middle class families to enroll.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Contributions

In this final chapter, I discuss the incongruences that emerged in a faith-based service response for low-income children living in the Deep South. Specifically, I consider how children's words and pictures supported by guardian data reveal the stereotypical nature of staff assumptions about participate families. As a result, my ethnographic work in Home Mission sheds light on some of the ways private social assistance can reiterate pejorative discourses about the urban poor. Overall, I discuss how my work complicates contemporary political, social, and religious claims that faith-based social services best meet the needs of the poor.

I also examine the potential contributions of this research. First, I discuss the ways this study can help expand out theoretical understanding of faith-based care, child-centered scholarship, and urban anthropology. Second, I suggest practical contributions that may result from this work. For example, this research can help Home Mission and other local FBOs craft more responsive services given what children and guardians say about their lives and agency participation.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Frameworks and Research Methods

Theoretical Frameworks

I draw from three theoretical perspectives to study the service encounter between faith-based organizations and low-income children and families in a southern, U.S. city. Unfortunately, there is not an all-inclusive theoretical perspective from which to adequately examine the complex social, political, and economic processes that influence religious social services and contexts of impoverishment in the U.S. South. As a result, I interrogate these issues using a tripartite theoretical framework that includes the political economy of U.S. poverty, intersectionality theory, and the anthropology of childhood. Each theoretical perspective offers valuable insights regarding structural inequalities and lived experiences that have relevance for research on private social service encounters. However, when these perspectives are allowed to speak to one another, a broader and more complex understanding of faith-based service provision and reception emerges that would not be possible by applying a single theoretical framework.

Examining the Structural Conditions of Domestic Impoverishment

Political economy of U.S. poverty examines the relationships between global, national, and local constructions of domestic poverty while articulating how the life chances of local groups and individuals are shaped by and in turn shape these processes (Goode and Maskovsky 2001, Goode 2002, Kingfisher 2002, Maskovsky 2001). Economic hardship is conceptualized in this perspective as the political, economic, and

16

ideological effects of capitalist processes and power relations (Goode and Maskovsky 2001). This approach understands poverty and inequality as *produced* from global capitalist markets and market ideologies. In addition, much of this work explores how impoverished people construct their everyday lives to highlight the agency of the poor within larger structures of inequality (Bourgois 1995; Mullings 2001; Stack 1974; 1998; Susser 1982; Zavella 2001). Political economic perspectives on domestic poverty emphasize the historical trajectories of current socioeconomic policy and practice to show how power relations shift, transform, and reframe social relations through time. In so doing, local and global conditions are not presented as snapshots of contemporary circumstances, but are theorized as reflections of past structural processes. I utilize political economy of U.S. poverty to theorize the construction of domestic urban poverty in a southern city and to highlight political movements advocating private poverty relief. Moreover, my work conceptualizes contemporary modes of service provision and reception in the U.S. South in light of the histories of slavery, segregation, and poverty that continue to affect dynamics of service (Brodkin 2000, Quadagno 1994).

Specifically for U.S. cities, research using political economy of U.S. poverty has helped demarcate the rise of neoliberal doctrine that has shaped such postindustrial processes as urban deinvestment, corporate and public service out-sourcing, urban political marginalization, gentrification, and "underclass" ideologies (for a review of this literature see Goode and Maskovsky 2001). Much of this work deconstructs neoliberal arguments as a means to both challenge behavioral explanations for poverty which focus on isolated "ghetto" mentalities (see Anderson 1999, Murray 1984, for examples of behavioral explanations) and highlight changes in the political economy of U.S. cities and spatial transformations that affect experiences of inequality (Goode and Maskovsky

2001, Morgen and Maskovsky 2003, Ruben 2001, Susser 1996). Morgen and Maskovsky (2003:317) argue that the policies and practices of domestic neoliberalism have come to "dominate civic life, social welfare policy, and elaboration of political identities" in urban communities and beyond. Specifically, changes in labor relations and movements of global capital characteristic of neoliberalism have transformed urban economies, development, and political relations to form new patterns of economic polarization and vulnerability (Morgen and Maskovsky 2003). Consequently, neoliberalism has emerged as a key concept for examining the structural conditions under which inequality is produced and maintained in U.S. cities. In this research, I use neoliberalism as a conceptual tool through which to investigate the dominant macroeconomic processes shaping urban impoverishment, and public and private poverty relief.

In my research, I understand neoliberalism as the resurgence of classic liberalist doctrine that valorizes unregulated and unhindered markets as the key to achieving socioeconomic order and growth (Ferguson 2009, Goode and Maskovsky 2001, Jessop 2002, Richardson 2001). Neoliberal theory supposes that human well-being and advancement are best achieved through the individualizing and liberating forces of free markets, which are realized through such things as global flows of capital, deregulation, privatization, limited federal involvement, and the deinvestment of public social services (Goode and Maskovsky 2001, Harvey 2007, Kingfisher 2002). Neoliberalism, understood in these terms, thus refers to a system that works to maintain and promote market ideologies and practices. It is within this context that private social services and urban poverty can be understood.

However, neoliberalism does not function as a unified system of policy and action. Rather, scholars note that neoliberalism is an evolving, contested, and variable

process with inherent contradictions (Clarke 2001, Ferguson 2009, Harvey 2007, Hyatt 2011, Morgen and Maskovsky 2003). Despite its inconsistencies, Maskovsky and Kingfisher (2001:15) argue that neoliberalism is continually "retooled" to maximize the reach of economic markets into economic, social, political, and moral domains. Harvey (2007:19) argues that neoliberalism is necessarily contradictory because if neoliberal doctrine were strictly applied, it would create a state that could not exist or what he terms "a utopian project" due to its impracticality. For Harvey, this divergence between theory and practice signals an underlying political project whereby economic elites utilize neoliberal arguments to consolidate and maximize their wealth and power. In fact, Harvey posits that neoliberal doctrine functions to rationalize, legitimate, and promote capital accumulation and power for elites. Using words such as "freedom, liberty, choice, and rights," neoliberal ideology works to inculcate in non-elites the market ideals that benefit dominant groups (Harvey 2007:119). Here, neoliberalism is conceptualized as the progression of practices and policies that structure class privilege and subjugation. Following this work, I understand domestic neoliberal doctrine, not as a monolithic social and economic system, but rather as a series of uneven policies and actions that work to promote market ideologies to the benefit of capitalist classes.

Neoliberalism theorized in this way becomes a productive tool for interpreting state policies and rhetoric regarding the urban poor and private poverty relief. In respect to the poor, neoliberalism, with its emphasis on the emancipatory power of unhindered markets, supposes a natural leveling mechanism to the market so that social conditions such as poverty are presumably alleviated through competition and work (Maskovsky 2001). This position reinterprets citizens through the lens of the market as individualized consumers and producers who are assumed to have equal access to economic processes.

The specific ideological emphasis on individualism, personal responsibility, and productivity has been crucial in shaping the lives of the poor by blaming individuals, not economic structures, for impoverishment (Fraser and Gordon 1994; Maskovsky 2001; Smith 1990). Maskovsky (2001:232) posits that such ideologies about freedom and individual ability work to mark those who do not produce and consume within universal norms as "other[s] of the market" who must be "converted to a subject of value or destroyed." In other words, the subjectivities of the poor must be realigned to fit with the pursuits of neoliberalism (Goode and Maskovsky 2001; Kingfisher 2002) and service responses help carry out this transformation (Fraser 1989).

By analyzing how the subjectivities of the poor are reconstructed through neoliberal policy and rhetoric, scholars show how embedded ideas of individual ability and personal freedom employ and reinforce sexist and racist assumptions (Fraser 1993; Fraser and Gordon 1994; Goode and Maskovsky 2001; Guinier and Torres 2002, Piven 2001). Specifically, those most often targeted for social and political transformation are racial and gender minorities. For example, in the U.S., single mothers who were once entitled to public assistance in the form of cash benefits are now directed to workfare programs and required to take on new identities as workers and entrepreneurs (Davis 2004, Kingfisher 2002; Morgen and Weigt 2001; Piven 2001). Davis's (2004) research with welfare-to-work programs shows how this transformation toward productive workers racializes poor women. In her research, Davis (2004) explains how white aid recipients were encouraged to continue their education and attain professional jobs while African American beneficiaries were encouraged to take low-wage work without further job training. Supporting such unequal social and economic realignments are ubiquitous "welfare queen" stereotypes that dominate popular opinion and which characterize

primarily poor Black women as unproductive and sexually promiscuous (Cruikshank 1999, Mullings 2001). "Welfare queen" images portray welfare recipients as fraudulent abusers of public funds and state welfare as an inflated and ineffectual system (Cruikshank 1997, O'Connor 2001, Quadagno 1994). Social and political discourses surrounding such images also pinpoint poor families, specifically female-headed households, as the locus of poverty and thus as the site for intervention, not state institutions (Cruikshank 1997; Mullings 2001). These images contribute to what Fraser (1993:9) calls "the political imaginary of social welfare" which embodies taken-for-granted assumptions based on race, class, and gender stereotypes to define people's rights and needs. As a result, the racialization and feminization of urban poverty have been used to stigmatize poor Black women and their families in addition to the welfare state.

As the poor are required to take on new identities as workers and entrepreneurs, U.S. poverty relief has also been restructured. In the post-welfare era, state assistance programs are characterized as inducing dependency in welfare recipients and thus ineffectual as poverty relief (Albelda and Withorn 2002; Kingfisher 2002; Mink 1998). Consequently, shifts toward increased privatization, the dissolution of state welfare, and limited federal involvement (Maskovsky 2001; Maskovsky and Kingfisher 2001; Duggan 2003; Piven 2001; Richardson 2001; Yates 2003) have moved the burden of service provision away from state control toward private implementation. Specifically, the economic and political push for privatization, bolstered by individualizing rhetoric that faults the poor for their impoverishment (Fraser 1993; Morgen 2001), has resulted in an expanding private social service sector where local agencies are increasingly responsible for needs interpretation and social programming (Salamon 1999; 2002). As a result, private agencies with varying missions, agendas, and services fill the gaps left by the

shrinking public sector (Salamon 1999; 2002). Moreover, private social service agencies

and those in need are reframed within consumerist models as "sellers" and "buyers" of

social services. Here, the economically disadvantaged are assumed to be able to move

freely through social service marketplaces as consumers of services who are unhindered

by structural inequalities of race, class, and gender (Bartkowski and Regis 2003).

Therefore, both the poor and the agencies that address impoverishment have been

"retooled" according to market ideologies (Maskovsky and Kingfisher 2001:15).

As state welfare is reconfigured toward private agencies, faith-based

organizations (FBOs) have emerged as a growing part of poverty relief strategies with

widespread federal and state support (Wuthnow 2004). National support for FBOs grew

in the 1990s as proponents of welfare reform looked for non-governmental ways to

address poverty in an overall scheme to decrease government assistance (Wuthnow

2004). In fact, federal backing for FBOs was concretized in the 1996 Charitable Choice

Act and in the establishment of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community

Initiatives in 2001. Proponents of such legislation and programs argue that faith-based

organizations are autonomous entities that can address social problems more effectively

than government assistance programs because of their local knowledge, community

connections, small size, and moral conviction (Cnaan et. al 2002). Advocates for

privatized social services highlight the presumed benefits of FBOs by juxtaposing them

against state programs here assumed to induce negative behaviors such as joblessness and

out-of-wedlock births (Hart 1996, Wuthnow 1991). This juxtaposition suggests that

FBOs posses an inherent morality that is lacking in state institutions and which can be

harnessed to reform the moral failings of the poor. Such sentiments portray FBOs and

other private social services as outside the domain of the state and thus better able to

identify community needs and avoid assistance fraud. This position reifies divisions

between the state and civil society by analytically isolating civil society, including FBOs,

from larger questions about state responsibility and involvement (Ferguson and Gupta

2002). Ironically, these divisions are promoted amidst unprecedented levels of

government and private contractual partnerships (Bartkowski and Regis 2003).

Hefferan and Fogarty (2010:6) argue that shifts toward private social services and

FBOs in particular do not indicate the retreat of the state from the lives of the poor, but

rather signal new forms for "the extension of state power into their everyday lives."

FBOs and other private social service organizations, therefore, become sites where new

methods of state power are practiced, but the "power of state logic is obscured, as

nongovernmental actors create mechanisms that work 'all by themselves' to bring about

government results" (Ferguson and Gupta 2002:989). As public social services are

privatized, private agencies increasingly become what Cruikshank's (1999:69) calls the

"programs on the local level" that function to responsiblize citizens and facilitate their

transformation into self-governing, self-sufficient individuals. Private social service

agencies form a contradictory nexus where they offer assistance beyond the state while

simultaneously acting as state agents by "imposing order in exchange for services"

(Withorn 2002:146).

Yet, theorists argue that neoliberalism is giving way to an emerging authoritarian

state where citizens are expected to be not only self-governing, but also self-policing

(Giroux 2005, 2006; Hyatt 2011; Wacquant 2001). Scholars argue that neoliberal

governance is transitioning to a law-and-order state aimed at the surveillance and control

of citizens, especially traditionally marginalized populations (Giroux 2005, 2006,

Wacquant 2001). Wacquant (2001) suggests that social service agencies whose very job

it is to help the disadvantaged are now incorporated into the work of surveillance. Given

their everyday interactions with "problem populations," local social service organizations

now participate in what Wacquant (2001:407) terms "social panopticism." In other

words, in the evolving authoritarian state, private programs participate in the surveillance

of the poor given their daily contact with and knowledge about the economically

disadvantaged. Analyses of contemporary transitions to the law-and-order state are

fruitful when considering evangelical FBOs since many do not just provide services, but

seek to morally reform the poor. In overtly religious service agencies, surveillance can

be theorized as both social and spiritual monitoring where those in need are encouraged

to police their social and spiritual selves. The focus on faith and personal salvation

amidst a self-policing and self-governing social and political climate reifies

individualistic ideologies and works to obfuscates state responsibility for impoverishment

(Hyatt 2011).

Critiques of Political Economy of U.S. Poverty and Urban Analyses

  While political economic frameworks are informative in elucidating the structures

of domestic poverty, political economy has been critiqued for not attending to the

situations of resistance and compliance that occur as people construct their everyday

lives. Ortner (1984:144) argues that political economic analyses are often unable to

maintain focus on "real people doing real things" and can represent "human actions and

historical processes" as entirely structurally determined. Similarly, Goode and

Maskovsky (2001:15) posit that scholarship that prioritizes structural explanations

disregards "on-the-ground, historically constituted power relations… and poor people's

agency." In such work, macro-level processes are given precedence and are characterized as orchestrating micro-level conditions.

On the other hand, some scholars of urban poverty portray low-income communities and people as isolated from the historical social, political, and economic developments affecting wider contexts in the U.S. and focus almost exclusively on behavioral causes of impoverishment (Anderson 1999, Lewis 1966, Wilson 1987, 1997). Such work represents disadvantaged communities and people as mired in dysfunction and moral lassitude. Conservative policy makers have widely accepted such analyses of urban communities and used them to both justify paternalistic welfare interventions (e.g. Moynihan 1965) and rationalize the dismantling of welfare programs (e.g. Mead 1992, Murray 1984). Social scientists have vehemently refuted such "culture of poverty" (Lewis 1966) arguments to show that issues like resource distribution, occupational decisions, and familial relationships are far from being "dysfunctional," and in fact, help the poor survive amidst dangerous jobs and limited economic opportunities (Stack 1974, Eames and Goode 1973, Liebow 1967, Valentine 1978). However, most of this scholarly rebuttal focused on impoverished urban black neighborhoods and like the work it critiqued, conflated racial minority status with impoverishment. Goode and Maskovsky (2001) assert that this literature, while debunking behavioral explanations of poverty, neglected to elucidate racist social structures and institutions, changing gender relations, and the construction of white privilege. Rather, this body of research fashioned ethnographic representations that focused on poor urban families and thus reinforced the family as the site for social and political intervention (Goode and Maskovsky 2001).

While my work also examines an urban community, it does so because faith-based organizations often target city neighborhoods for domestic service implementation,

25

thus making urban FBOs a nexus where issues of morality, power, racial exclusion, and the needs of low-income children and families converge. However, I attend to the critiques of overly structured analyses and essentialized urban ethnographies by examining the economic, social, and political dynamics that structure domestic impoverishment and poverty policy while also paying close attention to the collective and individual strategies of survival, resistance, and accommodation used by those living in the Heights.

Theorizing U.S. Impoverishment through the Lived Experiences of the Poor

I utilize intersectionality theory to examine the complex relationships between broad structures shaping poverty in the US and the everyday contexts of lived experience. Intersectionality compliments political economic perspectives by providing a framework from which to examine lived experiences. I, therefore, utilize an intersectional approach to examine the ways the economically disadvantaged are not only affected by broad socioeconomic and political processes, but in turn, affect these larger structures. By including intersectionality, I intend to neither privilege capitalist processes as the primary investigative focus nor politically marginalize the lives of the urban poor by portraying them as outside national and global developments. Rather, I examine the intersections of race, class, and gender to elucidate children's and guardians' experiences of domestic poverty and service reception within larger structural inequalities.

Black feminist scholars emphasize the simultaneous production of race, class, and gender inequalities when analyzing women of color's lived experiences (Collins 2000, Dill and Zambrana 2009, King 1988, Mullings and Schultz 2006, Weber 2004, 2006).

Crenshaw (1994; 1995) asserts that neither race nor gender research can wholly describe the experiences of African American women and that accounting for multiple social forces provides a more complex and realistic picture of Black women's lives. Black feminist theorists thus recognize the inability of one social category to alone account for experiences of inequality and argue that intersectionality has greater explanatory power than analyses emphasizing one social location over another (Bolles 2001, Collins 2000, Ebron 2001). Furthermore, Mullings and Schultz (2006) argue that the intersections of race and gender vary as they relate to one another and can work together to magnify marginalization. Intersectional approaches theorize race, class, and gender as interconnected systems of oppression or as "multiple axes of inequality" that intersect with one another through informal and formal systems of power to shape experiences of oppression and subordination (Berger and Guidroz 2009:1; Collins 1998; Weber 2004, 2006). In intersectionality theory, lived experiences of inequality are examined through the confluence of race, class, and gender to understand group and individual social positions within structures of power. These social factors are theorized as dialectic processes that shift and transform through time, but which continually emerge to shape social relations. I utilize an intersectional approach to consider the multiplicative and interactive effects of race, class, and gender as they coincide to shape guardians' and children's life experiences and staff conceptions of clients.

Scholars who employ intersectional approaches have expanded considerations of race, class, and gender to include other salient social categories such as sexuality, nationality, geography, health status, and age (Collins 1998; Mullings and Schultz 2006; Ore 2000; Weber 2000; Weis and Fine 2000). These works while focusing on race, class, and gender also recognize that other relevant social categories work in conjunction with

27

these social locations to influence experiences of economic and social inequality. Following this work, I examine the convergence of race, class, and gender *with* age to understand how age functions with historically marginalized social positions to affect children's experiences in Home Mission and the construction of services.

Like gender, age as a social construct has been underexamined due to its naturalization and conflation with biology (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis 1998; James and Prout 1990; Stephens 1995). Yet, age is interpreted culturally and, as James and Prout (1990:222) argue, provides the "main scaffolding" through which childhood is produced and controlled in western contexts. Researching children's lived experiences within the framework of intersectionality theory elucidates how race, gender, and class intersect with age to amplify and/or lessen social and economic inequality.

In this research, I conceptualize age as it relates to different life stages, especially the life stage associated with childhood and children, but also those connected with teens/youth and adults. While I understand that the transition from one age category to another is historically and culturally specific, I conceptualize age in this way to investigate how the social position of childhood converges with race, class, and gender to target certain children and not others for social services.

Historically, poverty policy has viewed children as "the key to social control" whereby poverty was assumed to be abated if poor children were transformed into productive, self-sufficient, and moral citizens (Sutton-Smith 1982; Trattner 1999:109). Here, children's youth marked them as more compliant to service interventions than teens or adults and therefore, easier to transform into productive, self-managing citizens (Mintz 2004; Trattner 1999). For example, Fisher (2002) shows that age affects perceptions of need given that youth are viewed as "tainted" or less worthy of assistance as they grow

28

older when compared to younger children. In addition, Malkki (2010) finds that in humanitarian efforts children are most associated with innocence, purity, and powerlessness in the face of injustice and inequality. Malkki (2010) argues that such sentimental and ritualized images become powerful political symbols in humanitarian contexts that are used to justify serving children and not others in need. Thus, age functions in these circumstances to funnel private assistance toward children due to their ritual connection to innocence and to mark children as more malleable to program agendas than teens or adults. Age becomes a threshold or dividing line that helps determine how assistance is structured. Following such work, I examine how race, class, gender, and age shape differences in service provision and reception for African American boys and girls and between children, youth, and adults involved in Home Mission.

Investigating the intersections between race, class, gender, and age is central to studying how children's needs are constructed in local social programs since children's needs are viewed differently compared to those of youth and adults. Yet, studying the confluence of these social locations is also informative when examining how families and guardians are perceived in Home Mission programs. Specifically, intersectionality theory allows me to attend to the ways staff construct images of participating African American teens and guardians based on the layering of stereotypical representations. I theorize intersectionality in my work with guardians to examine the ways race, class, gender, and age coincide to create a veil through which participating teens and adults at Home Mission are viewed. In other words, the intersection of stereotypes based on race, class, gender, and age converge to obfuscate the lived realities of guardians and which are used to separate children from youth and adults through service strategies.

To further conceptualize how age functions as a social category, I draw on the anthropology of childhood, a growing body of research from anthropology and other disciplines that emphasizes children's agency and the historical and cultural construction of childhood (Bluebond-Langner and Korbin 2007; Caputo 1995; James, Jenks, & Prout 1998, James and Prout 1990; Hendrich 1990; Hirschfeld 2002). Even though children and youth were evident in previous anthropological works (Benedict 1935; Mead 1930; Turner 1969), Wulff (1995) asserts that only now are children being heard in anthropological scholarship. Scholars currently assert that children are active social actors who respond to, create, and change culture through their own cultural styles and social competencies (Bluebond-Langner and Korbin 2007; Bucholtz 2002; Chin 2001; Hirschfeld 2002; Hutchby and Moran-Ellis 1998; James 1998, 2007; Lanclos 2003; Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998). Donna Lanclos (2003:2) explains that research investigating children must "engage the words and experiences of children themselves as social actors, as people in their own right, as residents of the real world that adults inhabit, in sometimes similar, sometimes very different ways." Yet, Bluebond-Langer and Korbin (2007) warn against childhood studies that privilege children's voices over others as these works isolate children's lives from the political, social, and economic issues that surround them and reify western notions that children are innocent, authentic knowers of truth. Rather, Bluebond-Langer and Korbin (2007) argue that anthropological studies of childhood must strike a balance between children's voices and the voices of other research participants to elucidate the social and cultural complexities evident in the world.

In this research, I further draw upon anthropological works on childhood that illustrate the ways childhood and children are historically situated within culturally-specific social and political processes (Aries 1965; Hendrick 1990; Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998; Stephens 1995). For contemporary western contexts, childhood is presumed to be a period of innocence, dependency, and privacy situated in the domestic sphere, separate from adults, and rooted in biological and psychological factors (Aries 1965; Boyden 1990; Stephens 1995). These assumptions have created a discourse about children which supposes biological immaturity equals sociopolitical and economic incompetence (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis 1998). Two prominent ways of thinking about children have emerged in this discourse. Young people are either constructed in relation to innocent past childhoods or productive future adulthoods (Caputo 1995; Prout and James 1990; Stephens 1995; Wulff 1995). On the one hand, children are conceptualized using symbolic images of the past as playful, inept subjects who are in need of adult protection and surveillance. On the other hand, children are seen as prototypes for their future adult selves requiring discipline and molding by adults. By linking children to imagined pasts or futures, the complex realities of young people's present circumstances are ignored while adult power and control are promoted.

For impoverished children whose life circumstances do not resemble either innocent or future-oriented childhoods, western child discourse coincides with the "political imaginary of the poor" (Fraser 1993:9) to produce two deficient images. First, children who do not represent innocent and playful childhoods are deemed helpless victims of others' actions, namely irresponsible guardians. Children that find themselves on paths not leading to mainstream adulthood are judged as deviants requiring transformation through adult intervention. Both constructions perpetuate individualistic

31

and behavioral justifications for impoverishment evident in neoliberal frameworks and reinforce adult perspectives and protection apparent in western child discourse.

Specifically for urban, racial minority children, the dichotomous representations as deviants or victims have been perpetuated widely. Images as dangerous, disengaged children have saturated the media and have been used to both raise alarm and promote the criminalization and reformation of center-city young people (Chin 2001). These images have had dire consequences as Guinier and Torres (2002) and Mullings (2003) describe linkages between the rise in the prison industrial complex and the labeling, targeting, and profiling of urban youth, specifically males, as criminals. Categorizing Black and Latino children and youth as deviants to be controlled through juvenile incarceration or other programs functions to hide the political economic conditions that limit children's life choices. Alternatively, portrayals of urban children as passive victims reinforce assumptions about parental irresponsibility or neglect which are used in U.S. contexts to justify stringent poverty policies for adults (e.g. Rector 2005).

Yet, it is these two images, victim and deviant, that have held particular sway within child policy and programming circles. For example, "at risk" discourses which gained prominence in the 1990s and which are still in use today employ such images as the framework through which to view poor children's lives (Fine 1995). Despite no clear consensus of what "at risk" means and for whom, this approach veils references to urban, racial minority children. Here, "at risk" designations reside at the intersection of race, class, and gender stereotypes to portray low-income children of color as at risk for ambiguous educational and socioeconomic failures and that simply being urban, black, and young is a cause for intervention. Moreover, Sleeter (1995:x) argues that "at risk" descriptions resurrect theories of "cultural deprivation [that] frame oppressed

communities and homes as lacking in the cultural and moral resources for advancement."

"At risk" labels work to reinforce assumptions that low-income homes are the cause of

risk factors and thus a main site for modification. Conceptualizing "at risk" discourses in

light of political economic analyses and intersectionality theory helps elucidate the ways

race, class, gender, and age intersect in this designation to shape trajectories of poverty

relief and resource allocation for low-income, Black children and youth.

The images and discourses surrounding urban children who are deemed "at risk"

have opened a door for local school-based and community-based organizations through

which to assume roles as transforming agents in children's lives (Quern et al. 2000).

Here, "at risk" discourses increasingly guide private provision and function to shape

services. Accompanying the rise of "at risk" designations are increases in funding for

children's programs amidst drastic cuts in other social programs aimed at job training,

family benefits, and single adult assistance (Seligson, et. al 1999), funding that stands in

stark contrast to the devolution of public welfare services. In fact, funding streams exist

specifically for programs that prove service for large numbers of children deemed "at

risk" (Quern, et al. 2000; Quinn 1999; Seligson, et al. 1999; Swadener and Lubeck 1995).

Scholars note that the increase in attention and funding stems from concerns and fears

about low-income children's free time activities (Chin 2001; Halpern 1999b; Kozol

1995). Stephens (1995:13) argues that children perceived to be unrestrained are viewed

not just as "at risk," but as "*the risk.*" Here, poor children are framed as problems that

need to be fixed or controlled (Stephens 1995) and private organizations increasingly

craft children's services according to these goals (Halpern 1999a, 1999b).

When viewed in relation to one another, the theoretical foundations of my work

highlight the ways race, class, gender, and age interact with one another to shape faith-

based social service provision and reception amidst historically contingent social, political, and economic structures shaping impoverishment in the U.S. South. These three theoretical bodies compliment one another as they converge in this research to create a deeper understanding of the service encounter between benevolence workers and service recipients. For example, intersectionality theory complements historically focused political economic perspectives of U.S. poverty by providing a framework from which to examine the everyday lives of those living with economic hardship. Moreover, the anthropology of childhood helps reveal the ways age intersects with race, class, and gender to shape social positions from which children experience private social services and their everyday lives. These works when taken together shed light on local processes that ideologically isolate children from their families as they participate in faith-based social programming.

Research Design and Methodology

The ethnographic methods used in this research are shaped by the goals and foci of my theoretical framework. To explain the construction and reception of private social services amidst the confluence of race, class, gender, and age dynamics, I employed participant observation, interviews, family surveys, a photography exercise, and storytelling sessions with the participants and staff of Home Mission's afterschool program. These methods enabled me to investigate both service providers and those who seek free out-of-school care to create a holistic view of the service encounter at Home Mission. I specifically chose to study children, their families, and staff members rather than children's views alone to position children's perspectives in dialectical relationship

with other service participants. This decision follows Bluebond-Langner and Korbin's (2007:242) call to integrate children's voices into a "multivocal, multiperspective view of cultural and society." To access the views of multiple research groups, I combined both traditional ethnographic techniques and child-centered methods as I examined the relationships between faith-based service providers and low-income children and families. The inclusion of both types of methodologies allowed me to produce a complex and layered understanding of program creation, implementation, and reception while also allowing children's voices to be "heard" throughout the research process.

Participant Observation

I began my eleven-month dissertation project in August 2009 during which I was a participant observer in Home Mission's afterschool program and in the Heights community. While I conducted most of my participant observation in the children's program, I also attended Home Mission holiday celebrations, weekend sports competitions, night meetings, extracurricular Bible studies, and other program events that did not occur during the afterschool hours. In addition to my interactions at the agency, I attended neighborhood events not connected with Home Mission to better understand community dynamics and contextualize the agency within the broader area. I took part in informal, everyday experiences like conversations with neighbors, home visits with children and guardians, and neighborhood rides with research participants or other neighbors. All of these endeavors helped me better understand the area, its residents, and Home Mission's place in the Heights.

While I conducted participant observation in multiple Home Mission events and throughout the Heights neighborhood, the majority of my participant observation was

conducted in the organization's afterschool program. On a typical day, I arrived at the agency before the children got there to visit with the staff, observed informal staff meetings, or helped set up for the day's activities. It was during this time that I was able to casually talk with staff members about their lives and listen to the ways they talked about the children and families they served. I viewed staff members preparing Bible lessons and gender-specific activities for participating children. However, before the children arrived, I usually went out to the entrance gate to walk in with the children. Once the children and I arrived inside, the program director would assign me to a homework room where I waited as the rest of the children trickled in.

There were four classrooms divided by gender and age and I rotated among the rooms throughout the year, often observing multiple rooms and activities in one day. Children arrived intermittently and I had time to informally chat with them as we waited for Bible Study or homework time to begin. Once the program started, I would engage children and staff while helping with homework, making arts and craft, and playing in the playroom, gym, outside or the computer lab. When the program ended each day, I waited with the children outside as their family members and friends picked them up. Overall, I worked to observe the children and staff in all the activities available at Home Mission's afterschool program during this research.

Unstructured and Semi-structured Interviews

I employed unstructured and semi-structured interviews with staff members and children to obtain focused research information and build rapport. I conducted initial interviews and follow-up sessions with all staff members involved in the Home Mission children's program. These interviews took place at Home Mission facilities while the

afterschool program was not in session. Interviews with staff members focused on such

issues as eligibility criteria, staff conceptualizations of participating children and families,

program benefits, and personal reasons for social service work. I tried to conduct these

interviews in 2-hour intervals, but had to conduct multiple follow-up sessions with each

staff member to complete the interview guide and accommodate staff schedules.

I also interviewed 32 children involved in the program. Thirty-six children were

registered for the after-school program and four did not participate in this research due to

either the lack of consent and assent forms or irregular attendance. Interviews with

children addressed such issues as their perceptions of neighborhoods and families, views

about Home Mission programs, and self-perceptions. I tried to keep interview sessions

with children to approximately 30 minutes to accommodate shorter attention spans (Scott

2000), but I often spent 45 minutes to an hour talking with older children. All the

interviews were conducted at Home Mission facilities and took place in an unoccupied

office, outside picnic benches, or an unused classroom depending on the availability of

space. Following Spilsbury (2002), I gave children a nylon bag of school supplies once

the interview was complete, but did not tell them about the supplies before the interview

to avoid coercion. I created informal interview guides to structure both child and staff

interviews following methodological considerations for children (Mahon, et al. 1996;

Morrow and Richards 1996) and adults (Bernard 2002; Spradley 1979).

Family Survey

I implemented a family survey with each participating child's parent or guardian

to elicit household economic and demographic data and to discuss the reasons guardians

chose to use religious out-of-school services. Surveys ranged from an hour to 3 ½ hours

in length and 20 parents participated in the family surveys. Parents received a $25 gift

card to a local grocery store for participating in this research. The surveys often took

place in the guardian's home, but several caregivers wanted to do the survey at Home

Mission. The surveys conducted at Home Mission facilities took place in an unoccupied

classroom or office on weekends or weeknights.

Child-Centered Methods

Morrow and Richards (1996) and Mahon et al. (1996) assert that incorporating

non-traditional techniques with more traditional ethnographic methods such as interviews

and participant observation is the most effective way to engage children in research.

While there are a growing number of child-specific techniques (Baker, et al. 1996;

Caputo 1995; Christensen and James 2000; Counihan 1999; Mahon, et al. 1996; Orellana

1999; Paley 1990; Spilsbury 2002; Sutton-Smith 1981), I utilized two child-centered

methods of data collection; each selected for its ability to elicit children's views about

their home lives, networks of support, and out-of-school programs that might not have

emerged through interviews or participant observation alone. In this research, I

employed storytelling sessions and a photography exercise. These child-centered methods

gave child participants the ability to express their thoughts and concerns in overt and

creative ways and to use their own words and pictures to describe their lives (Alderson

1995; Christensen and James 2000; Mahon, et al. 1996; Morrow and Richards 1996).

First, storytelling allows children to discuss their thoughts and feelings about the

world in a creative fashion and helps them express ideas and concerns they may not be

able to more formally articulate (Counihan 1999; Paley 1990; Sutton-Smith 1981). Paley

(1990:4) finds that children know "how to put every thought and feeling into story form"

38

which makes storytelling an effective tool to examine children's thoughts about programmatic experiences and to elucidate their constructions of themselves and their worlds. Twenty-four children participated in the storytelling sessions, which I divided into 8 sessions, each including 3 children. I organized the storytelling groups according to age groups and gender. All groups included children with similar ages and genders except two sessions were comprised of both boys and girls close to the same age due to fluctuations in attendance. I started each session with a story prompt and the children added strands to the story one at a time or simultaneously to built a collective understanding of the issue at hand. We often sat on the floor and ate snacks while the children told their stories, which gave these sessions an informal and relaxed quality. The imaginary aspect of storytelling allowed children to move the story in any direction they wanted and they used this opportunity to talk about issues that they might not otherwise discuss, such as their fears or worries, what made them happy, and their daydreams.

Once the stories were complete, children used this time to play and discuss issues unrelated to story topics. Children often talked about boys or girls they liked, discussed problems or praise they got from school, told jokes and were silly, and challenged my place as a researcher. Storytelling sessions were a favorite time for children to commandeer my audio recorder to interview each other and myself. They also used the recorder to tape funny sounds, make quiet admissions, or sing popular songs. Like Hecht (1998), I found that children used the recorder both as a toy and as a mechanism to make their voices heard. Therefore, storytelling sessions emerged not just as spaces where children created collective stories about research topics, but where children reappropriated my research agenda to create a space for play and intimate conversations.

Second, I employed Photovoice, a "participatory action research (PAR) method" which enables people through photographs to document the realities of their daily lives and convey community assets and concerns (Wang 2006:148). Photovoice, as an engaging and entertaining method (Necheles, et al. 2007), allowed the children to illustrate what and who were important in their lives as they documented their homes, friends, and families. Following Photovoice guidelines (Necheles, et al. 2007; Royce, et al. 2006; Wang 2006; Wang and Redwood-Jones 2001), I gave each child involved in this study a disposable camera and asked him or her to take pictures of what was important to them. Afterward, I developed the pictures and sat down with each child to talk about the content of their photos and the personal relevance of the subject matter. Orellana (1999) finds that through photography children reveal how ethnicity, gender, and class shape their experiences of the urban environment and exhibit the differences between adults' and children's neighborhood conceptions. Furthermore, Christensen and James (2000) find that using visual media with children is an effective method to retain children's interest, illicit concrete articulations of abstract ideas, and facilitate communication between participants and researcher. I, too, found that children had more ease articulating how they saw themselves and their worlds in reference to the visual stimuli than interviews alone. The photographs also allowed children to discuss taken-for-granted aspects of their lives and expound upon the people and things important to them.

My Presence in the Research

My decision to conduct ethnographic research in a faith-based afterschool program located in the Deep South was based on two key factors. First, local and

regional characteristics make Carlisle and the surrounding area an informative place to research child-oriented faith-based social services given the area's high levels of church affiliation, dense poverty, and high percentages of charitable giving (US Census Bureau 2010, local newspapers 2004-2005)[3]. These characteristics have led to widespread religious social service responses in both rural and urban communities (local newspaper 2003). These factors coincide with the region's legacy of slavery and segregation to influence the racial and economic dynamics of the service encounter between benevolence workers and the economically disadvantaged.

Specifically, Carlisle, exhibits an acute juxtaposition between philanthropic agendas and service reception due to the number of social service agencies located in the center city. Many of these organizations are fashioned by congregations and groups from outlying suburbs and offer children's programs as their main initiative or as part of a suite of services offered to the urban community. According to interviews with program directors, several of these organizations are generated specifically to provide outlets for their congregations to volunteer. It is within these programs that issues of race, class, gender, and age come to affect the relationships between agency staff and participating children and families.

Second, I worked in a Carlisle nonprofit before attending graduate school and became familiar with the social service institutions located in the Heights. While I did not know any of the families or staff involved in Home Mission programs before starting this research, I was able to peripherally view Home Mission's development during my years of nonprofit work. This previous knowledge facilitated my initial reception into Home Mission, but proved problematic at times as I attempted to move beyond my association with social service work to position myself as a researcher.

While conducting research in Home Mission's children's program, I inhabited a complicated presence that shifted and changed as I moved among the children, guardians, and staff members involved in my research. My position as a white, middle class, female researcher was perceived differently between and within each group of research participants. However, in almost all groups, my status as a white, middle-class, female was initially aligned with the volunteers who sometimes visited Home Mission programs to conduct community service. While volunteers from all walks of life come to do charity work in Home Mission, the majority of these volunteers are white women and I was thus first associated with this group. Even as I worked hard to negate these associations, I recognize that I was often perceived first as a volunteer and only later as a student or researcher or familiar presence.

In my interactions with children I worked to avoid any position of authority while participating in the program even though staff members often tried to persuade me to take more authoritarian roles. Methodologically, I tried to assume the "least adult role" (Mandell 1991, Wyness 2010) by inhabiting children's spaces and allowing children to invite or not invite me into their activities or conversations. In so doing, I sat on the floor with children, played games, hid in the playground equipment to talk, or shared a computer game. Children quickly recognized my rejection of authoritarian positions and tested my adult status by intentionally doing things for which staff members would reprimand them. At these moments, I remained complicit with children's actions, but had to delicately balance my solidarity with children while not alienating staff members. My avoidance of authoritarian roles, consistent presence, and questions sometimes shifted children's perceptions of me away from "volunteer" and toward "playmate" at times and "student" at others. However, I recognize that despite my attempts to be with children in

their designated spaces and to follow their lead, my age, class, gender, and race were constant reminders that I was not like the children participating in Home Mission. At best, some children equated me with big sisters or godmothers while others consistently challenged my presence in their space and brought attention to my difference.

Staff members initially welcomed me into the program and treated me much like they would another volunteer. However, this position was always tenuous since I had to move between relationships with children and staff on a daily basis. As I subtly and sometimes overtly rejected positions of authority assumed by other volunteers, staff members increasingly regarded me with confusion and/or suspicion. For example, I did not tell children to stop sleeping or talking during Bible Studies, which most volunteers readily did. I also chose to play with children on the playground equipment or in the gym while staff members and volunteers stood on the sidelines. These actions marked me as a "different" or "active" volunteer who could not be counted on to control the children. Yet, I arrived early most days to "hang out" with staff members and get to know them better which helped ameliorate my alignment with children during the afterschool hours. I would also help staff members on weekends and during special events to build rapport.

My previous experience in a neighboring nonprofit and researcher status also seemed to affect the way staff members regarded me. Some of the agency personnel knew that I worked at a large community-based organization before attending graduate school and expected me to implicitly understand the community matters evident in the Heights. When I would ask staff members to describe the social issues they wanted to address or the clients and community they served, they often tried to avoid a direct response by saying such things as "you know about the problems we face," or "you know the kind of families that live in the Heights." After such comments, I encouraged the

staff member to articulate what they meant and explained that I did not know much about Home Mission and did not want to make assumptions about the little I did know. I reiterated that I was not at Home Mission as a social service provider, but as a researcher and encouraged staff to be explicit in their responses. After participating in the program for a few months, comments about my previous work subsided and my status as a researcher became more accepted or "intelligible" to the staff.

However, as much as I tried to shift my position from social service worker to researcher and student, I believe my previous experience was always in the background. Overall, I believe the comments alluding to my previous work accomplished two goals. First, by invoking my prior knowledge of the community, staff members assumed I would understand the pervasive racist and socioeconomic stereotypes promulgated about the urban residents of the Heights without having to say those stereotypes out loud. Second, these comments suggested a veiled competitiveness and repetitiveness among local nonprofits. Here, staff members juxtaposed Home Mission's religious focus to other social service agencies to suggest its aim toward eternal salvation was more enduring than services aimed at survival.

Several guardians involved in my research also initially perceived me as a volunteer in the Home Mission children's program since it was through the agency that I first contacted them. Again, in these instances, I emphasized my role as a student researcher and the confidentiality of my work to diffuse my association with Home Mission. While some guardians spoke candidly about their experiences at the agency, I realize that my association as a volunteer may have affected guardians' comments given their potential concerns that the information they provided would affect the services they and their children received. However, not all guardians equated me with a volunteer and

several readily accepted my position as a student and researcher due to their own experiences in graduate or bachelor programs. These parents often asked about my "school project" and gave me advice about how to finish graduate school despite conflicts with family and teaching. There were also instances when guardians and I shared experiences about raising children. Parenthood gave us a common topic to discuss or a point of connection, which helped make me more relatable to most of the guardians. While these moments allowed guardians and me to connect due to shared experiences and roles, I recognize that my status as a white, middle-class female researcher affected the information that guardians chose to share with me.

Data Analysis

I transcribed all interviews, family surveys, and storytelling sessions. Once these data were transcribed, I organized my interviews, surveys, storytelling sessions, and fieldnotes using the ethnographic software package, Atlas.ti, to facilitate coding and analysis. I initially used open coding to identify themes and topics in the textual data and created a preliminary codebook. I hand-coded children's photos in conjunction with their photography interviews. Using the family surveys, I constructed a chart of household demographic data and maps of Carlisle to document the geographic distribution of participating families throughout the area. I then undertook more focused coding on both the textual and visual data to identify thematic categories. I categorized the emerging themes according to the three research questions that guide this work. These questions include (1) how do agency staff construct the needs of participating children and families, and how are these understandings reflected in program services;

(2) how do participating children represent their lives within and beyond Home Mission; and (3) what are the demographic characteristics of participating families and why do they utilize neighborhood children's programs.

Once I organized the data according to thematic categories within the framework of my research questions, I began to discern stark differences between children's and guardians' descriptions of their lived experiences and staff constructions of their lives, especially on issues of economic opportunity, family structure, religious affiliation, and networks for support. I then reanalyzed my data according to these differences to determine the ways such incongruences affected both the creation and implementation of faith-based afterschool services for urban children and children's use of and experiences in Home Mission.

Chapter Three

A Brief Historical Overview of Domestic Social Service Provision

This chapter outlines a brief history of social service provision in the U.S. during

the past four centuries to elucidate many of the social and political factors contributing to

the present service environment. Many scholars have written extensive volumes on this

topic and provide accounts detailing fluctuation in poverty relief strategies throughout

American history (Berkowitz and McQuaid 1992, Halpern 1999b, Katz 1989, 1996,

Patterson 2000, Trattner 1999). While I cannot attempt to provide such a comprehensive

account here, I wish to culturally and historically contextualize private social services,

specifically faith-based organizations, to better understand the social and political factors

influencing service provision at Home Mission. I hope to show how contemporary

understandings of need and Home Mission's particular style of service are influenced by

larger historical developments. To accomplish this, I outline U.S. social service

provision in both the public and private sectors from the colonial era to the contemporary

period, paying close attention to the role that religious organizations have played in

poverty relief and how poor children's needs have been conceived and addressed through

time.

The Early Development of Social Welfare in the 17th and 18th Centuries

America's first efforts at poverty relief were not created anew as the nation took

shape, but were rather modeled after the Elizabethan Poor Laws first created and

implemented in Britain in 1601 (Bremner 1988, Trattner 1999). While Elizabethan Poor

Laws are now characterized as draconian according to contemporary standards, they were

the first laws to recognize a government's responsibility to help its vulnerable populations. Although the Poor Laws were modified in the years following their creation, several key features of the laws continue to influence contemporary service provision. These include distinctions about local responsibility for aid, familial obligation, covenantal vs. contractual responsibility, and deserving vs. undeserving poor.

Local communities were at the root of Elizabethan Poor Laws in both Britain and the United States and were responsible for caring for the disadvantaged (Trattner 1999). Given the small size of American settlements, there were not clear distinctions between types of aid (i.e. religious, secular, private, or public). Rather, religious institutions, community leaders, and government officials worked together to provide assistance to the community's impoverished citizens. Localism was also supported by residency requirements that excluded outsiders due to the meager resources and fears that vagrants would take advantage of local assistance programs (Katz 1996). Proof of residency emerged in local communities as the first eligibility criteria and held the seeds of future debates to discern "deserving" from the "undeserving" poor.

Under the Poor Laws in the U.S., familial responsibilities played a prominent role in poverty relief. The family was primarily responsible for disadvantaged persons and charity was believed to start in the home (Trattner 1999). Here, the law codified familial responsibilities toward children and the elderly who were "legally required to economically provide for ... dependents" (Bartkowski and Regis 2003:29). These obligations meant that poor individuals had to exhaust meager resources before approaching local aid organizations. The recognition of familial obligation in the Poor Laws suggests that local responsibility for assistance was second only to individual, family units.

Obligations also existed between the privileged and poor. In colonial America, Puritan theology emphasized social responsibility for the affluent and poor alike, both of whom were expected to uphold the established social order and hierarchy. Here, the affluent were obliged to provide assistance to the poor as proof of their religious devotion and social duty while the impoverished were viewed as parts of the divinely inspired social order that allowed "men to do good" (Trattner 1999:16). Therefore, a covenantal relationship between the affluent and poor developed where each group was dependent on the other to determine their place within the divine hierarchy.

However, Calvinist perspectives on work created problems and inconsistencies within this covenantal framework. Inherent in Calvinist theology are stark contradictions between poverty and work, which have shaped distinctions between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor in the U.S. Within the Judeo-Christian tradition, Calvinism emphasizes Biblical edicts to care for the least of God's people (i.e. the poor and widows) through charitable acts. However, Calvinism extols the virtues of productive labor as well and links a person's commitment to work with their spiritual salvation. Here, the success of one's productive labor signaled religious devotion and God's blessing, whereas idleness was defined as sin (Trattner 1999). While pious men and women were expected to act benevolently towards the disadvantaged, it was only toward those judged "worthy" of their assistance evident through their commitment to piety and work (Bartkowski and Regis 2003).

American communities thus distinguished between the poverty caused by misfortune and "pauperism" or an unwillingness to work among able-bodied individuals (Katz 1996). For those believed to be the former, help was granted in numerous ways, but distinctions were still made between those deemed "deserving" of aid. For example,

the sick were seen as the deserving poor and given credit by merchants and landlords until illnesses subsided and they were able to return to work (Katz 1996). Impoverished children were given apprenticeships, which provided training and discipline (Halpern 1999b). Paupers, on the other hand, were stigmatized as the "undeserving" poor because of their assumed refusal to work and stringent measures could be taken if they could not find jobs in local communities (Katz 1996).

African Americans living during the Colonial era were viewed as inferior subjects who were not entitled to the rights held by white citizens and thus not "deserving" of aid (Trattner 1999). Both free and enslaved Blacks were predominately excluded from poverty relief programs. Freemen and women were simply denied benefits, forcing them to rely on informal networks of assistance while African slaves were dependent on their masters for help, excluding them from social welfare all together.

At this time, children were viewed as miniature adults and subject to the same sins of idleness and vice as their adult counterparts (Halpern 1999b, Mintz 2004). To prevent children from becoming unproductive adults, strict training and discipline were left to the family and little was done for children outside the home (Mintz 2004).

Developing Distinctions in Public and Private Poverty Relief

Private charity gained prominence in the late 1700s and early 1800s as populations and poverty grew. Economic downturns, industry shifts, occupational hazards, and military battles were among some of the causes of this increase in poverty as more widows, children, and infirm required aid (Trattner 1999). Unlike earlier periods, there was a growing group of private entrepreneurs with sizeable fortunes who were

willing to donate portions of their wealth to poverty relief. Trattner (1999:32) asserts that
"private charity began early in American history" as affluent individuals began to help
the needy on their own accord and work toward poverty solutions.

This nascent partnership between public and private relief was not limited to the
donations of wealthy individuals, but also included private social groups and churches.
For example, the First Great Awakening was a revivalist movement that emphasized
repentance, spiritual independence, charitable works, and individual responsibility rather
than divine will alone and focused on the conversion of nonbelievers to Christianity
(Kidd 2007). In fact, some believers sought to extend this message to African slaves in
the South and offered help to both freed and enslaved Blacks as a means to educate them
in religious doctrine (Bremner 1988, Kidd 2007). Even some slaveholders followed this
cause in a contradictory endeavor to save the immortal souls of their African slaves while
owning and exploiting their physical bodies. In the First Great Awakening, charity was
no longer something that the rich did out of social obligation, but rather all classes of
people were expected to help others as an expression of faith (Bremner 1988).

While the First Great Awakening contributed to the growth in religious
benevolence groups, the Enlightenment shaped the development of secular philanthropic
organizations (Bartkowski and Regis 2003, Bremner 1988, Trattner 1999). With its
emphasis on reason and science, the Enlightenment understood poverty as a social ill to
be logically addressed and dismantled through the rigors of science. Humanitarian
efforts followed as enlightened individuals sought to address the causes of poverty, help
those in need, and reform society using the techniques of science and the mind. With
both secular and religious philanthropic groups on the rise, this period was the first time
that public and private efforts worked together on such a large scale.

The Enlightenment also challenged previous notions about children as miniature adults. Previously children were viewed as sinful creatures who needed oversight and discipline to develop into respectful citizens. Now, children were seen as Lockian *tabula rasas* who were not born in sin, but rather came into the world as empty vessels ready to be filled with reason and experience (Halpern 1999b, Malkki 2010, Wall 2004).

By the middle of the nineteenth century, children further came to be viewed as innately good and morally superior to adults (Mintz 2004). This shift was bolstered by evangelical movements of the time that preached about children's innate innocence and closeness to God. No longer did children require strict discipline and hard work, but instead benefited from a loving, nurturing environment provided by mothers who became predominately responsible for children's care, growth, and salvation. If children could not be taken care of in the home, they were given apprenticeships (Mintz 2004). These apprenticeships moved children out of unfit homes, but kept them in familial units that were still deemed the rightful place for children's care and upbringing.

Institutionalization, Science, and Faith: 19th Century Responses to Poverty

Beginning in the nineteenth century, critics began to attack Poor Law specifications. Specifically, laissez-faire capitalism challenged the covenantal relationships established between the privileged and poor, and favored contractual relations based on individual rights and self-interest (Bartkowski and Regis 2003, Fraser and Gordon 1994). Nineteenth-century classical economists argued that property and wealth accumulation were "natural rights" of hard working individuals who should not be expected under noblesse oblige to provide for the poor (Trattner 1999:49). Poverty was

viewed not as a God-given condition which the poor could not control, but rather as a necessary aspect of the wage economy that forced the poor into the labor market. According to this logic, by guaranteeing assistance to those in need, local poverty relief programs undercut wage-labor capitalism and undermined incentives to work by providing a "refuge from productive labor" (Bartkowski and Regis 2003:36).

Not only was the dominant system of programmatic relief under attack, but so were the poor. In the nineteenth century, as classical economics and contractual relationships gained prominence, the poor were reinterpreted according to these individualistic projects as lacking moral virtue and a commitment to work (Trattner 1999). No longer were the poor entitled to relief services based on their role within preordained social hierarchies. Instead, they were subject to paltry wages and life's hardships that were presumed to be the consequences of immorality and vice (Bartkowski and Regis 2003).

These changes were also given religious credibility in the Second Great Awakening, another revivalist movement that located the root of spiritual and social ills in the individual (Hankins 2004). In this movement, the individual became the focus of attention and vulnerabilities such as "poverty and damnation were personal matters; only the individual could overcome them" (Trattner 1999:55). Overall, both classical economists and religious movements of the time began to focus on individuals through production and salvation. A deep disdain and suspicion arose about the able-bodied poor and in turn, poverty relief programs were attacked for making the poor idle, unproductive, and promoting immorality and vice.

Trattner (1999) argues that social assistance was characterized more by stereotypes at this time than the real life circumstances of the poor. Images of lazy and

shiftless poor people were pervasive and contributed to pejorative sentiments regarding

public poverty relief. No longer were private and public sectors working in tandem to

relieve hardship at the local level, but rather these two relief enterprises were in

competition. In the debates surrounding social service provision, the private sector was

increasingly viewed as the area best suited to help the vulnerable and put all able-bodied

persons to work.

Underlying these debates were beliefs about the deserving and undeserving poor,

distinctions that led to the poorhouse movement of the time. Advocates for poorhouses

asserted that these institutions could finally weed out the able-bodied vagrant from the

worthy poor by dividing the "undeserving" and "deserving" poor into workhouses and

almshouses respectively (Katz 1996). Those deemed able to work, but who chose not to,

were sent to workhouses. Here, they were taught about the virtues of productive labor

and trained in "respectable forms" of work that included farm work, domestic labor, and

industry (Trattner 1999:57). The "deserving" poor or those with physical and mental

disabilities and infirmities were cared for in almshouses where they were to receive

specialized care according to their ailments (Katz 1996). In the poorhouse movement,

the disadvantaged were excluded from mainstream society and characterized as needing

not only vocational training, but also moral and social reformation.

Impoverished children were also subject to institutionalized care at this time and

often placed in orphanages if their parents lived in poorhouses or were destitute (Mintz

2004). It was believed at the time that in orphanages, children could not only learn their

school lessons, but also learn to be different from their parents (Bartkowski and Regis

2003, Katz 1996, Mintz 2004, Trattner 1999). Parents living in poorhouses were

assumed to instill social and moral vices in their children and perpetuate poverty through

their progeny. Institutional personnel, on the other hand, were perceived to be morally superior to impoverished parents and able to teach children about Christian values and productivity. With their help, children were more likely to lead virtuous and economically productive lives and not internalize the failings of their parents. The poorhouse and orphanage system located the genus of poverty in what was assumed to be the generational dysfunction of poor families and thus worked to separate family members in an attempt to end the cycle of poverty.

While poorhouses were idealized as efficient and moral institutions best suited to address poverty than previous relief programs, the realities were far from this ideal. Specifically, distinctions between the able-bodied and deserving poor were often difficult and not as clear-cut as advocates assumed (Katz 1996). In addition, mismanagement of funds and corruption plagued many institutional relief programs, undermining claims that staff and overseers were able to teach residents to be respectable, law-abiding workers. However, the largest underlying problem of the poorhouse system was a deep contradiction in its approach. As Bartkowski and Regis (2003:39) assert, "poorhouses were expected to be both humanitarian and punitive, caring and authoritarian, efficient and specialized." This contradiction ultimately contributed to the system's demise since these institutions could not operative effectively under opposing forces.

Orphanages were also critiqued for providing inadequate care for children, and accounts of grave abuses abounded (Halpern 1999b, Mintz 2004). These institutions hoped to protect children from the corrosive influences of society and their parents while promoting self-sufficiency, morality, and hard work. However, these hopes were never fully realized and orphanages failed for many of the same reasons that workhouses and almshouses did, including untrained staff, poor facilities, and inherent contradictions.

Given their numerous flaws and inconsistencies, poorhouses fell into disfavor. In their place, advocates of scientific charity emerged (Bremner 1988, Katz 1996, Trattner 1999). Scientific charity continued to focus on the presumed individual deficiencies of the impoverished and sought to end vagrancy by transforming the character of poor individuals through professional social services and scientific knowledge. This movement became the predecessor of secular philanthropies throughout urban America (Katz 1996). This movement also denoted a shift in popular perspectives toward the poor by renaming poverty relief as charity. "Relief," as used in previous periods, highlighted the hardships of the impoverished. However, defining aid as charity shifted attention from the needs of recipients to "the goodwill and voluntary acts of kindness undertaken by generous, upstanding citizens" (Bartkowski and Regis 2003:40). Here, the focus of assistance was no longer on the disadvantaged, but rather the goodness of the giver.

The Protestant character of the scientific charity movement encouraged the evangelical fervor of many of its adherents. According to Protestant logic, destitution equaled moral depravity, so advocates reasoned that poverty needed to be addressed using both scientific principles and religious conversion. This resulted in charitable groups that passed out tracts while serving the poor (Bartkowski and Regis 2003, Cammisa 1998). These tracts helped shape the private service encounter as one not only centered around assistance, but also the assumed immorality of the poor and the power of the provider to bestow both aid and religious salvation.

The scientific charity movement also feared that indiscriminate aid would allow the poor to take advantage of multiple groups (Katz 1996). As a result, the movement sought to evaluate the validity of benefit claims by subjecting supplicants to committee oversight and home visits (Katz 1996). During home visits, men called "paternal

guardians" would provide beneficiaries with moral guidance, domestic tips, and stern direction toward "honest work" (Katz 1996:79). At the heart of this oversight was a suspicion of the poor who were presumed to greedily search for aid. Overall, Cammisa (1998) argues that Protestant white reformers in the scientific charity movement sought to help immigrants and freed slaves only in so far as they sought to instill white, middle-class values in the people they attempted to assist.

Between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, child welfare became a central focus for relief initiatives throughout the country (Halpern 1999a, 1999b). The shortcomings of the poorhouse and orphanage system coupled with the emergence of new relief organizations caused reformers to advocate moving disadvantaged children out of orphanages and back into family care. However, they were not to be transferred to their natal homes for fear that their parents would lead them toward lives of vice and crime. Rather, children were to be temporarily cared for or adopted by other families who would provide religious and social training. These programs initially focused more on getting aberrant youth out of poverty-stricken cities, but there was little oversight once children were placed with other families, which led to many cases of child maltreatment (Mintz 2004).

Given these abuses, social critics and natural parents of transplanted children fought the removal of children in the late nineteenth century and advocated for a systematic and procedural process of foster care (Halpern 1999b). These changes helped lead to the professionalization of child welfare workers as children, natal families, and foster families were often evaluated by a collection of paid social workers, physicians, psychologists, and other administrative staff (Halpern 1999a). While these changes helped place children in more suitable homes and provided assistance to natural families

when available, the overall system focused on the individual child whose needs and

development were assessed separately from their families.

The Development and Devolution of the Welfare State: Social Service Provision in the
20th and 21st Centuries

The early twentieth century witnessed a dramatic shift in the control of social

welfare assistance as it progressed from localized public and private charity to state and

federal services. In the Progressive Era, states began to more actively determine poverty

policy and provide relief. One of the first programs instituted at the state level was

mother's pensions, a cash assistance program for widows with dependent children

(Halpern 1999b, Skocpol 1992, 2000). Social reformers of the time criticized the

poorhouse system for separating families and advocated mothers' pensions as a way for

women to care for their children at home. Yet, this assistance was grounded in

paternalistic notions of family and did not provide care for unmarried or deserted mothers

(Gordon 1990, 1994). Here, widows were viewed as "deserving" or "respectable" aid

recipients while women deserted or separated from husbands were viewed as less

deserving of assistance (Halpern 1999b:59). Regardless of marital status, the payments

were small and women often had to find economic resources elsewhere to make ends

meet. To supplement their meager assistance payments, women sometimes found

employment outside the home or became involved with partners who contributed to

family coffers, both of which were prohibited under the program and made women

subject to program sanctions and designations as neglectful mothers (Gordon 1994).

Mothers' pensions also raised fears regarding non-traditional family forms that

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Mothers' pensions also raised fears regarding non-traditional family forms that

would continue into the present day. Motherhood, as understood in this program, was

defined according to white, heterosexual, middle-class standards, which for many mothers was hard to accept or achieve (Gordon 1994). In this first attempt at family poverty assistance, U.S. policy makers "were doing what they could to maternalize public assistance, so long as they did not undermine the two-parent domestic model that was thought to be ordained by God and selected by human history" (Bartkowski and Regis 2003:48).

Despite the initial steps states took to institute public assistance through such things as mothers' pensions, the Progressive Era was marked with a general sense of optimism, faith in free markets, and prevention ideologies that claimed poverty could be avoided through the appropriate measures (Patterson 2000).

Patterson (2000) suggests that these attitudes and other forces actually worked against the creation of a broad welfare state, even in the face of the 1929 stock market crash. However, when middle-class families started to become destitute after the crash, the federal government was pressured to step in (McElvaine 1994). At this time, it become glaringly apparent that only public institutions "could deal with the collapse of the economy, mass unemployment, and widespread destitution" (Trattner 1999). Consequently, the federal government became heavily involved in domestic welfare, a movement that changed the face of domestic poverty relief for years to come. Specifically, New Deal policy makers passed two large social assistance programs, Social Security and Aid to Dependent Children, which ushered in the American welfare state as we know it today (McElvaine 1994).

Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) was important legislation for child welfare and expanded assistance first provided through mothers' pensions. ADC recognized that children needed to be cared for in the home, but also promoted children's care in their

natal families, not only in foster homes. The program was fundamentally based on the individualization of children and viewed as "'an investment in future citizenship,' carried out in partnership with mothers" (Dunham 1938 as quoted in Halpern 1999b:91). Similar to critiques of mothers' pensions, however, detractors argued that women would have multiple children for whom they could not care in order to receive assistance. McElvaine (1994:179) shows that "for many Americans who avoided the ravages of the Depression, it became an article of faith that… relief women had babies in order to qualify for higher payments." Such sentiments caused ADC to help women and children by employing a prejudicial system to determine which types of families were worthy of aid (Gordon 1994).

The formation of ADC compared to Social Security also highlights the dichotomous distinction between social insurance (i.e. Social Security) and public assistance (i.e. Aid to Dependent Children) evident in New Deal programs (McElvaine 1994). In the former, workers contributed to social insurance programs through taxes and received benefits after retirement. In the later, women with dependent children received assistance without contributing to the program, but qualified for assistance based on a series of eligibility requirements.

The distinctions between these two programs reveal the gender and racial inequalities upon which they were established. Social insurance programs privileged white male workers who were deemed the "deserving" poor and valorized for their productivity while public assistance was associated with needy mothers, often women of color, or "undeserving" recipients who were stigmatized for not adhering to traditional family models (Fraser and Gordon 1994). These inequalities are most apparent given that recipients of social insurance programs do not simply collect exactly what they put in the

program and people who receive public assistance also pay sales tax and contribute to public revenue in other ways (Fraser and Gordon 1994, Gordon 1994).

While New Deal programs marked a fundamental shift in social assistance in the U.S., there were not substantial changes in issues of racial equality. Rather, the programs created during this time reinforced racial stratification. For example, programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps restricted African American enrollment to 10 percent and segregated blacks from other corps members (Trattner 1999). Moreover, the federal and state relationship established through New Deal programs allowed states to administer the programs according to local dictates, a move enabling Southern states to withhold assistance to African Americans (Bartkowski and Regis 2003, Katz 1996). Overall, federal responses to widespread poverty did little to dismantle racial segregation and violence (Katz 1996).

Although the federal government assumed responsibility to help the domestic poor, the political climate was never completely accepting. From its inception, state welfare was regarded with disdain and even President Roosevelt, credited with implementing large-scale relief, "regarded welfare as a narcotic, to which people became addicted" (Berkowitz 1991:91). Overall, Berkowitz (1991:93) asserts that, "welfare… never enjoyed widespread acceptance, even in the 1930's," despite the fact that millions received aid. America's long history of individualizing the poor and associating poverty with moral lassitude continued to influence mainstream attitudes about impoverishment.

By the 1960s, the welfare programs first instituted during the Great Depression were further expanded, and the federal government took an even more prominent position in mandating poverty relief programs. The revitalized interest in poverty reduction led to the creation of new programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, and Head Start while existing

programs received increased funding (Danziger and Haveman 2001). For example, ADC was renamed Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and benefits were expanded for children and their family members (Coll 1995, Trattner 1999).

During this period, new partnerships emerged between the federal government and local community groups. As part of President Johnson's War on Poverty, The Economic Opportunity Act (1964) was established to create community action agencies (Cammisa 1998). These local agencies worked directly with the federal government to create local assistance programs using federal grants resulting in a new type of localism, one that included federal structuring and funding. Yet, local action groups drew attacks from state offices that had co-funded welfare assistance since the New Deal. These attacks were even more severe in racially segregated areas like the South where white powerbrokers were bypassed because they were deemed "untrustworthy" and were not likely to use federal funds to help poor African Americans (Bartkowski and Regis 2003:54, Cammisa 1998).

During this time, African American churches, especially in the South, emerged as a powerful force against racial segregation and violence (Harris 2001, Irvin 1992, Lincoln and Mamiya 1995, Morris 1984, Noll 2008). Intertwining "the civic language of rights with religious visions of social justice" (Bartkowski and Regis 2003:54), African American churches were at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement and motivated their congregations to become politically active through grassroots efforts aimed at effecting systematic change (Hall 2001, Jackson 1993, Marsh 1997, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). In so doing, the Civil Rights Movement was the force behind other nationwide rights struggles including the national welfare rights movement. The National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO), formed by Civil Rights activists and welfare

recipients alike, brought local conflicts for economic stability to the forefront and shed light on poor women's struggles in the welfare system (Jackson 1993).

Amidst positive movements for change, popular sentiment believed that poverty could be alleviated using the latest research combined with public resources (Danziger and Haveman 2001). Poor people were perceived as differing from the rest of society primarily in their lack of economic resources, and the apparent solution was to correct the income shortfall in an efficient and standardized manner (Patterson 2000). These attitudes contributed to the belief that if incomes were raised, poverty would end. Although numerous scholars and politicians waged "war on poverty," their income solutions lowered, but never fully eradicated impoverishment because underlying such solutions were beliefs that economic benefits were broadly available and the poor needed only to take advantage of the opportunities before them (Berkowitz 1991:116).

In the War on Poverty, government officials also fundamentally altered how public and private assistance programs worked together. Before this time, private relief organizations were largely funded by private and in-kind donations (Smith and Lipsky1993). However, during the 1960s, the federal government began to directly fund private non-profits and transformed previous limitations controlling federal input in local assistance. For example, the Social Security Act was amended in 1967 and explicitly "encouraged states to enter into purchase-of-service agreements with private agencies" (Smith and Lipsky 1993:55). Moreover, Smith and Lipsky (1993:71) argue that the shift from previous parallel tracks between government and private assistance toward federal funding of private social services in effect made "nonprofit agencies agents of government in the expansion of the American welfare state." This amendment instigated widespread federal outsourcing of social service provision to secular relief organizations,

a practice that quickly became commonplace. These changes codified the contractual

relationship that would characterize government and private assistance from this time

forward.

Despite the efforts made to end poverty during the early 1960s, the changes and

expansions in welfare provision instituted by Johnson came under attack during the 1970s

and 1980s. Critics argued that federal control of welfare assistance created an ineffective

and burdensome bureaucracy that did not adequately address or understand local

problems and contexts (Trattner 1999). States rights advocates argued that the federal

government needed to move control of welfare provisioning back to state and local

governments. In addition, federal assistance programs were condemned for perpetuating

poverty and fostering dependency. Critics, using racist and sexist ideologies, vilified

public assistance for such things as deemphasizing work and promoting out-of-wedlock

births (Cruikshank 1997, Quadagno 1994).

One of the most memorable attacks moved beyond political rhetoric to involve

AFDC recipients. Here, the General Accounting Office sent official visitors to the homes

of AFDC recipients during the night or on weekends in the hope of discovering able-

bodied, employable or employed men residing in the home (Berkowitz 1991, Coll 1995).

If such a man was found in the household, the aid recipient and her children would lose

their benefits. These raids exhibit a shift away from attempts to understand the structural

causes of poverty as promoted in the 1960s toward individualistic justifications for

economic hardship. Here, poverty was once again perceived as rooted in individuals who

lacked, not economic and social resources, but work ethics, moral values, and healthy

relationships. Moreover, these raids were most often conducted in the homes of African

American women, which promoted feminized and racist representations of the poor that further stigmatized impoverished women of color (Berkowitz 1991, Stack 1974).

Not only did the raids signal a shift in attitudes towards the poor, but also toward public assistance. The poor were increasingly characterized as "undeserving" of aid and public relief as promoting dependency and other negative behaviors. As a result, federal relief programs were cut or rolled back in an effort to reform the poor and the welfare system (Albelda and Withorn 2002). The gains won by the Civil Rights Movement and anti-poverty campaigns in the 1960s and 1970s were stalled and sometimes reversed as punitive poverty relief measures, and the feminization and racialization of poverty increased in the 1980s (Goode and Maskovsky 2001).

While a host of New Deal and Great Society programs came under attack at this time, the 1960s push for private provision of public assistance was unscathed and in fact, was expanded (Adkins, Occhipinti, and Hefferan 2010, Bremner 1988, Goode and Maskovsky 2001). For example, as federal welfare programs were reduced, a "waiver state" emerged where states could petition the federal government to exempt them from the federal regulations dictating welfare assistance (Bartkowski and Regis 2003:56, Cammisa 1998). As states coordinated their own welfare programs, often more stringent than previous federal mandates (Haskins and Blank 2001), states now regularly contracted with private providers to offer social services. This process contributed to a stark increase in secular and religious nonprofits as public-private partnerships became normal practice (Salamon 1995). As the private sector increasingly took control over social service provision, the federal government decreased its poverty relief programs and in effect, its responsibility for impoverished citizens (Smith and Lipsky 1993).

In subsequent U.S. poverty policy debates, private social services became the panacea for seemingly ineffective large government assistance programs. Here, 'big government' was assumed to perpetuate poverty by fostering dependency and the poor needed to be transformed into entrepreneurial, self-managing citizens through the power of the market (Maskovsky 2001) and the help of private organizations (Goode 2006). Consequently, AFDC became a central target for change.

Long associated with "welfare queens" and "teenage mothers," AFDC recipients were criticized for shunning wage labor and having children only to receive welfare checks (Gordon 2002). Transforming AFDC allowed the federal government to further decrease its welfare expenditures while also symbolically changing a program highly associated with the problems of the welfare state (Piven 2002). Moreover, AFDC policy changes became the door through which the federal government could move beyond state waivers toward a unified policy directed at state control of welfare programs.

In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed into law the welfare reform bill known as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) (Haskins and Blank 2001). One of the bill's major functions was the replacement of AFDC (formerly ADC) with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant system. Under this new law, individual states, not federal agencies, were responsible for the dispersal of TANF funds. This required that each state create its own guidelines and regulations under which families could receive assistance, resulting in "an increasingly diverse set of state programs" (Haskins and Blank 2001:7). Many TANF regulations not only moved women off welfare rolls to work in low-wage jobs, but also enacted behavioral requirements that promoted two-parent families, abstinence, and other pregnancy prevention strategies (Flynn 1999; see Mink and Solinger 2003 for a

comprehensive outline of TANF regulations; Padgette 2003). Overall, these policy changes again highlighted the primacy of work in America and individualistic causes of impoverishment.

With TANF, private social service responses became increasingly responsible for providing services due to new regulations allowing states to allocate a portion of their TANF funds to private agencies that met TANF guidelines (Padgette 2003). Consequently, states began transferring millions of TANF dollars to private social services each year that promote such issues as abstinence and teenage pregnancy prevention (Padgette 2003). As a result, TANF funding could be shifted away from family-based cash assistance to an array of private programs with diverse aims.

In fact, TANF funds could be allocated to private social programs that claimed to serve "at risk" children and youth. Appearing in the 1980s and 1990s, "at risk" descriptions emerged to characterize poor children as "at risk" for vague economic, social, and educational failures. These descriptions implicitly referred to low-income, ethnic minorities and employed sexist and racist ideologies to locate "problems or 'pathologies' in individuals, families, and communities rather than in institutional structures that create and maintain inequality" (Swadener and Lubeck 1995:3). Although the Civil Rights era helped to show the order and cohesion evident in low-income communities and helped oppressed groups make social, economic, and political gains, "at risk" discourses undermined these efforts by labeling poor communities and children as deficient (Sleeter 1995).

Not surprisingly, there was an increased interest in afterschool programs for children, especially those from low to moderate-income families (Halpern 1999a, 2001, Seligson 1999). While children's out-of-school time had been a source of public worry

and scrutiny throughout much of the 20th century, Halpern (1999a) notes that politicians and policy makers turned to afterschool programs with new fervor in hopes to reform "at risk" youth. Most notably, President Clinton championed the concept and pushed for federal support even while other services, especially state welfare programs, were being severely dismantled (Seligson 1999). In fact, President Clinton allocated over a billion dollars to fund afterschool centers across the country while simultaneously ending family-based cash assistance programs or "welfare as we know it" (Seligson 1999).

Amidst these changes, PWORA fundamentally altered public support for children and families, but it also set in motion changes that would allow religious groups to receive federal support for administering assistance programs. PRWORA included a Charitable Choice provision that "eased restrictions on religiously oriented service agencies that wished to apply for government funds to support their programs" (Wuthnow 2004:14). This provision gained widespread support from conservative political and religious groups who vehemently criticized government assistance programs for promoting immorality (Piven 2001, Wilcox 1996). Within the established contracting system, such groups challenged traditional divisions between church and state and argued that faith-based groups should be able to receive federal support for social services (Hall 2001, Walsh 2001). Charitable choice advocates argued that faith-based organizations were ideal agencies from which to provide poverty relief given their explicitly moral missions, religiously motivated and committed staff, connections to local populations, and high standards of ethics and integrity (Clarke and Jennings 2008, Walsh 2001, Wuthnow 2004).

President George W. Bush concretized federal backing for faith-based organizations in the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in

2001, which opened federal funds and support for religious organizations (Adkins, Occhipinti, and Hefferan 2010, Wuthnow 2004). As in similar periods of US history, religious groups were viewed as being able to reform the immoral and unproductive lifestyles of the poor. However, what makes Charitable Choice unique is the unprecedented federal financial and rhetorical support for religious charitable groups. Here, privatization of social services through the contract system coincides with a revival in evangelical political action and religious fervor to create agencies that seek to politically and morally reform the lives of the poor with federal support.

Conclusion

This historical overview of social service provision in the U.S. briefly documents how public policy and opinions about the poor have shifted through time. Emerging from this longitudinal perspective are several key factors that continue to influence contemporary programmatic responses like Home Mission. First, individuals have largely been viewed as responsible for their own impoverishment throughout much of American history. Even during periods of increasing state welfare like the 1930s and 1960s, the majority of programs continued to focus on individuals who needed resources, training, and/or work opportunities. Moreover, the legacies of Calvinism have given religious justification to individualistic notions of poverty by interpreting personal success as divinely inspired and socioeconomic hardships as moral failings. These distinctions undergird much of American assistance, which seeks to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor. These issues have coalesced in impoverished children's lives to mark families as the genitors of hardship and immorality, and thus as

sites for intervention. Consequently, public and private social assistance programs have emerged throughout American history to implement individualistic reforms for poor adults and children. At times, state and private organizations have worked in tandem and at other times in opposition to one another, but they have always been woven into the American social safety net. The current contractual order between state and private organizations is a new articulation of an old relationship, but it has the potential to alter that relationship in fundamental ways by fragmenting social service provision and obfuscating government's responsibility for its citizens.

All of these factors have created the particular political and ideological climate making service strategies like Home Mission possible. Specifically in Home Mission, American's particular blend of individualism and Calvinist legacies combine to "save" clients from sin and social failings. Furthermore, the historical racialization and feminization of welfare recipients continue to influence how staff conceptualize children and families. Yet, local and regional dynamics also contribute to Home Mission's service strategies. It is to these local factors in context of these broader historical processes to which I now turn in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Carlisle, Carlisle Baptist, and the Heights: The Making of Home Mission

Home Mission's beginnings are a product of the history of domestic service

provision as outlined in Chapter 3 and exemplify the contemporary shift to private, faith-

based social service provisioning. It is in this agency that we see the historical legacies

of such issues as privatization, individualization, productivity, and personal responsibility

reemerge and become practiced in the relationships between service providers and

recipients. Yet, this broader history combines with Carlisle's specific local and regional

histories that also help to shape Home Mission's approach to and implementation of

social services. Therefore, I detail a few of the key local and regional factors that

structure inequalities and service responses in this southern city. I briefly outline these

issues to provide background information for the second half of this chapter, which

examines the creation of Home Mission by Carlisle Baptist Church. In light of these

histories, I highlight how Home Mission's past can reveal some of the ways philanthropic

modes of power can affect and limit community participation.

Key Regional and Local Factors Affecting Home Mission and the Heights

Carlisle is a medium-sized, southern U.S. city located in the heart of the Deep

South, a region most known for and associated with legacies of slavery and segregation

(Cox 2011, Griffin 1995, 2000, Hackney 2001, Tindall 1989). Until the 1960s, Carlisle

was entrenched in the exploitative biracial system that supported the agricultural

economy of the region (Davis 1989, 2006, Hopkinson 2006, Horton and Horton 2005).

The city and surrounding areas were considered strongholds of white supremacy for many generations as whites consolidated socioeconomic and political power through the terrorization and subordination of Blacks (Litwack 1999). In the fight for freedom, the city became a battleground as Civil Rights activists challenged segregation (Newman 2004). The area was flooded with Civil Rights activists, both black and white, who fought to end the racist socioeconomic system. While the Civil Rights Movement helped to end state sanctioned segregation, the city's and South's history, specifically its racist past, are "not even past" as the famous southern writer, William Faulkner observed. Rather, as Griffin (2000:9) argues, "its history of racial injustice and brutality, of freedom rides and anti-desegregation riots… is recycled and then recycled again" in both scholarship and popular media (Cox 2011).

Yet, the city's and region's history have also encouraged contemporary antiracists and other activists to work in the area to address the pains of the past. In fact, there now exist several professional and religious organizations throughout Carlisle that work toward racial reconciliation. These groups are primarily made up of professional, politically liberal, middle class blacks and whites who live in Carlisle[4]. There are also current movements by some of the city's elite to revitalize several low-income, African American neighborhoods in efforts to preserve Black cultural heritage. Moreover, African American professionals and government officials overwhelmingly run the city and county administrations. As such, there is a growing group of African American professional elites and Black middle-class communities throughout Carlisle. The city and surrounding area are also home to several Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that serve predominately African American students from around the country.

Despite these gains, Carlisle's population has been falling in recent decades as many of the city's citizens move to surrounding suburbs (US Census Bureau 2010) for such things as better schools, cheaper housing, and job opportunities. Carlisle has thus experienced and continues to experience similar trends in suburban sprawl and concentrated, poor urban neighborhoods as cities across the country (Rutheiser 2005, Williams 1996). These dynamics suggest that in addition to race, class segregation is also evident as both affluent African Americans and whites choose to live in outlying suburbs.

As a result, Carlisle exhibits higher poverty rates than the surrounding suburbs (US Census Bureau 2010) and many center city neighborhoods, like the Heights, have the most concentrated rates of economic hardship. Several of these urban communities have been targeted for public and private social services. Some of these organizations were started and continue to be managed by neighborhood and suburban churches like Home Mission. Civil rights leaders and inter-faith groups organized others.

While the area has some of the highest poverty rates in the country, it also boasts the highest percentage of charitable giving in the United States (USA Today 2005). This paradoxical condition spotlights the relationships between the interpretation of needs and service provision on the one hand and the daily lives of those living in poverty on the other. This juxtaposition is especially acute in Carlisle where philanthropic agendas and service reception combine in multiple social service agencies located in the center city. Many of these organizations are fashioned by congregations and groups from outlying suburbs and offer children's programs as their main initiative or as part of a suite of services offered to the urban community. According to program directors, several of

these organizations are generated specifically to provide outlets for their congregations to volunteer[5].

It is here, in the intersections between private assistance and center-city communities, that organizations like Home Mission develop and implement services. These local and regional histories help to elucidate how issues of race, class, and urbanization combine to affect service provision and reception in Home Mission. Given these histories and the larger national debates about the poor through time (as discussed in Chapter 3), I examine in the rest of this chapter how these factors affected Home Mission's creation in the Heights.

Formation of Home Mission by Carlisle Baptist Church

Carlisle Baptist Church stands on a main thoroughfare in downtown Carlisle. Its grey concrete, fortress-like exterior is evocative of the business and government institutions that surround it rather than the traditional steepled structures typical of Christian religious buildings. The church, founded in the mid-nineteenth century, has grown dramatically in membership and physical space since its inception. It's buildings and parking lots have been renovated numerous times and took up four city blocks at the time of this research. The sanctuary could house over 3200 congregants at one time and during this research, the church boasted an overall membership of over 10,000 registered individuals. 75% of congregants lived in the suburbs surrounding Carlisle and commuted to church on Sunday mornings, the majority of which were white, middle to upper class churchgoers. The church employed approximately 25 pastors and ministers who organized and directed a multitude of spiritual and social activities for church members.

Of the 25 ministers and pastors who oversaw the church's congregational events during the research period, 5 were women and 20 were men, all of whom were white except one Chinese-American male. Carlisle Baptist's size, wealth, and membership made it one of the largest churches in the entire metro area.

At the time of this research, Carlisle Baptist's religious messages and values were shaped by its association with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), a large umbrella organization that defines the denominational beliefs of this particular sect of Baptists. The hallmark principles of the SBC are beliefs in the literal translation of the Bible, the Bible's authority over all aspects of life, and eternal salvation by faith alone in Jesus Christ through a profession of faith and Believer's Baptism[6] (SBC 2012). As a part of the larger convention, Carlisle Baptist Church supported the same doctrinal edicts as the SBC and provided financial assistance to the national convention's state chapter.

The belief in the authority of Jesus Christ as the only means through with to achieve eternal salvation contributed to the SBC's and the church's evangelical focus. For example, the SBC's overall mission is to "present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world" and convert "all the nations" to Christianity (SBC 2010). Similarly, Carlisle Baptist's mission, at the time of this research, was to "transform lives into passionate followers of Jesus Christ" (church promotional materials). These mission statements shaped the outreach efforts of both institutions toward missionary work, both domestic and international, that aimed to religiously convert service recipients. Conversely, this focus required believers to carry out this endeavor and to do "God's work" (Scott, Home Mission Executive Director, interviewed 5/21/2010). Therefore, the mission statements of the SBC and Carlisle Baptist shaped the way service encounters were interpreted as moments for conversion (recipients) and as opportunities for believers

to prove one's faith (providers). These institutional foci influenced the particular service trajectory developed in Home Mission, specifically its focus on "saving" children, and affected the relationships between staff and program participants, as discussed in the following chapters.

As prominent, primarily white institutions, the SBC and Carlisle Baptist have been shaped by the racial dynamics of the US South. Specifically, the history of the Southern Baptist Convention was deeply entwined with the promotion of slavery and segregation. In 1845, the SBC was formed when congregants broke away from anti-slavery Baptists to form the Southern Baptist Convention, which used Biblical justifications to promote human bondage (Economist 2012, SBC Resolution 1995). During the Civil Rights era, many SBC clergy and congregants were staunch supporters of segregation and white supremacy (Economist 2012). Yet, in recent years, the Convention has tried to shift its association with its racist roots by publicly apologizing for its earlier endorsement of white supremacy (SBC 1995). In June 2012, the SBC also elected an African American preacher as its president to show its acceptance of African Americans and to help change its racist image.

As the SBC attempted to resolve its racist past on the national level, such issues were less explicit at the local level. Despite its association with a historically racist institution and the publicity of recent SBC apologies, Carlisle Baptist had not publically addressed any church-related racial issues at the time of this research. In fact, any mention of the Civil Rights Era or 1960s activism was surprisingly absent in the church's public historical documents (church promotional materials). Yet, it was precisely the area's racial dynamics and the evangelical fervor of Southern Baptist adherents that helped contribute to the founding of Home Mission.

Two miles from Carlisle Baptist Church was Home Mission, the urban non-profit created by Carlisle Baptist in 1999. During the short drive from Carlisle Baptist to Home Mission, the large office buildings that surrounded the church shifted to smaller businesses and residential homes, which existed in a range of repair and disrepair. The city's railway lines traversed the drive to Home Mission and signaled the literal and proverbial "tracks" whereby downtown establishments transitioned to low-income, urban communities. The Heights neighborhood was located on the other side of the railroad tracks just outside the downtown area. It was in the middle of the Heights that Carlisle Baptist Church chose to establish Home Mission.

The Heights was a predominately residential area dotted with several small corner stores and discount shops where neighbors stopped to pick up necessities because there wasn't a grocery store close by. There were two elementary schools located in the community and during the school year; the streets were bustling with children and caregivers walking to and from school. Families and neighbors also regularly sat on their porches as children played and rode bikes in the street.

Many non-profits, churches, and personal care homes also resided in the area. There were approximately 7 nonprofit agencies that provided a range of social services, over 16 personal care homes that offered assistance to mentally disabled persons, and six churches in and immediately surrounding the Heights (County Resource Guide 2010). There were often clients of these numerous social service organizations and personal care homes walking through the community. The neighborhood thus was a mixture of residential homes, apartments, and social service organizations, which created a diverse community and caused periodic conflicts between social services, clients, and local residents.

Home Mission was located at the heart of the Heights neighborhood and its facilities took up approximately 75% of a city block. The Home Mission campus was made up of three buildings, a pavilion, and parking lot. One building held the medical, dental, and legal clinics with an upstairs dormitory available to out-of-town volunteer groups who wished to stay on campus during "inner-city mission trips" to the Heights. The gymnasium, storage rooms, and administrative offices were housed in the largest building while the third structure contained the after-school classrooms, more administrative offices, computer lab, and indoor playroom. All the buildings faced inward and opened onto an internal courtyard.

The children's program, housed in the third building, included four classrooms, a computer lab, and indoor play area. The classrooms were plain with tables and chairs for the children, a bookshelf or two filled with workbooks, puzzles, and games, and sometimes a small cabinet for school supplies. There were not many pictures on the walls, but every room had bright windows that helped light the space. The computer lab had approximately 10 computers that children shared when it was their turn to go to the computer room. Finally, the indoor playroom was painted brightly with Bible verses, butterflies, and flowers, and housed a large jungle gym similar to indoor play areas found in fast food restaurants.

While the Home Mission children's program started out with small, once a week Bible studies, it expanded in subsequent years to include an afterschool program and summer camp for approximately 36 children ages 5 to 12. The afterschool program was open Monday through Thursday from 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm and occasionally on

weeknights and weekends for special events. It was closed for extended periods during holidays, and before and after summer camp. Families joined the program on a first come/first serve basis when spots became available. Program enrollment dates were not advertised, but rather disseminated through word-of-mouth as participating families told other family members, neighbors, and friends about windows for enrollment, a process that confined program participation to existing family social networks. If all the spots were not filled by children already attending the afterschool program, new families could enroll either in the fall for the afterschool program or in the spring for summer camp.

The children's program followed a general template for daily activities. On an average day, children energetically arrived, ate a snack, had Bible study, worked on their homework, and participated in 1 to 2 activities that rotated between the computer lab, indoor playroom, and gym. Children also occasionally engaged in seasonal activities with visiting volunteer groups that included such things as art classes, volleyball, holiday crafts, Black History Month lectures, and safety classes. Excluding some seasonal events, children did not participate in activities together, but were divided into four classrooms according to age and gender. These rooms were separated into a Kindergarten room (girls and boys), 1st and 2nd grade classroom (girls and boys), 3rd through 6th grade girls' classroom, and 3rd through 6th grade boys' classroom.

The afterschool program was led by a small staff, which included Home Mission's Executive Director, the Program Director, a Preschool Coordinator, and several college interns. All employees except the Executive Director worked with children on a daily basis. Of the 6 staff members that routinely worked in the program, only two college interns were in education or child development fields. The other staff members had or were working toward degrees in fields unrelated to education or

childcare. However, the Preschool Coordinator had numerous years of experience

working with children prior to her employment at Home Mission. Despite the staff's lack

of education in childcare fields, Home Mission did provide several short, seasonal

training sessions that introduced new staff members to the purpose and activities of the

afterschool program. To understand staff dynamics and to contextualize their comments

presented later in this chapter, I briefly provide background information for each staff

member below (staff members are listed in Appendix I).

Scott, a white man in his forties, was the Executive Director of Home Mission.

Scott did not work directly with the children and families involved in the afterschool

program, but was known by participating families through his occasional attendance at

special events and organizational authority. Scott left his job in the late 1990s because he

felt "called to inner-city missions" and to help Carlisle Baptist church establish Home

Mission. He had been the Executive Director since the agency's inception. However, he

was paid by Carlisle Baptist Church, was on their ministerial staff, and had an office at

the downtown church, not at Home Mission. He was thus absent from many of the day-

to-day activities of the organization and was distanced from the everyday lives of

program participants.

Katelyn, a 24-year-old white woman, was the full-time director of the Children's

Program who oversaw program operations and managed the staff. Katelyn graduated

from Braeburn Baptist College, a local religious institution, with a double major in

science and Christian studies. She grew-up in an affluent suburb north of Carlisle and

volunteered in Home Mission as a teen. She was hired as the part-time director while

still in college and had been the program director for two years. Katelyn continued to

live in the same suburban community where she grew up and described herself as upper-middle class

Camille, a 50 -year-old African American woman, was the Preschool Coordinator. Camille had some college training in math, but had worked in childcare establishments throughout her life. Camille worked in the afterschool program for 5 years and before taking her current position, was a part-time intern and assistant director. Camille was the assistant director at the time of Katelyn's hire and was moved to the coordinator position at Katelyn's arrival. Camille lived in a downtown neighborhood located a few miles from Home Mission and described herself as working class.

The four part-time interns described below were college students who lived in the surrounding Carlisle suburbs. First, Courtney, an African American woman who was 24 years old, attended a local community college and was working toward an associate's degree in child development. Courtney had worked in the program for 3 years and became employed at Home Mission after talking with Camille, a family friend. She lived in an eastern Carlisle suburb and described herself as middle class. Second, Sara, a 22-year-old white woman, was studying to be an elementary school teacher at Braeburn Baptist and began working in the Home Mission afterschool program after volunteering with her church. She described herself as middle class and had been an intern for less than a year. Third, Lauren, a 21-year-old white woman, was studying at Braeburn Baptist. Lauren also started volunteering in the program before being employed and had worked in the after school program for two years. She was originally from an affluent northern Carlisle suburb and described herself as upper to middle class. Finally, Brian, a white man who was 21 years old, attended Braeburn Baptist and had worked in the program for approximately a year after talking with a church friend involved in other

Home Mission programs. He also grew up in a Carlisle suburb and described himself as upper-middle class.

Three out of the four college interns described above attended Braeburn Baptist College, the same college from which the Program Director graduated. Braeburn Baptist College was associated with the Southern Baptist Convention and promoted itself as a Christian university that emphasized evangelism in addition to academic scholarship. As part of the SBC, Braeburn Baptist College required all professors to agree with and sign the "Baptist Faith and Message," a document that required teachers to live by and teach the religious tenets set forth by the SBC (SBC 2012). Thus, the students who attended Braeburn Baptist were familiar with each other and the denominational edicts of both the Southern Baptist Convention and Carlisle Baptist, even if they did not attend Carlisle Baptist themselves.

Moreover, all the white employees shared international mission trip experiences that were encouraged and organized by Braeburn Baptist and other local SBC churches. Specifically, three of these employees sought long-term careers in international missions and two viewed Home Mission as the means through which they realized their call to the mission field (Lauren, interviewed 4/5/2010; Brian, interviewed 2/12/2010). For these three employees, Home Mission was not a place for long-term employment, but rather a stepping-stone that helped them achieve their future goals of international mission work. Overall, educational, religious, and experiential connections helped to shape the racial dynamics of the staff, whereby the majority of the small staff were young and white, and shared college and church commonalities.

These college and denominational linkages further isolated the two African American women who worked in the afterschool program. Courtney and Camille both

attended the same African American nondenominational, Christian church and often talked and shared experiences about church events or activities with each other. While Camille and Courtney shared some religious beliefs and values with other staff members, namely the belief in Jesus Christ as the only eternal savior, there were other denominational differences that set them apart. Specifically, the SBC and its entities did not believe in the ordination of women, while a woman was the head pastor at Camille and Courtney's church. These denominational differences were drawn according to race in this context, helping to reveal the racial dynamics at work in the program.

Racial divisions between staff members were also evident in daily program activities. While the staff worked together easily, they were physically and programmatically divided by race and gender in daily operations. The two African American women worked together in the K-2nd grade, downstairs classrooms; the two white, female college interns worked in the upstairs 3rd through 6th grade girls' classroom; and the one white male intern worked in the upstairs, boys' classroom. Each staff member worked with the same group of children throughout the year. The Program Director moved from room-to-room during the afterschool program, ran errands to other buildings, or worked in her office. Pick-up time at the end of the day was the only time that children and staff associated freely with one another. Yet, staff members were also visibly segregated during this time as the two African American women normally stood by the parking lot to greet parents and family members while the remaining white staff sat with the children or milled about. While there was staff camaraderie, the make-up and placement of the staff was shaped by race and religion, processes that structured divisions seen throughout the program (discussed further in Chapter 5 and 6).

Before establishing Home Mission, Carlisle Baptist Church was involved in an internal evaluative process influenced by the approaching millennium. Around this time, the Heights neighborhood was surrounded by media attention due to two murders that took place in adjacent, dilapidated apartment complexes. Several members involved in the Carlisle Baptist millennial evaluation took note of the murders and began to consider church involvement in the Heights (agency archival materials; Scott, interviewed 5/21/2010). The area was already popularly associated with urban blight and the homicides functioned to pinpoint the apartment complexes as the center of criminal activity in the neighborhood. Although murder rates in the Heights had been consistently high for several years (FBI 2010, Carlisle Police Department), the news media's sensational treatment of the deaths spotlighted the area as rife with gang violence, derelict housing, and crime. Since the perpetrators and victims in these shootings were all African American young men, such accounts conflated being urban, Black, and male with criminal activity (e.g. Guinier and Torres 2002, Wacquant 2005) and perpetuated racist representations of poor, center city residents.

Such representations of the Heights reinforced what Bourgois (1998:32) calls "a racist 'common sense'" that characterizes center city communities and residents as broken and dangerous, and the homicides functioned to pinpoint the Heights as an area that was morally and socially destructive. In fact, it was these murders that church officials continually sited as the impetus of Carlisle Baptist's involvement in the community (local newspapers 1999 – 2002).

In light of these events, Scott, the future Executive Director of Home Mission, directed "prayer walks" through the Heights and "pray rides" when church members felt unsafe walking through neighborhood streets. These walks and rides were designed to bring healing to the neighborhood and discernment about Carlisle Baptist's level of involvement in the area. As a consequence of these walks and rides, Scott and other church members proposed that Carlisle Baptist, as part of its millennial vision process, acquire and demolish one of the stigmatized apartment complexes and build a community center (Scott, interviewed 5/21/2010). Here, staff and volunteers could evangelize to urban residents while providing social and medical assistance. Scott argued that the area's economic and religious resources were lacking and Carlisle Baptist would infuse the area with networks, assets, and spiritual salvation. Church leadership approved Scott's plan and allocated $1 million to create Home Mission out of an overall $22 million raised to fund its millennial strategic plan (local newspaper 1999).

While Carlisle Baptist was heavily involved in starting Home Mission through funding and volunteers, its support has lessened over the years. Intentionally, Carlisle Baptist slowly decreased its financial support for Home Mission and was no longer its largest financial contributor at the time of this research. Scott, the Executive Director of Home Mission, stated that the church structured their involvement in such a way as to allow other churches and institutions to help contribute to and volunteer in the agency. While the church continued to give to the organization, it broadened its attention to other domestic and international outreach and included Home Mission as one entity among many that it supported. Thus, over time, the church seemed to be distancing itself from the organization and agency participants through its decreasing support.

Community Reaction: Economic and Racial Tension Resulting from Home Mission's Placement in the Heights

According to interviews with several neighbors, some local residents had mixed feelings about the agency's presence once Carlisle Baptist Church announced its plans to tear down the apartments and establish Home Mission[7]. There were some that supported the agency from the beginning, but others worried that another social service organization in the neighborhood would further affect property values. To express their apprehension, several local pastors and community members chose not to talk with Carlisle Baptist church members as they conducted "pray walks" and "prayer rides" through the area (Scott; Donnell, interviewed 2/11/2010). There were several residents and community groups already working toward the rehabilitation of dilapidated properties in the Heights before Carlisle Baptist church got involved (local newspaper 1999--2003), but the media and agency materials depicted Carlisle Baptist and Home Mission as the main impetus for community change (local newspapers 2000-2002, Home Mission promotional materials 2002).

Underlying these tensions were racial and economic differences between those creating Home Mission and the recipient community. While the agency was hailed as a positive addition to the Heights in local papers (local newspaper 1999—2003), several neighborhood residents worried that the church's wealth, racial privilege, and influence would give the agency authority in a community that was already racially, politically, and economically marginalized. As one neighbor confided,

> The community is African American, and a lot of people; they look at Home Mission and Carlisle Baptist as Caucasian or white. And here is this white church coming into an African American or black community and setting up an

organization as big as Home Mission. They're trying to come in and take over, or they are trying to tell us we don't know how to do things (Cassandra, interview 3/22/10).

This neighbor's comment spotlights the racial dynamics that surrounded Carlisle Baptist's decision to create Home Mission in a predominately African American neighborhood. Scott, the Executive Director, recognized the role race relations played in the tense welcome Home Mission received in the Heights. He posited that many in the community did not want a "large church, suburban type, mostly white congregation doing work somewhere that's mostly African American."

Given these dynamics, the building of Home Mission's current parking lot and fence proved to be particular points of contention. A longtime homeowner who lives down the street from Home Mission and who supports Home Mission's services and purpose remembered, "the whole thing with the parking lot really divided the community on Home Mission" (Michelle, interview 5/13/10). The agency demolished two dilapidated homes to build the parking lot, one of which was an inhabited duplex. Michelle remembered several of her neighbors picketing as the parking lot was constructed. Another longtime resident remembered that she and several neighbors pushed for Home Mission to use its resources to rehabilitate the properties and create better housing opportunities for community members, rather than creating a parking lot that would further decrease their housing values (Marie, interviewed 4/12/2010). Several neighbors who initially supported Home Mission were frustrated with the growth pattern that the parking lot suggested whereby Home Mission continued to take over housing stock without replacing similar structures.

Home Mission then surrounded the parking lot and campus with a 6-foot high iron fence. In addition to the fence, the organization employed a security guard and

installed a high-tech camera system that provided internet video feed of Home Mission's buildings and the surrounding houses. As Low (2003) argues, visible barriers such as fences, walls, and gates not only create physical separation, but also reinforce social divisions based on race and class interest. For Home Mission, the large, iron fence not only created a physical barrier, but also socially separated the predominately white volunteers and staff from the primarily African American residents. Staff members justified the fence by suggesting that it was necessary to keep their properties from being burglarized[8]. But some neighbors perceived the social exclusion that the fence implied. A neighbor living a few blocks from Home Mission put it this way: "I know what they're doing is good and all, but the fence kinda sends a bad message. Like they're trying to keep us out or something" (Stephanie, interview 2/15/10). The agency's security measures showed that despite the agency's attempts to serve those in need, stereotypes characterizing poor, urban African Americans as threatening continued to permeate institutional attitudes toward community residents.

However, staff bypassed issues of race and class exclusion by interpreting resistance to the agency's development as only a small group of obstinate, race-conscious neighbors. Agency personnel instead focused on the deficits of the area, not on the underlying racial tensions that emerged from the agency's creation. For example, Camille, a Home Mission employee and long time resident of Carlisle, was frustrated by Home Mission's lack of community acceptance. She asserted,

> It's almost like I was a traitor to come here. [imitating neighbors] And don't you see what they're doing to our neighborhood, trying to take it --- [Camille talking as herself] No, they're not. They're taking your neighborhood that has gone down to the dogs and building it back up. [speaking as neighbors] Why don't you see it? They just trying to take --- [speaking as herself] I don't care. But they're trying. But it's what matters is they're helping you. So if you want control back in your neighborhood, then do something about it (interview 2/22/2010)

Camille, who is African American, typifies staff reactions to racial tensions as she shifts focus toward the deterioration of the neighborhood and blames residents for not improving the community. Other staff members individualized neighborhood resistance by pinpointing "uncooperative" neighbors who "just wouldn't like anything you put here" (Katelyn, interview 3/26/2010). Negative perceptions of Home Mission and issues of race are interpreted as problems with individual neighbors, not related to systems of racial and economic inequality historically upheld in the Deep South and beyond. In so doing, staff members diffused community contestation by individualizing oppositional arguments rather than addressing the underlying racial and economic disparities between the developers of Home Mission and residents in the Heights.

Staff members' neglect of race and power must be understood within broader discursive practices that silence the poor. Scholars note that processes that individualize the poor work to depolitize and demobilize resistance strategies available to the economically and socially marginalized (Clarke 2004, Goode and Maskovsky 2001, Kingfisher 2007). In so doing, avenues for collective resistance and social mobilization that highlight social inequalities are disregarded or "erased" (Goode and Maskovsky 2001:14). Thus, as Clarke (2004) argues, individualization combines with other neoliberal imperatives such as privatization and market ideologies to move inequalities from the social realm to personal and psychological domains. Understood in these terms, agency staff dismissed residents who highlighted or attempted to resist the racial and economic disparities evident in Home Mission's placement in the Heights by contributing community disapproval to personal attitudes and obstinate neighbors, thus "erasing" critiques.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have briefly described some of the local and regional factors affecting the creation and implementation of Home Mission. Here, the racial, religious, and economic characteristics of the South combine with broader national debates about the poor (as discussed in Chapter 3) to form the social and racial landscape in which Home Mission developed. Carlisle Baptist's religious values and mission as shaped by the SBC have also contributed to the particular trajectories along which Home Mission developed services, hired staff, and dealt with neighbors. These histories help locate Home Mission within the larger discourses regarding domestic poverty relief, evangelical religion, and race, helping to elucidate the complicated location of increasing numbers of faith-based organizations within the fabric of American social welfare. Thus, in this work, Home Mission can be conceptualized as a prism through which these historical factors converge and from which they are refracted and changed. With these national, regional, and local histories in mind, I examine the daily service encounter as practiced in the Home Mission afterschool program and the realities of children's lives in the following chapters.

Chapter Five

The Development and Practice of a Faith-based Service Response for Low-Income Children in a Southern U.S. City

One fall afternoon, I walked into the program director's office, which was small, but fashionable like the director herself. Today, Katelyn, the 24-year-old afterschool program director, wore skinny jeans tucked into tall leather boots with an untucked shirt and wide leather belt. Her office was neat and was decorated with pictures, plaques, a small rug, and colorful pillows on two guest chairs. Several of the pictures were close-ups taken of the children involved in the afterschool program which I had seen used in Home Mission promotional materials. These prints were larger, however, and the children's smiles beamed from behind the glass.

I had come early to Home Mission to help the staff prepare an art project for the children and soon Lauren, 21, and Sara, 22, joined us, both of whom were college interns. There was not enough room in the office for all of us, so we moved into a foyer space outside Katelyn's office. This space housed the security officer's desk, which held a large computer screen showing live video feed from cameras set about the Home Mission campus. We pulled up chairs and began cutting strips of construction paper for the art project. As we worked, Katelyn, Sara, and Lauren began chatting about the day's schedule and about issues they were having with certain children. They talked about Lauren and Sara's plans for the weekly Bible studies they led with the 3rd through 6th grade girls. The three staff members began to envision the possibility of having a baptism for children who wished to make a "profession of faith" or convert to the evangelical Baptist faith, which Katelyn, Sara, and Lauren espoused. Katelyn excitedly

dreamed about holding the baptism on a Saturday morning at a local YMCA that had a pool. She encouraged Sara and Lauren to utilize Discipleship groups that were held on Fridays when the afterschool program was not open to prepare children for this important religious commitment. She commented offhand that they could tell parents about the baptism if they wanted, but that parents more than likely would not come to the baptism or be interested in it.

While the baptism never came to fruition, Katelyn, Lauren, and Sara's conversation highlights how staff members in the Home Mission afterschool program conceptualized their work with children and families. In the conversation about baptism, staff imagined transforming children through a powerful religious ritual promoted by their SBC churches and creating children "new in faith" (Lauren, fieldnotes 10/6/2009). Yet, staff members envisioned this significant spiritual milestone devoid of parental input or involvement. In so doing, staff sought to programmatically isolate children from their families and target young, racial minority children for moral reformation.

As seen in earlier historical periods, child-related poverty relief often focuses on individual children and not the hardships faced by families (Halpern 1999b, Mintz 2004). This process is part of larger historical movements to individual the poor (Clarke 2004, Goode 2002), but here affects the service options and resources for children and their families living in Carlisle. The separation between children and families implied by staff in the above example can be viewed in context of these individualizing practices as staff insinuated that parents did not provide spiritual direction for their children.

I show in this chapter that staff conflated guardians' supposed amorality with social failings, again echoing similar past assumptions about the poor (Bartkowski and Regis 2003). Consequently, staff spoke of being children's sole social and religious

guides who sought to instill "appropriate" social and religious values in participating children. Here, moral reformation combined with political transformation as staff members sought to "save" children's moral souls while "saving" them from their parents or becoming like their parents.

In this work, I conceptualize the processes of morally and politically "saving" children as the "transformation" of young participants away from their African American families and communities toward white, middle class conceptions of personhood and productivity as taught by staff members and as promoted in neoliberal rationales. In Home Mission, neoliberal ideologies about responsibility, productivity, and choice (Harvey 2007, Kingfisher 2002) influence the service encounter to mark African American caretakers as unwilling or unable to provide material and moral resources for their children. Furthermore, these ideologies combine with western, idealized constructions of childhood (Aries 1965, James and Prout 1990, Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998, Stephens 1995) to frame participating children as embodying the "potential" to live up to the promises of neoliberalism. In Home Mission, staff asserted that children could become productive, moral citizens by following the social and religious examples of staff members, not guardians. Therefore, staff conceptualized their work with children as transforming them away from sin *and* their families.

Yet, transformative processes, specifically moral reformation, were not practiced equally among all young participants. I found a clear gender division based on age that targeted preteen girls for more intense moral and social reformation than boys of the same age or younger children. The gender and age differences in religious education must be understood within broader cultural narratives about African American teenage mothers who are assumed responsible for such things as familial poverty, child abuse and

93

neglect, and welfare dependency (Davis 2004, Hendrixson 2002, Rodriguez 2008). In the afterschool program, such representations of Black young women functioned to target pre-teen girls for more abstract and lengthy religious training. Simultaneously, images of boys as energetic and rowdy (Kane 2006, Martin 1998, McGuffy and Rich 1999, Messner 2010) coupled with representations of African American boys as athletes (Harrison et al. 2011, James 2012, Messner 1989) worked to justify boys' sporadic and brief Bible studies. Overall, race, class, gender, and age intersected in the Home Mission afterschool program to target 3rd through 6th grade girls for more strenuous religious programming which shaped and limited their experiences of the program.

To examine the above issues, I first analyze the agency's philosophy of service to demonstrate the foundational perspectives from which staff created and implemented services. Next, I argue that staff members viewed themselves as positive role models in children's lives against parents who they perceived to be inconsistent and negative caregivers. I then discuss how age, gender, and race combined to shape staff views of and resulting services for children and teens. Finally, I conclude by focusing on "transformation" as the way staff members understood and practiced their work with urban children.

Understanding the Mission *of Home Mission*

During one of our interviews, Camille, the Preschool Coordinator, described Carlisle Baptist's decision to establish Home Mission in the Heights. She stated,

> They came in and saw a need… So they saw a need, and say, "Well, let's see what we can do." And then it just went from there and they – over the course of

the years, kind of – able to transform this place into what it is. What is basically seeing a need on an area that needed help.

So then when you have a church that comes in and concerned. Not trying to take over, but see a need, want to do something about that and then you have people that's says they don't need to be here. But you weren't doing anything (interviewed 3/26/2010).

Camille's statement is emblematic of how staff characterized the Heights and its residents to explain Home Mission's presence in the community. Her comment highlights a ubiquitous belief among the staff that the residents of the Heights were mired in "desperate need" (Lauren, interviewed 3/24/2010). Such sentiments echoed Wilson's (1987) and others' (e.g. Garbarino et al. 1991, Kotlowitz 1991) portrayals of urban communities as deficient, isolated, and dysfunctional. Such representations have been widely critiqued in academic scholarship (di Leonardo 1998, Goode 2002, Gregory 1998, Katz 1989, 1993, Newman 1992, Williams 1992), but have proliferated in popular opinion nonetheless (Fraser 1993).

Yet, while staff characterized the Heights and its residents as "in need," they had trouble articulating exactly what those "needs" were. For example, Sara, a college intern in the older girls' classroom, specifically targeted participating children as having vague "needs" when she said: "So we're working with kids that need something – and it's great to have children's ministries at churches and things like that, but as far as what fits [here] is working with kids that need something" (interview 4/1/2010). Yet, Sara could not outline exactly what children needed as I prodded her for clarification. Finally, she elusively mentioned the popular edict that participating children needed role models, but did not elaborate further. Moreover, Scott, the Executive Director, sited the area as "one of the greatest places of need" and that "resources were needed back in the community." I asked him to explain to which he responded: "that's financial, and that's people, and

that's *everything*." As evident in staff comments, they described the area and people as in need, but were vague about what these needs were and how Home Mission was to address them.

Fraser's (1989) examination on discourses about the needs of the poor is particularly insightful given the staff comments above. Fraser (1989:146) argues that popular and political "needs talk" form "the politics of needs interpretation." Here, interpretations of needs by those in power are privileged and uncritically accepted by policy makers and service professionals. Yet, these accounts are only *interpretations* of needs and not necessarily descriptions of real life circumstances for the economically disadvantaged. In fact, the "highly political" nature of these statements are not viewed as political at all, but rather viewed as common-sensical accounts regarding the poor (Fraser 1989:154). In Home Mission, the fact that the Heights was "in need" had become "common-sensical" to staff members in that they could not clearly describe the area's or its residents' needs, but could figure the community as "needy." Here, "politics of needs interpretation" functioned to obfuscate the positive events happening in the neighborhood that were unaffiliated with Home Mission, such as the recent 5-star rating of a neighborhood school and an active neighborhood association. Furthermore, staff members' "needs talk" functioned to legitimize the agency's presence and work in the community, and lent an "aura of facticity that discourages contestation" to silenced challenges and critiques (Fraser 1989:146).

Moreover, "needs talk" as practiced by the staff at Home Mission functioned to homogenize the area's residents by assuming that all those who sought care or lived in the surrounding area were in need. The simple, but sensational needs statements made by program staff missed the complexities of program participants' lives (Smith 1990,

Williams 1992) and helped to shape services according to staff perceptions, not participant's actual needs. As I examine in the following chapters, children and their families were, in fact, not in "desperate need" as staff members perceived and many children had extensive resource networks and nurturing homes. Yet, staff routinely imagined children and families as a large, homogenous group of needy individuals who Home Mission sought to serve.

Physical Needs as the Conduit to Spiritual Salvation

While staff members characterized the Heights and local people as in need of economic and social resources, the main focus of the agency was not on practical, everyday necessities for survival, but on spiritual needs. In its promotional materials and throughout staff interviews, the goal of Home Mission's programs were described as meeting physical needs through sharing Christian Biblical teaching and doctrine. Here, the evangelical focus of the SBC and Carlisle Baptist most explicitly shaped the service trajectories of Home Mission. As a result, staff members emphasized the spiritual component of the service encounter as more important than addressing physical needs. In fact, clients' physical needs were continually portrayed as the means through which evangelism occurred. For example, in its promotional materials, the organization's purpose is explained as "meeting the tangible needs of individuals as an *avenue* to meet the *paramount* spiritual needs" (emphasis added). Moreover, Scott claimed "our primary purpose is the spiritual aspect of what we do, but we do that through meeting needs." Scott specifically linked the meeting of spiritual needs by addressing physical concerns to the ministry of Jesus Christ. Scott stated,

He [Jesus] would provide food and then talk about the bread of life, or water [and talk about] that which you can never thirst. So in the same way, we're meeting needs, developing relationships, and then when that door opens… when allowed the opportunity, then we're gonna take it.

Moreover, Sara understood Home Mission's community involvement not as an end in itself, but rather as a tool through which religious messages were promulgated. She stated, "So, I think in a nutshell, the community development and instilling pride in this area and what you have, and then you use that as an opportunity to share Christ with these people." Staff and volunteers "shared Christ with these people" by asking service recipients to pray with them before and after medical procedures, meetings, and other program functions. In the afterschool program, children were required to engage in regular Bible studies and prayed before and/or after sports activities and special events. Staff members and other agency personnel did not view meeting medical and material needs as an end in itself. Thus, physical needs were the conduit through which those seeking care could be religiously converted or "saved."

As a result, people with medical and economic needs were automatically assumed to have spiritual needs as well. This assumption equates poverty with an individual's spiritual or moral deficiencies, not with structural inequalities that shape access and opportunities in capitalist markets. As noted in Chapter 3, the individualistic association between poverty and immorality has been similarly expressed by service professionals and popular media throughout much of American history (Patterson 2000, Trattner 1999). Moreover, this assumption follows the legacy of Calvinism whereby believers saw in their own economically productive lives the evidence of their piety thus proving their "election" or predestined salvation by God (Bartkowski and Regis 2003). The Calvinist theological equation that links economic wealth and success with religious devotion and

sanctity is practiced daily in Home Mission as the poor are imagined by staff to be morally lacking simply because they seek free or low-cost social and medical services.

The conflation of material and spiritual needs evident at Home Mission must be understood within the particular context of Carlisle, a city located in the Deep South with a violent racist past. Across Carlisle and the state, African Americans are more likely to be poor than their white counterparts (US Census Bureau 2010) and to seek assistance (Statistical Abstracts 2012). At Home Mission, African Americans make up the majority of service recipients and in fact, all the children participating in the afterschool program were Black. Of course, one of the reasons for the seeming overrepresentation of African Americans at Home Mission is that the agency is located in a predominantly African American neighborhood. But data suggests that African Americans across the state utilize social service assistance at higher percentages as a result of high poverty rates (US Census Bureau 2010, Statistical Abstracts 2012). Therefore, Home Mission's focus on addressing spiritual problems through physical needs functions to equate African Americans who disproportionately seek services in this area with moral lassitude and denies a rich history of activism and spiritual dedication in Black Southern churches (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, Morris 1984, Noll 2008). In fact, Black churches since before the Civil War have opened a space for African American social organization and intellectual pursuits (Noll 2008) in addition to providing informal networks for economic assistance amidst a racially oppressive social system (Harris 2001). Moreover, the South in general and Carlisle particularly boast high percentages of Christian church affiliation and religiosity (Bartkowski and Regis 2003, Newport 2009, 2012). The area's religiosity reveals a contradiction in the actions of Home Mission whereby they hope to convert and

"save" clients who already live in a highly religious area and who are often connected to churches with rich spiritual and activist histories.

Service Trajectories and Limitations

As originally shaped by Carlisle Baptist, Home Mission's explicit focus on an individual's moral and social behaviors formed the agency's path along which services were developed and directed. As a result, there were community and familial concerns that staff members could not or chose not to address due to Home Mission's focus on the social and moral lives of individuals.

I became explicitly aware of these limitations as I observed the ways staff dealt with the fears and anxieties children expressed during daily Bible studies. During one devotional, Sara tried to describe God and human beings as infinite and finite space, an abstract concept that caused Sara to go on at length. Seeing that the girls were confused and restless, Sara shifted her discussion to heaven and attempted to relate God's infinite presence to "paradise" which she hoped the girls would better understand. Madison, a talkative 4th grader, interrupted to ask, "Is there a jail in heaven?" Both Sara and Lauren laughed and Sara said that people in Heaven were totally consumed with praising God, so there wouldn't be any jail. But Madison was serious and amidst the commotion that the question caused with the other girls, she said that there were some boys on her street that were "getting into trouble" and she worried that they had been on her lawn and might come back. Sara stated, "It sounds like they need God's love. We'll pray for them."

Here, Lauren and Sara dismiss Madison's real life concerns to rather focus on prayer. I witnessed similar episodes throughout the year as children brought up their

concerns and fears to staff members who vacillated between either ignoring children's admissions, telling children to pray for the person in question, or inviting children to pray with a staff member about the situation at a later time.   In none of these instances did I observe staff members asking children to further articulate their concerns beyond prayer or propose practical actions to address children's worries.

In another example, Katelyn, the Program Director, was troubled by the bureaucratic and geographical exclusion created by a state-funded children's insurance plan. She stated that the office for the children's insurance program was located approximately 30 miles outside of Carlisle in a northern suburb and parents were required to renew their plans every year in person. Economically disadvantaged guardians and those without transportation struggled to access a vital service necessary for the health of their children. She excitedly argued,

Katelyn: You have to go in person! Other places you can get online or place phone calls to renew it. Well, they don't remind you to renew it here and it's 30 to 40 minutes away, so if you don't have a car you can't get there.

There's no public transportation to get there and it's only during regular office hours, so it sets you up to not be able to get it and that makes me sick. Doesn't that make you sick? Because that's children! They're punishing the children!

Caroline: How does Home Mission address that issue?

Katelyn: Those are broader and I've brought some of these issues to light, especially with the insurance program. Catholic Charities has volunteer lawyers that are writing up things and protesting and they are very into that social aspect of making those changes and that's great. Somebody needs to be fighting for that. The board and executive director of Home Mission have decided that's not the route for Home Mission.

Caroline: So what's the route that they chose?

Katelyn: Well, the route that they've chosen is to just be a loving place to reach out as Jesus Christ did and help as many people as we can with the physical needs that we can meet and be the hands and feet of Christ. We can

partner with [other groups] that's doing some other things and working with some other issues on our own [time], but that to not be our main focus. And so --- which is good too, because somebody needs to fight that fight, but they've chosen for that to not be our fight (interviewed 3/3/2010).

While Katelyn was emotionally upset about the inaccessibility of the state sponsored children's insurance program, she was unable to use her influence and resources available through Home Mission and Carlisle Baptist to actively challenge the structural inequalities she saw in the community. Lauren, a college intern in the older girls' classroom, alluded to this tension when she stated, "We can't eliminate poverty because I don't think that's really possible because the poor will always be with us. But [we can] reach out to people who face poverty and show them Christ's love" (interviewed 2/24/2010). As seen in Katelyn's and Lauren's comments, the staff and agency thus chose to focus on the moral conversion of individuals and not on structural inequalities, which were assumed to "always be with us."

The comments above attest to the fact that staff members recognized social and economic fears and barriers with which children and the local poor contended, but Home Mission's specific focus on religious salvation limited organizational and staff responses to children's concerns and efforts to mobilize its vast resources and allies toward structural change. Rather the emphasis for change was on the moral and spiritual character of program participants. Here, the focus of change was on individuals.

Situating Children in Home Mission Services

Staff members in the afterschool program avoided confronting questions about structural inequalities by focusing on children who were believed to be the blameless

102

victims of parental actions. In her work on similar constructions in international humanitarian work, Malkki (2010) argues that philanthropic groups use idealized conceptions of western (and Christian) childhood to play upon "structures of feeling and ritual practices" in an effort to invoke universal feelings of humanism and community. In so doing, children serve as depoliticizing agents who are framed according to their future possibilities, innocence, and insightfulness (Bornstein 2005, Freidus 2010, Malkki 2010). As Freidus (2010:55) explains,

> History and politics fade away when the face of a child is used to rally donor sentiments of compassion, morality, Christian responsibility, and humanity. The complexity of global inequalities, systematic poverty, and social injustice is simplified or ignored via the trope of a defenseless child.

Similarly, in Home Mission, children's youth and vulnerability shifted focus away from the social, political, and economic processes that produced and maintained inequality.

Freidus's quote also highlights how images of "defenseless" children function to rally support because they are deemed "blameless" for their social and economic hardship (Malkki 2010:82, Wark 1995). Adults, on the other hand, are not perceived as blameless within neoliberal imperatives of personal responsibility and choice, but are rather "blamed for their own poverty" (Kingfisher 2001:283). Marginalized parents are doubly blamed not only for their own, but also their children's hardships because of their presumed personal failings and flaws. Wark (1995) posits that the "blameless" child and "blamed" adult dichotomy works to funnel donations and support toward children's programs at the expense of adult assistance. As I argue below, this dichotomy also ideologically functioned to programmatically isolate children from their families and communities as staff pinpointed parents as problems.

Throughout my research, staff members routinely judged parents as children's biggest obstacle in life; an obstacle staff believed it was their responsibility to help children overcome. In so doing, staff invoked "the political imaginary of social welfare" (Fraser 1993:9) or racialized and feminized representations of the urban poor to frame parents as negative influences on their children. Against the backdrop of negative guardians, staff described themselves as positive moral and social role models from which children learned about God and appropriate behavior.

I asked each afterschool employee to describe the hurdles that they believed children faced in life in an effort to elucidate employees' conceptualizations of children's needs. In every response, staff spotlighted the family as the site of children's greatest problems whether by specifically targeting parental behavior or family relationships. Despite the fact that all staff members pinpointed parents as children's greatest obstacle, their responses differed by race in that white employees highlighted nontraditional family forms as the problem while African American staff members pinpointed parents' lack of emotional support.

While both types of responses focus on natal families as the center of children's hardships, they differ in noteworthy ways. On the one hand, white staff members tended to blame promiscuous, unmotivated mothers and uninvolved fathers for children's hardships. In so doing, staff employed "underclass" stereotypes (Wilson 1997) to vilify guardians and focused on assumed innate, individual faults. On the other hand, African American staff highlighted guardians' lack of emotional support, which suggests

caretakers lacked parenting and communication skills. In so doing, Black staff members focused on skills that could be learned, not on supposed character deficiencies.

In the following exchange, Katelyn exemplified the belief by white staff members that parents posed as problems for children because of dysfunctional and nontraditional home lives:

Caroline: How would you describe some of the issues children face in their lives?

Katelyn: Well, some of them, their biggest issue, I hate to say it, but their biggest issue is the parents.

If you don't have a devoted parent, you are limited as a child. As far as what you can be introduced to and the school and extra-curricular activities. As far as what they're willing to take you to, to drive you to. But another thing is, and this is a huge push that we have, but a lot of my kids just think that they can't be what they want to be."

Caroline: Where do you think that comes from?

Katelyn: I noticed that a lot of the ones that say 'I can't,' or 'I won't,' it's not their parents that have given up, but they're usually the ones that don't have any stability at home. And they're bouncing from one house to another. And the mom or dad, whoever, doesn't have a stable job. She [mothers] jumps around. So, the lack of stability causes lots of, you just lose some self-esteem with that. So, it really is a direct connection with the life of the parent and the life of the child (interviewed 1/5/2010).

Here, Katelyn located children's problems as emanating from parents', specifically mothers', lack of stability and ambition. Similarly, Sara believed that children's greatest impediment in life was their sense of failure and low "standards" which resulted from "family situations, either an absent mother or father, or older brothers and sisters that are influencing them in negative ways or something like that." Lauren, too, perceived families to be a hindrance for children and focused on family structure as the source of children's problems. When I asked Lauren to describe what issues children faced on a daily basis, she responded in the following way:

I think the families that they're in, their home situations… I guess just like lack of good family structure. A lot of them don't have a dad at home and if they do, there's a lot of like marital problems. But for the most part, a lot of them don't have a father figure at home so I think that's a huge problem. Um, because not only do they not have the right kind of affection from a male 'cause that causes problems later on down the road. And even now if… they're not seeing their mom in a good relationship with a male and so it's like I don't know… They don't know what that's suppose to look like when they get to that point when they need to be someone's wife. They don't know what that's suppose to look like. So it's both sides I guess. They need a father figure and they need to see their mom be like… what that needs to look like (interviewed 3/23/2010).

Like other white staff members, Lauren pinpointed parents and guardians as "problems" in children's lives and focused specifically on their supposed lack of traditional gender relations as the locus of the problem. Later in our interview, Lauren asserted that children in the afterschool program learned about traditional gender norms from program staff, not from their parents.

Unlike the above comments, Camille and Courtney, the two African American employees in the afterschool program, did not perceive family structure to be sources of children's problems, but spotlighted parents' exhaustion or lack of emotional support as the cause of children's hardships. For Camille, children did not feel loved by their parents as she explained:

The biggest problem most children, I think is some of them don't feel love and you know mom, dad stressed out because they can't--- they have to work and they have to come home and do so and so, they get stressed out and then that stresses out the children. So, then also it sets the tone for an attitude for the day as far as the child is concerned because if you get up in the morning, your mom is hollering at you, tell you this, this, this and this and you get fussed at all the way to school, that affects you in school and then when you come here, it affects you. So, I don't want to say [they] don't feel love, but maybe the attention they desire… if I tell, grab them and say, 'You know I love you!' and it's – you know they need that and need to hear that and some of them, I don't know if they get it enough at the house (interviewed 2/22/2010).

Here, Camille recognized the financial and professional stresses many parents and guardians endured and did not locate parents' difficulties in personal characteristics like her fellow white staff members. Rather, she pinpointed parenting hardships in external forces affecting well-meaning parents. However, she did not connect these external stressors with such things as unstable labor markets or low-wage work. While Camille did not vilify parents for their supposed instability as seen in white staff comments, she still located the obstacles children faced as emanating from parents and the home.

Courtney, an African American college intern working with the younger children, also highlighted children's emotional health in relationship to their parents as the area of greatest need. Specifically, she believed that children desired for, but did not receive, attention from their parents. Similar to Camille, Courtney highlighted parents as the cause of this emotional deficit and believed that parents did not have "patience" with their children and "need to learn to listen." But like Camille, Courtney shifted focus away from racialized and feminized discourses about urban families to focus on the difficulties of parenting. Consequently, both women pointed to areas that parents could improve upon, not areas that were assumed to be innate, character flaws.

Yet, while these comments did not reproduce white staff representations of poor Black mothers and fathers as unstable, Camille and Courtney's comments still pinpointed guardians and families as the genitors of children's problems. Kingfisher (1996, 2001:276) finds that service workers who share similar racial, social, and/or economic positions as their clients are often "blinded" to such similarities due their precarious occupational positions. For service workers positioned at the "bottom of an internal hierarchy" at work, they are still socially located above their clients (Kingfisher 2001:280). In other words, service workers have little power within their places of

employment, but do have some power over their clients' lives (Kingfisher 1996, 2001, Morgen, Acker, and Weight 2010). Following this work, Camille and Courtney's continued focus on problematic parents and families can be contributed to similar situations of powerlessness. As a college intern, Courtney had very little organizational authority. However, Camille was the Preschool Coordinator with many years of experience in afterschool care. She, thus, had some decision-making power and authority in the agency. But Camille had been overlooked twice for the position of program director and both times the directorship went to a young, middle-class, white woman. In fact, all three directors employed since the start of the Home Mission afterschool program were young, middle-class white women. As a result, both African American employees were afforded little to marginal authority in the agency. Kingfisher's (1996, 2001) and Morgen, Acker, and Weight's (2010) works shed light on the ways Camille's and Courtney's tenuous positions in the organization work to thwart possibilities for alliances and solidarity with participating families and rather continues assumptions that families are responsible for social ills.

In context of the racial differences in staff comments above, every staff member pointed to guardians and families as obstacles in children's daily lives. However, these comments were not the only staff responses to highlight parents as problems. In fact, staff members continually blamed parents and guardians for a range of negative issues such as being poor disciplinarians, bad role models in life and religion, inconsistent and uninvolved caregivers, providing dysfunctional homes, and not conforming to traditional gender norms. By portraying parents as the cause of children's problems in multiple facets of life, staff positioned themselves, not guardians or other family members, as the redeemers of children who staff assumed would become wayward if allowed to follow

parental examples. For example, Brian, the college intern in the older boys' classroom,

imagines the Home Mission staff as consistent and positive role models juxtaposed

against unreliable guardians.

> I think the two most things they [children] need to hear the most is respecting
> others and being leaders… I think they hear that at Home Mission, they hear that
> a lot. Which is great, but their lifestyle outside of Home Mission is just so
> inconsistent that whenever they do leave our campus they either, you know, go
> back to a normal lifestyle at their house that might not necessarily be the same
> views that we have there at Home Mission and through that inconsistency they
> could either be confused or can just be apathetic and I mean, at their age it would
> be difficult to live a lifestyle like that and to hear maybe truth about what we're
> telling them and just be confused (interviewed 2/12/2010).

But beyond being positive role models, staff perceived their roles as guiding

children to spiritual salvation, which they assumed parents were incapable or unwilling to

do. For example, Katelyn conceived staff as the sole moral guides for children despite

the fact that she knew children and their families were involved in religious institutions.

During one of our conversations, she stated:

> Parents aren't taking them [children] to church. They may go to church with their
> grandmother from time to time, or an aunt or something. They've been around
> church.… Some of them will go sometimes if there's a big event, like if its an
> anniversary or celebration they'll go, but not a lot. So we thought 'Well, if
> they're not getting it on Sunday morning… We're gonna get this to them at least
> one time a week (2/10/2010)

Katelyn understood parents as failing to provide the "right" kind of religious education

since children were not attending church with their biological mothers and fathers. Since

children were not "getting it on Sunday morning," she perceived it to be her duty to

morally reform the children through the Bible Studies she organized. Camille also saw

herself as supplanting parents in multiple areas of children's lives such as educational

advocacy, emotional attention, religious education, and discipline. In one instance, she

described herself as "tak[ing] up the slack as far as a parent is concerned" and described

parents as having "a lack of concern" for their children (interviewed 3/26/2010).

Therefore, Camille saw herself and the other afterschool staff as replacing parents.

Not only did staff members see their roles in children's lives as moral guides, but they also perceived themselves as more open and loving to children than inconsistent guardians. Staff members argued that they were always available and open to communicate with children unlike parents. For example, Katelyn asserted, "If something's going on in their family, like if they're not living with mom and dad or living with a grandparent, but they always know that we're gonna be here. That we're here and will always love them." Likewise, Sara completely distances children from their parents by suggesting, "It doesn't really matter about their background, where they go to school, their parents. None of that matters. It just matters to me what is best for them and that they can always come to me with anything." In these and other comments, staff described themselves as loving and consistent presences in children's lives. These statements usually referenced family dynamics, mostly non-traditional family structures, as the backdrop against which staff proved their affection and dependability.

Overall, the negative comments and images that staff made about parents created a veil through which staff members judged guardians. The array of pejorative statements about guardians formed an overarching conceptualization of families as detrimental to children. Staff comments echoed popular American narratives about the poor that blame social, economic, and political inequalities and hardships on poor individuals, not larger social structures (Cruikshank 1997, Goode 2002, Goode and Maskovsky 2001, Morgen and Maskovsky 2003). Moreover, it was these stereotypes that were practiced on a daily basis as staff sought to programmatically separate children from families. However, as I will show in subsequent chapters, staff assumptions about guardians and families were

surprisingly wrong given household incomes, family structures, social networks, and religious affiliations.

Staff Perceptions of Race and Age

Staff continued to negatively portray parents by suggesting that African American caretakers taught their children to "see" race in a program where staff acted nonracially as "God's hands and feet" (Katelyn, interviewed 4/22/2010) to all people regardless of color. In so doing, staff avoided talking directly about race and racism. Rather, they covertly discussed racial issues and differences as "walls" and "attitudes," which they characterized as being taught by parents and worsening as participants got older. When I tried to engage staff in discussions about race, they instead shifted our conversations to "walls" and "attitudes," which functioned as a type of code that allowed staff members to discuss race and age without having to directly talk about program race relations or their own racial statuses.

Both white and black staff members talked about "walls" and "attitudes" in discussions about participating children and families. However, white and African American staff members differed in how they perceived themselves in relation to the racial barriers that children and guardians presumably erected. On the one hand, white employees imagined themselves to be non-racial or color-blind and only children and parents recognized or "made-up when it's not really there" (Lauren, interviewed 4/5/2010) racial dynamics in the program. Scholars investigating whiteness suggest that in the post-Civil-Rights era, whites do not openly acknowledge their racial status or discuss racial matters for fear of being called racists (Bonilla-Silva 2003, Dyer 1997,

111

Feagin and Vera 1995, Hill 1997). Instead, many whites believe race is a problem only for people of color who announce racial injustice for gain (Bonilla-Silva 2003, Roediger 2002). White staff members typified this assertion by avoiding any discussion of their own white privilege or the racial discrepancies evident in the program. They rather blamed parents for creating racial "walls" and "attitudes" that thwarted their Christ-like work.

On the other hand, African American staff were fully aware of their minority status in the predominately white organization and had to navigate between white employees, volunteers, and benefactors and the predominately African American clientele. Courtney and Camille often felt that guardians perceived them as "traitors" (Camille) and "the enemy" (Courtney) for their association with a large, white, suburban church, but they also recognized that guardians felt more comfortable with them due to racial solidarity. Despite Camille and Courtney's tenuous position, they too commented that guardians' racial comments created a barrier to their work at Home Mission and chided parents for bringing up issues of race in the first place. As Camille stated one day,

> If they [guardians] forget race and just look at being Christ-like and what Christ did and the things that he went through. If they can just see that and forget all the rest of this junk and look at that, then they'd be better people (interviewed 2/22/2010).

Camille's comment typifies the two African American women's responses to parent's racial comments by shifting focus away from a discussion about race toward the benevolent work of Home Mission, a movement that suggests guardians are the only program participants who perceived race and who "play the race card" (Camille, interviewed 2/22/2010).

112

Sara most succinctly characterized patterns in both white and black staff responses to my inquiries about racial issues. She remarked, "I don't have a specific example. It's kind of like an attitude thing, because you can choose not to let that be something that affects the way you think" (interviewed 4/1/2010). Sara's comment highlighted two common themes in staff discussions about race. First, she equates "attitudes" (other staff members talk about "walls" in a similar way) with racial issues or problems and does not talk about race specifically. Second, she suggests that race is an issue you "choose" or just a "bad attitude" that could be avoided by individual choice. As a result, staff located the origin of racial barriers as emanating from families who taught their African American children to negatively perceive whites and who created "walls" or impediments blocking the work and religious witness of staff members. In other words, children had "walls" as a result of parental racism.

However, staff believed they could break children's barriers with their kindness and consistency. For example, when I asked Katelyn, the white program director, if there were any racial issues that emerged in her work with the African American children and families, she stated

> A lot of them have really bad homes… well, I guess a few have good homes... But they come here it's just like attitudes. These walls are just up. It takes the whole 2 ½ hours. I only have them 2 ½ hours. It takes almost that whole time to chip away at that. And you notice at dismissal, we're outside, goofing off, playing, everybody is laughing (interviewed 4/22/2010).

Katelyn attributes children's bad attitudes to difficult families, but after only a short time at Home Mission, children are happy and playful. Here, children are transformed away from familial negativity into idealized conceptions of childhood innocence, one without walls or attitudes. Children are literally transformed into happier children because of Home Mission.

Even when children do make overt comments about race, staff did not perceive children as developing such ideas on their own, but rather blamed "racist" parents who were assumed to foster such sentiments in their children. A particular story about Dennis, a 10-year-old boy, was told over and over again by staff members to explain the transformative power of Home Mission. Dennis's story exemplifies how staff located racial observations and prejudice in parents, not children. Dennis was a tall, bold 4th grader who was an exceptional artist and football player. One afternoon, I was outside with the boys' classroom watching and occasionally participating in a pick-up football game in the open area between Home Mission buildings. Katelyn came out to observe and after a particularly rough tackle between several boys, called out, "Be more careful, guys!" Dennis picked up the football and said, "Ok, Mrs. Katelyn" as he flashed an assured grin. Katelyn turned to me and told me the following story about Dennis (she also told me this story in slightly altered versions during interviews and other informal conversations):

> You know, when I first got here he (pointing to Dennis) wouldn't speak to me because he said he hated white people – he just had this huge wall! And I said, "why [do you hate white people]?" And he said because his mom hates white people. I thought, goodness, that's going to be an obstacle course and even still his mother doesn't speak to me very much. The issues there as far as the everyday ins and outs of my afternoon, it really doesn't play a role. But when it comes to those times when we do have those parent meetings or those one on ones, you can tell some parents never let go of that guard, that wall that's up. So, I hope that they will in time, but to me its encouraging to see that little boy when he comes in, he'll give me a hug and he'll say "Hey Ms. Katelyn."

Dennis's story is emblematic of the way staff members conceptualized and discussed programmatic race relations. Specifically, Dennis's story allowed staff members to (1) locate parents and guardians as genitors of racial barriers, (2) portray

children as "unknowing" subjects in terms of racial inequalities, and (3) spotlight

children's racial "walls" as easily breached by staff through their love and perseverance.

Here, age functioned to mark children as innocent and ignorant of racial dynamics

and who could only learn such things from parents. Malkki (2010:79) notes that this is a

common conception in humanitarian efforts where there is "little space for children who

know 'too much' or for children who hate particular presidents, political regimes or,

indeed, anyone. Children are not supposed to hate." Ideologically, children are not

supposed to participate (at least not willingly) in attitudinal or physical violence of any

kind (Malkki 2010). Yet, there is a growing body of scholarship that describes children's

involuntary and voluntary involvement in violent conflicts (Kohrt and Koenig 2009,

Rosen 2007, Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998, Stephens 1995). This literature

problematizes western constructions of childhood and the dichotomous representations of

"adults as violent" and "children as innocent."

Yet, this is precisely the dichotomy invoked by Home Mission staff who viewed

children as having "walls" only because their parents taught them to. This dualism

allowed staff to avoid addressing organizational and programmatic race relations and the

affects race had on their interactions with children. It also represented parents as strictly

accountable for their and their children's racial assumptions, which staff did not attempt

to address or challenge. Therefore, guardians became the scapegoat for children's racial

awareness and statements.

In discussions about "walls" and "attitudes," as in most aspects of the program,

teens inhabited a tenuous space between children and parents. Only six 6th graders were

enrolled in the program. Even though they were allowed to attend the afterschool

program, these middle schoolers were not viewed in a similar light as children. Due to

their older age and ascendance into middle school, staff perceived teens as rife with "attitudes" and "walls" which were used to negatively portray their racial awareness. While children's racial comments were blamed on parents, teens were identified as responsible for their statements and perceived to be "bad influence[s]" on younger children (Brian, interviewed 2/12/2010). Yet, staff believed they could break the walls and barriers that teens erected through their loving kindness. Therefore, teens were viewed with suspicion by staff because they "just stink of a bad attitude" (Katelyn, interviewed 3/5/2010) unlike younger children, but were not viewed as entrenched in racial assumptions as parents.

Service Provision and Evangelism in an Uneven Context: Intersections of Gender and Age

Despite the fact that staff perceived evangelism as the ultimate purpose for their work at Home Mission, their religious efforts were not pursued equally among participants. Here, race and age intersected with gender to shape an overall programmatic gender divide that ran throughout the program. Children were divided into separate classrooms according to gender and age, which affected the activities they participated in and the amount of time they spent in religious training. As discussed below, staff allowed boys more opportunities for outside play and subjected older girls to longer periods of religious education. Thus, children experienced unequal evangelical efforts and program activities based on gender and age.

The afterschool program was structured along this gender and age divide in multiple ways. Before Katelyn became the program director, the classrooms were

divided according to grade level not gender. However, shortly after becoming the fulltime director, Katelyn separated 3rd through 6th grade boys and girls into different classrooms. As a result, boys' and girls' activity times were separate and different. For example, boys most often played in the gym and were allowed to play outside more frequently than girls. Even when girls were scheduled to exercise in the gym, Katelyn routinely modified the schedule so girls would stay in their classroom; go to the computer lab, or play inside. Rarely did girls get to play outside in the open lot between Home Mission buildings. On the few occasions when both boys and girls were in the gym together, they mostly competed against one another in "girls versus boys" games. Pick-up time at the end of the day was the only time 3rd through 6th grade girls and boys freely associated with each other.

As scholars in anthropology and other disciplines have long noted, schools often reflect, reproduce, and naturalize traditional gender hierarchies in curriculums and teachers' interactions with students (Best 1983, Deem 1978, Ferguson 2000, Goetz 1981, Kelly and Nihlen 1982, Lopez 2003, Martin 1998, Nihlen 1975, Sherman 1978, Wiener 1985). For example, Martin (1998) shows that teachers control girls' movements and promote indoor play for girls while allowing boys freer range of movement and access to more outdoor activities. Moreover, Martin (1998) finds that teachers have more tolerance for boys' interruptions and attention-seeking behavior but limit girls' voices and the spaces their bodies occupy. The afterschool program is similar to these school environments given that staff members controlled and limited girls' activities and actions while allowing boys' more opportunities for physical movement and play.

Staff members rhetorically supported the programmatic gender divide by again making negative comments about parents in non-traditional family forms. In so doing,

staff posited that children learned proper gender relations while attending Home Mission and not at home. For example, during a discussion about participating families, Lauren mentioned, "You know, some of them just have a single mom, the mom having different people in and out of the house, just not a lot of structure… but I hope they learn a little bit about it [traditional gender norms] here." Courtney most adamantly critiqued guardians' familial and marital relations and routinely chastised fathers for not being in children's lives. On one particular occasion, she remarked,

> They don't have they dad and they're not disciplined… The girls, we need our fathers. It is like we need our fathers to help us and they don't have no discipline. None whatsoever… So I think they need a male figure in their life to deal with, to let them know and teach them how. My mom taught me to be a lady. But your dad know what is out there more and he know. He's a male himself, so he can teach you when you get older… But you know they [children] don't have a dad in their life. Well, they have a dad, but he don't stay with them. I mean that's weird. It's different to me. I think it's different cause there's happiness between you and your siblings with a dad around. And it's just like everything's separated. It's like they not loved like they're suppose to be. But they know they loved here and we teach 'em how to be (interviewed 4/21/2010).

Courtney went on to argue that female staff members taught girl participants to be ladies, while male staff helped the boys learn to be "a man." She supported the programmatic gender divide because it provided same-sex spaces for boys and girls to learn proper gender roles, lessons she believed guardians did not teach.

Not only did staff justify the programmatic gender division due to parents' supposed lack of traditional gender relations, but also because of fears regarding preteen sexuality. Katelyn rationalized the restructuring of the program according to age and gender because "those 4th and 5th graders, just boys and girls, they start to notice each other." Lauren reiterated Katelyn's sentiments while talking about the program's gender divide during her interview and remarked, "I think once you get to a certain age with kids, boys and girls together is kind of a distraction cause you know, they're trying to

impress one another or they're picking on one another. It's just crazy." Likewise, Brian suggested that the gender separation was beneficial because it would "provide less distractions just because of, you know, curious thoughts."

Throughout these and other staff comments, the fear of teenage flirtation and budding sexuality were used to justify separating girls from boys despite the difficulties of handling multiple grade levels in a single classroom. As a result, 3rd grade (about 8 to 9 years of age) became the threshold over which sexuality became a programming issue. Younger boys and girls were allowed to play together throughout the day and were not imagined as being concerned with the opposite sex. The above comments echo a long American history of white fears of African American sexuality (Jones 1985, Morton 1991). Since slavery, Black sexuality has been feared and demonized by whites, creating representations of Black women and men as sexually promiscuous (Harris 2003, Litwack 1999, Mullings 2001). Currently, such representations are revived in "welfare queen" rhetoric, which luridly portrays poor women of color as licentious and sexually irresponsible (Davis 2004, Lubiano 1992). In the afterschool program, age intersected with anxieties about Black sexuality to divide preteen girls and boys because staff were afraid they would "flirt" and "look at each other."

For female participants, the historical representations of Black women and vitriolic "welfare queen" debates coincide to make 3rd through 6th grade girls subject to increased evangelization efforts than younger children or boys in similar grades. While all children participated to some degree in religious education classes, only girls in 3rd through 6th grades were targeted for lengthy and abstract Bible Studies on a daily basis. Here, the intersections between gender, race, and age shaped girls' experiences of the

program in different ways than younger children and boys as they were subject to more

religious training and restrained activities.

In the following excerpt from my field notes, I caught a glimpse of how divisions

based on race, gender, and age, as imposed in the program, affected children's

experiences of religious instruction and thus their time for homework and other activities.

> I decided to walk around today and moved between the classrooms. I stopped first in the little kids' room. Camille was doing a short devotion with the kids, talking about forgiveness. Malcolm, a 2nd grader, interjected with some examples from the Bible and reiterated that if you want forgiveness, you have to forgive others. He clearly articulated the Bible verses and it was apparent that he had memorized them. Camille mentioned that his dad is a preacher. Tony asked if God would forgive you for taking a toy from your sister. Camille laughed and said he needed to ask first, then he'd have nothing to be forgiven for. She wrapped up the quick devotion with a prayer and told the kids to get out their homework.
>
> Next I went to the boys' classroom. Dennis and Gregory were doing their homework and Brian [the college intern] sat close by. Malik and Jon were at another table making little triangle footballs out of paper and flicking them at each other. Komari kept trying to catch their "footballs" in midair and mess up their game. I asked Brian if they had done devotion and he said "Not today." He explained that the boys were "hyper" and they would probably do it tomorrow with Katelyn.
>
> Finally, I slipped into the girls' classroom. They were still doing devotion. Lauren was telling the girls that sometimes God doesn't answer our prayers because He wants us to do something and we haven't done it yet (i.e. we have to be obedient to God for Him to answer our prayers). Some of the girls were restless, others paying attention. Tiana was half asleep with her head on her arms. Kysha was nodding her head in agreement to what Lauren was saying. Jada was rolling her eyes at her cousin. Lauren talked for another 15 minutes about needing to be obedient to God. Finally, she told the girls to get out their homework after Madison prayed (fieldnotes 11/9/2010).

Everyday that the program was open (Monday through Thursday), most of the

children participated in some type of devotion. However, as seen in the above excerpt,

there were stark differences between the amounts of time that the older girls' classroom

spent in religious education versus the younger children's classroom and the older boys' classroom.

The younger children spent an average of 10 minutes participating in devotion sessions with Camille or Courtney as they ate their snack and prepared for homework time. These sessions were informal, quick, and focused on God's love, sharing, and being nice to others. These sessions often ended with a few moments when children could ask questions and then the children usually recited the Bible versus John 3:16 or a classroom leader would say a prayer.

In the 3rd to 6th grade boys' classroom, boys usually arrived sporadically, got their snack, and started on their homework or played. On most days, boys did not do devotion with Brian, their classroom leader. If Brian decided to do devotion at all, he interrupted homework time to have a 5 to 10 minute discussion about a Bible verse he usually pulled up on his mobile phone. The boys' Bible sessions were infrequent, quick, and often focused on Biblical action stories. Brian justified the infrequent nature of boys' devotion due to the boys' short attention spans and immaturity. According to Brian, Bible studies were "difficult" with the boys because they were "off the wall" and "just boys being boys."

Ferguson's (2000) work with urban, African American boys helps to reveal how such gender-based assumptions combine with processes of race to mark African American young men as existing outside of educational projects. In Ferguson's study, educators labeled Black boys early on as troublemakers and excluded them from learning opportunities through a host of disciplinary mechanisms. While boys at Home Mission were not disciplined disproportionately to girls, staff did make predictive decisions about them based on race and gender that functioned to exclude boys from the agency's

primary focus on salvation. Here, staff comments about boys' high energy levels coincided with allusions to boys' affinity for sports (Katelyn, interviewed 3/5/2010; Brian, interviewed 2/12/2010) to echo popular representation of African American boys and men as athletes (James 2012, Harrison et al. 2011). As a result, boys were portrayed as unable to sit through and/or uninterested in spiritual tasks and predispose toward sports and athletics. Consequently, staff did not pay as much attention to boys' spiritual direction as compared to girls of similar ages. Staff's inattention suggests that they did not see boys' behaviors or futures as something they could change or mold, unlike girls. Therefore, like the teachers and professionals in Ferguson's work, afterschool staff made programming decisions based on race and gender that marked boys as outside spiritual and educational projects, which perpetuated gender and racist representations of African American boys.

In this context, boys' actions that did not fit staff assumptions of "boys just being a boys" (Brian) were viewed as exceptional. For instance, Lauren was surprised that the boys were better behaved than the girls during a boys' devotion that she attended. She noted,

> The boys were almost like better behaved than the girls, which is crazy to me, but they were really responsive to a lot of the questions…. Sometimes we'll [the girls classroom] do devotion and we'll [Lauren or Sara] ask questions and stuff and they [the girls] won't respond to anything at all. The boys came in there and they were all interested in what we were talking about and I don't know, maybe it was just a good day (interview 3/24/2010).

Thus, Lauren's comment helps to show that gender and race-based assumptions portraying boys as energetic and unable to focus on Bible stories functioned to normalize their disruptive behavior (Boocock and Scott 2005, Messner 2010).

Bible study in the 3rd through 6th grade girls' classroom was markedly different

from the other classrooms as noted in the following except from my fieldnotes.

> On my way to the girls' classroom, I peeked in the boys' room and they were starting homework. Brian was yelling at someone to get a pencil. When I got to the girls' room, Lauren was beginning devotion. She and Sara started talking about our stumbling blocks to God, the things in our lives that stand in our way of acting like God wants us to. Lauren read a passage from Paul's letters and then told a story. She recounted listening to a rap song that she found herself singing and thinking about later, but she noticed that it was negatively affecting her. She had to stop listening to it. She mentioned that things like music can be a stumbling block between us and God, but she only talked about rap music. She said that rap songs could make the girls think poorly about themselves or influence them to do things that God didn't want. She mentioned that we must "be examples for others who are weaker, because if you know Christ, people watch you." She continued: "This is what I really want you to get from this. If you accept Jesus, it will change your life. It will change who you are and how you live."

> Bible study went on for 35 minutes and the girls were restless. Throughout devotion, several girls put their heads down, closed their eyes, talked, etc. The group was about equally split---half paying attention (some only barely) and the other half closing their eyes, fidgeting, etc. (fieldnotes 10/15/2010)

As seen in the above example, older girls were required to sit through long and

abstract Bible studies that focused on their moral and social transformation. Like the

other children, girls arrived at the program intermittently but were not allowed to start

their homework as they waited for the other girls. Rather they were asked to sit and wait,

sometimes eating their snack and sometimes having to wait until Bible study to eat their

snack. The girls' religious training on average lasted 30 minutes, sometimes going even

longer. During these sessions, Lauren and Sara lead the daily Bible lesson and common

themes were salvation, sin, and obedience. They also discussed abstract theological

doctrine about incarnation, God's omnipresence, and the Trinity. Like the boys'

classroom, girls were restless during these long religious sessions and were disruptive. I

observed girls doing such things as making silly faces, secretly making fun of Sara and

Lauren, sleeping, drawing, talking, and purposefully rustling snack bags. Once devotion was finished, girls often had to rush through their homework if they wanted to go to other activities or were required to stay behind to finish their work as other girls left to play in the playroom or computer lab.

In addition to daily Bible studies, the 3rd through 6th grade girls were allowed to attend Home Mission on some Fridays for "Discipleship group." The regular afterschool program was not open on Fridays, so these sessions did not follow the normal template for operations, but included only a short playtime and in-depth Bible Study. Both girls in the older and younger classrooms were allowed to participate in these sessions and each one received a prayer journal and small Bible, which they were expected to bring with them to these Friday sessions. At the start of the year, these sessions were only open to girls. However, many "Discipleship group" participants had brothers who attended the program and the logistics of family scheduling meant that a few boys were dropped off and made to wait on their sisters. In addition, several other boys vocalized a desire to attend "Discipleship group" because they also wanted to come on Fridays. So, by mid-year, approximately five boys were allowed to attend these sessions. However, boys were not included in the Bible Study similarly. Girls and boys were again divided into two distinct groups despite the small group of boys that attended. The girls spent approximately an hour in Bible Study as Sara and Lauren discussed a religious topic, often lecturing for long stretches of time. Boys, on the other hand, participated in a 15 to 20 minute Bible Study with Katelyn and were then allowed to play in the playroom and gym.

The division of preteen boys and girls in the program generally and in Bible studies specifically highlights how girls were morally disciplined in ways that were

different from boys and younger children. Not only did girls have less time to do their homework than other children, but they were also subject to longer and more abstract religious training. Like the boys' classroom, girls were consistently distracted and disruptive during Bible study (I discuss these tactics as resistance in the next chapter). However, unlike the boys who were considered energetic and thus not required to participate in daily Bible studies, the girls' distractions were interpreted as stumbling blocks to be overcome with more stringent religious teaching. Sara clearly recognized the difficulty girls had concentrating in Bible Study after coming directly from school. She stated,

> I think that coming straight from school and then they come in here and we're like. 'Okay, let's do devotion and you've got to concentrate.' I just hate that for them because I couldn't do it. I mean, I have a hard time doing it, much less when I was ten. But we try to make it fun too, because we don't want them to have the idea that God is boring (interviewed 4/1/2010)

While Sara understood the difficulty concentrating after a long day at school, she does not attempt to change the length or frequency of devotion. Rather, it was girls who were expected to change by overcoming their fatigue and distraction. In fact, their disruptive behavior was viewed as a spiritual obstacle, which they needed to overcome to prove their faithfulness and obedience. For example, on a particularly unruly day, Lauren chided the girls by saying "Satan doesn't want you to hear this!" and criticized further their disruptive behavior, relating it to sin. Here, disruptive behavior was interpreted as the work of the devil who was distracting girls from hearing God's word. Unlike boys, girls were expected to control themselves physically and morally. However, as discussed in the next chapter, I found that the older girls' used disruptive behavior to resist these staff expectations and control.

It becomes evident from the above examples that despite the evangelical focus of the agency, participants were not equally involved in religious exercises. Rather, gender, race, class, and age coalesced to target 3rd through 6th grade girls for more intense social and moral reformation than boys of the same age or younger children. As a result, the confluence of these factors caused children to differentially experience the program and thus be subject to different processes of transformation.

Furthermore, the staff's focused attention on structuring girls' activities and devotionals and their relative inattention for boys' actions and moral training follow similar patterns found in poverty debates. In such debates, women in general and poor minority women in particular have been at the center of policy and popular debates about poverty and social reforms (Cruikshanks 1999, Fraser 1989, 1994, Goode 2002, Kingfisher 2002, Mullings 2001). African American men, on the other hand, have been represented as living on the periphery of family life (Hyatt 1995, Goode and Maskovsky 2001). Similarly, the afterschool program targeted older girls for staff's most concentrated efforts at reform while making predictive decisions about boys that isolated them from the agency's primary focus.

Transforming Children, Not Families

> Rundown, crime, hopeless, violence and hurt. All of these would be words used to describe not only the apartment complex, but also the surrounding neighborhood. In fact, a grandmother's prayer to God was simple and direct. "Lord, please send someone, anyone to take the trash away," she prayed.
>
> His answer was found in the planting of a community ministry center. His plan was to not only take the trash away, but to transform the very soul of a city through the efforts of His followers.

Home Mission now stands as an oasis shining out to the entire Carlisle area to meet the tangible needs of individuals as an avenue to meet the paramount spiritual needs. Our city has soul - a transforming one.

---Home Mission pamphlet

The pamphlet above exemplifies Home Mission's aims to transform the Heights and its residents. Throughout the agency, transformation, both physical and spiritual, played a prominent role in the ways staff members articulated Home Mission's purpose and the ways they talked about participating children and families. By suggesting that Home Mission is the only oasis in this urban desert, the pamphlet represents the organization as the savior of the community. But what exactly is the "trash" from which Home Mission saves the Heights and agency clients? In the afterschool program, staff conceptualized parents as that entity from which children needed to be saved.

As argued in this chapter, staff viewed young people's transformations against the backdrop of problematic parents and sought to transform children away from families both socially and morally. Not only did staff perceive children as needing to be morally and socially changed from parental examples, but they also perceived themselves as giving children the consistent support and guidance that inconsistent parents lacked. Staff asserted that by following their examples, children would develop into productive, faithful citizens who followed normative gender roles. Yet, children and parents were not as socially and economically "needy" as staff members portrayed them to be (discussed in the next chapter). Moreover, the afterschool staff were not as consistent as they believed. In fact, the majority of the staff members who took part in my research left the program at the end of the year and thus proved inconsistent in their long-term care of participating children[9].

127

Examining programmatic divisions helps to reveal potential tensions within faith-based social service organizations as staff seek to serve the poor while simultaneously judging them as worthy or unworthy recipients. In agencies like Home Mission, evangelical benevolence coincided with broader cultural narratives about US social poverty policy and civil society to produce competing aims within agencies, specifically between judgment and compassion (Bartkowski 2001, Becker 1997, Wuthnow 1991). In other words, religious social service organizations strive to define themselves as compassionate, moral communities while also judging service recipients as spiritually and socially misguided. In the Home Mission afterschool program, this tension was placated as staff members negatively judged parents while "compassionately serving" children.

Such programmatic incongruences must be contextualized within broader movements toward faith-based social services (Walsh 2001, Wuthnow 2004). With the devolution of the welfare state, private social service provision and faith-based agencies are increasingly responsible for meeting the needs of the poor and disadvantaged (Hall 2001, Walsh 2001). Yet, as argued in this chapter, such agencies have extensive power to shape services according to their religious and social views, which can reproduce and maintain negative stereotypes about children and families.

Chapter Six

Children's Voices and Images about the Service Encounter and Their Worlds at Large

> She [the director] wants us to learn about God and respect so when we grow like her, we can do what she do
>
> ---CJ

CJ, an affable, seven year old boy in first grade, made the comment above as I interviewed him about his life and participation in the Home Mission afterschool program. CJ's short comment summarized Home Mission's aim to morally and socially transform minority children whom staff believed lacked "God and respect." He succinctly pinpointed moral and social lessons that staff hoped to teach children, lessons staff believed were not taught by guardians. As CJ's comment shows, staff and volunteers thus worked to teach urban, African American children about spiritual salvation ("God") and standards of behavior based on mainly white, middle class standards and values ("respect").

Yet, children's descriptions regarding their home and church lives were very different from staff constructions, revealing that such attempts at transformation were misguided in part because children participated in caring and religious families. Children also discussed reasons that they used the program beyond "learning about God and respect" that staff did not recognize. Children did not internalize programmatic messages about transformation holistically, but incorporated this knowledge into their daily lives in fluid and sometimes contradictory ways. As I show in this chapter, children, like CJ, could pinpoint the moral and social goals of the afterschool program while also resisting such aims.

A growing body of anthropological scholarship recognizes CJ and other children as active social actors who have valuable insights into social processes (Bluebond-Langner and Korbin 2007; Bucholtz 2002; Chin 2001; Hirschfeld 2002; Hutchby and Moran-Ellis 1998; James 1998, 2007; Lanclos 2003; Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998). This body of work argues that no longer can children's actions and ideas be examined solely from adult perspectives or left undocumented, but rather children must be asked about their physical and cultural environments. Following this work, I include children's perspectives about the service encounter and their lives beyond Home Mission to elucidate the contested relationships that converge in this faith-based afterschool program.

To explore these issues, I first discuss how children talked about and represented their worlds outside of Home Mission by focusing on their relationships to family and church. I discuss these two areas specifically because they were the areas that staff pinpointed as most lacking for children and because they were the areas that children consistently talked about in interviews and photo descriptions. Here, I examine the ways in which children talked about and pictorially represented their relationships to guardians and other family members to further deconstruct employees' negative descriptions of families. I also explore children's accounts regarding their participation in local churches to show that children were involved in religious education and guidance beyond Home Mission's evangelical efforts. By exploring children's involvement at home and in church in light of staff views about participating families outlined in Chapter 5, I continue to problematize private service programs where negative portrayals of clients can often mask the lived realities of participants. In so doing, I frame this section as a response to Home Mission attempts to socially and morally transform children by

130

showing that in these two areas, familial relationships and church, children have active and supportive relationships.

In the second section of this chapter, I examine children's relationships to Home Mission by investigating young peoples' interpretations about their participation in the program. Here, I show that children viewed Home Mission as a recreational, educational, and occupational resource used to meet familial goals. Children understood the agency as one institution among many (i.e. school and church) that they and their families accessed for the betterment of their families. Finally, I show that although children understood the agency's utility for their lives, they also engaged in processes of resistance that undermined staff attempts to morally and socially transform them (see Appendix II for a list of children's names and ages).

At Home

> *Tanisha was waiting outside for me on my first visit to her house. Tanisha lived in an older, ranch-style home with her mother, father, and brother, which was located in a southern Carlisle neighborhood. She had just finished riding her bike with a friend and was waiting on the porch. The usually quiet 4th grader jumped up as I got out of my car and ran over, "I want you to meet my dog! Come on, come on!" We had often talked about her dog Fifi, a small Chihuahua, while hanging out in the afterschool program and I could hear him barking through the door. Tanisha invited me inside where her mother, Barbara, sat on the couch playing with a neighbor's 2-year-old daughter as Fifi yipped loudly at my arrival. Tanisha's mother said, "Don't worry about that dog. She won't bite, just barks a lot. And this little one won't quit pulling on her tail." Tanisha's mother had the day off from the hospital where she worked as a nurse and was babysitting the small child to help out her next-door neighbor. Don, Tanisha's father, was working this day at the maintenance job he'd held for many years.*

> *Tanisha and I sat down on the floor of the den to play with the dog and baby. As we played, Tanisha told me about a new fish they'd gotten for the large tropical fish tank that was located only a few feet from where we sat. In addition to the fish tank, the den was decorated with framed portraits, some which showed Tanisha as a baby and small child with chubby cheeks and braids. There were family portraits of her with her parents, vacation snapshots, and framed photos of*

131

extended kin. There were also framed school certificates on the wall for both Tanisha and her parents (fieldnotes 11/12/2010).

My visit to Tanisha's house, like many of my other visits to participants' homes, showed that children's home lives did not resemble the representations presented by Home Mission staff. When talking about participating guardians, staff primarily conflated racial minority status with poverty (Goode and Maskovsky 2001, Gregory 1992, Williams 1992), Black mothers seeking assistance with unscrupulous and promiscuous behaviors (Davis 2004, Cruikshank 1999), and Black fathers with living on the periphery of family life (Collins 2000). In so doing, staff approached their work from and crafted services upon these uncritical associations that are rampant in U.S. poverty and welfare debates.

However, my visit to Tanisha's house revealed that staff conceptions about participating children and families were often incongruent with the realities of children's lives on multiple levels. First, Tanisha's parents had been married for over twenty years. In fact, during the year that this research took place, a third of guardians were currently married and had been married for many years. Another third were either separated or divorced, but the devolution of their marriage did not mean that only one guardian took care of their children. Rather, the overwhelming majority of divorced or separated families had a mother and father who were both active in their children's lives and shared parental responsibilities. In those families where the mother was the primary caregiver, fathers often provided child support and other resources. For those families without married guardians, fathers continued to play an important role in their children's lives and children rarely "[had] no dad in their life" (Courtney, 4/21/2010). In only three families were children's biological fathers not involved in their lives due to death or neglect and

children in these families had stepfathers, uncles, and grandfathers who helped care for them. Overall, guardians did not represent staff characterizations of promiscuous mothers and fathers who "jump around" (Katelyn, interviewed 4/22/2010).

Many guardians were not only married, but also had professional jobs that provided benefits, vacation time, and regular salaries. Unlike staff portrayals of economically depressed families, these guardians made working-class and middle-class incomes that allowed them to provide for their families. Both of Tanisha's parents had professional jobs, which allowed them to provide a "comfortable" home for their children (Barbara, interviewed 4/5/2010). For example, Tanisha's parents, like many others, regularly took their children on vacations to water parks or other local vacation spots so they could "spend time together" (Tanisha, interviewed 2/26/2010). At other times, especially when Barbara worked late, Don, Tanisha's father, and Tanisha would often go out to eat and sometimes see a movie or peruse the aisles at Wal-Mart (one of their favorite pastimes). Barbara and Don also encouraged and provided the means for Tanisha to be involved in multiple activities outside of school like cheerleading and basketball.

Furthermore, Tanisha and her family did not live in the Heights neighborhood, but resided in a southern Carlisle neighborhood several miles away from the agency like the majority of families who participated in this study. The neighborhood was a working to middle class community with houses separated by lawns and gardens. Tanisha and other children rode their bikes up and down the street or walked around the corner to buy icebergs (frozen cool-aid in Styrofoam cups) and other treats from a local candy lady. While there was an unoccupied house on the street that caused Tanisha's mother to worry

about the possibility of vandals, the neighborhood was "quiet and nice" (Tanisha, interviewed 2/26/2010).

As I began visiting children and guardians in their homes, I soon realized that only a few families lived in the Heights. In fact, only three families lived in the Heights neighborhood where Home Mission was located. Three other children and their families lived in adjacent neighborhoods approximately 2 to 3 miles away. The remaining fourteen families, including Tanisha, lived in western and southern Carlisle communities. Children living in these outlying neighborhoods attended schools far from Home Mission and had to have family members drive approximately 20 minutes or more to bring them from school to Home Mission. Therefore, the majority of children involved in this research did not live in the Heights, but lived and played in outlying low and middle-income neighborhoods.

Children' pictures also revealed that their families and home lives were unlike staff constructions. As part of my research study, I gave twenty-two children disposable cameras and asked them to take pictures of the people and things that were important to them. I followed the photovoice concept and method (Wang and Burris 1997, Wang, Burris, & Xiang 1996, Wang 1999), which uses photography as a tool for marginalized groups to document their everyday realities in an effort to influence policy. Scholars using photovoice have found that through pictures disenfranchised groups are able to express relevant issues that policy makers and implementers often miss (Wang and Burris 1997). This method was germane to my research because it provided a framework that allowed children, whose points of view have historically been neglected in research and policy discussions (James and Prout 1990, Wulff 1995), to describe their lives through their own images and words. In addition, photovoice methodology was particularly

accessible for the children involved in my study given their familiarity with camera-phones and digital cameras. In fact, the disposable cameras I gave children were incredibly "low-tech" for my research participants' photographic skills and caused children to complain that the cameras were "old school" (Jessica, fieldnotes 3/8/2010) and to routinely ask me if they could have a digital camera where they could "see the picture right after I take it" (Alexis, fieldnotes 3/8/2010). Despite children's disapproval of the camera type, my work follows other youth photovoice projects (May 2001, Morrel-Samuels et al 2005, Necheles et al 2007, Wilson et al 2006; see Wang 2006 for a summary of this work) in that children easily understood and carried out the task of documenting important areas of their lives through pictures.

In this exercise, children captured multiple aspects of their daily lives beyond Home Mission, but the overwhelming majority of children's photographs depict family members and homes. These pictures and children's pictorial comments help to document children's home lives and attest to the nurturing relationships they experienced with guardians and other family. Children's photographs of material objects were also used to communicate the importance they placed on familial relationships, even though this connection was not explicitly recognizable until children explained their pictures in photographic interviews. As a result, children used pictures of both people and things to pinpoint their natal and extended family networks as nurturing, enjoyable, and supportive havens[10].

First, nineteen children involved in the camera exercise included photos of their mothers and fathers and explained the importance of these pictures by telling me how their guardians took care of them. For example, Jon, an athletic 5th grader, took five pictures of his married mother and father. In one photo, Jon's mother is standing in front

of her car wearing an attractive, dark blue suit. When I asked him why he took the picture, he stated "my momma loves me and cooks for me. She takes care of me when I'm sick and gives me a blanket when I'm cold at night" (photo interview 4/5/2010). In another picture, his father sits in a comfortable white chair in their den. Jon said he took the picture because his father "loves me too. And we play a lot together, sometimes he takes me for a ride and we go somewhere." Likewise, Kysha, 11 years old, took several pictures of her mother and uncle. In one picture, her uncle is lying on the couch watching TV. Kysha explained that she took his picture because "he's my best friend. We have the most in common. We have fun, like play the Wii a lot" (photo interview 4/13/2010). In another photo of her uncle, she stated, "He helps my momma take care of me." Kysha explained when looking at the pictures she took of her mother, "My momma loves me. We do everything together." Both children's photos and descriptions depicted caregivers as involved and nurturing.

Children not only took pictures of their parents, but also other family members who were important to them. These pictures show the extensive familial networks in which children participated. For example, Madison, 11, and Shelia, 7, took pictures of their grandmother who they admired and with whom they visited often (Madison, photo interview 4/28/2010; Shelia, photo interview 5/11/2010). Marcus, who was in Kindergarten, took pictures of his stepfather who helped him with his homework, fixed his broken toys, and helped provide for his family (photo interview 5/7/2010). Felicia, 8, took pictures of several cousins who came over to her house to "practice cheerleading" and play games (photo interview 4/29/2010). Rodney, 10, took a picture of his eighty-year-old grandmother while she made macaroni and cheese because that was something special they did together when he went to her house on Friday afternoons (photo

interview 5/3/2010). These pictures and children's descriptions of them showed that they were surrounded by family members for whom they cared deeply and who attended to their material and recreational needs.

Children's experiences of extended kin networks are related to a long history of such alliances in African American communities throughout the Deep South. Since the time of slavery, African American mothers and fathers have had to forge extended care networks within a racially and socioeconomically oppressive social system. Collins (2000) asserts that these networks were primarily made up of extended and fictive female kin or "bloodmothers and othermothers." During slavery, women had to depend on other slave women to help care for their children when they or their children were brutally taken away by slave masters (Lincoln and Mamiya 1995). Later, with the abolition of slavery, segregation and discrimination forced African American women to work outside the home (Litwack 1998). Again, mothers depended on networks of women to share in mothering responsibilities during this time (Mullings 2001). These networks helped African American families cope with and negotiate the intersecting oppressions of race, class, and gender.

However, Collins (2000) argues that the centrality of women in African American families is not based on "the absence of husbands and fathers" or "male powerlessness," but rather on the "significance of women." Like Collins (2000), children captured both mothers and fathers, which showed that fathers and other male kin were not "absent" but actively involved in caring for children.

As seen in children's photographs, the centrality of extended kin networks continues to be important not only for childcare, but also for children's entertainment and emotional support. In Home Mission, individualized service strategies that sought to

ideologically and programmatically separate children from their families missed or ignored the extended care relationships in which children were a part and the participation of both mothers *and* fathers.

Finally, children described their pictures of material objects such as toys, clothes, TVs, gaming systems, and other household objects according to their social networks. Before conducting photography interviews, I assumed such pictures were taken as status symbols to "show off" children's prized possessions. Pugh (2009:55) argues that children use the power of possession as a type of "script" which allows girls and boys to participate in children's social worlds and gain social standing. There were, in fact, some children who explained their pictures in these terms. For example, Dennis, 9, took a picture of a pair of high-top basketball shoes to show he owned a pair of popular and expensive shoes (photo interview 5/12/2010). Rodrick, 10, took a picture of his Xbox 360 and numerous video games to prove to an incredulous friend that he had an Xbox (photo interview 4/30/2010; Photo 6.1 in Appendix III). Likewise, Gregory, 10, took a picture of his gaming system to boast about all the games he had (photo interview 5/3/2010). These pictures were clearly taken so Dennis, Rodrick, and Gregory could prove their possession of particular status items. Specifically in Rodrick and Gregory's cases, these pictures acted as the "script" (Pugh 2009) allowing them to participate in boys' ubiquitous conversations about video games and gaming systems.

While these boys took such pictures to prove their ownership of high-status items, the majority of children's material object pictures were important because of their association with significant family members. One of Komari's pictures was of 7 matchbox cars neatly lined up across his bed (Photo 6.2 in Appendix III). He explained that he staged this picture because his little brother was "real important" to him and these

were his little brother's cars (photo interview 4/27/2010). He further described times when he and his brother played an array of imaginary games with the cars and would share their toys. Komari, a 4th grader, also took a picture of a 58-inch television set and described its importance in this way; "My stepdad bought that for my momma on Valentine's Day. He took us to Applebee's on Saturday and we went fishin'. We do a lot [together]" (photo interview 4/30/2010; Photo 6.3 in Appendix III). In each of these pictures, neither status nor possession were reasons Komari took the pictures, but rather the items were important only because they reminded him of important members of his social network. Likewise, Malik, a 3rd grader, took a picture of his Xbox system and described that it was important because he played it with his brother (Photo 6.4 in Appendix III). Especially when he was sad, Malik and his brother would play a video game to cheer him up. Although Malik's picture resembles Gregory and Dennis's pictures, Malik explains his photo in terms of his recreational and emotional relationship with his brother, not in terms of status. Furthermore, Jon took a picture of the touch screen navigation system in his aunt's car because she frequently picked him up from school and Home Mission when his mother or father could not (Photo 6.5 in Appendix III). While looking at the picture, he explained that her house was like a second home and his auntie was "like another mom" (photo interview 5/4/2010). He described spending many afternoons sitting in his aunt's kitchen eating snacks and playing with his cousins.

In all of these examples, the importance of material objects lay in their connection to significant people in children's lives, not in a desire to express possession or consumption as researchers such as Pugh (2009) have suggested. Rather, this finding follows Chin's (2001) work on low-income children's consumptive lives whereby

children's buying patterns operate within the confines of their intimate familial relationships. Similarly, I found that the majority of children's pictures representing material objects are meaningful only as representations of their relationships with family members.

When asked to capture images of what was important to them, children overwhelmingly took pictures of their mothers, fathers, grandmothers, cousins, siblings, aunts, uncles and other family members. By far, the majority of their pictures depicted immediate and extended family members and in so doing, children expressed that their familial relationships were the most significant aspects of their lives.

My visit to Tanisha's house and children's pictures and words tell a different story about participants' home lives than those promulgated by staff members. Rather than the negative and neglectful homes imagined by staff members, children lived in a range of family forms, but all of which were practicing Christians (discussed further below and in the following chapter) and had guardians that worked and cared about their children's success. Many families had married guardians with middle-class incomes and professional jobs who owned homes in outlying neighborhoods like Tanisha's parents. There were also low-income parents and single mothers who rented homes, but not at the rates supposed by staff. Moreover, families were part of extended kin networks that supported children's development with the involvement of both female and male kin. Children involved in this study were not part of a homogeneous group of poor, vulnerable children who lacked moral and social guidance from their parents. Rather, my research sample was a socioeconomically and geographically diverse group of children who were deeply embedded and actively participated in their families.

>*Several weeks before Christmas, Shakela was absent for several consecutive days. Since I usually help her with her homework, I started to worry that she might be sick. On Thursday, Shakela showed up at the afterschool program looking healthy and happy and certainly not sick. I asked her where she'd been and if she'd gone on vacation. She said, "No, I've been at practice all week!" Shakela went on to explain that she had been at church in the afternoons practicing for an upcoming Christmas program. She was to perform a step routine and a liturgical dance with the church dance troupe and sing several songs with the children's choir. She also recited for me a Bible verse that she was preparing to say during a church services. She had spent much of the previous weekend and the beginning of the week at various practices getting ready for her performances. Shakela mentioned, "I'm only here today cause sometimes Mrs. Katelyn gets a little mad if we miss too much. But I needed a break too. My feet hurt!" (fieldnotes 12/3/2010)*

As evident in the above example, church for Shakela was a multifaceted institution in her life. Not only did it provide spiritually based activities like dance and choir, but it was also a central focal point for her family and friends. Her parents, grandparents, and other family members were all extensively involved in the church. For example, Shakela's mother and father held positions of authority and her grandparents, who had been founding members, were highly respected elders who often preached. Like many southern African American churches (Lincoln and Mamiya 1995), Shakela's church experiences were intricately connected to her familial relationships.

But the church offered Shakela more than social interaction and activities with family and friends. Shakela had an overarching religious worldview, which was encouraged and supported by her family. One afternoon, Shakela was teaching me a "hand-slap" game which I was slow to learn when her little brother ran up and tried to mess up our concentration. She pushed him aside and said, "Go on Tony!" Proud that he had successfully messed up our game, Tony trotted off laughing. "I can't stand him sometimes," Shakela said. She then continued in an offhanded way,

But you know I still love him. I don't know why I love my brother. I just love him. 'Cause my granny tell us to love him a lot 'cause even though he a mess, even though they bother you, you still gotta love 'em. 'Cause the Lord love us. The Lord love us when we do wrong so we got to love them when they do wrong.

Shakela's comment speaks to her own Christian faith that was not only nurtured at Home Mission, but through her involvement at church and the religious witness of family members like her "granny." Like Shakela, other children made religious references throughout the day without provocation, suggesting that Christian doctrine was intricately woven into the ways they approached the world. In his work on children's spirituality across multiple faiths, Coles (1990) notes that children, even very young children, have profound thoughts and questions about God and religion and can develop a religious worldview. Similarly, the children involved in the Home Mission afterschool program regularly talked about God when referencing their lives, behavior, and relationships.

Shakela's example typifies most children's experiences of church and faith outside of Home Mission. While some were not as extensively involved in church activities like Shakela, all participating children were involved in a local church and attended religious services regularly with family members and neighbors. Children's active participation in religious activities outside of Home Mission undermined staff portrayals of children's homes as spiritually void and rather, points to the long tradition of spiritual dedication and social solidarity present in African American churches since the Civil War (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, Montgomery 1993). While staff members imagine themselves to be the paramount moral guides of children, children's comments show that their involvement in churches goes far beyond Home Mission.

Even for children whose guardians only occasionally attended church, they still went to religious services regularly with other family members or neighbors and

expressed religious sentiments in our conversations. Tiana, 8, and Imani, 10, were sisters whose mother only occasionally attended church. However, the girls routinely went to a local religious service when a church van came to their apartment complex on Sunday mornings to pick up anyone who wanted to "hear the preacher" (Imani, interviewed 3/2/2010). The girls' mother encouraged, but did not make them attend the neighborhood church. Thus, the girls chose to go to the services regularly, only missing if they slept late or were staying with their divorced father. Even if they spent the weekend with their father, which they commonly did, they attended church with their father and paternal grandmother. As Imani remarked, "She [her grandmother] like church a lot. We're there like *all* day" (interviewed 3/2/2010).

Other children also went to church services with people other than their guardians. Gabrielle, 11, went to church with her aunt when her mother had to work on weekends. Felicia went to an evangelical church every Sunday with her godmother because she liked it better than her mother's church. She explained that her godmother's church "[did] church longer" than her mother's church and she liked their "singing, praise dancin', and stuff" better. Komari went to Sunday school and church services with his grandmother and aunt. As seen in these examples, children had numerous opportunities to participate in religious institutions with or without their guardians. In fact, children's involvement in religious services was higher than parental rates because they could attend services with multiple family members and friends and did not have the burden of working on the weekend as some guardians did.

Since its inception, African American churches have been central to the social, political, and educational advancement of African Americans and Black communities in general (Anderson 1988, Billingsley 1999, Lincoln 1999). In fact, many scholars assert

that it is the core institution in African American communities (Billingsley 1999, Chatters et al. 2002, Fulop and Raboteau 1997, Harrison 2005, Lincoln and Mamiya 1995, Swain 2008, Wilmore 1984). Specifically for children, Black churches have helped foster a sense of community activism, resiliency, and self-empowerment (Cook 2000, Haight 1998, 2002, Johnson, Larson, and Li 2000, Swain 2008), promote high expectations for achievement (Billingsley and Caldwell 1991), and encourage educational development (Irvine and Foster 1996, Kelly 2001, Moss 1994). Similarly, children's comments about their participation in local African American churches suggested that church was central to their lives and the lives of their families and pointed to the rich spiritual and developmental traditions in African American churches.

Children's pictures also depicted the importance and pervasiveness of religion in their lives beyond Home Mission. Specifically, children took pictures of religious symbols such as Bibles, crosses, church spaces, and religious household decorations to express the importance of God and religion in their lives. For example, Brianna, a tall, quiet 2nd grader, took multiple pictures of her Bible. In one photo, a worn Bible full of extra papers sits on the floor next to a bed strewn with clothes (Photo 6.6 in Appendix III). Brianna described the picture by telling me that it was in her room and the Bible was always by her bed. She noted that she read the Bible daily, often with her family, but also by herself. During these times, she learned about "God's word" and how to live a "good" or faithful life (photo interview 4/19/2010). Brianna's picture and other children's pictures of Bibles were expressions of the significance of religion in children's lives beyond the evangelization efforts of Home Mission.

Furthermore, several children took pictures of religious symbols such as crosses and pictures of Jesus in their homes and the homes of relatives, which suggest that they

144

were surrounded with religious iconography. For example, Imani did not take many pictures, but two of her nine photos were of religious prints hanging in her grandmother's house. Both pictures capture a print of Jesus's Last Supper (Photo 6.7 in Appendix III). In one photo, Imani zoomed in on the central picture of Jesus and explained it's importance in this way, "Jesus died for our sins. We gotta remember that" (photo interview 5/3/2010). Not only did Imani's grandmother display religious pictures and crosses in her home, but there were also religious symbols in her mother's car and apartment that I observed when I visited. Even though Imani's mother only occasionally attended church, Imani was surrounded by religious symbols at home and in the homes of extended kin, which she highlighted in her photos.

In Chapter 4, I described staff's unequal attempts to religiously reform girls and boys in the 3rd through 6th grade classrooms. In these attempts, staff required older girls to participate in longer and more abstract religious training sessions than boys. Despite Home Mission's uneven and gendered evangelization efforts, children displayed no gender differences in their religious comments. Overall, girls and boys, regardless of age, pinpointed Christian institutions, teachings, and practices as central to their lives outside of Home Mission.

Children's religious comments and pictures suggest that their religiosity cannot be attributed to their involvement in Home Mission's faith-based programs for several reasons. First, children talked about attending church with guardians, other family members, or friends who allowed them to attend church services regularly even when parents had to work on weekends or weeknights. Moreover, children's pictures depicted religious items that they saw on a regular basis in their homes and the homes of relatives, suggesting that children were surrounded by religious symbols and received religious

145

messages from multiple sources. Second, if children's religious devotion was rooted in the evangelical efforts of Home Mission staff, it would reason that girls would express more religious statements than boys given their disproportionate religious training. However, boys and girls were equally religious, suggesting that participating families prioritized church involvement even if that involvement was not practiced by nuclear families but with extended family members and friends. Overwhelmingly, children's religious statements and pictures depicted their church affiliation outside of Home Mission and expressed the religiosity to which most children aspired and families promoted.

Overall, the above examples about children's home and church lives suggest that young people involved in the afterschool program understood their lives differently than did staff. Not only did children's words and pictures show that children came from nurturing and religious homes, but they also suggest that children were much more socioeconomically and geographically diverse than assumed by staff. Differences between staff assumptions of children and the realities of participants' lives point to discontinuities in services and to the denial of Black working and middle class families and the influences of Black churches in the lives of African American children. Children's words and pictures help strip away the "veil" constructed by staff members that obfuscated the active and nurturing family and church homes in which children and guardians participated.

At Home Mission

While Home Mission employees worked to "save" children from sin and their families, children understood Home Mission's purpose more fluidly and described it as a

religious aid, site for entertainment, educational resource, and family utility. Each of these descriptions points to reasons that children used the program and attests to the multiple factors leading children and families to use Home Mission afterschool services as it fit into their daily lives.

First, children understood their participation in Home Mission as an extension of their family's religious life. As noted above, children participated in religious services and activities outside of Home Mission and were steeped in Christian Biblical teachings. For example, during a devotion Gregory recited (to Katelyn's surprise) a story about King Solomon that Katelyn, the Program Director, had referenced the previous week. He recounted the story in much more detail than Katelyn had previously provided and had begun to make some theological comments on King Solomon when Katelyn cut him off. Like Gregory, children's experiences in local churches and their own faith lives gave them a sense of familiarity and continuity with the religious messages that Home Mission staff taught. Thus, children understood Home Mission as an extension of their own and their family's religious engagement and believed that they attended Home Mission so they could "learn some more about God" (Kysha, interviewed 3/9/2010). Most children involved in this study recognized that Home Mission's explicit religious orientation was similar to other religious influences in their lives. In other words, they understood their participation in Home Mission much like their involvement in activities at church. Children thus saw Home Mission as supporting the religious lessons they already learned from their families and churches.

Beyond its religious focus, children also recognized the afterschool programs' entertainment value as one of the reasons they participated in the afterschool program. Mya, a shy 5 year old, expressed that she liked the program because it was "fun" as we

played in the indoor play area on a rainy spring afternoon. The indoor playroom had

brightly colored equipment with two slides and multiple tunnels to climb through. I sat at

one of the tunnel openings with Mya. We were hiding from pretend "monsters" who

were being played by several other boys and girls chasing each other through the tunnels.

During our brief respite from the game, Mya leaned over to confide, "I don't like

[playing] monsters. I want to go slide, but they'll catch me (giggling)." I asked, "Is the

slide your favorite thing in here?" "Yea. It's fun! I can take my shoes off," Mya replied.

All of a sudden De'Andre roared in the tunnel beside us and Mya ran off laughing toward

another tunnel to escape the approaching "monster."

Mya's insights while playing in the tunnel exemplify how most children

approached their time at Home Mission. They saw it as a place where they could play

and be with friends. In these instances, children simply talked about their involvement in

the Home Mission afterschool program as "fun" and a "good place to play." Like Mya,

other children focused on the activities offered at Home Mission as a reason they and

their families chose to utilize Home Mission's afterschool program. In fact, Komari, 11,

Gregory, 10, and Rodrick, 10, created an entire story during their storytelling session

about children playing various games at Home Mission such as kickball, basketball, relay

races, and computer games, showing that one way they conceptualized the afterschool

program was as a site for entertainment. As Rodrick noted when the main character in

their story "ran a home run" in a kickball game, "He came out with a happy face and he

was enjoying himself."

Children also understood their participation in the afterschool program as it

related to their educational success via homework help. Most children in the program

were good students, many of whom were on the Honor Rolls and in the gifted programs

at their schools. Homework was a regular part of life as elementary school students and children saw Home Mission as a resource to help them finish this daily task. As Malik, 10, casually noted, "I come here to learn and they can help me with my homework." In another example, Monique, one of a handful of 6th graders allowed in the program, decorated the front cover of a book report she'd been working on all week. She was making an elaborate zigzag border with alternating colors and was searching through a small, plastic bin filled with markers to find the colors she wanted. She told me as I admired her work, "They have good markers here. And lots of colors. It's really good to finish a project with." For Monique and Malik, Home Mission was an educational resource that helped them finish their schoolwork and class projects. Overall, such comments show that children understood Home Mission services as a practical utility that fit into their lives as students who wanted to do well in school and stay on top of their daily homework assignments.

Finally, children discussed their participation in Home Mission within the practical negotiations of family life. For example, the majority of children explained that they attended Home Mission's afterschool program so their parents could work. For example, Marcus's mother was employed at a local hospital and usually did not get off work until 5:00 or 5:30. Consequently, Marcus, 10, described his participation in Home Mission as a resource allowing his mother to continue to work. He stated in our interview, "[My mom] needs somebody to watch us when she's at work." For Jessica, 9, her mother and father worried about their daughters if at home alone and worked hard to make sure their children were taken care of in the afternoons. While explaining the arrangements her parents made for her care, she told me, "They don't like it when we're home by ourselves, but they gotta work. So we come here." Children, like Marcus and

Jessica, recognized their family's need for afterschool care because it allowed guardians

to work and provide for their families. Thus, they conceptualized Home Mission as a

tool, which allowed their parents to reach occupational goals without worrying about

their children's safety. Overall, children conceptualized Home Mission as a resource

allowing children and guardians to pursue religious, entertainment, educational, and

occupational goals, which complicated the transformative purpose of the agency as

stipulated by staff.

Undermining Transformation through Patterns of Resistance

> *Sara, a college intern in the older girls' classroom, began devotion as the girls trickled in from school. The homework tables had been pushed together to create a large square around which the girls and two interns sat. Sara asked Kysha to read Galatians 4:6, a verse about God sending the Holy Spirit to the sons of God. When Kysha finished reading, Sara asked, "What do you know about the Holy Spirit?" Madison raised her hand and started to say something about the Holy Ghost, but Sara continued. She explained that before Jesus, in the Old Testament, God was held away from the people in the temple; he was not a personal God. You had to go to the temple to be with God and he wasn't with everyone. But Jesus came and changed that, she said. She told the girls, "If you ask Jesus to come and live in your heart then you'll receive the Holy Spirit." Sara stressed that the Holy Spirit only came to those who "accepted Christ and who asked him to come and live in their hearts." Then, Sara shifted to 1 Corinthians 12:4 and talked about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Sara stated that she wanted to talk about the Holy Spirit because she wasn't sure whether the girls knew about Him or not.*

> *After Sara had been talking for about 20 minutes, Lauren, the other college intern, took over the discussion. She incredulously asked, "Who's heard about Pentecost? Do you know what it is?" She then read Acts 2:1-4 about the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus's disciples while locked in an upstairs room after Jesus's death. She explained that despite the fact that all the windows were shut and the doors locked, the Holy Spirit entered the room and caused the disciples to speak in tongues. At this moment, Alexis, a funny and precocious 5th grader, yelled loudly, "Voodoo!" causing the girls to snicker and laugh. Tiana animatedly waved her arms and made funny faces in an attempt to imitate a Voodoo priestess or person possessed. Most of the girls roared with laughter which woke Felicia who had been dozing in her chair. Amidst the giggles, Sara and Lauren scolded the girls to sit down and pay attention. Lauren called an end to the Bible study discussion and asked if there were questions. At which time,*

Alexis asked, "What time are we stopping Bible study?" Sara gave her a reproachful glance and said, "That is not an acceptable question" (fieldnotes 9/29/09)

The Bible study described above helps to show the ways that children actively disrupted programmatic moments designed for children's moral and social transformations. Home Mission staff members understood their roles in children's lives as spiritual and social guides leading young people toward productive, faithful citizenship. But as discussed previously in this chapter, many children's lives were dissimilar to staff conceptions. Such incongruences revealed the racial, gendered, and classist assumptions which staff promoted and practiced in the service encounter. The inability of staff to "see" the variability of children's lives and the religious and social similarities between staff and participating families resulted in tensions between staff and children.

These tensions were most evident during daily devotions and storytelling sessions. In these times, children engaged in a daily "dialectic of resistance and acceptance" (Alpert 1991:350) in their interactions with staff. Put differently, children at times expressed similar religious and social sentiments as staff members (i.e. making evangelical proclamations and touting the need to lead a respectful, "good" life) while also undermining staff attempts to inculcate them to white, middle class ideals of appropriate behavior and productivity.

Theories of student resistance have been widely examined in educational literature (Alpert 1991, Davidson 1996, Everhart 1983, Fine 1989, Giroux 1983, McLaren 1994, 1995, Willis 1977) and feminist scholarship (Leadbeater and Way 1996, Rodriguez 2008, Ward 1990). This literature examines both school socialization processes and the techniques students, namely minority students, employ to oppose

society and schools' reproductions of race, class, and gender hierarchies (Faiman-Silva 2002) or what Giroux (1983:263) terms "hidden curriculums." Such work finds that children do not simply accept educational and societal processes that attempt to socialize them toward specific and "appropriate" social positions in educational domains and the world beyond, but overtly and covertly resist such processes (Cousins 1999, Miron and Lauria 1998, Varenne and McDermott 1998).

For African American teens, Roberts, Bell, and Murphy (2008) show that racial minority youth often used humor and other expressive devices such as the spoken word and hip hop to carve out spaces of resistance to white dominant norms experienced in their schools. Humor and jokes have long been a source of resistance for African Americans (Cobb 1995, Dollard 1949, Levine 1978, Scott 1990), especially in the South when overt challenges to the racist social system were often punished with death (Litwack 1998, Tolnay and Beck 1995). Rather, expressive devises and humor allow subordinate groups to indirectly challenge the dominant system and to lay bare the contradictions and cruelty of oppression (Cobb 1995). Gordon (1998) argues that humor and word play can act as "strategic survival tools" for African American youth by providing comic relief amidst the hardships and obstacles of living in a racist society. Such "tools" allow young people who are in subordinate positions to teachers and other authority figures to indirectly challenge the dominant system.

Students in the afterschool program often used humor to challenge staff while also creating a sense of solidarity with other participants who joined in the joke. This type of resistance was acutely evident in Bible studies. In fact, Bible studies in each classroom acted as flashpoints where staff's attempts to morally and socially transform children met with children's most vocalized protestations. Moreover, the physical dynamics of these

sessions whereby children were required to sit and listen as staff spoke and preached put the tensions between staff and children in stark relief.

As seen in the vignette above, Alexis undermined Lauren and Sara's aims at leading a quiet and sacred devotion by blurting out "Voodoo." Here, she challenges staff's sense of religious authority by interrupting their commentary and making fun of their assumptions that children were ignorant of the Holy Spirit (children, in fact, knew about the Holy Spirit and talked about the Holy Ghost in several prior devotions which the staff seemed to forget). Alexis also encouraged others to laugh at her joke and thus created a sense of solidarity against the two white college interns. She, furthermore, called attention to the prolonged nature of the devotional by asking when Sara and Lauren would finally finish Bible Study. Here, Alexis uses humor and a challenging question to turn the discussion about the Holy Spirit and thus the interns' efforts at moral transformation on its head.

Boys in the 3rd through 6th grade classroom also used humor to undermine their infrequent Bible studies. For example, Dennis derailed Brian's attempt to lead Bible study one day by asking, "Is God a fat man? You know, like Santa Claus?" Brian immediately became flustered and evasively answered Dennis's question by alluding to the spiritual, not physical, presence of God. Dennis disregarded Brian's attempts to explain and continued to joke that God had a big, fat, jiggly belly and rubbed his hands on his stomach to demonstrate. Brian quickly wrapped up the devotion as other boys stood up with Dennis to mimic having big bellies.

In these examples, children routinely blurted out amusing and shocking questions to disrupt Bible studies. In fact, children's use of humor for disrupting devotion formed a pattern of resistance that undermined staff attempts to lead controlled and centered

devotionals and thus struck at the core of the afterschool program 's purpose to socially and spiritually save children.

These outbursts not only worked to disrupt devotionals and promote solidarity among the students, but many also revealed social and racial differences between white employees and volunteers and the African American children who had to listen to their religious commentary. One afternoon a young white woman showed up to volunteer. She sporadically volunteered in the program, but confidently made comments throughout the girls' Bible study. At one point, the volunteer tried to reprimand several children for not paying attention. After Lauren related the children's distractions to sin, the volunteer, visibly frustrated, interjected, "We are all slaves to sin and can't help but sin. You guys probably know people in your lives with addictions, who drink too much, who don't know God!" But Tiesha, 9, cut her scolding lecture short by blurting out "We're still slaves?!" making the other girls roar with laughter and roll their eyes at the volunteer who stammered and backtracked. The white volunteer's usage of "slave" touched on the ever present legacy of slavery in the Deep South to which the girls as southern, African Americans were keenly aware. Tiesha uses her humorous, but cutting interjection to quickly point out that "slave" is differently understood by white and black Home Mission participants. In so doing, she calls attention to the racial divide that is evident, albeit unspoken, in the program.

Blurting out humorous statements and questions, as noted above, were two strategies among many that children used to upset Bible studies. Boocock and Scott (2005:127) suggest that students, like other relatively powerless people, use a variety of resistance strategies to "challenge, circumvent, or undermine the authority of superiors." Such strategies can include: "withdrawal or detachment" or not paying attention; "covert

resistance" or non-serious challenges to authority through such things as humor; and "overt resistance" or attitudinal and physical refusal to conform (Boocock and Scott 2005:128). While children did imagine strategies of "overt" resistance in their stories (discussed below), they primarily used "withdrawal" and "covert" methods to undermine staff control during Bible studies.

For example, I routinely witnessed boys in the 3rd through 6th grade classroom ignore or adopt indifferent attitudes to resist Brian's attempts to control his classroom. On one particular day in the fall, I watched as two boys blatantly ignored Brian's attempts to start a discussion about Daniel, a figure from the Hebrew Scriptures (fieldnotes 10/8/09). As Brian tried to organize the boys for Bible study, Komari and Gregory ignored him and instead drew pictures of Michael Jackson in their notebooks and talked to each other. Their complete dismissal of Brian's attempts to start Bible study finally resulted in Brian giving up his efforts.

The boys' behavior can be understood as a type of "cool masculinity" (Majors and Billson 1992) or a strategic behavioral style sometimes adopted by African American males to combat a racist social system. Majors and Billson argue that indifference, toughness, and "coolness" help African American men fashion masculinities in a racially oppressive society that denies Black men the tools and opportunities to achieve mainstream economic and social success. In context of Home Mission, boys' "cool" behaviors toward staff worked as "withdrawal" (Boocock and Scott 2005) resistive strategies, allowing them to counter white staff members' attempts to control them.

Overall, children undermined devotion through an array of verbal and nonverbal methods as a means to resist staff. For example, children periodically slept through all or parts of religious lessons. Children more actively undermined devotionals by trying to

make their fellow classmates laugh, stomping other's feet, rattling papers, and/or

reaching across the table to tug or hit a fellow student. In all of these instances, children

sought to upset those times most devoted to children's social and moral reformation. Yet,

students exhibited a "practical awareness" (Giddens 1984) in their resistive acts that

allowed them to challenge and undermine staff attempts at transformation without getting

kicked out of the program.

Children explored more "overt" or aggressive strategies of resistance during our

storytelling sessions. Guided by social scientific works with children and storytelling

(Counihan 1999, Paley 1990, and Sutton-Smith 1981), I conducted storytelling sessions

with 24 children in small sessions to examine children's thoughts about their homes and

experiences at Home Mission. A pattern quickly emerged whereby children wove tales

of overt resistance and aggression toward staff in their stories. Roberts, Bell, and

Murphy (2008) find that stories allow minority children and youth to discuss experiences

of race and racism within a dominant culture that denies racial significance. At Home

Mission, white staff promoted color-blind ideologies (Bell 2003, Bonilla-Silva 2003,

Frankenberg 1993, Winant 2004) that silenced social and programmatic racial disparities.

Thus, like Roberts, Bell, and Murphy (2008), I found that children's stories allowed

students to address experiences of racial exclusion through imagined resistive and

aggressive acts aimed at white staff members. In so doing, storytelling sessions allowed

children to imagine confrontations and vent feelings that they were unable to express

during everyday interactions with staff without facing serious punishments or expulsion.

In one of Jessica, 9, Madison, 11, and Keisha's, 10, stories, Lauren, a counselor in

the older girls' classroom, fussed at a group of girls for being outside. Keisha responded

as a character in the story, "You get on my nerves, Ms. Lauren!" and Madison echoed,

"You're not the boss of me! I'm going home." As the story progressed, the girls imagined themselves apologizing to the director for their rude behavior to which Jessica chimed, "I'm sorry. But I still don't like you." The girls' imagined resisting Lauren's attempts to control them in ways unavailable to them in their daily interactions with staff.

Sometimes children's stories took on aggressive, even violent overtones as they imagined challenging the authority of white staff members. For example, Jon, 10, Dennis, 9, and Malik, 10, imagined aggressive tactics in a story about resisting the program director's demands. Their story centered on a group of kids who wanted to play outside and were being rowdy. In the story, the director asked the group to come inside, but the boys refused. At one point, the storytellers envisioned the group of kids being severely reprimanded by the staff member when Dennis interjected, "he poisoned her [the program director] chocolates, so she would die, cause he didn't want to get in trouble." Finally, in the most violent imagined attack on staff, Tiana added to a story about Katelyn, the Program Director, banning a child from the afterschool program that the "kid got a gun to shoot her. She shot Ms. Katelyn."

First, let me note that I do not believe the aggressive and sometimes violent nature of the stories meant that children harbored violent tendencies toward the staff, but rather that they were free to explore shocking and taboo responses in these sessions. Children's extreme comments were made even more sensational by the laughter and encouragement of their fellow storytellers. These stories in many ways mimicked popular children's films and books about young people undermining or aggressively overturning the authority of adults (Singer and Singer 2001, Tobin 2000). However, in this research, they can be understood as children's responses to the control they felt primarily from white staff members. Here, children pinpointed Katelyn, Lauren, Sara, and Brian, all white

employees, as the staff members that characters verbally or physically confronted the most. Camille, an African American staff member, did emerge in two stories: in the first, Camille and Katelyn got into a fight with a golf club; and in the second, Camille fell in the mud and got a concussion. Camille's presence in children's tales was peripheral to the main action of the stories and she was never a direct target for aggression. Overwhelmingly, children's imagined resistance to staff was aimed at white employees, a fact made plain when children spoke in affected, preppy, white voices when primarily speaking as staff members. These stories, understood within the theoretical framework of this research, allowed children a safe space to confront staff attempts to transform them according to white, middle-class social and religious values as taught and embodied by white staff members.

While children's disruptions helped elucidate social and racial tensions between white staff members and Black children, the Bible study disruptions were differentiated by age and gender. Specifically, girls and boys in the 3rd through 6th grade classrooms undermined the sacred and serious atmosphere that staff members tried to cultivate more frequently than younger children. While younger children occasionally disrupted Bible studies held in their classrooms, their disruptions were not as loud or numerous. Younger children mostly fidgeted in their seats and/or whispered to each other while Camille or Courtney led devotion. Younger children's less frequent disruptions could be contributed to Camille and Courtney's more authoritarian styles of discipline where they corrected children quickly and sternly, and/or to the larger age difference between Camille, 50, and the students. However, another possible reason for younger children's behavior is that Camille and Courtney were the only African American employees in the afterschool

program, resulting in less racial tension between child participants and staff members in the younger children's classrooms.

Even though older girls and boys disrupted Bible studies more than younger children, the frequency of disruptions and resulting disciplinary actions also differed between older girls and older boys. Boys in the 3rd through 6th grade classroom disrupted devotion in similar ways as older girls, but they were not subject to as many religious classes as girls of similar ages and thus had fewer opportunities for interruptions. Moreover, their interruptions were often brushed aside as "boys just being boys" (Brian, interviewed 2/12/2010). As a result, their punishments were less severe than those given to girls for similar offenses.

However, Majors and Billson (1992) assert that boys' resistance through "cool poses" (discussed previously) can become the vehicle through which African American young men are negatively labeled and further distanced from possible opportunities for achievement. In Home Mission, boys' attempts at being cool and funny often reinforced staff suppositions that they were indifferent and disrespectful. Thus, older boys' resistive tactics could be inverted to justify staff's racist and gender-based assumptions about participating young men.

Older girls were subject to longer Bible studies than boys and thus had more opportunities to make outbursts and show disinterest. Greater opportunities for girls to upset Bible study meant that girls were more often singled out for further reformations such as one-on-one talks with staff and individual prayer sessions. For girls like Alexis who were outspoken in their resistance, staff often sent them into hallway as punishment for interrupting Bible study or being "disrespectful." On other occasions, the girls were required to sit alone with Sara or Lauren and listen as the staff member encouraged the

159

girls to be more "grateful," "respectful," and "obedient" to God and staff. I wrote the

following excerpt in my fieldnotes after one such exchange:

> Alexis disrupts Bible Study again. At one point, she commented that this was 'boring' and a little later, Sara pulled her aside to reprimand her by saying they were talking about God and that he had done a lot for her and she needed to pay attention and be thankful (fieldnotes 10/13/2009).

While Alexis continued to perform resistive acts despite such reprimands, the

punishments did cause Alexis and other girls to miss out on activity time with their

friends or time to do their homework. Here, the confluence of race, gender, and age

caused a layering of oppressions whereby girls more often experienced the program's

punitive aspects than other children, which caused them to spend more time away from

educational and recreational activities.

If children's disruptive behavior is interpreted as resistance to these intersecting

oppressions, then staff reprimands and punishments can be understood as part of the

"social panoptic" work of social service agencies within the emerging authoritarian state

(Wacquant 2001:407). Wacquant (2001) argues that social service agencies are

increasingly complicit in the surveillance and control of "problem populations," here

understood as girls and boys who are "at risk" for becoming like their parents. Yet, as

children resisted staff attempts at social and moral transformation, children treaded a fine

line from being "at risk" to becoming "the risk" (Stephens 1995). In other words, when

children undermined staff control, staff did not interpret their behavior as signaling

problems within the program (i.e. long and unequal devotionals), but rather focused on

individual deficiencies that needed to be addressed through prayer and punitive measures.

Here, children seemed to embody both staff hopes that they would be different from their

parents and staff worries that they would recycle their parents' assumed deficiencies.

Thus, children's resistance to staff attempts at control could be reinterpreted by staff as justifications for their moral and social transformations.

Conclusion

Throughout this research, children showed in their comments and pictures that they were intimately connected to families where they felt love and found enjoyment. They also described participating in local churches unaffiliated with Home Mission, which they regularly attended with guardians and other family members. Children's words and images about these two areas of their lives revealed inaccuracies in staff constructions of participating families as unstable and unaffectionate (discussed in the previous chapter). Instead, children portrayed their families as protective and nurturing spaces that prioritized religion. Such portrayals functioned to expose the deeply entrenched, pejorative assumptions about poor, urban African American children and families that staff members held and which blinded them to the realities of their clients' lives. Continuing to complicate the service encounter, children talked about their involvement in the afterschool program as a tool their families used to pursue religious, recreational, educational, and occupational goals, reasons that differed from the transformative purposes articulated by staff. Thus, children were part of a socioeconomically and geographically diverse service population who utilized the program for different reasons than those considered by agency personnel. Moreover, children resisted staff attempts at leading controlled and sacred devotionals, which cut at the very heart of agency aims.

Chapter Seven

*"I Need Somebody to Reinforce What I'm Teaching:" Guardians' Understandings and
Use of a Faith-based Out-of-School Program*

I met Amber one Saturday morning during a basketball tournament at Home

Mission. Two of Amber's children flashed down the court as her third child jumped

excitedly to cheer on her siblings. As we chatted through the game and afterward, Amber

talked about the difficulties of raising three children while juggling work and other

responsibilities. She discussed the stresses of her managerial job with a state agency and

how she and her husband tried to balance work, family, church, and friends. She also

spoke of her dreams for her children, namely that they would develop self-expressive

skills like art and writing in addition to a rich spiritual life. Our conversation drifted

toward Home Mission and why she utilized the program when she remarked, "I need

somebody to reinforce what I'm teaching at home. I think Home Mission does that."

Amber understood Home Mission as an extension of her own values, specifically in

education and religion. She believed that her children learned these values first at home

and Home Mission's role was to support the lessons she and her husband already taught

their children.

Guardians' views of Home Mission as an extension of their own family values

worked against staff constructions of irreligious and inconsistent caregivers as discussed

in previous chapters. While staff saw their roles in children's lives as replacing parents,

guardians perceived Home Mission as one tool among many that they used to help their

children grow spiritually and socially. As I will show in this chapter, the majority of

guardians' lives did not reflect staff assumptions about participating families. Rather,

many parents were working and middle class caregivers who used the program because they agreed with its religious orientation and wanted their children to have additional school help. The differences between staff perceptions of guardians and caregiver's lived realities continue to highlight incongruences between service providers and recipient families.

Children's comments in the previous chapter demonstrate some of the ways children and their families were unlike staff constructions of their Home Mission clients. These differences reveal how deeply held cultural beliefs about the minority poor function to blind well-meaning staff to the everyday realities of the people they served. That blindness and the uncritical acceptance of urban stereotypes worked to perpetuate structural inequalities in a program that sought to help others. In this process, guardians played a key role. As adults, they were held responsible for their and their children's socioeconomic hardships (if, indeed they were poor). In an insidious twist, African American guardians were also held responsible for issues of race and racism that surfaced in the afterschool program. Staff invoked images of negative guardians regularly as a rhetorical trope through which to justify their transformative work with children. Yet, after spending time with guardians in their homes and communities, and in extensive interviews, I found that children were religious, driven, and educationally successful because their families instilled these qualities in them *before* attending Home Mission. Children did not have such qualities *because* of Home Mission.

The diversity evident in the children's research sample became clearer as I conducted family surveys, which showed that families inhabited a financial, occupational, and social range unlike staff constructions. While there were a few low-income, single mothers whose children attended Home Mission, they were far from

163

representing "underclass" myths of promiscuous and irreligious mothers. In addition, there were numerous married, middle-income families who sent their children to the Home Mission afterschool program. This familial diversity, discussed below, helped to reveal the stereotypical nature of staff comments about guardians.

In this chapter, I examine guardians' lives through survey data and their comments to look beyond staff assumptions. First, I provide demographic data regarding marital, educational, economic, and geographical characteristics of caregivers to demonstrate the diversity evident in the guardian sample. I then contextualize guardian demographics with similar information for residents in the Heights and Carlisle to examine the economic and social positions of guardians within the larger community. Next, I analyze guardian interview responses to elucidate how and why families used the Home Mission afterschool program. I show that church, education, and affordability were the primary reasons caregivers allowed their children to attend Home Mission. Finally, I question why a socioeconomically diverse group of families were allowed to participate in an afterschool program designed for economically depressed families. Here, I argue that program structure functioned to encourage the enrollment of working class and middle-income families and discouraged participation of poorer households.

Research Sample

I conducted surveys and interviews with 21 guardians during the course of this research (see Appendix IV for a list of participating guardians). In addition to these methods, I also visited guardians in their homes, chatted with them while watching basketball games on the weekends, and got to know them through multiple everyday interactions. The guardians who participated in this study were the caretakers of the 32

children who also took part in this project. Therefore, I interviewed at least one guardian for every child included in this study. I primarily interviewed mothers and grandmothers (sometimes within the same family) because they most often returned interest and consent forms with their contact information. While I observed and spoke with fathers throughout the research period, fathers usually deferred the formal interviews to their wives or the mothers of their children, citing such reasons as their busy work schedules or that mothers knew more details about the ins and outs of their family life. This pattern was not surprising given women's association with home life and children (Collier et al. 1997). Given the dynamics of this sample, the demographic data are analyzed according to family units and not individual guardians to ensure that some families are not overrepresented, since I sometimes interviewed multiple caregivers in a family. Yet, I discuss both mother and father responses when analyzing their qualitative accounts, especially about church affiliation and educational expectations.

There were two guardians whose children attended Home Mission, but who did not return research interest or consent forms. They and their children are not included in my analysis. However, given that I interviewed 32 out of 36 children involved in the Home Mission afterschool program and 21 guardians out of a total of 23 caretakers, I believe my data represent the economic, educational, and marital variability found between families participating in the Home Mission children's program.

The Echols Family

Yvette, 46, and Jeremy, 51, Echols lived in a southern, Carlisle neighborhood about 15 miles from Home Mission. They lived in a four-bedroom home with a large yard full of tall pine trees. They had been involved with the Home Mission afterschool program for a number of years which started when their older children, now in middle school, attended the program. Their youngest child was now involved in the afterschool program.

Yvette and Jeremy had been married for almost 20 years. They met at church while both were attending college. Yvette said that she was drawn to Jeremy's charisma, a trait that has helped him professionally as a statewide sales representative. She also loved that he was "a giver" and was generous to those he met. Jeremy first noticed Yvette as she sang in the church choir and loved that she was smart and driven. After graduating with their bachelor's degrees, they married in the same church where they first met and where they and their children continued to be active members. Yvette and Jeremy described themselves as middle-class, but noted that they still financially struggled at times, especially given current economic fluctuations. Yvette taught at a local university that had been particularly affected by educational cutbacks. In fact, at the time of this research, Yvette was working toward her PhD to help maintain her position as a college professor if further educational funding cuts were enacted.

The Gleason Family

A few miles south of the Heights neighborhood, Shae Gleason, 35, rented a small three-bedroom home on a quiet residential street in an urban Carlisle neighborhood. Her front lawn was meticulously manicured and had a small flower garden around a tree thanks to her boyfriend of several years who worked in a landscaping business. Shae had worked in the same service industry job for multiple years and was able to use her influence there to help several family members also get jobs. Shae graduated from a large, Carlisle high school, but was unable to attend college. Despite these educational setbacks, she still had high educational goals for her children and boldly encouraged their educational success. She was often present at PTA meetings and school functions to make sure "they know I care about Gabby's schooling."

In addition to education, Shae also made sure that her children attended church every Sunday, even on the weekends when she was called into work. When she had to work on Sunday mornings, she called one of her sisters to make sure someone would pick up her children in time for Sunday school and church

*services. On the weekends when she didn't work, Shae and her children attended
a neighborhood church just down the road from their house where several other
family members went.*

The brief portraits of these two families help to show the variability in marital

statuses, educational attainment, occupations, and incomes that characterized families in

the Home Mission afterschool program. Like other scholars who examine contemporary,

African American communities (Boyd 2005, Gregory 1992, Lacy 2007, McCoy 1999,

2007), Black families did not form a monolithic racial group, but rather displayed a broad

range of social and economic positions. In the following section, I examine the diversity

of my research sample according to marriage, education, and income to detail this range

for Home Mission families.

Marital Status

Like Yvette and Jeremy, over a third of guardians involved in this research were

married, many of who had been married for numerous years. Another third of guardian

respondents were divorced or married but separated at the time of this research. Thus,

over 65% of parents were married or had previously been married. The remaining 35%

of guardians self-identified as either single but living with a companion or single. For

these unmarried caretakers, 20% were like Shae who reported being single but living with

a companion and 15% were single.

Parental Education

Guardians involved in this study exhibited a range of educational

accomplishments. 10% of parents did not finish high school and dropped out before

graduating. Like Shae, 20% of caregivers finished high school or received their

equivalency degrees. 15% of guardians attended a local community college and received

an Associate's Degree. Similar to Jeremy, 35% attended a four-year university, six of

which graduated with a Bachelor's Degree. Finally, the remaining 20% of guardians had

Master's Degrees like Yvette, two of which were working toward their PhD's. Overall,

70% of guardian respondents attended some college, whether a community college or

four-year institution. These data suggest that the majority of caregivers involved in

Home Mission were well educated.

Household Income

The Home Mission afterschool program did not require proof of income at the

time of registration. However, I included a question about familial income in my survey

instrument to examine the economic statuses of participating families[11]. After hearing

staff members routinely talk about families "in need," I was surprised to find that

guardians reported a range of familial incomes. Guardians reported household incomes

between $10,000 and $60,000 or more. There was not a concentration of low-income

families, but rather families were about equally distributed across this income spectrum

with approximately the same amount of families reporting higher, mid-range, and lower

incomes. These data suggest that guardians' incomes and levels of economic stability

span a much broader range than staff constructions of low-income, "needy families."

My survey also asked guardians to provide their places of employment. Parental responses showed that families involved in the Home Mission afterschool program exhibited a variety of occupational positions that corresponded with differences in the incomes noted above. Only one guardian self-identified as unemployed at the time of this research, however, she had a recurring position at a daycare center where she worked when she needed extra money. One other guardian described herself as "self-employed" and engaged in periodic work as a caterer, housekeeper, and babysitter. All other guardians were employed in areas such as banking, service and retail, hospitals, universities, police and fire departments, and state and city government offices. Moreover, while some guardians worked in entry-level or assistant positions, others worked as managers and project directors.

Contextualizing Guardians within the Heights and Carlisle

As noted above, the guardians involved in this study exhibited a wide range of marital relationships, educational achievements, occupations, and incomes. These data highlight only a few areas of socioeconomic diversity among the families involved in the Home Mission afterschool program, but they suggest the general range of differences in children's and their families' social and economic positions. For example, some guardians, like Shae, were single-mothers who worked at low-wage, service jobs while others were married, university professors like Yvette. Such variety complicates constructions of Home Mission service recipients as a homogeneous group of low-income, single-parent families living in the Heights. In fact, the spectrum of guardian social and economic positions, when compared to U.S. Census Bureau data for the

169

Heights and the city of Carlisle, shows that parents were more like citywide statistics than demographics for the Heights[12], the neighborhood specifically targeted by Home Mission.

I briefly compare the demographic categories above for guardians, residents in the Heights, and Carlisle citizens to contextualize children's parents within the broader community. For marriage, children's guardians exhibited higher rates of marriage and fewer rates of never married persons than reported by Heights residents and were more closely aligned with Carlisle demographic data on marriage rates. Guardians whose children attended the Home Mission afterschool program also had higher rates of educational attainment than statistics for both the Heights area and Carlisle. Guardians were overall more educated than residents of metro Carlisle. Comparing income data and household size with the US Department of Heath and Human Services poverty guidelines for 2012 (US Dept. 2012), I found that a little less than half of participating families were economically poor. This estimation was similar to the poverty rates in the Heights, but slightly higher than poverty statistics for Carlisle. However, the remaining families earned significantly more than area percentages. For example, 20% of caretakers earned $50,000 or more while approximately 7% of people living in the Heights and 16% of Carlisle residents reported similar household incomes.

Examining factors such as guardians' marital status, educational attainment, and income show that many families had middle-class and working class lives. In fact, the majority of guardians involved in Home Mission were well educated, married or previously married, and financially stable. Even for those guardians who were unmarried and earned low-incomes, they still worked full time and encouraged educational success for themselves and their children.

The portrait of families that emerges from data on children and guardians begs two questions. First, "why would well-educated and working parents send their children to a program that denied their diversity and achievements and framed them in deficient terms?" While the answer to this question is complex and made up of numerous contextual reasons that are particular to each family, I found that overall guardians chose to send their children to Home Mission's afterschool program because it was compatible with their own religious and educational views and was affordable. Overall, families used Home Mission because it was a free program that supported their values and helped them achieve familial goals. I address this question below.

The second question that arises from these data is "why did program personnel allow middle-class families to participate in a program that was ideologically created for economically depressed families?" I believe the answer lies in the ways the afterschool program was structured. Here, lack of transportation, word-of-mouth advertising, and early program dismissals encouraged enrollment of families with guardians who had flexible, professional occupations, vehicles, and friends or family already enrolled, and discouraged poor family involvement. I discuss this question after first examining family choices for participation below.

Church Affiliation

As I have argued in previous chapters, Home Mission staff equated material need with spiritual need and assumed that most families were not religious. Consequently, staff focused their attention on children's moral salvation, which was made possible by claiming that guardians were socially and morally misguided. Yet, I found in interviews and observations with guardians that caretakers were overwhelmingly engaged in local churches and sought to encourage their children to be similarly involved. In fact, the primary reason parents chose to send their children to Home Mission was because it was a Christian-based program that supported their religious values. They did not see Home Mission as filling a void in children's lives, but rather as an extension of the home environments and spiritual lives they cultivated in themselves and their children.

To examine the level of parental church participation, I analyzed guardian comments regarding church affiliation and involvement to determine whether they were "extensively," "moderately," or "occasionally" involved in local religious institutions. Parents were categorized as having "extensive involvement" if they reported attending church on Sundays and participated in 1 or more additional activities during the week such as choir, Bible study, board meetings, praise and worship teams, or church service projects. Parents were identified as being "moderately involved" if they attended church weekly and took part in other church activities at least once a month such as church plays, holiday events, and bereavement support. Finally, I classified parents as being "occasionally involved" in church if they attended religious services at least once a month. No guardians involved in this research indicated that they did not attend church

at least once a month. Given these designations, 55% of guardians were "extensively involved," 25% were "moderately involved," and 20% were "occasionally involved" in local churches.

Shalisa, 31, and Calvin, 33, Monroe, a married couple whose children attended the Home Mission afterschool program, exemplified those families identified as "extensively involved." The Monroe's lived in a western, Carlisle neighborhood that bordered a growing suburb. Calvin joked that they lived so far outside Carlisle's hub that they might as well live in the suburbs. But they both conceded that living on the edges of the city had its advantages. One such advantage was that their four-bedroom ranch home sat in the middle of several acres of land where their children roamed and played. They were happy knowing that their children had plenty of space to run and "be kids" (Calvin, interviewed 5/11/2010).

Another advantage of living on the outskirts of town was that they did not have as far to drive to their out-of-town church. Shalisa and Calvin attended God's Way Baptist Church located in a small town southwest of Carlisle. They made the drive to God's Way multiple times a week because they were deeply religious and many of their family members were also members in the church. Shalisa and Calvin were direct that church was a major part of their family's life. As Shalisa joked, all she did was "work and church." When I asked the Monroe's to explain the activities their family participated in while at church, Shalisa laughed and remarked,

Shalisa: I should tell you what I'm not involved in! That would be easier. Well, ok. This is my duty at the church: I'm youth leader, youth director, youth minister. I work in the finance office, Sunday school teacher. I am in the drama team. I am in the choir. I am the youth choir director. [turning to her husband] What else do I do sweetie? I'm in the support group that we have. Is there anything else?

Calvin: I think you got it.

Caroline: And how about you, Mr. Monroe? What are you involved in?

Calvin: Everything. I'm a musician, alms bearer, sound recording, Board of Trustees. What else do I do?

Shalisa: Support group.

Calvin: Support group, just whatever they need.

Caroline: And what about your kids? What are they involved in?

Shalisa: [Our daughter] is involved in the youth choir. She's in the dance team. She's in the praise and worship dance team. She's on the drama team. The [middle son] is a junior alms bearer. He's in the youth choir. And our baby boy is in the youth choir (interviewed 5/11/2010).

While the Monroe's church participation may seem extreme, their level of religious participation was not unique and several other guardians were similarly involved in different churches. The Monroe's comments speak to the importance many guardians placed on church participation and faith.

Even for families that were "moderately" and "occasionally" involved in their churches, religion and Christian values were important to them. For example, I sat with Jaylea, 28, one afternoon at her kitchen table. Her house had recently been broken into and she lamented the fact that the robbers stole a heavy, antique coffee table of which she was particularly proud. She had become more cautious since the theft, but continued to find strength in God through the ordeal. Jaylea, an occasional church-goer, said while gazing at the new furniture she was forced to buy, "I might not go to church every Sunday, but I really believe that there's a God and all things are possible through Christ that strengths me." Even though Jaylea went to church "about once or a few times a month," she still was grounded in Christian teaching and depended on her faith in God to face the hardships in her life. Like Jaylea, even those parents with only monthly

attendance regularly talked about God in our conversations and routinely quoted the

Bible without provocation. As a whole, guardians deeply believed Christian Biblical

teaching to be a significant aspect of their lives and in the lives of their children.

Parents also made sure that their children were equally involved in local churches

and placed a high priority on their children's religious training and church involvement.

Christina, 33, exemplified the importance guardians placed on church and faith in the

lives of their children. Christina explained in our interview how she worked to cultivate

spiritual awareness in her children and hoped to foster that quality throughout their lives.

She stated,

> I tell them all the time, I do not want them to be a statistic for the young black
> males. You know, every time you look on the news, that's what you see, you
> know. I like to keep them focused. I like them being in church, that's my main
> thing because without that you don't have anything. I want them to grow up to be
> successful. Like I told them when they get grown, they gonna have to take care of
> me when I get old. You have to get a good education and keep God in them, God
> instilled in them because it was instilled in me and that's what I want to put in
> them (interviewed 2/28/2010).

Likewise, Susan, 48, was firm about her religious expectations for her children and would

not alter her family's church schedule despite the fact that she sometimes had to work on

the weekends. She noted,

> And they [her children] know that Sunday morning we gonna be in church even if
> I gotta work. They know Thursday, between Thursday and Friday you have to
> read your Sunday school lesson. You gotta be able to tell me what it's for cause,
> you know, you gotta be ready. And then we do Sunday school and church. Then
> we do an outing, we go out to eat (interviewed 4/24/2010).

Susan wanted her children to work as hard on their Bible lessons as they did at their

schoolwork. She also took her role as her children's spiritual teacher seriously and often

directed her own family Bible studies at home in addition to requiring that her children

attend Sunday school.

These examples spotlight the rich spiritual lives of children and parents in addition to showing one of the primary reasons guardians chose to use Home Mission's out-of-school services. For caretakers, religion was an integral aspect of their family's life as evident in their Christian beliefs and their extensive involvement in local churches. These examples again attest to the importance of the African American church for many Black individuals and communities (Abrams 2010, Billingsley 1999, Lincoln and Mamiya 1995). Like their children, African American guardians involved in this research overwhelmingly looked to African American churches as focal points in their lives. As a result, they strove to provide religious opportunities for their children and believed Home Mission was one such opportunity. Rather than looking for a program to teach their children about God, they actively sought out programs to surround their children with faith-based resources as a means to support their already rich spiritual lives.

Educational Success

In addition to developing religiously oriented lives, caretakers also wanted their children to academically succeed. Parents used the afterschool program because they prioritized education and believed Home Mission assisted their children academically by helping them to finish their homework. Specifically, guardians believed that the combination of faith and education would help their children prosper in life. In her research with African American children who regularly attended Sunday school at a Black church, Peele-Eady (2011) found that, in fact, children did learn communicative tools at church that parlayed into academic achievements. She found that children gained confidence and developed new ways to articulate knowledge through their participation in different church activities, which helped their academic success.

Similarly, parents involved in my research believed that faith and education were the two most important ways for their children to succeed in life. For example, Susan stated:

> I want them to go get a good education. I want them all to finish school and get a good education, go to college, maybe more. [I want] them all to just strive for the limit, the sky's the limit…. Remember it's all because of God. He can supply all your needs and you keep Him first and everything's gonna work out. He always have your back. But I want them always to remember that. I want them all to have a good education and remember that (interviewed 4/24/2010).

For Susan, as for many parents, she intertwined both faith in God and educational attainment in her hopes for her children. She practiced these hopes as she made sure her children were active in church and drilled them daily on their homework lessons.

Like Susan, the majority of guardians received Bachelor's degrees and several had Master's degrees. For these families, as well as for others, educational achievement was a familial expectation. As Michelle, 36, who was working toward her Doctoral degree, remarked,

> It's not like I'm the first person in my family to get a degree… My dad has his Master's degree. My mom has her Bachelors. My brother has his Bachelors. Got a long line of family folks. My mom has cousins that have PhDs, so I have a long line of family who are very into education. I'm working toward my PhD. And I'll expect my girls to follow that long line of family (interview 5/13/2010).

Michelle expects her children to academically succeed and sees Home Mission as a resource to help her children achieve their educational goals.

Education was a high priority for all families, even those who did not finish high school. For example, Jaylea did not graduate from high school and routinely reminded her children that she wanted something different for their lives. She wanted them to have better opportunities and believed education was the key to their success. On another visit to Jaylea's home, we again sat at her kitchen table. But this time, we discussed happier

topics as we admired her daughter's Honor Roll report card. Alexis, Jaylea's oldest

daughter, had been on the Honor Roll for most of the school year and Jaylea told me that

she expected no less than A's and B's from her daughter who consistently delivered

excellent grades. She remarked,

> I really want her to graduate from high school with good grades, go to college. I
> just want her to graduate and be a little more successful [than me] and do things
> that I didn't make it to do in my life. Go places, get far away, travel, made a good
> living, be happy (3/25/2010).

Overall, parents used the afterschool program because they prioritized education

and believed Home Mission assisted their children academically by helping them to

finish their homework. Furthermore, many parents, while not articulating it as clearly as

Peele-Eady (2011), did believe that combining a faithful life and education would help

their children succeed.

Program Affordability

Finally, parents reported that the free program helped their family budgets. While

there were four other free afterschool programs in the neighborhood[13], these programs

were not utilized by Home Mission families because they either did not know about them

or they were not sufficiently evangelical for guardians' tastes. There were also several

fee-for-service afterschool programs run by neighborhood schools, Boys & Girls Clubs,

YMCAs, and churches. Most guardians had experience with other fee-based afterschool

programs, but most of these were not located in the Heights. Several families noted that

other programs they were involved in either cost too much or required additional fees that

they did not wish to pay.

Low income and middle-income families both reported that the fact that the program was free helped them decide to put their children in Home Mission, yet differed in terms of the degree to which this fact shaped their decisions. For example, Yasmin, 43, cited that the program being free played a "major role" in her decision to utilize Home Mission's afterschool care. At the time, she was looking for afterschool services for her middle daughter who was no longer in the program. She was not working then and needed a program that was both affordable and would allow her work past 2:30 pm (when school got out) if she found employment.

In another example, Christina, 33, was paying monthly tuition for her children to attend an "out of the way" afterschool program, which also required additional fees for snacks and games. She noted that "it was just too much" and that there were other things she wanted to do for her children. Her son, Rodney, told me later that his mom didn't want "to waste all her money" on the expensive afterschool program and wanted to free household funds so "we can play basketball." He explained that he and his brother played in two recreational basketball leagues and their mother had to pay for their uniforms, shoes, league fees, etc. Therefore, Rodney's family was able to pay for multiple sports opportunities because the free Home Mission afterschool program made funds available that would otherwise be spent on afterschool care.

Yasmin and Christina demonstrated how both low-income (Yasmin) and middle-income (Christina) families differed in their explanations for using the free program. While Yasmin's financial struggles led her to use the program, Christina wanted to free up household income to provide more recreational opportunities for her children. While these explanations differ, they both show that program affordability was a consideration as families sought afterschool care for their children. As such, middle-class and low-

179

income parents were utilizing a free service that allowed them to have more income for other purposes. But as noted above, cost effectiveness was not the only reason that parents enrolled their children in the afterschool program. In fact, most families noted that they wanted their children to participate because of the religious focus and financial accessibility was either on par with religiosity or an added bonus in their considerations of available programs.

Structuring Program Inequalities

The above examples show that (1) guardians were socioeconomically and religiously different than staff constructions (described in Chapter 5), and (2) like their children, parents articulated reasons for program usage that differed from the transformative purposes expressed by staff. Overall, these data also show that both working-income and middle-income families were included in an afterschool program that was ideologically created to meet the needs of impoverished families. These service inconsistences beg the question raised previously in this chapter: "why did program personnel allow middle-class families to participate in the program?" The answer to this question lies in the fact that the program was structured to encourage working and middle-class participation through such things as word-of-mouth advertising, lack of transportation, and no afterschool care on Fridays and other frequent closures.

Carol Stack (1974:127) shows in her seminal work, *All Our Kin*, that government assistance programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children systematically reduced social mobility for the poor by inhibiting dual earner families and women's additional incomes. As a result, program guidelines helped contributed to the

maintenance of poverty, despite the program's aims to support the economically disadvantaged (Stack 1974). Similarly, Home Mission's afterschool program was structured in a way so as to miss its target population or those who were economically depressed. Rather, it encouraged working and middle-income families to participate in the program in several ways.

First, new families joined the afterschool program through word-of-mouth advertising promulgated by participating families. Staff members did not disseminate enrollment dates except to already involved families. Consequently, guardians told their family and friends about the program. Parents already involved with Home Mission sometimes tried to give their friends and family members an advantage by bringing prospective families to meet the program director well before registration dates. As a result, the program included two primary social groups with only a few families who were not involved in either of these networks.

The first network of families included a group of six mothers who knew each other personally and professionally before attending Home Mission. The mothers in this group often talked warmly about their relationships outside of Home Mission and attributed their program participation to one friend or another in this social group. For example, Lesley attributed her family's Home Mission acceptance to her friendship with Yvette. She remarked that Yvette was instrumental in her Home Mission participation because it was Yvette who "told me about the program and helped me get in" (Lesley, interviewed 5/6/2010). In fact, Yvette met with the program director well before the enrollment dates and got registration forms for Lesley to fill out in advance.

The second existing social network included a group of sisters and sisters-in-law who subsequently joined the program once one sister's children gained admittance. This

group included four mothers who, over the course of a few years, helped each other enroll in the program. This group of related mothers also helped three other family friends join the afterschool program.

Of the remaining families, two families knew the Executive Director, one family was related to a staff member, and four joined the program during open enrollment over the course of several years. These prominent social networks reveal an unanticipated consequence of disseminating registration opportunities by word-of-mouth as the program conformed to existing social networks. Therefore, it was very difficult for families not involved in these social systems or who did not know a staff member to access the program, especially given rare program openings.

Social networks, as noted above, were not only important for participating families to gain admittance, but were also useful given the complicated transportation logistics with which guardians had to contend. The children's program did not provide transportation to and from the program. The lack of transportation limited access for socioeconomically disadvantaged families who did not have cars or other means of transportation assistance. If children were not picked up shortly after 5:00 pm, the program director would call to question parents about their whereabouts. If guardians were routinely late, the program director would require a personal meeting and could either suspend their child for up to a week or permanently remove them from the program, depending on the director's discretion. Thus, caretakers had to have (1) the means to own or access a vehicle and provide for its maintenance and/or (2) family and friends who did own a car and on which they could rely for transportation help. These requirements often weeded out guardians who could not afford to own or maintain a vehicle, and those without familial and social networks made up of individuals that did

have access to cars. As a consequence, transportation proved to be one of the main obstacles limiting low-income families' participation in the organization.

Finally, the program was only open Monday through Thursday with no afterschool care on Fridays. It was also closed for over a month during the Christmas and New Year holidays, a week for Spring Break, and 3 weeks before and after the summer session. On Fridays and extended holiday breaks, families had to either put their children in another afterschool program, pay for in-home childcare, or send their children to other family members or friends who agreed to watch them during these times. A few mothers and fathers rearranged their work schedules to be off on Fridays to be with their children, but they were forced to find other arrangements for childcare when the program was closed for extended periods. Not having the program open on Fridays and long seasonal breaks meant that guardians had to have the financial and/or familial resources on which to draw to provide for childcare during these times. The schedule of the afterschool program was not conducive for poor families in the Heights who could neither afford additional childcare on Fridays and during extended closures nor could take off work. Low-income parents who did not work were not allowed in the program (Katelyn, interview 4/1/2010).

Freidus' (2010) work with Malawian orphans and evangelical FBOs sheds light on the ways program structures can produce unanticipated outcomes for children and families. Freidus argues that agency personnel are blinded by their own constructions of orphans based on western and Christian frameworks. Their inability to "see" children's lives as they are causes agencies to construct social programs that miss children's cultural contexts and larger systems of inequality. Similarly, Home Mission staff structured their afterschool program in such a way that functioned to limit the participation of

economically depressed families or those families that staff rhetorically aimed to serve. Thus, the program encouraged working and middle-income families while simultaneously denying the socioeconomic diversity of participants.

However, the incongruences between staff constructions of families and their lived realities can also be theorized as benefiting the agency. For example, during the Fall Festival, I stopped at the popcorn booth and began chatting with an older, white man who lived in a western suburb. He had come to the festival with a group of volunteers from a large, evangelical Christian church that now helped support Home Mission due to Carlisle Baptist's financial distancing. He asked me what church I was with to which I explained my research. When he realized that I came to the afterschool program almost daily, he stated, "Aren't these kids great? They're [children] so well behaved! They're [staff] doing a really good job here" (fieldnotes 11/12/09). The man's comment echoed other informal statements by program volunteers, which I heard throughout my research. In these instances, volunteers were often impressed with the children attending Home Mission and contributed children's good or polite behavior to the success of Home Mission staff and programs.

Similarly, American charter schools have been praised for empowering children left behind by failing public school systems. Charter school advocates portray charter schools as free from bureaucratic rules and teachers' unions, which they argue allows these institutions to focus on pedagogical innovation and student achievement (Buckley and Schneider 2007). However, scholars have criticized charter schools for accepting only well-performing and/or non-disabled students to boast school performance (Layton 2012, Lacireno-Paquet et al. 2002, West, Ingram, Hind 2009). These studies have pointed out that charter schools can and have selectively admitted higher-achieving

184

students through such things as admission tests, other screening mechanisms, and/or requiring parents to commit time or financial resources before admittance (Sizer and Wood 2008). Such requirements confine enrollment to only those children and families that have the educational and financial ability to pass such eligibility tests. This process, popularly known as "creaming," allows charter schools to enroll students from better-off families so as to boast school achievement scores, while leaving behind more disadvantaged students.

Following charter school critiques, Home Mission seems to be "creaming" by enrolling middle-class families in the program. While the agency does not require admission tests for enrollment, it allows a substantial portion of program participants to be from more financially stable and educated families because of its word-of-mouth advertising. Like charter schools hoping to boast achievement scores, working-class and middle-class children and families' polite and religious behaviors reflect well on the agency. Yet, these positive behaviors resulted from the class and religious values families already espoused as discussed in this chapter, and did not develop solely from the agency's influence. As a result, many of the more disadvantaged students from the Heights were excluded from Home Mission afterschool services.

Conclusion

Guardians whose children attended the Home Mission afterschool program exhibited a wider range of marital statuses, educational achievements, occupations, family incomes, and home locations than described by staff members. In fact, demographic data reveal that a large percentage of guardians earn working to middle

185

class salaries, have high skill jobs, are married, and have college degrees. While there are families that have low skill occupations and report lower incomes, these families were not the majority and they rarely, if ever, resembled staff "underclass" constructions. Working and middle class families are included in a program that aims to help economically disadvantaged households because enrollment and access are structured to encourage guardians with extensive social networks, financial stability, and occupational security. These positive attributes are understood within Home Mission's portrayal of participants' negative home lives to spotlight Home Mission, not families, as responsible for children's social and educational successes. Caretakers continue to participate in the program despite program closures and complicated transportation schedules because it is an affordable service that coincides with their own religious and educational beliefs. Thus, parents see Home Mission as an extension of their home lives, not as an agency filling a void in their children's social and spiritual development. Shalisa most succinctly stated why guardians utilize the program despite complications. She remarked, "like my mom always taught us, if you invest in your children's future, it will pay off." Parents saw Home Mission as one step among many that they took to move toward that future.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions and Contributions

It was activity time at Home Mission when the girls and boys in the afterschool program finished up their homework and moved on to other activities in the gym, computer lab, or playroom. On this day, I accompanied several older girls to the indoor play area. Several more had to stay in their classroom to finish homework which they had not had time to finish after devotion. I sat again with Jessica, the 4th grader whose family I joined during the Thanksgiving dinner described at the beginning of this dissertation. Jessica brought a pack of UNO cards to the playroom and as she dealt the cards, I heard the older boys run down the stairs from their classroom and rush out the doors to the open lot between the Home Mission buildings. I watched from the windows as the boys picked teams and started playing football. The younger children were walking in a line to the gym with Camille and Courtney, the leaders of the young children's classroom.

Soon Alexis, a 5th grader, and Imani, a 4th grader, came to see what Jessica and I were up to. Alexis and Imani sat down next to us to watch, but didn't want to join our game. Rather, Alexis pulled out some Skittles from her pocket and gave some to Imani, Jessica, and me. Soon several other girls were crowded around Alexis as she passed out a few Skittles to each of them. Seeing the girls gathered together, Lauren, a college intern, called across the room, "What are ya'll doing over there?" Lauren was sitting by the door, occasionally texting on her phone and talking with Kysha, a 5th grader. Alexis told her they were "talking" and quickly finished off the few remaining Skittles. Soon the

girls sitting with Alexis started acting silly and playful. Felicia pretended to sing into a microphone and Madison started to rap a popular song called "You're a Jerk." The song was accompanied by a dance called "The Jerk" and several of the girls stood up to compare how well they could do it. The dance included a series of stylized moves that made the dancers look like they were running in place with occasional dips down on one knee. Lauren called again from across the room for the girls to stop dancing, saying, "Girls, stop it!" Tiana, a 4th grader, called back, "It's not bad, Ms. Lauren!"

I was surprised by Lauren's comment and quietly asked Jessica what was wrong with the dance. Jessica said, "It's not bad or nothing. She just doesn't want them to nasty dance." I asked her if "The Jerk" was "nasty" to which Jessica told me that it wasn't and it was basically a newer version of the "Running Man," a similar, but older dance. She also said that Lauren didn't like rap music and got mad when the girls started dancing.

As Jessica and I whispered, Lauren called again for the girls to stop and suggested that they go play on the tunnels and slides. Several of the girls protested, saying that they danced "The Jerk" at home and their parents thought it was ok. Lauren replied half-joking, "Stop! I don't want to think about how you dance tonight or what you do at home." The girls murmured under their breath as they broke up their dance circle. I heard Tiana mumble, "You're a Jerk, Ms. Lauren," an obvious play on the song title. She then went to sit with her friends in the upper most tunnels.

The brief conflict that took place in the playroom that day was illustrative of greater divisions evident throughout Home Mission and which form the focus of this dissertation. We see such divisions as Lauren stopped the girls' dance because she thought it might be "nasty" or mimic hyper-sexualized dances seen in some gangster rap

and hip-hop videos (Morgan 2000, Neal 2004, Watts 2004). In so doing, Lauren conflates the girls' fun with sexist and racist representations of African American women as promiscuous sexual objects (Harris 2003). But as Tiana noted, "The Jerk" was not a sexualized dance, but rather an energetic one that required balance and quick steps, one approved by their morally conservative parents. Also, Tiana's play on the song title shows that the girls did not holistically accept Lauren's attempts to control their behavior, but rather used expressive devices to resist and expose staff misperceptions of participating children. Here, tensions and incongruences between staff constructions of children and children's experiences of their own lives converged in the playroom to affect the implementation and reception of faith-based social services.

This dissertation helps to reveal these complex and contested relationships between service providers and recipients as experienced in Home Mission. Specifically, I have analyzed the incongruences that developed from the intersections of race, class, gender and age to show how certain children and not others were targeted for social and moral transformations. These "interlocking systems of oppression" (Rodriguez 2008) combined with historic and contemporary social processes advocating privatization, conservative evangelism, and productive individualism to shape private service responses and children's lives. I examine these issues in this dissertation to highlight the ways structural inequalities are reproduced and maintained in a faith-based children's program located in a southern, US city.

At the beginning of this dissertation, I asked three research questions that have guided this work. First, I examined the creation and implementation of a faith-based afterschool program by asking: how do agency staff construct the needs of participating children and families and how are these understandings practiced in the Home Mission

189

afterschool program? I found that staff in the afterschool program constructed a narrative

veil through which to view participating families that wove together neoliberal ideas

about personal responsibility and individual productivity with racialized and feminized

portrayals of the urban poor. Such agency narratives functioned to target urban, African

American families for social interventions. Additionally, idealized, western constructions

of childhood were threaded throughout this discourse to pinpoint African American

mothers and fathers as obstacles that children had to overcome with staff help. The

religious orientation of the agency also wove conservative, evangelical notions of sin and

salvation into narratives about deficient families to mark guardians not only as socially,

but also morally lacking. In so doing, children were perceived as needing social and

moral "saving" due to the assumed deficiencies of parents and families.

This narrative view or construction of children's needs was practiced daily

through the program's structure and relationships between staff and participants. For

example, negative portrayals of guardians functioned to distance staff from parents and

conceptually isolate children from their families. It also included assumptions about

African American women and men that led to the differential implementation of the

program. Here, older girls were subject to more intense spiritual training, less playtime,

and more disciplinary action than boys of the same age. On the other hand, older boys

were viewed as rowdy and hyper, and more often channeled toward sports and outside

play. Thus, race, class, gender, and age intersected in the daily implementation of the

program to mark older girls as in need of control and discipline and older boys as in need

of physical development and less spiritual teaching.

In light of staff constructions of program participants, I also investigated the lived

experiences of children and guardians by asking two additional research questions. To

guide my work with children, I asked: how do children represent their lives within and beyond Home Mission and do these representations differ from or affirm staff constructions of children's lives. In my work with guardians, I asked: what are the demographic characteristics of children and families participating in Home Mission and why do guardians utilize faith-based out-of-school care? Throughout the course of this research, children and guardians described their home lives and relationships as nurturing and enjoyable, which functioned to reveal the pejorative nature of staff assumptions. For example, many children described their lives outside Home Mission as economically stable with educated, middle-class guardians and/or married parents who lived outside the Heights neighborhood. Other children and guardians described living in low-income, female-headed households. Despite lower incomes and single parenthood, these homes did not resemble the unstable or chaotic families assumed by staff. Instead, several single mothers were well educated and many fathers were involved in their children's lives, even if not living in their child's home. In addition, children and guardians described participating in local churches unaffiliated with Home Mission, which for many were focal points for their nuclear and extended family networks. Parents also discussed their reasons for utilizing Home Mission. Here, guardians related their involvement in the afterschool program as a practical extension of their religious, recreational, educational, and occupational goals.

Children's and guardian's accounts of their lives outside Home Mission demonstrated that participating families were part of a socioeconomically and geographically diverse service population who utilized the program for different reasons than expected by agency personnel. Children's and guardians' accounts put in relief the deeply entrenched, negative representations of poor, urban African American children

191

and families that staff members promoted and which blinded employees to the realities of their clients' lives. It is through the juxtaposition of staff constructions of children's needs in light of children and guardian's lived experiences that evidence of conceptual and practiced divisions emerged. These divisions as examined in this dissertation help to reveal some of the ways structural inequalities are reproduced and maintained in faith-based social service encounters.

The Reproduction and Maintenance of Social Inequalities

In light of the differences between staff and children's accounts that became apparent in this research, social inequalities were reproduced through the daily interactions between staff, children, and guardians in the Home Mission afterschool program. For example, children were ideologically and programmatically isolated from families, which perpetuated the individualization of service recipients. The historical focus on individual, not societal, reform (Goode 2006, Katz 1996) was maintained as staff concentrated their efforts on children while holding guardians responsible for any family hardships, but yet not as targets for services. As a result, Home Mission employees missed forging possible connections between staff and participating families.

In educational literature, such connections between parents, teachers, and other community stakeholders have been shown to improve children's educational success (Dauber and Epstein 1993, Epstein 1991, Henderson and Berla 1994, Leler 1983, Stevenson and Baker 1987). This research verifies that parent involvement, whether construed in relation to school-based activities or teacher-parent communication, is positively linked to student achievement (Fan and Chen 1999, Hill and Craft 2003,

192

Miedel and Reynolds 1999, Okagaki and Frensch 1998). By isolating children from

guardians and focusing only on children's social and moral transformations, Home

Mission staff missed developing salient partnerships with parents, partnerships that have

been recognized as a factor in positive outcomes for children.

Agency narratives also conflated racial minority status with poverty and

homogenized a diverse service population. Children and guardians' accounts showed a

diverse group of families that ranged in incomes, occupations, marital statuses, and

geography. Yet despite their socioeconomic differences, participants valued both religion

and education. The analysis of these accounts suggests that some families were part of

Carlisle's growing Black middle-class and that all families recognized the significance

and influence of local African American churches. Instead of viewing African American

families as unique, staff conflated race with need and thus viewed all participating

families according to the narrative veil discussed above. In so doing, Home Mission

employees dismissed the spiritual and activist histories of local African American

churches, which if realized, could have led to alliances build on mutual religious beliefs.

Moreover, the neglect of guardians' socioeconomic diversity left pejorative stereotypes

about urban African Americans intact and undermined possible relationships built on

class solidarity.

Finally, staff members reproduced stereotypical gender roles throughout the

program. Here, the threat of Black teenage sexuality caused the director to divide older

girls from older boys and contributed to staff's unequal behavioral expectations for each

group. As a result, older girls were subjected to lengthy and abstract devotions focused

on obedience and self-control. Older boys, on the other hand, were regarded with less

attention and subjected to less religious and social training. In so doing, staff

recapitulated social fears about African American young women who have been front and center in debates about social assistance as "welfare queens" and teenage mothers (di Leonardo 1998, Davis 2004, Hendrixson 2002, Katz 1989). In comparison, staff's relative inattention to boys' social and moral reformation continued popular perceptions of African American boys and men as peripheral to family domains (Collins 2000) or as outside educational projects (Ferguson 2000). As a result, Home Mission programmatically supported gender inequalities and recapitulated negative conceptions of African American women and men produced in broader assistance and educational debates.

The reproduction of inequalities, as noted above, stands in stark contrast to the stated benevolent mission of the agency. By examining these issues, this dissertation provides an example of the ways religious philanthropic modes of power reproduce and perpetuate structural inequalities. As Freidus (2010) notes, FBOs can be blinded by their own faith and altruistic notions so as to neglect the cultural contexts of service participants, which can lead to unanticipated negative outcomes. Similarly, Home Mission viewed participants through a negative veil, which disallowed the development of possible partnerships and alliances with participating children and families that could combat racist and sexist assumptions about African American service recipients. The examination of such issues is timely given the increasing role of faith-based organizations in national and state relief agendas (Wuthnow 2004) and the broad-based rhetorical and material support many FBOs now receive (Adkins, Occhipinti, Hefferan 2010). This work problematizes contemporary claims that faith-based programs are more efficient and morally superior to their public and secular counterparts (Cnaan 1999) by showing

how FBOs can "get it wrong" (Freidus 2010:65) if they are not acutely aware of the cultural contexts within which they work.

Theoretical Contributions

By examining the incongruences that develop in a faith-based out-of-school program, this research makes several theoretical contributions. First, this work helps advance anthropological theories of political economy of U.S. poverty to show how neoliberal imperatives are practiced at the ground level in a religious social service organization. Staff attempts to save children from sin and their families can be understood as working to accomplish neoliberal aims to reform the poor (Goode and Maskovsky 2001; Kingfisher 2002; Maskovsky 2001, Smith 1990). In practice and rhetoric, staff sought to transform the subjectivities of participating children who they deemed misguided by the moral and social failings of their guardians, and they used neoliberal ideologies regarding choice, individual ability, and responsibility (Kingfisher 2002, Harvey 2007) to justify their transformative work. By extrapolating these processes, this work shows how policy and popular discourses about individual production and personal responsibility combine with urban stereotypes in a faith-based service encounter to perpetuate structural inequalities.

Additionally, this dissertation helps expand our understanding of the multiplicative and interactive affects of race, class, and gender with other salient social categories such as age. In Home Mission, the dialectical layering of social oppressions such as age, race, class, and gender caused services to be differentially implemented for boys and girls, and for children, teens, and adults. Including age in this intersectional

195

approach helps to reveal how social identities highly connected with age such as children and the elderly are in reality influenced by multiple social factors that converge to affect experiences of marginalization.

This work also contributes to the growing body of anthropological scholarship that recognizes children as active social actors who have valuable insights into social processes (Bluebond-Langner and Korbin 2007; Bucholtz 2002; Hirschfeld 2002; James 1998, 2007; Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998). This research demonstrates the importance of including children's words and actions in anthropological studies since the pejorative nature of staff assumptions was revealed through children's accounts. Therefore, this work provides an example of the ways children's voices can enhance anthropological scholarship while also opening up a space for a traditionally marginalized group to speak (James 2007).

Finally, this research extends the northern-focus of urban anthropology (Bourgois 1998; Bowie 2003; Goode and Schneider 1994; Low 1996; Mullings 1987; 2003; Ruben 2001; Sharff 1998; Stack 1974; Susser 1982; Susser and Schneider 2003) by investigating a mid-sized urban center in the southern U.S. Specifically, the South's history of explicit racism, high levels of poverty, and religiosity combine with conditions of urban living to create particular contexts of marginalization and disenfranchisement for many residents. Here, the historical particularities of the South offer a deeper understanding of urban processes by exploring how conceptions of impoverished urban communities and residents affect the creation and implementation of faith-based social programming in this center city.

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this research offers practical applications for the social service agencies populating Carlisle's city center and other urban contexts. As agencies struggle to meet the needs of children and families, this research helps to show that giving voice to service populations, especially children who are rarely considered in the creation and implementation of services (Korbin 1992), helps to identify areas for service development and collaboration. By listening to children's and guardians' voices, service professionals can learn about the everyday realities of children's lives that may be similar or different from agency constructions of children's needs. As a result, service professionals could construct more responsive programs because they gain first-hand knowledge about the issues children face.

One possible method for Home Mission to ascertain the cultural contexts for families is to revise their admission paperwork to include open-ended questions that would encourage parental input at the very beginning of enrollment. For example, staff generally did not think children and guardians attended church. However, as indicated by participants, children and guardians were all involved in local churches, although to differing degrees. By adding questions about where families attend church and how often, staff could ascertain church involvement and identify religious connections.

In addition, agencies could implement ongoing needs assessments with families to stay abreast of the issues that children and families face and with which they need help. By using needs assessment data from families, staff could more clearly weigh their constructions of families' "needs" with families' actual social and economic situations.

As a result, program guidelines and practices could be adjusted to minimize the layers of division discussed in this dissertation.

Finally, this work speaks to the importance of making staff in afterschool or other child-related social services aware of the educational literature about the benefits of parents' program involvement for children's academic and social success. This body of work shows the importance and necessity of parental involvement for children's positive outcomes and could help staff develop programs that encouraged parental involvement instead of ideologically isolating parents from children. The above suggestions point to concrete ways programs like Home Mission could construct more responsive programs, ones that take into account the cultural contexts in which children live and act.

Overall, implementing collaborative projects and assessments that include children and families in the development and practice of social programs helps to combat negative narratives about those in need in addition to structuring more effective social programs. Furthermore, collaborative efforts can build relationships between and reciprocal knowledge about service providers and recipients to bridge many of the divisions discussed in this dissertation. Identifying and addressing such divisions has become particularly salient given the current fractured landscape of social service provision in the US, where private agencies like Home Mission are increasingly responsible for determining the available array of social services for children and families.

Endnotes

[1] To protect their privacy, all individuals who participated in this research have chosen or been assigned a pseudonym.

[2] Home Mission, the Heights, and Carlisle are all pseudonyms for the places I conducted research.

[3] To protect the privacy of the community and city where I conducted research, I do not site newspaper or some archival sources directly because to do so would reveal the name of the city and neighborhood that I studied.

[4] I attended several meetings of two groups that worked toward racial reconciliation in Carlisle. After the meetings, I informally interviewed leaders in both groups to gain an understanding of the groups' histories and current projects.

[5] During the course of this research, I interviewed nine nonprofit directors who ran agencies throughout Carlisle's center city neighborhoods. These directors were unaffiliated with Home Mission, but I interviewed them to learn about the private social service offerings available to children and families in urban Carlisle.

[6] Unlike churches that practice infant baptisms, the Southern Baptist Convention promotes "Believer's Baptisms" which is when a person accepts Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior and agrees to a baptism by immersion. This process ideally happens when a person is old enough to understand and accept this faith commitment.

[7] I base the information on community reactions to Home Mission on interviews with Heights Neighborhood Association members and other Heights residents conducted between August 2009 and May 2010.

[8] Based on interviews with Courtney on 4/2/2010; Katelyn on 3/5/2010, Lauren on 3/24/2010, Sara on 4/1/2010; and Scott on 5/21/2010.

[9] The staff members who were leaving at the close of the school year included the following staff members: Lauren, a college intern in the older girls' classroom, was graduating college and preparing for work in an international mission site. Sara, also a college intern in the older girls' classroom, was starting her student teaching in the coming academic year and was preparing for a career as an elementary school teacher. Brian was traveling to Africa for a summer mission trip and hoped to pursue a career in sports missionary in Africa. Finally, Katelyn, the Program Director, accepted a position at Carlisle Baptist Church as their World Mission's Coordinator and left the afterschool program in May 2010 (at the close of this research).

[10] I do not include children's pictures of family members in this chapter to maintain the confidentiality of my research participants. However, when appropriate, I incorporate

pictures of material objects that do not contain images of people. Pictures are included in Appendix I.

[11] As I tested my survey instrument before implementation, I found that respondents felt more comfortable providing income estimates than writing specific amounts. Consequently, I asked guardians to check the corresponding income range that was most congruent to their financial situation. Boxes were provided with salary estimates starting with "$60,000 or more" and decreased by $10,000 increments to "$10,000 or less."

[12] Census data for the Heights is based on two Census tracts, Census tracts A and B. I have chosen to represent the tracts with letters, rather than their designated numbers to maintain confidentiality for the Heights community. Census tracts A and B cover the Heights community, but extend a few city blocks beyond the boundaries of the neighborhood. However, the Census tract areas that extend beyond the Heights are also urban, residential communities, which resemble Census block group data for specific streets in the Heights. All percentages for Census Tract A, Census Tract B, and the city of Carlisle are taken from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2012 to maintain consistency (ACS 2012).

[13] One program was located 4 blocks from Home Mission and primarily served children from the two Heights elementary schools in addition to children from two neighborhood homeless women's shelters. Additionally, there were two small afterschool programs run by prominent individuals. One was supported by a local, white activist lawyer and was housed in a residential house two blocks from Home Mission and the other was directed by a charismatic, African American woman who ran a program in an old storefront approximately 8 blocks from Home Mission. A local church approximately 3 blocks from Home Mission directed the other program, however, this program was scaling back its afterschool offerings due to funding issues at the time of this research.

Appendix I

Summary of Home Mission Staff

Name	Age	Job Title	Race/ Ethnicity	Highest Level of Education	Home Mission Classroom
Brian	21	College Intern	White	Currently Attending 4 year College	3rd thru 6th grade boys
Camille	50	Preschool Coordinator	African American	Some College	Kindergarten thru 2nd grade girls and boys
Courtney	24	College Intern	African American	Currently Attending Community College	1st thru 2nd grade girls and boys
Katelyn	24	Program Director	White	BS	n/a
Lauren	21	College Intern	White	Currently Attending 4 year College	3rd thru 6th grade girls
Sara	22	College Intern	White	Currently Attending 4 year College	3rd thru 6th grade girls

Appendix II

Summary of Participating Children

Name	Age	Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Home Mission Classroom and Teacher
Alexis	11	5	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Brianna	8	2	African American	1st thru 2nd, Camille/Courtney
C.J.	7	1	African American	1st thru 2nd, Camille/Courtney
Charles	12	6	African American	3rd thru 6th boys, Brian
De'Andre	6	1	African American	1st thru 2nd, Camille/Courtney
Dennis	9	3	African American	3rd thru 6th boys, Brian
Felicia	8	3	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Gabrielle	11	5	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Gregory	10	4	African American	3rd thru 6th boys, Brian
Imani	10	4	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Jada	12	6	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Jessica	9	4	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Jon	10	4	African American	3rd thru 6th boys, Brian
Keisha	10	5	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Komari	11	5	African American	3rd thru 6th boys, Brian
Kysha	11	5	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Madison	11	4	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Makayla	6	K	African American	Kindergarten, Camille
Malcolm	7	2	African American	1st thru 2nd, Camille/Courtney
Malik	10	4	African American	3rd thru 6th boys, Brian
Marcus	10	4	African American	3rd thru 6th boys, Brian
Miesha	7	1	African American	1st thru 2nd, Camille/Courtney
Monique	12	6	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Mya	5	K	African American	Kindergarten, Camille
Rodney	8	2	African American	1st thru 2nd, Camille/Courtney
Rodrick	10	5	African American	3rd thru 6th boys, Brian
Shakela	10	5	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Shelia	7	2	African American	1st thru 2nd, Camille/Courtney
Tanisha	9	4	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Tiana	9	3	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Tiesha	9	3	African American	3rd thru 6th girls, Lauren/Sara
Tony	7	1	African American	1st thru 2nd, Camille/Courtney

Appendix III

Children's Pictures of Important Aspects of Their Lives

Photo 6.1

Rodrick's photo of his Xbox gaming system

Photo 6.2

Komari's picture of the matchbox cars he shared with his brother

Photo 6.3

Komari's picture of the television his stepfather bought his family

Photo 6.4

Malik's picture of the Xbox that he played with his brother

Photo 6.5

Jon's picture of his aunt's car

Photo 6.6

Brianna's picture of her Bible on the floor of her room

Photo 6.7

Imani's picture of her grandmother's framed print of the Last Supper

Appendix IV

Summary of Participating Guardians

Guardian Name	Age	Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity	Marital Status	Highest Level of Education	Church Participation	Number of Children in Home Mission
Amber	41	African American	Married	BS	Extensive	2
Barbara	56	African American	Married	College	Extensive	1
Cassandra	32	African American	Single / Living Together	Associates Degree	Moderate	1
Christina	33	African American	Divorced	Associates Degree	Extensive	2
Daniesha	31	African American	Divorced	BS	Extensive	2
De' Andrea	29	African American	Single / Living Together	Associates Degree	Moderate	2
Georgia	48	African American	Single	Associates Degree	Extensive	2
Jaylea	28	African American	Single / Living Together	9th	Occasional	1
Lesley	41	African American	Married	BS	Extensive	1
Mary	28	African American	Single	High School	Moderate	1
Michelle	36	African American	Divorced	MA (working toward PhD)	Extensive	2
Pamela	32	African American	Single / Living Together	GED	Moderate	2
Shae	35	African American	Single / Living Together	High School	Moderate	1
Shalisa and Calvin	31/33	African American	Married	BS / BS	Extensive	2
Sharon	31	African American	Divorced	7th	Occasional	3
Susan	47	African American	Married	BS	Extensive	1*
Tiffany	41	African American	Married	MA	Extensive	4

Tina	36	African American	Separated	Associates Degree	Occasional	1
Yasmin	43	African American	Separated	High School	Occasional	1
Yvette	46	African American	Married	MA (working toward PhD)	Extensive	1

*Susan's son was not interviewed.

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Wyness, Michael
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Yates, Michael
    2003. *Naming the System: Inequality and Work in the Global System*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Zavella, Patricia
    2001   The Tables are Turned: Immigration, Poverty, and Social Conflict in California Communities. *In* The New Poverty Studies: The Ethnography of Power, Politics, and Impoverished People in the United States. J. Goode and J. Maskovsky, eds. New York: New York University Press.

<div align="center">

<u>VITA</u>

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EDUCATION

PhD, Anthropology, Pending   2012
University of Kentucky
Dissertation Title: *Growing Gaps: Children's Experiences of Inequality in a Faith-based Afterschool Program in the US South*

MA, Anthropology   2006
University of Kentucky
Thesis Title: *Through the Eyes of Little Ones: Child and Adolescent Agency in the Urban Environment*

BA, English, Magna cum Laude   1998
Millsaps College

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2003-2006   Teaching Assistant
              University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

2004-2006   Evaluation Consultant
              One Community One Voice (OCOV), Lexington, KY

AWARDS AND HONORS

Dissertation Fellowship   2011--2012
University of Kentucky

Association of Emeriti Faculty Endowed Fellowship   2010
University of Kentucky

P.E.O. Scholar Award   2010--2011
Philanthropic Education Organization (P.E.O.) International

Dissertation Enhancement Award   2009
University of Kentucky

| NSF Summer Institute for Research Design | 2005 |
| National Science Foundation | |

Susan Abbott-Jamieson Award for Preliminary Research   2005
University of Kentucky, Anthropology Department

First Place in the Graduate Student Paper Competition   2004
Southern Anthropological Society

Phi Beta Kappa   1998
Millsaps College

PUBLICATIONS

Ellender, Caroline.
Spring 2008. Through Their Eyes: Child and Adolescent Agency in the Urban Environment. *VOICES: A Publication of the Association for Feminist Anthropology, 8(1):12-16*.

Guskey, Tom with Caroline Ellender and Sunwoo Kang.
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Ellender, Caroline.
April 2004. Through the Eyes of Little Ones: Child Agency in the Urban Environment**.** *Southern Anthropological Society Newsletter*

PAPERS PRESENTED

American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting   2005
Washington, D.C.
"Through Their Eyes: Child and Adolescent Agency in the Center City"
Association of Feminist Anthropology Panel

Southern Anthropological Society Annual Meeting   2004
Decatur, GA
"Through the Eyes of Little Ones: Child Agency in the Urban Environment"

American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting   2006
San Francisco, CA
Guskey, Tom with Caroline Ellender and Sunwoo Kang. "Evaluating a Community Wide, Parent/Family Involvement Program"

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Search Committee for Department Chair   2005
University of Kentucky, Anthropology Department

President, Anthropology Graduate Student Association   2004--2005
University of Kentucky

Treasurer, Anthropology Graduate Student Association   2003--2004
University of Kentucky

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

American Anthropological Association
Association of Black Anthropologists
Association for Feminist Anthropology
Society for Urban, National, and Transnational/Global Anthropology
National Association for the Practice of Anthropology
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Signature