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**A Comparative Study of
Religious Cult Behavior Among Negroes with Special Reference to
Emotional Group Conditioning Factors**

by

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The Graduate School

Howard University

FOREWORD

Through frequent popularized descriptions and presentations, the public has been given the illusion of familiarity with the behavior patterns, personality types and social atmosphere of the religious sectarian cult; especially the popular evangelical type so characteristic of American life. But although it is an important social phenomenon, both of our time and of our American folk-life for generations back, one has to look wide and far for adequate descriptions of it. Serious interpretations are still more rare. Those available, for the most part, are as descriptions, full of distorted accents, caricature and sensationalistic journalism, and as interpretations, amateurish and unscientific to an amazing degree. Especially is this true of the accounts of what is a large segment, but only a segment, of this general religious phenomenon,—the Negro cult sect.

The following study of Negro Religious Cults by Mr. Raymond Julius Jones, started as a field project in anthropology under the supervision of Professor Julius Lips but completed as a master's thesis project in the department of philosophy, is offered by the Howard University Division of the Social Sciences as a preliminary but pioneer study in this important field. As an accurate first-hand report of the proceedings and procedure of thirteen such cults, it furnishes what is to date the most comprehensive cross-section picture of a significant contemporary scene. In its interpretative side, its analysis is definitely intended as tentative and suggestive, but also as exploratory of the three main possible angles of interpretation,—the socio-anthropological, the socio-economic, and the psycho-analytic. Each seems to throw some explanatory light on these modes of religious behavior, which plausibly in their several aspects can be interpreted as religious primitivism, individual compensatory emotionalism or as compensatory group reaction to socio-economic maladjustment. More intensive study, some of it, it is to be hoped, in continuation of this particular study, will be needed to show where the weighted set of factors may be that will furnish finally adequate scientific explanation. For the time being, considerable service has been done in opening up the field and in bringing forward the explanation that the high incidence of this type of religion among Negroes is a function of their background of social experience and their economic condition rather than of any "inherent religiousness" or any so-called racial trait or character.

ALAIN LOCKE, HEAD,
Department of Philosophy.

PREFACE

As far back in life as I can remember, there has been conflict of a religious nature going on within me. Early in life, I was indoctrinated with the teachings of the orthodox Baptist Church. In fact, for the past twenty years, practically all of my social and religious activity has been in a church of the Baptist denomination in one locality or another. During this time, I have served in various capacities as Clerk, Sunday School teacher, B. Y. P. U. worker, and the like. Yet, I have never felt fundamentally in agreement with the dogmatic interpretations of the theological doctrines upon which the institution is founded. The issues over which I seemed to be confused did not appear, however, to be, as far as I could understand them, confined to any particular denomination, but rather, involved the two-fold problem of the meaning of religion as a whole, and the practicability of Christianity, in particular. Upon entering college, I grasped at what was my first real opportunity to delve deeply into the whole "business" of religion, theoretically, to try to "see just what it was all about."

After almost ten years of undergraduate and graduate study, including one year in the School of Religion at Howard University and another year spent in the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, I found myself just beginning to get close to the basic factors involved in this search for a more acceptable explanation of religion for myself and for a more satisfactory understanding of the meaning of religion in the life of social groups, generally.

In this search for light on this persistent and perplexing problem, I was led to enroll in whatever courses in philosophy that dealt with the subject of the ultimate meaning of life. Soon it occurred to me that a fuller comprehension of the nature and function of religion required some understanding of life at the primitive level of society. Thus, as soon as instruction was offered in anthropology, I pursued courses in this field.

My work in philosophy and anthropology made me increasingly aware of the role of religion and magic in primitive societies, and of certain basic factors common to modern cult behavior and religion in primitive societies. At the same time, I began to feel nearer to a comprehension of my own religious difficulties, and to an understanding of the group mechanisms and functions of certain types of religion.

This study is an initial effort toward a more detailed and scien-

tific examination of contemporary religious cult behavior. It involves an analysis of thirteen religious cults, three in New York City and the remainder in Washington, D. C. It is chiefly concerned with one particular aspect of the cult program, namely, the worship services or group meetings.

The purpose of the study is three-fold: first, to obtain a composite picture of a number of religious cults in which the majority of the devotees are Negroes; second, to compare the data pertaining to the cults with authoritative anthropological accounts of religion and magic among certain primitive peoples; and third, to suggest probable social and psychological interpretations of such contemporary religious cult behavior.

The appendix contains thirteen first-hand descriptive reports of group meetings witnessed by the writer. The accounts are as accurate and detailed as possible under the circumstances. Wherever possible, exact quotations are cited. However, many of these are incomplete, for in cases where lengthy passages were involved the entire statement could not be recorded verbatim. In these reports, no attempt is made to reflect the observer's opinions except in cases where a clarification of the meaning of a particular observation is necessary.

The writer wishes to express his gratitude to Dr. Alain Locke, the Head of the Department of Philosophy and to Dr. Julius E. Lips, formerly Visiting Professor of Anthropology at Howard University for their inspiration and cooperation; to Mr. Lyonel C. Florant and Mrs. Margaret Hunton for their aid in gathering materials covering the three cults surveyed in New York City; and also, to the several cult leaders and their many devotees.

It is hoped that further study of the challenging phenomena of religious cult behavior from both the psycho-analytic and the socio-economic angles may lead to some objective and at the same time sympathetic understanding of their basic psychological and social factors. Such analysis, the writer feels, is not incompatible with genuine interest in the cults and the large constituency which they serve, for so widespread and persistent a social phenomenon urgently demands careful analysis and interpretation. The author, indeed, himself hopes to continue this initial study with special emphasis upon the psycho-analytic approach which has only been treated incidentally in the course of the present analysis.

RAYMOND JULIUS JONES.

Howard University
June, 1939.

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CHAPTER I

A COMPOSITE PICTURE OF THE THIRTEEN RELIGIOUS CULTS

One can hardly dispute the fact that there has occurred within very recent years a noticeable revival of religious cult interest and practices. Against the much vaunted scientific trends and accomplishments of our contemporary civilization, even the persistent survival of religious manifestations in their most primitive form would raise an issue calling for serious analysis and explanation. But the spread and growth of such forms of religious organization and behavior raises still graver and more challenging questions.

Certainly we confront a problem of general social significance in this, since cult practices and beliefs are not restricted to any limited segment of the population, even though their incidence among certain groups is relatively greater. The vogue of these more elementary forms of religious behavior exhibits no well defined boundary of race, nationality, or class. This study of thirteen religious cults, in which the majority of the devotees are Negroes, should give no further impetus to the erroneous popular idea that cultism is peculiar to certain sections or levels of the population, or that the forces responsible for its prevalence to an unusual degree among Negroes are necessarily racial. They may well turn out to be factors of psychological or even socio-economic condition, as in fact the tentative conclusions of our study will eventually indicate. Indeed, many observers find in the sharp increase of contemporary religious cultism either a general symptom of our troubled hectic age, with its increased stresses and conflicts, or a general trait of our local American culture, with a rather continuous social history in this mode of religion ever since the great waves of revivalism that swept the population periodically during the early frontier days.

Before any detailed consideration can be made of the contemporary religious cults selected for this study, it is very necessary that the historical background of the religious cult situation in America be considered. We shall, therefore, review briefly the high points of the earlier movement which seems not only to have been the precursor of these contemporary cults, but which many believe to have stereotyped the basic pattern of that singular type

of highly emotionalized religiosity, commonly known as "revivalistic" Christianity.

Evangelicalism is usually traced to Holland where it is reported to have had its beginnings as Cocceianism or Federalism, being so named from its foremost representative Cocceius (1669). Another phase of the movement was Pietism, the principal exponents of which were Spener (1705), who conducted prayer-meetings known as *Collegia Pietatis*; A. H. Franke (1663-1727); and J. A. Bengel (1687-1752). Pietism influenced another mystical movement known as Moravianism in which the name of Count Zinzendorf, the passionate Lover of Christ, figured prominently. Shortly after Moravianism, there followed Methodism, which was first developed in England under the inspiration of the two Wesleys and Whitefield, and then spread to America where it achieved phenomenal success with its open-air preachers and camp meetings.

In the revivals, which have formed an outstanding and recurring feature of American Christianity, the impulse seems to have been a native one, and America has, in this particular, been in a position to give to Europe rather than to imitate it. Very remarkable "awakenings" were experienced in Kentucky and the neighboring states from 1796 onwards. By 1857 the whole country was pervaded by a similar evangelistic movement. A characteristic feature of these early revivals was the existence of physical manifestations accompanying the services which, although they have tended to disappear as a constant feature in certain sections of the country and in certain groups, still persist.¹ Against this background of evangelical and revivalistic religion, the prototype of contemporary religious cults, the Negro plantation church is believed to have had its beginnings.²

In the course of time, the evangelistic churches became established in American life and, although some of them still retain elements of revivalistic worship, it is possible to point out certain distinctions between them and the cults included in this study.

In comparing the evangelistic churches with the cults, the following general characteristics seem common to both groups: (1) primary emphasis upon "preaching the 'Word';" (2) salvation by faith; (3) worship as fellowship; and (4) vernacular singing. In addition to these, certain other features observed particularly in connection with the cults appear more or less common to evangelistic churches also. They are: (1) lengthy exhortations and sermons

¹ Andrew Polk Watson, *Primitive Religion Among Negroes in Tennessee* (M. A. Dissertation, Fisk Univ., 1932).

² See Chapter Four.

punctuated by stereotyped phrases such as, 'Amen!' 'Glory to God!' 'Praise His Name!' 'Hallelujah!' and so forth; (2) sermons featuring polemics against the so-called "sins of the flesh," in contrast to the "blessings of the Spirit" and the "rewards of the hereafter;" and (3) the dogmatic assertion by each of its monopoly on the "only true gospel" of Jesus.

Although the cults and evangelistic churches seem to have the above features in common, certain others appear to be more especially distinctive of the religious cults only. These may be listed as follows:

1. A leadership that is magnetic to an almost hypnotic degree and virtually dictatorial in its control over the cult devotees.
2. Frenzied overt emotional expression, such as shouting, running, jumping, screaming, and jerking as a regular feature of the worship services.
3. Frequent repetition of hymns transformed into jazzy swing-time and accompanied with hand-clapping, tapping of feet and swaying of bodies.
4. Testimonies given in rapid succession and certifying to the reception of "miracles," healings, messages, visions, etc.

The above features represent fairly well the common types of religious behavior found in the cults examined. However, it must not be assumed that the list is exhaustive of the many observations made in all of them, nor must it be assumed that each cult exhibited all of the above features to the same degree. In fact, from one point of view, the difference between the cults and the established churches seems to be largely a matter of the degree to which certain forms of religious behavior are more or less intensified.

Turning our attention now more exclusively to the individual cults, it was found, after a careful analysis, that they appeared to fall into common groups on the basis of certain characteristic emphasis. The distinguishing features which tended to characterize these groups may be treated separately as follows:

1. In two of the cults, namely, the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement and the United House of Prayer For All People, the entire program seemed designed so as to emphasize and magnify the personality of the leader of the cult. In the case of the Peace Cult, the leader is represented as a living physical embodiment of what the devotees conceive to be the Deity. And in the case of the House of Prayer, the leader, Bishop Charles Emanuel "Daddy" Grace, is represented as being the "human repository of the grace and bounty

of God." In a sense, these cult features are reminiscent of the periodic outburst of "messianic" religious fervor that have marked the pages of religious history for many centuries.

2. "Spirit-possession," a type of highly emotionalized religious and ecstatic experience commonly designated by such terms as "filled with the Holy Ghost," "lost in the spirit," "speaking in tongues," and "rolling," seemed to distinguish certain others of the cults. Among these, one must particularly include the following: (a) The Christian Holiness Church—Apostolic; (b) The Church of the Holy Trinity; (c) The Bible Way Church of Christ; (d) The Highway Christian Church of Christ; (e) The Assembly of Jesus Christ; (f) The Way Back to Pentecost Assembly; (g) The Mt. Zion Pentecostal Church; (h) The Mt. Calvary Assembly Hall of the Pentecostal Faith of All Nations.

3. Another group of cults, which might be designated as utopian, communal or fraternal cults, appeared to be distinctive for their extensive and varied programs of religious, charitable, and educational work carried on by auxiliary branches in different communities, and under the supervision of the leader of the cult. In this group there are: 1. The Church of God and Saints of Christ, with headquarters in Bellevue, Virginia, where there is maintained a religious, educational, and industrial plant. Numerous branches of the cult are located in many cities in the eastern part of the United States, in the West Indies, and in Africa. 2. The Church of God, led by Elder Solomon Lightfoot Michaux, with headquarters in Washington, D. C., and branches in Norfolk, Virginia, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This organization sponsors a National Negro Memorial to be constructed on a 500 acre plot located near Jamestown, Virginia. The radio broadcasting program of Michaux, the "Happy Am I" preacher, as he styles himself, and choir over a nation-wide hookup of the Columbia Broadcasting System is an outstanding and popular feature of this cult. 3. The Universal Temple of Tranquility, founded by the late Sufi Abdul Hamid in New York City, included provisions for an extensive program of educational and recreational activity on the grounds, with fairly adequate facilities for the attainment of these ends. The Sufi also visualized a "Universal City of Tranquility" to be built on a 300 acre plot located in upstate New York.³

The Father Divine Peace Cult, with its "Promise Land" situated on the banks of the Hudson River across from Hyde Park, might well be mentioned in connection with this group of cults. However, the writer believes that because of the unusually strong emphasis that is placed upon the "messianic" pretensions of the

³ See Appendix B for descriptive accounts of cult group meetings.

leader, it would be more appropriate to include the Peace Cult in the first group mentioned.

Two characteristics seem to stand out and to distinguish the cults more or less clearly from all other institutions, religious, fraternal, civic, or otherwise. These were first, "spirit-possession;" and second, the mass hypnotic effect of the group gatherings. It might be mentioned in passing, that three of the cults had women leaders. These were: 1. The Assembly of Jesus Christ; 2. The Christian Holiness Church; and, 3. The Mt. Calvary Assembly Hall of the Pentecostal Faith of All Nations in New York City.

An interesting feature of the Church of God and Saints of Christ was the singular custom of tracing its "spiritual" origin back to the ancient Hebrew Prophet Abraham. As a direct descendant of this noble ancestry, the present head of the organization bears the official title of G. F. A., i.e. Grandfather Abraham, and his wife bears the title of G. M. S., or Grandmother Sarah. Also, this cult is the only one of those studied that observes the Sabbath on Saturday, at which time the devotees spend the entire day, from early morning till sundown, within the building. Except for brief intermissions of from fifteen to thirty minutes during which the members move around, consume their lunches, and chat, services are conducted throughout the day. In this cult also, each member is required to purchase and wear a uniform that is especially designed for devotees of the Church of God and Saints of Christ.⁴

From the above composite description of the cults analyzed in this study, it can readily be seen that it is not possible to classify them rigidly into separate groups. There is too much overlapping of distinctive features by common basic characteristics for that. However, the general classification will give us a practical means of giving, in terms of certain of these more distinctive group features, a fairly comprehensive and realistic picture of the thirteen cults involved, and enable us, at the same time, to make certain interesting comparisons that promise to throw light on the basic forces with which we are concerned. Some of these are psychological, others, socio-economic; some relate to comparisons with primitive societies and analogies with primitive religious manifestations, still others with what seem to be conditions peculiarly characteristic of the social background and present condition of the cult clientele.

In chapter II, we shall be particularly concerned with pointing out certain significant parallels between contemporary cult behavior and certain elements of religious magic and group control among primitive peoples.

⁴ See Appendix B for descriptive account of this cult.

In chapters III and IV, we turn to the examination of the contributory factors of a socio-economic and psychological nature in an attempt to ferret out the basic factors that determine or condition those peculiar and compensatory forms of emotional experience and reaction which distinguish the cults from other types of religious organization and behavior.

CHAPTER II

COMMON DENOMINATORS BETWEEN CULT RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS MAGIC AMONG PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

In a comparative approach to the study of primitive and modern cultural elements in religious behavior, it seems necessary at the outset to remind ourselves of the existence of certain basic common denominators of the primitive and the modern mind. C. C. Jung, in a foreword to Aldrich's book on *The Primitive Mind and Modern Civilization*, makes the following statement which might well express the viewpoint taken in this study:

"The primitive mind is far from being illogical and is just as far from being 'animistic'. He is by no means that strange being from which civilized man is separated by a gulf that cannot be bridged. The fundamental difference between them is not a difference in mental function, but rather in the premises upon which the functioning is based."¹

And in further substantiation of this point of view, Aldrich says in his treatment of the primitive mind:

"I am assuming that there is no difference in kind between our psychic structure and processes and those of the savage and the primitive; also, that the primitive psyche and all its ways survive in the most highly cultured man and woman . . ."

Realizing that a common psyche exists for both primitive and modern man and that a consideration of the basic ethnological factors is necessary to evaluate, scientifically, similar elements of contemporary and primitive cultures, an attempt will be made in this chapter to point out significant analogies existing between religious cult behavior observed in this study and elements of religious magic found among certain primitive peoples.

A. The Personalities of Modern and Primitive Cult Leaders.

We turn first to what seems one of the core elements of cult religion, a special type of religious leader and leadership. In this

¹ Charles R. Aldrich, *The Primitive Mind and Modern Civilization* (London Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1931), p. xiii.

connection it is illuminating to compare the personalities of modern and primitive cult leaders. These cult leaders in both types of society possess such an unusually strong and magnetic type of personality that they are able to exercise complete control over the beliefs and practices of their devotees.²

Turning to primitive peoples, we find that among the Eskimo the religious leader, the angakok, possesses a "compelling and absorbing personality." According to Edward Moffat Weyer, Jr.

"The angakok is primitive priest, prophet, and practitioner of medicine; the intermediary between the living and the dead, between the natural world and the supernatural. He is a strange soul, the Eskimo shaman, a compelling and absorbing personality, both to his people and to the investigator, who sees in him the embodiment "par excellence" of primitive religious expression."³

A description of the personality and functions of "the ideal shaman" is given in the following account by I. M. Casanowicz:

"The ideal shaman unites in his person the office of priest, healer, and prophet. As priest, he officiates at communal as well as private sacrifices and ceremonies. But the shaman's priestly functions are secondary to and emanate from his other functions. His connection with sacrifice is mainly the fact that, as one who knows the will of the gods or spirits, and what sacrifices will be pleasing to them on any occasion, he determines their nature and the method of offering them." The author, then, proceeds to point out the most important function of the shaman. He adds: "It is the gift of prophecy, or the art of divination that makes the shaman powerful and that is the basis of his other functions. He has direct intercourse with the spirits and actual access to the spirit world, and so obtains knowledge superior to that of ordinary men. By virtue of this knowledge, he can give directions about worship and sacrifice, and overcome or drive out hostile spirits. He can foretell the future; find out what is going on in distant places; discover secrets; detect thieves; and answer all manner of questions for which men resort to the soothsayer or prophet."⁴

² See Appendix B for detailed descriptive accounts of the cults.

³ Edward Moffat Weyer, Jr., *The Eskimos* (Oxford Press), p. 421.

⁴ I. M. Casanowicz, "Shamanism of the Natives of Siberia," *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution*, 1924, p. 415.

The primary aim of all the various techniques employed by the modern cult leaders, we find, is the desire to gain complete mastery over the mental life of their followers. Henry Lee Moon, in an attempt to account for the magical effect of Father Divine's personality, gives the following description of the cult leader:

"The man is an utterly unimpressive figure. He is dull brown in color, undersized and stockily built. There is nothing of grandeur about him. The back of his head is scarred with some long-standing wound. In his eyes, there is no divine fire and his countenance is undistinguished. Always conventionally attired, he has none of the impressiveness of Prophet Martin, Harlem's towering bare-foot street-corner preacher with his great mane of white hair. Nor does he have any of the gaudiness of the preposterous "Daddy" Grace. . . . On the platform, he is an uninspired speaker, lacking eloquence and violating every canon of oratory. His formless speeches consist of incoherent rhetoric. Words, words, words. Strange meaningless, unheard of words, punctuated with 'Peace! Now isn't that wonderful?' And the frenzied acrobatic jumpings up and down. The effect is magical. His followers respond with ecstatic hosannas . . ." ⁵

Obviously, such complete control, exercised often in cases where there is little outward distinctiveness in the leader, is due as much or more to the general mental conditioning of the cult group membership, and the frame of mind in which they confront or "receive" the stimulus of the cult leader. Though he seems the active agent, they are preconditioned to his sway and influence, and his psychological personality somehow fits into theirs reciprocally. In fact, what stands out in Mr. Moon's description of Father Divine's personality is the curious disparity between his physical and personal qualities and the psychological effect of his leadership upon his followers, which is nothing short of crowd hypnotism or religious magic. Indeed, as is pointed out by Middleton Smith, physical peculiarities may contribute to the effectiveness of the shaman's techniques as a drive toward power and dominance through the manipulation of crowd fear and mass superstition by psychopathic personalities.⁶ In describing the Eskimo angakok, Smith says:

"Aside from the technique of the angakok and the

⁵ H. L. Moon, "Thank You Father, So Sweet," *New Republic*, Sept., 1936.

⁶ It may be interesting to point out that this description also fits, in a measure, the Billy Sundays, Hitlers, and other popular demagogues.

traditional wisdom he employs, singularities of personality sometimes enhance the effect of his art. Certain tendencies toward the possession of physical peculiarities favor the prospective angakok. A case is mentioned of a skinny man who became a powerful angakok at Point Barrow. By virtue of his paper thinness, he was reckoned a good doctor. For, he could get into places where larger men could not go, so that the "evil spirit" had a hard time to conceal himself from the doctor. He was very successful in driving out the devil from the innermost recesses of the heart and body."⁷

Paul Radin, in developing the same point regarding the physical peculiarity of the shaman, lays stress upon the factor of emotional instability. He states that:

"Throughout the world of primitive man, some form of emotional instability and well-marked sensitivity has always been predicated as the essential trait of the medicine man and shaman. This is particularly true of the simplest cultures where magic plays the dominant role. Such instability takes a variety of forms. Throughout Siberia, we know that it assumes pathological proportions, and that a shaman there is preferably selected from those suffering from Menerick. This is a nervous affliction in which the patient falls into trances, and where he is subject to fits of unconsciousness. Although Menerick itself, manifestly, is a disease, the insistence that shamans be selected from individuals subject to it, has a definite bearing on the fundamental trait of all shamans and medicine men everywhere. They must be disoriented, and they must suffer."⁸

The same author then proceeds to point out that these psychopathological abnormalities often entered into the shaman's religious formulations, permeating them throughout with reflections of his own neurotic epileptoid nature. He says:

"The medicine man was thus constrained by his own temperament and by the attitude of his fellow men to make an analysis of his inward life that would properly mirror his own special personality, and that would, at the

⁷ Middleton Smith, *In the White World*, ed. by Rudolph Kersting, 1902, p. 113.

⁸ Paul Radin, *Primitive Religion, Its Nature and Origin* (Viking Press, 1937), pp. 106-107.

same time, be intelligible to the layman. Such an analysis would, naturally, have to stress the salient characteristics of the shaman's mental state when he was engaged in the practice of his profession; i.e., his trances, his neurotic susceptibilities, and the conditions necessary to the attainment of this state. That meant the stressing of his fantasy life, of his illusions, and of his hallucinations. These differed only in degree, assuredly, from those of his normal fellow tribesmen."

I. M. Casanowicz, in describing the same type of peculiar personality found among the shamans of primitive Siberian tribes, states that:

"Among the Yakuts, Tunguse of the Trans-Baikalia, Buryats, Lapps and Ostyaks, the shaman exhibits psychopathic traits. He is shy, distraught, and moody, given to hallucinations and trances, or he is subject to epileptic fits. He is fond of solitude and takes to the woods, jumps into fire or water, hurts himself with weapons, and in general betrays the symptoms of an abnormal person." 9

In pointing out further that the shaman is peculiar in both appearance and make-up, the same author cites the following quotation:

"In general," says Sieroshevshi, (1c,p.102), "there is, in the appearance of the shaman, something peculiar which enabled the author to distinguish him with great certainty in the midst of a number of persons. He is distinguished by a certain energy and mobility of muscles of the face. There is also, in his movements, a noticeable spryness. Add to this, that the shaman is sometimes mentally abnormal, an epileptic, or afflicted with some milder neurosis, which is aggravated by the practice of his calling and further reinforced when, as in the case among some tribes, the office is hereditary or runs in families, and that primitives, everywhere, regard the physically, and more so the mentally, abnormal as due to spirit-possession." 10

However, the chief effectiveness of the techniques employed by both the primitive shaman and the modern religious cult leader is

psychological, and depends upon the extent to which psychological ascendancy can be gained over the minds of the credulous laity.

Dr. James A. Brussell of Pilgrim State Hospital for Mental Patients at Brentwood, Long Island, after diagnosing three cases, one of dementia praecox—paranoid type, a second of dementia praecox—catatonic type, and a third of schizophrenic syndrome, all of the patients having been followers of Father Divine, comes to the conclusion that:

“The striking paucity of references to Father Divine in all three cases is quite apparent. Subtle methods of approach, skilfully worded questions, and ingenious subterfuges met with failure. At no time, before, during, or after psychosis, would any patient be induced to tell his or her experiences in the kingdom, or describe the life there, or divulge what Father Divine had said to them. It is remarkable that in the most dissociated state, the power of the preacher does not fail to keep the lips of the disciple sealed. Whether this silence is prompted by primitive fear, by personal embarrassment, or by the threat of eternal punishment, has not been discovered.”¹¹

Of course, the above cases, being definitely pathological, are not representative of the mental life of the countless followers of Father Divine. Nevertheless, it is a widely recognized fact that the cult leader exercises extraordinary control over both the mental and physical life of his devotees.¹² Dr. Brussell seems to come nearest to pointing out the nature of this mental control when he suggests that it “is prompted either by primitive fear or the threat of eternal punishment.” That a similar fear is felt by the primitive is brought out by the following examples, the first of which is furnished by John Lee Maddox:

“In addition to his alleged intimacy with the gods, the medicine-man does not hesitate, in cases of incorrigibility, to employ another expedient which never fails to smite terror in the heart of both friend and foe. This may be called his detective function. . . . Savage people cannot conceive of bad luck apart from agency. The agents may be visible or invisible. In either case, the question arises: Who prevailed upon the spirits to enter into the patient and bring his sickness and death? For “proper” answers,

¹¹ “Father Divines Holy Precipitator of Psychosis,” *Amer. Jour. of Psychiatry*, vol. 92, No. 1, July, 1935, p. 215.

¹² See Appendix B for “Impressions of the Cult led by Father Divine.”

those questions are always submitted to the specialists of the imaginary environment. Then woe to those unfortunate individuals against whom the medicine-man entertains a grudge; for upon them will fall the accusation of witchcraft, which is usually followed by death. The detective function gives the medicine-man an opportunity to gratify his malice, to punish the recreant, to whip with perfect safety the disobedient into line, and at the same time to intensify to a superlative degree the dread with which popular superstition enshrouds his own person."¹³

Thus we see that the fear of the shaman, like that of the cult leader, is primitive in nature and origin, and that it can be traced to the belief that the religious leader is capable of controlling the destinies of the people through the exercise of supernatural powers.

Among primitive peoples, this fear of the shaman has, also, an economic basis. In short, the divinator, by virtue of his strategic position as intermediary between the laity and the spirits, controls the material fortunes of the whole community. Therefore, the people feel that it is incumbent upon them to submit to his will. Failure to do so would result in untold suffering, also, perhaps, in loss of social status and economic security.

Paul Radin, in discussing the role of the religious formulator, points out that sociological and economic factors entered into the determination of the shaman's position as spokesman for the spirit world. He states that:

"Sociological and economic considerations reinforced the psychological ones, if, in fact, they did not determine them. We must never forget that it was as an intermediary for others, after all, that the medicine man made his living. The primary function of the medicine man here accordingly, was to act as an intermediary, just as his primary wish was to develop a type of approach to the supernatural that would appeal to the layman and furnish him with an explanation for success or failure that would be acceptable to him."¹⁴

Rasmussen gives the following quotation from the lips of an Eskimo who is attempting to explain the "raison d'être" of his belief in the power of the angakok:

"We do not believe in any God as you do," the Eskimo

¹³ John Lee Maddox, *The Medicine-man* (N. Y. Macmillan Co., 1925), p. 120.

¹⁴ *op. cit.*, p. 170.

said. "We do not understand the hidden things, but we believe people who say they do. We believe our magicians and we believe them because we wish to live long, and because we do not want to expose ourselves to the danger of famine and starvation. We believe in order to make our lives and our food secure. If we do not believe the magicians, the animals we hunt would make themselves invisible to us. If we did not follow their advice, we should fall ill and die." ¹⁵

From Franz Boas we receive another vivid description of the circumstances which contribute to the primitive fear of the angakok felt by the natives of Baffin Bay:

"The spirits of the dead, the Tupiloq, knock wildly at the huts, which they cannot enter, and woe to the unhappy person whom they can lay hold of. He immediately sickens, and a speedy death is regarded as sure to come. The wicked qiqirn (spirit) pursues the dogs, which die with convulsions and cramps as soon as they see him. All the countless spirits of evil are aroused, striving to bring sickness and death, bad weather and failure in hunting. The worst visitors are Sedna, mistress of the underworld, and her father, to whose share the dead Innuits fall."

"It is then the busy season for the wizards. In every hut we hear them singing and praying. Conjuring of the spirits is going on in every house. The lamps burn low. The mystic sits in a mystic gloom in the rear of the hut. He has thrown off his outer coat and drawn the hood of his inner garment over his head, while he mutters indescribable sounds, unnatural to a human voice. At last the guardian spirit responds to the invocation. The angakok lies in a trance, and when he comes to himself, he promises, in incoherent sounds and phrases, the help of the good spirits against the Tupilac, and informs the credulous affrighted Innuits how they can escape from the dreaded ghosts." ¹⁶

The fact will be pointed out later that the coming of Father Divine "at a time when poverty and confusion and insecurity were everywhere," contributed heavily toward increasing the magnitude of the popular acceptance of his cult as a haven for the dispossessed.

¹⁵ Knud Rasmussen, *The People of the North* (London, 1908.)

¹⁶ Franz Boas, "The Central Eskimo," *6th Annual Report U. S. Bur. of Ethnology*.

However, in order to gain a sufficiently high degree of ascendancy over the minds of the people, the modern religious cult leader, as with the primitive shaman or divinator, must exhibit proof of his miraculous powers to the absolute satisfaction of the credulous believers.

An effective though perhaps indirect method of impressing upon the people the fact that he is more powerful than the ordinary man comes as a result of the opposition from civil authorities which the cult leader, almost invariably, has to face in defense of his activities. Should he be fortunate enough to win what might be considered as a major triumph over his enemies, his future success is widely, and perhaps even wildly acclaimed and his "spiritual" leadership is virtually assured. In present day cult activities, most of the opposition comes through the medium of the courts. Elder Michaux proudly boasts of his "having been thrown into jail for preaching the Gospel."¹⁷ Bishop C. E. "Daddy" Grace has come into conflict with the courts on several occasions, one of the most recent of which terminated in the closing of one of his "House of Prayer for All People" establishments in the state of North Carolina.

But the greatest triumph that has been won by any cult leader in recent years was achieved by Father Divine in his contest with one of the lower courts of New York. Henry Lee Moon gives an account of the main incidents in connection with the trial in the following words:

"He (Father Divine) first received wide notice in 1932, when residents of Sayville (Long Island, N. Y.) sought to rid the community of the religious headquarters and employment agency he maintained in that town. Convicted of maintaining a public nuisance, he was sentenced by Justice Smith to the maximum penalty of one year in prison and a fine of five hundred dollars. Then a Major Divine miracle happened. It had been freely predicted by his followers that should he be convicted and sentenced some dreadful disaster would befall the court. Justice Smith was aware of these predictions. The following Wednesday night, the Justice, who was apparently in sound health, dropped dead without a moment of warning. Divine was made. His prestige soared . . ." ¹⁸

Turning now to primitive society for an analogy, we find, according to a report by Maddox, that the priests among the Tshi-

¹⁷ See Appendix B for a description of Elder Michaux's "Church of God."
¹⁸ *op. cit.*

speaking people of West Africa are reported to have the ability to procure the death of certain persons :

“Among Tshi-speaking peoples, the priests are frequently able to procure the death of persons who have injured or offended the applicants. It is supposed, however, that the priests don't have this power of themselves, but rather, that being in high favor with the gods, they are able to induce them to adopt their quarrels. The persons against whom the priests exert themselves and show their power, sometimes really die, and in such coincidences the power of the servants of the gods is greatly enhanced.”¹⁹

The above examples, taken from different sources and pertaining to primitive peoples that are widely separated culturally and geographically, tend to establish with reasonable certainty the following observations regarding the personality and techniques employed by the religious leader: First, that the shaman or divinator is a peculiar and abnormal person either mentally or physically or both. He is an individual, voluntarily or involuntarily, set apart from the other members of the community, and functions as an especially designated or “called” spiritual leader and intermediary for the people. Second, it is to the material advantage of the religious leader to magnify rather than minimize, in the eyes of the laymen, the sufferings and dangers which he experiences, ostensibly, in order to safe-guard their interests as individuals and as a community. Third, the techniques used and the formulations back of the religious life of primitives dominated by shamanism, are devised to fit and reflect the physical and the semi-pathological psychological needs of the clientele. Fourth, the primitive layman, as in the case of the credulous and faithful follower of the modern religious cult leader, submits himself whole heartedly and in dread to the will and demands of the shaman. Fifth, the basic factors underlying the powerful role which the religious leader assumes in modern as in primitive societies are circumstances of deep-seated emotional needs, both economic and psychological.

In contrasting contemporary and primitive cult leaders, it must be observed that, whereas, among the latter the position of religious formulator was, as a rule, highly specialized, and admission to the same governed by initiation and other individual and group requirements, the position of contemporary cult leaders has, in the course of time, become considerably laicized, and the requirements for admis-

¹⁹ *op. cit.*, p. 125.

sion seem no longer to emphasize peculiar physical and emotional types but are open to anyone, professional or otherwise, who can gain mental or "spiritual" ascendancy over others.

It is just as important to point out the wide disparities that exist between modern and primitive instrumentalities of religious group control, for we would by no means insist on an exact parallelism between them. In the modern cults both the leaders and the followers live and participate in a world far different from the world of primitive experience and belief. However, in their religious life they slip into characteristic context of unquestioned belief and fantasy and of complete submissiveness to suggestion and authority which all but reinstates the conditions and attitudes of the primitive animist who is the inevitable victim of shamanistic despotism and control. In many cases this is for all practical purposes a regression to the primitive cultural level, while in other more moderate cases there are sufficient common factors, both in the psychological beliefs and reactions and in the social behavior, for the analogies to be interestingly illuminating and interpretative.

B. A Comparison of the Techniques of Contemporary and Primitive Cult Leaders

A common feature absolutely basic for cult control is the dominantly aggressive authority of the cult leader, reinforced by "peculiar" practices, "special powers", and "singular prerogatives". Though infinite in variety, they still have a common purpose, to clinch in the mind of the devotee the supernatural character of the sources of power.

The Negro religious cult leaders exhibit great ingenuity in exercising this type of leadership control, and employ a wide variety of techniques and instruments of appeal and control over the minds of the devotees. These techniques range all the way from mystic revelations to sitting at the banquet table eating "in the spirit" but not in the flesh.²⁰ Because of the multiplicity of appeals at his disposal, from which he is free to make his own selection, the leader of a cult finds it both possible and profitable to attract and hold the interest of many different types of individuals of various races.

Turning to primitive societies, we find, according to Naomi M. Giffen,²¹ that among the Eskimo there exist innumerable techniques of appeal and control, and an unlimited freedom on the part of the shaman to make such a selection as will best further his aims. The same author reports that, "shamanism has no dogmas of any kind."

²⁰ See Appendix B, "Impressions of the Divine Cult."

²¹ *The Roles of Men and Women in Eskimo Culture* (Chicago, 1930), p. 59.

Other authorities support this point of view. Hooper states that no particular forms are observed by the shaman, each one creates his own particular forms and ceremonies."²² Turner adds that almost every person who can do anything not fully understood by others has more or less reputation as a shaman."²³

Hall reports that, "any man or woman can become angakok if he is strong enough to gain a mental ascendancy over others."²⁴ Hence, it may safely be concluded that there is no general rule to be found among either primitives or modern cult leaders which determines who shall be the religious leader, or the techniques to be employed by him the same. However, in primitive societies, it is always "one who has the power to get into an ecstatic state, and has trained himself to do so when the circumstances demand and permit."²⁵ On the other hand, in the cults studied, the approach seems to be to the effect that the individual, after having made a careful study of the basic economic and emotional needs of the group over which he wishes to dominate, proceeds to employ techniques of group appeal and control convenient and suitable to the particular situation.

This is by no means to suggest that control is more effective in the case of religious hypocrisy and disbelief on the part of the cult leader, or, on the other hand, is dependent upon self conviction and belief. Many cases of effective leadership can doubtless be brought forward of both varieties; it is, after all, the projection of conviction that counts, though often the cult leader is emotionally sincere and convinced.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare the sincerity and trustworthiness of the attitudes and techniques employed by the Negro religious cult leader with reports as to the alleged honesty of the religious formulator among primitives. First, in regard to the cult leader, we have the following account of an interview with the founder of a present-day cult in which the latter states the purpose and objectives of this organization:

"We will attempt to create wholesome and scientific methods of recreation. We'll have ball courts, handicraft, bowling alleys and other outdoor sports. We will revolutionize the church's purpose by carrying out clean sports to build youth physically, thereby being able to destroy the diseased bodies existing in the community that result from

²² William H. Hooper, *Ten Months Among the Tents of the Tuoki* (London, John Murray, 1853), p. 112.

²³ Lucien Turner, *11th Annual Report*, Bureau of Ethnology, 1898-99.

bad housing. In order to further check the evils of bad housing, we are building the "Universal City of Tranquility." It will be a piece of land upstate (New York) in the Catskills some 95 to 100 acres. It will be a neo-divine community based on the teachings of Jesus. We will obliterate crime by means of forensic medicine. Lust, greed, hate, and passion are the four causes of crime and insanity. Common ownership will be necessary to obliterate crime. We hope to develop a new type of human being. We will analyze marriage scientifically. All couples should have a blood test, a urine test, and a psychiatric test before marriage licenses are issued. We will cut down the hours of work to five hours a day. Education of two and a half hours a day will be compulsory for all adults until scientific standards of intellectual ability have been attained by all members of the society."²⁶

When urged to state the sources from which he expected to derive income sufficient to carry out this program, the leader is reported to have replied that the funds were unlimited, but that he was under oath not to divulge the secret. However, the interviewer was assured that once he was on the "inside" he would know everything. It was also stated that one of the reasons why collections were not taken at the meetings was that such moneys would hardly cover the electric bill, much less supply the thousands of dollars already spent on the building. Then the Sufi was asked to state the spiritual purpose of the movement, and he replied: "Have you never thought of the possibility of converting people to a quiet peaceable way of living, so as to remove all of the discontent that makes for strife?"

In another instance, at one of his "banquet table" speeches, Father Divine gave expression to the spiritual and material advantages to be derived from membership in the Peace Mission Movement. He said:

" . . . Now live in this recognition, if you want to. If you do, I will be with you. And I am well, healthful, joyful, peaceful, lively, loving, successful, prosperous and happy, in spirt, body, and mind. Yea, in every joint, every sinew, every limb, and every bone, and in every atom, fibre and cell of this physical bodily form. Then, if I am with you, and you are with me, harmoniously, you will be the recipients of this which I am. You will be the

²⁶ Excerpts from an interview with Sufi Abdul Hamid, founder of The Universal Temple of Tranquility, by Lyonel C. Florant.

re-incarnators, and the reproducers, and the repersonifiers of that which I have actually personified. That you may visualize and have something perfect to visualize . . .”²⁷

In the “Church of God and Saints of Christ,”²⁸ founded by the late Bishop W. L. Crowder and now led by Bishop H. Z. Plummer, G.F.A., with headquarters in Bellevue, Va., we find, also, an elaborate religious and educational program utopian in character. Acknowledgements of donations received are printed in the official organ of the cult. The following example is cited:

“Bellevue, Va. We express our gratitude to the saints of Washington, D. C. for the food, clothing, and shoes they have sent to the institution; to the saints of Chattanooga, Tenn. for shoes, clothes, starch, and soap; to Elder John A., of Hartford, Conn. for shoes, clothing, and food supplies; and to Sister Floriette Bowie, of Mt. Vernon, N. Y., for clothes.

Bishop H. Z. Plummer, Pres.
Sister Beatrice Plummer, Matron.”²⁹

The above incidents, in connection with Sufi, Father Divine, and The Church of God and Saints of Christ, point out another feature of certain of the cults studied, namely, that they profess to be vitally concerned in a practical manner with the economic needs of the devotees and promise future and immediate benefits of extravagant and transforming character.

On the primitive level of life, Paul Radin finds that the strength of primitive religion lies in its being rooted in the everyday life and demands of the community. In expressing this point, he says:

“The strength of religion lay in its being rooted in the everyday life and demands of the community. . . . The subordination of religion to the specific needs of man is encountered everywhere. Even in so complex a civilization as that of the semi-Bantu Iyala of Northern Nigeria, a priest has no hesitation in reducing the function of the supreme God, Awwaw, to that of satisfying the particular wants of the moment. He prays: ‘Let rain fall. Make our yams grow big, and let us get food.’ And then he adds: ‘We then kill goat and fowl and leave the blood and feathers, and eat the rest with beer. We are not sac-

²⁷ Taken from *The New Day*, vol. 3, No. 5, p. 7.

²⁸ See Appendix B, “The Church of God and Saints of Christ.”

²⁹ Taken from the *Weekly Prophet*, vol. 27, No. 43, Nov. 18, 1938.

rificing at all to Awwaw this year, since rain has fallen early'."³⁰

It is difficult and highly speculative to attempt to pass critical judgment upon the extent to which these efforts to ameliorate the distressing conditions of cultists are genuine and sincere expressions of helpfulness on the part of cult leaders. The least that can be said is that the honesty of the religious cult leader should compare favorably with that of leaders in other fields of endeavor which involve large responsibilities in terms of public trust and confidence.

Although nothing final may as yet be said regarding the trustworthiness of the Negro religious cult leader, some suggestions as to the proper ethical evaluation of his techniques of appeal and control might be derived from the following opinions of researchers as to the honesty of primitive shamans and diviners.

Casanowicz, writing on the subject of shamanism among Siberian tribes where the phenomenon is believed to have originated and to exist still in its most striking form, expresses the opinion that:

"The shaman is often a man of unusual intelligence and mental resources. He has a profound knowledge of the simple life of his neighbors, and gradually acquires the habit of solving their perplexities by a logic of his own particular talent. In many cases the rite performed is to bring about a result which, like rain or sunshine, is about to happen anyway. By the shrewd turning to account of accidents, he manages to assert and maintain his ascendancy. Obviously, it cannot be otherwise that many of the divinations and predictions of the shamans are belied by results. However, with the child-like credulous peoples, one successful instance causes them to ignore or forget all previous failures and deceptions. Still the shamans could hardly, for any length of time, keep up the belief in their superiority without convincing the people of miracles, that is, by executing feats which exceed the power of the laity to perform and understand. And, as a matter of fact, according to the testimonies of travelers and explorers, some shamans are past masters in the arts of ventriloquism and sleight-of-hand tricks. The question is: Is the shaman convinced of the power of his conjurations? Or, is he play actor, playing a

³⁰ *op. cit.*, p. 116.

comedy before the superstitious people? In general and a priori, it may be said that the rise of so complex a phenomenon cannot be explained by mere trickery and deception. Only a profound belief in their calling could create the conviction in the people of the miraculous power of the shamans and endow them with the enormous influence which they enjoy among Siberian tribes.”³¹

Another writer, Edward Moffat Weyer, Jr., expresses confidence in the angakok's methods on psychological grounds. He states that, “on psychological grounds, it must be insisted that the angakoks cannot be denounced as utter charlatans. Beneath their superficial artifices, there stirs a genuine spiritual force that is incontrovertably real.”³²

From another viewpoint, Bilby seems less favorable in his estimation of the sincerity of the shaman's practices, especially after he has completed his apprenticeship and has assumed the functions of a full-fledged conjuror. He says:

“It is after the period of training is over that the conjuror becomes the bestial, sensual, tricky figure, full of cupidity and treachery he is so often represented to be. After graduation in the guild, no further prohibitions and denials are observed. He marries, indeed, but no woman of the community is safe from him. Under one professional pretext or another, he may have his way with each and every one of them, with or without her particular husband's consent. This, however, is seldom withheld. On the whole, monogamy is the rule among the Eskimo, although there are plenty of exceptions. The observer has known a conjuror with three wives, two of them sisters.”³³

Paul Radin, laying stress on the factor of economic security, expresses a more realistic viewpoint regarding the technique used by the “religious formulator.” He states that:

“The initial and primary task of the shaman and priest is to emphasize and magnify the obstacles that stand between man and his natural and realistic adjustment to the outside world. It is through the excellence and effectiveness of the “technique of obstacles” that he

³¹ *op. cit.*, p. 431.

³² *op. cit.*, p. 421.

³³ Julian W. Bilby, *Among Unknown Eskimo*, p. 195.

made his living and retained his hold on the majority of the people. Nor does this necessarily imply that he was an imposter, a dupe, or an individual with only mercenary motives. Granted his temperament and its contrast to that of the layman, he could have been both sincere and altruistic. If he frequently was not, that was because the profession as such and its enmeshment in the economic set-up made this impossible.”³⁴

From the above examples, taken from different groups of primitive peoples, it can be seen that researchers are almost in agreement in expressing the opinion that the shaman and divinator believes, more often than not, in his own power to perform miracles and to function as an intermediary between the people and the spirit-world. Undoubtedly, this feeling of self-confidence is communicated to and shared by the credulous laity. And it seems reasonable to conclude, both upon the basis of current testimony and analogy, that a similar situation pertains as to the sincerity and conviction of religious cult leaders. They either believe or come to believe in their supernatural powers, and the unquestioning faith of their followers fortifies their authority and effectiveness. They are, for better or worse, vested tyrants of fear, superstition, and other fixations of a primitive mass mentality.

C. Modern and Primitive Forms of Cult Membership.

Within the cults, three fairly distinct groups of membership status are recognizable. First, the cult leader, who, by virtue of his position, occupies the highest “spiritual” rank in the cult; second, there are the “saints” who enjoy special honors because of claims, duly substantiated, of having become “holy and sanctified”; and, third, the remaining devotees who are not so distinguished. In certain of the cults, the leader and the “saints” wear special uniforms and occupy special seats in the meeting places.

Among primitive groups, there exists a similar “sort of hierarchy”. Bilby describes this situation among the Coronation Gulf Eskimos:

“The greatly esteemed profession of conjuror is open to both men and women. . . . The art has its own hierarchy of professors according to their degree of aptitude and initiation. Only those with some particular qualification, natural or acquired, such as the power of throwing themselves into a trance, attain the highest dignity.”

³⁴ *op. cit.*, p. 145.

And in stating the duties of each class, Bilby adds :

“The trance is the final test for the honors of full conjurship. Those who forever remain unable to arrive at this, fail to pass the test and are rejected from the class of the full-fledged. One of these inferior grades is that of Kenneyo, the one who incants for the seal hunters. Another is the Makkosaktok, the one who goes around with the whip during the Sedna ceremonies. And a third is the Noonageckaktok, another official at the great annual celebration.”³⁵

Among the cults studied, it was necessary for the devotee to give both verbal and physical proof that he had been chosen as one of the “saints”. Verbal proof of this fact was given, usually, through testimonies of healings, messages, visions and the like received from “the other side”. Physical proof was given through demonstrations of “shouting,” “speaking in tongues,” “rolling,” and so on, to the satisfaction of the other cultists.³⁶

According to Bilby, the Eskimo shaman, “on the completion of his training, is publicly acknowledged as a conjuror. He makes a visitation of all the dwellings in the settlement, performs incantations, and receives a payment in charms. These things are valueless in themselves, but signify that the tribesfolk have accepted the new conjuror.”³⁷

In contrasting contemporary with primitive forms of cult membership, it must be observed that, whereas among the latter, there exists a “sort of hierarchy of shamans of the laity”, in the contemporary cults, membership status is less rigidly classified and includes the devotees also. Thus, anyone providing substantial and acceptable evidence of having received the “Holy Ghost” appears eligible for recognition as a “saint”.

D. The Mass Behavior in Modern Cults and in Primitive Societies.

Here again, in respect to mass behavior, in spite of all differences, there is a basic similarity in the mechanisms and responses of the crowd under religious excitation. A general state of mass hysteria is worked up emotionally by means of the physical excitement of singing, shouting, and dancing in unison under the skilled initiative of the leaders. A pattern of such behavior becomes stereo-

³⁵ *op. cit.*, p. 199.

³⁶ See Appendix B, “Christian Holiness” and “Mother Horne” cults.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 199.

typed in a given cult and is imitated competitively by the initiates. Testimony, shouting, possession, "rolling" or what not, predominates according to the worship pattern of the particular cult, but all of them have the base mechanism of the hypnotic effect of mass rhythm induced by song and dance. In the cults studied, the majority of the hymns had been transformed into jazzy swing-time rhythms. While singing, the devotees kept time by clapping hands and tapping the feet and swaying their bodies. Frantic shouting, jumping, and screaming frequently adds considerable excitement to these group meetings.

Among primitive peoples, likewise, rhythm plays a major part in all ceremonial activities. Thalbitzer gives the following account of the dances of the Eskimo:

"The dances of the Eskimo are of two sorts; the ceremonial dances performed in a prescribed manner, and the dances wherein the performer invents movements and pantomines extemporaneously. In the former of these, we find the dancing of the women and men to differ radically. The women merely swaying gracefully to the tune of the music, while the men jump about violently."⁸⁸

In the cult meetings, one characteristic manner of the singing was that of repeating the chorus of a hymn over and over. This repetition was kept up until the more enthusiastic of the devotees were worked up into a high degree of emotional excitement, expressing itself in hysterical shouting, screaming, and occasional prostrations.⁸⁹ Psychologically, this continuous and monotonous rhythm had a mass hypnotic effect upon the participants which resulted in the temporary loss of all sense of emotional balance and restraint.

The rhythmic beating of drums has a similar hypnotic effect upon certain primitive peoples. Tom Harrison gives a description of a war ceremonial among the Papuan natives of New Hebrides in which the rhythmic effect of the beating of drums is vividly described:

" . . . A special rhythm is beaten out on the greatest gong; three longs, pause; three longs, long-short-long, three shorts, long. . . The whole land roars into a riot of sound; waves fiercely sweeping over all. . . The killer then dances out before the whole village and drops the flower from his teeth at the feet of the chief. The chief

⁸⁸ William Thalbitzer, *The Ammassolik Eskimo*, (Copenhagen, 1923), p. 165.

⁸⁹ See Appendix B, "Bible Way" and "Mother Horne" Cults.

embraces him. Through the night, the dancing goes on in a formal pattern of rush and pause. One man has the privilege to lead the incessant chanting. . . ." ⁴⁰

From Boas, we have a quotation from Kumlien's account of the role of an *angakok* in one of the ceremonials. A more pointed example of group hysterical behavior among primitives can hardly be found:

"They have an interesting custom or superstition, namely, the killing of the evil spirit of the deer, sometimes in the winter or in the early spring. The chief *anuit* (*angakoq*) is the main performer. He goes through a number of gyrations and contortions, constantly hallooing and calling until suddenly the imaginary deer is among them. Now begins a lively time. Everyone is screaming, running, spearing, and stabbing at the imaginary deer, till one would think a whole madhouse was let loose. Often this deer proves very agile and must be hard to kill, for I have known them to keep this performance up for days, in fact, till they were completely exhausted." ⁴¹

The significant thing to observe in connection with rhythm is the temporary hypnotic effect of it upon the people. The effect seems not to depend upon the type of rhythm, but rather, upon its being sufficiently continuous and monotonous. Such monotony tends to deaden the normal sensibilities to space and time relationships and to fatigue, and seems to throw the individual into a temporary fit of exaltation. It may be interesting to point out, too, that in the cults studied, the leader, though taking an active part from time to time in whipping up the intense atmosphere, seemed particularly immune to the more serious hypnotic effects of the rhythm.

E. Contemporary "Cult Consciousness" and Primitive "Group Consciousness."

Another characteristic of the cults, as of primitive peoples, was the existence of a strong and distinctive "cult consciousness" approximating what Durkheim would call a "collective representation" of the cult as an institution mystically incorporating all of its members in a special bond, and as setting its members apart from the rest of the community. The cultists invariably manifested a marked "in-group" attitude toward each other, and an equally strong "out-group"

feeling toward non-members. Devotees addressed each other always as "brother" and "sister," or in some way recognizing or stressing the group bonds between them.

It is a widely recognized fact that among primitive peoples the group feeling, expressing itself through public opinion, is the most powerful force in the life of the tribe. In fact, there is no such thing as an effective and distinctive individual will except, perhaps, that of the shaman and the chief in certain tribes, in the conduct of affairs pertaining to the welfare of the group as a whole. An example of this primary concern for the well-being of the community is brought out in the following account by Bilby:

"In their family and tribal life, the Eskimo carry out a very smooth running sort of communism, the chief tenets of which are rigidly enforced peaceableness, open hospitality to strangers, and a sharing of food and the necessaries of precarious existence with each other."⁴²

In the cults, the leaders strongly emphasize the need for harmony among the membership. Invariably, they preach "faith" and "belief" on the part of each devotee. No critical sentiment is either encouraged or tolerated. Father Divine, in one of his banquet table addresses, recently gave classical expression to this dominant attitude of cult uniformity. He said:

"I do not want anybody to follow me who is not wholeheartedly consecrated or who is not all of my spirit and all of my mind; for I do not want to be in confusion, nor do I desire to confuse anyone. . . . If you can find any flaw in my work, mission, words, deeds, or actions, why go on about your business and get yourself another teacher. . . ."⁴³

Such messages, thundered almost nightly from the pulpits, serve to weed out all persons who might have the slightest tendency to criticize, either constructively or otherwise, the program of the cult. Those remaining are molded into one indivisible cult mentality. In this connection, we are reminded of a statement by Casanowicz to wit: "The slightest lack of harmony between the acts of the shaman and the mysterious call of the spirits brings their life to an end." May it not be suggested that the contemporary religious cult leader, like the primitive shaman, realizes that the effectiveness of his techniques is dependent upon complete psychological submission and loyalty, what he calls the "spiritual unity" of the cult.

⁴² *op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁴³ *The New Dawn*, vol. 3, No. 5, Jan. 31, 1939, p. 6.

F. Modern and Primitive Cult "Benefits."

In most of the cult meetings, the devotees testify to having received certain "spiritual blessings" as rewards for being faithful and obedient. Although these testimonies vary with individuals, all of the "benefits" received appeared to fall in three general groups, namely: 1. healings, 2. religious experiences, 3. relief from pressing circumstances, sometimes emotional, sometimes social. In addition to the testimonies included in the descriptive accounts of the several cults, the following may be cited as typical of these three groups:

1. Healings: "Through prayer, I can say the Lord has healed my leg. It is covered with new skin, and looks like my leg was never hurt."

Ruth Holly, Baltimore, Md.

"I praise Him because He is a leader. He healed me from what doctors diagnosed as fibroid tumor and tuberculosis of the spine years ago."

(Sister) Julia Collins, Balto., Md.

"Since I've been saved, the Lord has been my healer without a drop of medicine of any kind."

Freda Harrison (age 13), Washington, D. C.

2. Religious Experience:

"I've been buried in Jesus name and filled with the Holy Ghost."

Rosa Wilkins, Washington, D. C.

"I am yet praising the Lord for what He is to me and for saving me from sin."

Leola Stringfellow, Washington, D. C.

"Praise and thank the Lord for being baptized in Jesus name and filled with the Holy Ghost."

Marie Rogers, Washington, D. C.

3. Relief from Pressing Circumstances:

"God carried me through school and allowed me to receive a teaching position in Baltimore City."

Elise Wade, Baltimore, Md.⁴⁴

Among primitive peoples, as in the cults, the "benefits" derived from shamanistic belief and practice are associated with the vital

needs of both the individual and the community. For, it is the religious formulator who, as intermediary between the people and the spirit-world, has the power of safeguarding the food supply, regulating the weather, healing the sick, and minimizing the harmful effects of evil spirits.

In the cults, however, the power of influencing the spiritual forces seems not confined to the religious formulator exclusively, but rather, appears available to all "true believers" to a certain degree.

G. Contemporary and Primitive Forms of Spirit Possession.

Spirit-possession, a phenomenon intimately related to the peculiar and abnormal personality of the shaman and, to a certain extent, the modern religious cult leader, manifests itself also among the devotees as a form of highly emotionalized ecstatic behavior commonly designated by such terms as "speaking in tongues," "shouting," "rolling," and other mystical revelations, messages, visions, etc.⁴⁵

There is ample anthropological evidence to show that spirit-possession had its origin, perhaps independently, on the primitive level of life, and that it exists among tribes widely separated culturally and geographically. It thus seems to be a phenomenon arising automatically out of similar conditions. An attempt here will be made to cite a few instances describing spirit-possession in shamans and diviners. Then, with these in mind, an attempt will be made to compare the primitive form with similar behavior in a cultist who is also "possessed" by the "Holy Ghost." Finally, suggestions will be offered as to the most probable explanation of this phenomenon on the primitive level of life and, by analogy, among the cults studied.

Turning first to primitive societies for examples, we find the following account of a "spirit-possessed" shaman as prescribed by Lowie.

"When the spirits first summon their protege, he suddenly begins to grow languid and to tremble. He starts yawning violently. He utters incoherent sounds, and is seized with sudden chills. He rolls his eyes wildly. He totters to the ground. He leaps round in a circle as if insane. He falls to the ground. He lies twitching like an epileptic. He loses all powers of sensation, touch, hearing, and sight. He recovers normalcy. He takes up

⁴⁵ See Appendix B.

the tambourine and starts beating it. He launches out upon some so called 'mission or inspired task'." ⁴⁶

From West Africa comes the following account of spirit-possession among the natives of Ashanti:

"The majority of the priests and priestesses insist that they first adopted their profession because they suddenly discovered that they were subject to possession by some spirit influence. As a rule, this realization comes upon them unawares, either while engaged in the ordinary business of life, or while attending some religious ceremony. They hear the voice of some god and fall down in a fit, or maybe go into a trance. Some fully qualified priest is then called in to interpret the phenomenon, and he comes to the conclusion that some particular spirit or god desires to "marry" the afflicted person. It is then left to the decision of the latter. If he consents, he enters into the service of some full-fledged priest of the particular god whose spirit he has been told manifested itself in him." ⁴⁷

From Central Australia comes this description of an Arunta medicine-man at the outset of his career:

"When a person is about to become a shaman, the evil spirits seize upon a particular person who happens to be footloose and deprive him of his senses so that he runs about like one crazy and can neither rest by day or night. The evil spirit throws stones at him about the size of a pea and of different colors. They enter every part of the body. Finally, the evil spirit directs the man to enter the western entrance of his home, and there he is repeatedly beaten until he falls unconscious to the ground. While in this condition, a kanga or leg bone is forced into his occiput and ngankara stones are placed in his shoulders, hips, and stomach." ⁴⁸

In West Africa among the Amazulu we learn that an apparently normal person may be changed into an abnormal neurotic

⁴⁶ Robert H. Lowie, *Are We Civilized* (New York, Harcourt Brace 1929), p. 214.

⁴⁷ R. S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1929), p. 47.

⁴⁸ C. Strehlow, "Das Soziale Leben der Arunta—und Loritza Stamme," vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 38.

type in order to fit him for shamanistic activities. Canon Calloway gives this description of the transformation:

“The condition of a man who is about to be a divine is this: At first he is apparently robust, but in the process of time he begins to be delicate, not having any real disease. . . . He begins to be particular about his food and abstains from some kinds. He is continually complaining of pains in different parts of the body. And he tells them that he is being carried away by a river. He dreams of many things and on awakening says, ‘My body is muddled today. I dreamt many men were killing me. I escaped, I know not how, and on waking one part of my body felt different from the other parts!’ At last the man is very ill. His hair falls off and his body is dry and scurvy. He yawns again and again and sneezes again and again. And men say: ‘Now truly it seems as though this man is about to be possessed by a spirit.’”⁴⁹

Among the North American Eskimo we have an account of an angakok as he enters into a trance:

“The Eskimo conjuror throws himself into a perfectly genuine trance. To do this, the conjuror sits down with his face to the wall and, drawing his hood well over his features, rocks himself backwards and forwards, calling the while on his familiar spirit to come to him. He continues this howling and rocking until such concentration of mind is affected that he becomes unconscious. He foams at the mouth. Whilst in this condition of self-induced hypnotism, his spirit, it is believed, goes below to Sedna or above to the regions of beatitude. . . .”⁵⁰

The above accounts are sufficient to illustrate the general character of spirit-possession and how characteristic it is of primitive peoples widely separated culturally and geographically. An attempt now will be made to contrast similar behavior among cultists who believe themselves “possessed” by the “Holy Ghost.”

The first thing to be observed regarding spirit-possession in the cults is that, in contrast to the primitive forms, the type of religious experience is often considerably milder and a more temporary form of neurotic behavior. However, among the professionals and the cult addicts, of whom there are thousands, the phenomenon seems

⁴⁹ Canon Calloway, *The Religious System of the Amazulu* (Natal, 1870), p. 259.

just as definitely symptomatic of a chronic regression to primitivism and to a psychopathological condition. Then, too, among primitive peoples, the shaman's trance and the diviner's fit seem confined, more or less exclusively, to individuals with peculiarly adapted personalities, i.e., to medicine-men and diviners as a group; whereas, in the cults, almost every "saint" claims to have been visited by the "Holy Spirit" at one time or another. It also appears that the modern cult leader, in striking contrast to the primitive religious formulator, appeared less seriously affected by these ecstatic situations than the more enthusiastic of the devotees.

In seeking to determine, if possible, the fundamental nature and origin of spirit-possession, we turn first to an examination of the phenomenon on the primitive level of life. Paul Radin offers the following explanation:

"Concretely, we may visualize the development somewhat as follows; spirit-possession in its simplest form is invariably connected with mental anguish and physical suffering. The suffering is induced by the spirit forcibly entering the body. The unwelcome pressure of the layman, who has been accustomed to regard the trance state as the only bona fide indication that the shaman is functioning properly and effectively, is a vital and determining factor.⁵¹

Casanowicz attempts to explain spirit-possession in terms of an "alternate personality" that is artificially induced. In expressing this viewpoint, he says:

"The characteristic method of shamanistic divination is the seance, or what is locally called or known as "kamlanie". In this, the shaman, by smoking, the use of narcotics, singing, dancing, beating of the tambourine, etc. produces a state of trance or alternate personality. While in this state, the spirits take possession of him and reveal their will to him, or give him the desired information."⁵²

Then in pointing out what he believes to be the common origin of spirit-possession and divine revelation, the same writer quotes a statement from George Foot Moore:

"The answers of the shaman, or rather of the spirit he

⁵¹ *op. cit.*, p. 173.

⁵² *op. cit.*, p. 426.

conjures into himself, to questions about all sorts of things which there is no ordinary means of knowing, is perhaps the oldest form of natural divination and the origin of the idea of divine revelation.'"⁵³

The above explanations by Radin and Casanowicz are suggestive of approaches to a critical analysis of contemporary forms of spirit-possession such as we find in the cults. It seems clear, from the examples cited among primitive peoples, that the phenomenon on that level of life has features in common with similar manifestations among contemporary religious cult devotees. Both types, it seems to us, may reasonably be attributed to very much the same causes; i.e., anthropologically, as a form of social crowd behavior characteristically primitive; and, psychologically, as a type of neurotic-epileptoid behavior or a milder form of the same kind of abnormality.

In concluding this section on the comparison of religious behavior in the revivalistic cults and in primitive societies, we may safely assume that with such marked similarities and parallels there are revealed certain basic denominators common to both. This would simply mean that, with due allowances for differences of degree and extent, we confront in such behavior in present day society, roughly, similar primitive reactions in the psychological aspects of the case. And to explain these rather striking resemblances, we must look for psychological factors, and perhaps back of them such social and economic conditions as would characteristically induce such behavior.

In the absence of the general group conditions characterizing primitive society, there are, nevertheless, predisposing conditions, both individual and group, in the immediate background of these contemporary cultist movements necessitating compensatory forms of behavior on a large scale. As individuals, and in the main, as social groups, the cult devotee has encountered shock and setback in the struggle for existence. It is more than a coincidence that the vogue of the cults is invariably strong among the "sick souls" and the handicapped classes.

Fear, based on one or another variety of insecurity, supplies the common factor of the primitive regression. Especially have the unsuccessful groups, the economically submerged, the socially persecuted, the exploited and disparaged minorities been susceptible throughout history to cult adherence and influence, not exclusively of course, but disproportionately so.

⁵³ George F. Moore, *The Birth and Growth of Religion* (New York, Charles Scribner & Co., 1923), p. 923.

At least one of the primary predisposing elements of their cult addiction is this predicament of theirs and the need for rapid relief and compensatory adjustment of the negative factors of their life's experience. They are, by their very circumstances, prone to the more extreme forms of primitive religious appeal and excitement, and are the more or less "natural" constituency of the hypnotic cult leader, be he "messiah" or charlatan.

CHAPTER III

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS IN RELIGIOUS CULT BEHAVIOR

This raises next the question as to the role played by the economic and social factors in shaping the form and character of religious behavior expressed in revivalistic cults. Throughout history religion has assumed the role of helping man to cope with the exigencies of the struggle for existence. With this in mind, extremist forms of religious behavior might be expected to show certain close correlation both with stress and crisis generally, and with unsuccessful situations and conditions in particular. In this connection it is pertinent to inquire what there is in the social history of the Negro groups that might predispose unusually to cultism and what class of Negroes, from the economic and social points of view, constitute the majority of the constituency in these cults.

The constituency of the cults examined appears made up, for the most part, of Negroes in the lower economic and social stratum. This class comprises, in the main, unskilled laborers, domestics, janitors, porters, delivery men, waiters, and such like. In describing this group in the economic set-up in the South, Dollard states that:

“The lower class is the same “arms and legs” group with the simplest skills and personalities adapted to continue peaceably a subordinate role. . . . It is at the bottom of the economic and social system. It is this lower class whom Southerners hold up to Northerners as the reality of the problem with which the South has to deal in contrast with the Northerner’s idealized picture of the Negro. Among this peasant class, Johnson observes a pressure to escape the limitations of their class status by educating their children. Reuter also describes among them a wish to cross the caste barriers, at least in the sense of arranging life so that they will be as much in contact with the lighter people as possible and have lighter children. It is in this class that the presence of the mother-centered family has been noticed by Frazier. It is apparently more difficult to stay alive in this group of Negroes, because we learn that in this state the Negro rural death rate is markedly higher than the white death rate, and

the infant mortality per thousand births for Negroes almost twice as high as for whites.”¹

What all these writers quoted by Dollard agree upon is that the effort to escape certain economic and social limitations is significantly pronounced among these “lower class Negroes”. Their religious orientation, often stressed as “escapist”, is also from the psychological point of view directly “compensatory”, and in lieu of other less immediately available ways of adjustment, is effective tentative adjustment. In view of this, and the predominant class composition of the cults, one may ask: To what extent do the economic handicaps and social limitations of this class status determine and predispose individuals to membership in religious cults, and lead them to take advantage of the psychological compensations and adjustments offered by such religious cult experiences and practice? To use a typical case, to what extent was the economic and social situation in New York conducive to the widespread development of the “Father Divine Peace Mission Movement?” Henry Lee Moon describes these conditions as follows:

“Coming at a time when poverty, confusion and insecurity are everywhere, Father Divine appears serene and mysteriously affluent. In a period of war and rumors of wars, he offers “Peace” as a greeting, as a byword, and as an objective. Lured on more by the abundance of his banquet table than by the audacity of his theological claims, the economically disadvantaged and the socially outcast have flocked to his banners in large numbers and with boundless fervor. Added to these are the spiritually starved, and those professional cultists perennially in pursuit of elusive happiness. . . .”²

Another writer, Charles Fisher Anderson, in an article entitled, “Peace!—It’s Wonderful,” offers two suggestions as to the basic factors that were responsible for the ready acceptance of the Divine Cult:

“From what I saw and felt, I have drawn general conclusions. First, Father Divine is living proof of a theory which I have often heard handed down from the Negro pulpit, that is, most Negroes need a new God. Not an intangible God who is all-seeing, all-knowing, all-hearing, all-powerful, the same God that allowed them to

¹ John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (Institute of Human Relations, Yale University Press, 1937), p. 85.

² *op. cit.*

be bound in slavery and permits him to be segregated and discriminated against and apparently does nothing about it. Father Divine felt and heard the need for the new "God," and answered it. . . ."

"The second conclusion is that I believe that one of the secrets of his success is that he offers to a disheartened and weary people a chance to live. People who were feeling the pangs of hunger and chill to the icy blasts of winter in New York were attracted to this man, who offered shelter for 75 and 50 cents a night . . . free if you were unable to pay, chicken dinners for 15 cents, hair-cuts for 10 and 15 cents, shoeshine for 5 cents. He offered to these people a chance to live; they took it and are grateful. To them, Father Divine is a Savior. . . ."

Both of the references cited above have localized the main causes underlying the rise and spread of the "Father Divine Peace Mission Movement" in the so-called evils of the general socio-economic situation which envelops Negroes as a minority group, not only in New York, but also throughout the country. However, one might raise the question as to whether Mr. Anderson is supporting the theory that Negroes, as a race, need a new God or whether they, as a minority and underprivileged group, irrespective of their racial identity, have found it increasingly necessary to challenge any conception of a Supreme Being who sits complacently by while severe and obvious social injustices are imposed upon large masses of devout though dispossessed peoples. It must be admitted as an historic fact that wherever society permits a considerable element of its citizens to smart under conditions of extreme economic disadvantage, such groups are certain to reflect these adverse circumstances in the existence among them of an unusually large percentage of individuals excessively and abnormally religious in their behavior, primarily as a defensive and compensatory reaction. This psychological aspect of the problem will be discussed in the next chapter.

What has been said concerning the economic situation in New Negroes in Washington, D. C., where the majority of the cults in New York as being conducive to the rise and rapid spread of the Father Divine Cult seems also applicable to the economic situation of Negroes included in this study are located. Here again, we ask how does the socio-economic situation in the city of Washington facilitate the propagation of such a large number of religious cults?

Relief statistics, when accurate, are a reliable index to the economic condition of a group. According to the *Congressional Report of Investigation of Public Relief in the District of Columbia*, in

May, 1938, there were 45,848 persons receiving public relief from the Public Division (P. A. D.) and the Works Progress Administration (W. P. A.). In view of the fact that when these statistics were compiled the highest estimated percentage of Negroes in the total population of the District of Columbia was only 27 per cent, the accompanying table showing the racial distribution of relief cases in May, 1938 throws considerable light on the comparative economic condition of white and Negroes:

Race	Total	P.A.D.	W.P.A.
Total	45,848	14,037	31,811
White	14,477	4,093	10,384
Colored	31,371	9,944	21,427

The above table shows that in the racial distribution of individual relief cases 34.8 per cent are white and 65.2 per cent are Negroes. In a normal economic situation, in view of the percentage of whites and Negroes in the total population of Washington, whites should contribute about 63 per cent and Negroes no more than 27 per cent of the relief cases. The figures are still more illuminating when viewed in the light of the administration of public relief through the several agencies handling such funds. The following table shows, again, the wide disparity existing between whites and Negroes receiving aid from these organizations.

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF CASE HEADS RECEIVING
PUBLIC RELIEF BY RACE AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE
SAMPLE STUDY—MAY 1938

Type of Assistance	Total	—Total—	
		White	Negro
Grand Total	100.0	34.8	65.2
Public Assistance Division	100.0	34.4	65.6
Aid to Dependent Children	100.0	25.6	74.4
Aid to the Blind	100.0	22.8	77.2
General Relief	100.0	28.7	71.3
Home Care	100.0	33.7	66.3
Old Age Assistance	100.0	42.0	58.0

Not only do we find that Negroes figure far too prominently on relief rolls but, also, that in receiving aid from public relief sources

the median monthly income from all sources averaged \$59.12 for whites whereas that of colored averaged \$45.87. Again, we find that a disparity exists between whites and Negroes receiving all of their income from relief sources alone. The median monthly income for whites was \$57.45 and for Negroes \$43.74. When comparing the number of whites and Negroes totally dependent and partially dependent upon relief sources for maintenance, we find, too, that a considerable disparity exists between these figures. The percentage of individual totally dependent white cases was 24.4 whereas that of Negroes was 42.7. The percentage of white cases partially dependent was 10.4 whereas that of Negroes was 22.5. These relief compilations stand out in bolder relief and take on national significance in view of the additional fact that, according to a study made in March, 1935 of the relative cost of living in 59 cities in the United States, the most expensive city in which to live is Washington, D. C.³

Turning our attention now to the unemployment situation for further racial comparisons, we find that according to the active file of the District of Columbia Employment Center, the most continuous count of unemployed job seekers available, over a period from November, 1935 to April, 1938 the percentage of active white job seekers was 45 whereas that of Negroes was 55, or double what it should have been in view of the fact that they represent no more than 27 per cent of the total population of Washington. These figures, certifying to the fact that Negroes face comparatively greater extremes of adverse economic circumstances than white, are further reinforced by statistics on Unemployment in the District of Columbia and released by the Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce. According to this survey, out of a group of 37,615 persons totally unemployed, 39.9 per cent were white and 60.1 per cent were colored. In the partially unemployed group consisting of 7,258 women and 4,916 men, we find 26 per cent of the white women and 74 per cent of the colored women, and 47 per cent of the white men and 53 per cent of the colored men partially unemployed.

Even when receiving work relief under the W. P. A. set-up, as the accompanying table shows, Negroes are classified, for the most part, in the two lowest wage groups—the intermediate and the unskilled classes and, accordingly, receive the lowest pay.

³ Margaret Stecker, *Inter-City Differences in Cost of Living—59 Cities* (Works Progress Administration, March, 1935).

Percentage Distribution of Works Progress Administration
Employees by Color and Security Wage Classifications
Sample Study—May 1938

	Total		
	Total	White	Colored
Total	100.0		
Unskilled	62.0	25.3	81.9
Intermediate	14.3	19.5	11.4
Skilled	18.3	45.3	3.7
Professional and Technical	5.4	9.9	3.0

It must continually be borne in mind in interpreting these comparative statistics on the racial distribution of relief and unemployment that the highest estimated percentage of Negroes in the total population of the District of Columbia is 27 per cent.

The above picture, being statistical, only roughly outlines the relative extent of the socio-economic disadvantages confronting Negroes in the city of Washington. In many cases, too, the figures belie the real facts, as for illustration, the preferential assignment of such assistance as obviates formal relief status and numerous other ways in which, even in official statistics, the factors of preferential prejudice operate. However, even when such allowances are made, it is only too evident that the Negro population in Washington, by and large, sustains comparatively greater extremes of economic and social disadvantage. The average Negro, belonging to this submerged and painfully maladjusted mass, finds it very necessary to seek emotional relief and compensation. These figures suggest the kind of environment in which these cults flourish, and point to conditions which are, in no small part, the causes of their hold on the population.

Thus it will be seen that what is religiously referred to as "trial and tribulation" trouble is a familiar and constant factor of Negro life at this level. Add to this emotional strain, that of racial stigma and the humiliating contacts of menial service which is so widespread for the group and we have a picture of the predisposing elements demanding emotional compensation.

Another question that has been raised in connection with the problem of this study is the degree to which the phenomenon of religious cult behavior is primarily a racial characteristic. In short, can it be said that Negroes as a group are inherently more religious than whites, or more primitively and hysterically so?

History seems to provide the most reliable answer to this question. There have been recurrent outbursts of mysticism in the

form of mystery cults from the earliest times to the present. No age, race, or culture, however primitive or civilized, has been without its historic beginnings in religious manifestations on the primitive religious level. Not until later, and only after centuries of cultural evolution, have the more complex and rationalized types of institutional religious organization and the existing forms of religion become possible.

Particularly has history shown that in this development minority groups, irrespective of race or historical period, when subjected to extremes of injustice and oppression, have reverted to various kinds of mysticism and "Messiah" complexes. Dr. Abram Sachar describes the demoralizing effect which three centuries of relentless persecution in Western Europe had upon the Jews in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. He states that:

" . . . Cut off from contact with European civilization, the Jews were compelled to draw into their own shells and to feed on their heritage. . . . As the centuries passed and the hope for a better day faded and died out, the situation grew graver. Jews lost their resiliency of mind, and their power of judgment. Too often, the Bible became a vehicle of superstition. Rendered desperate by the burdens of life, many Jews juggled its letters and sentences, hoping to discover some magical incantation which would give them control of events, or, at least power over their enemies. Others flung themselves into complete dependence on a strict religious code, seeking to forget their miseries by sucking dry the very marrow of every precedent. Still others harkened to every charlatan who promised them a way out. In every generation there were dupes who succumbed to the wiles of rascals and fanatics who dared to be Messiahs, sent by God to usher in a new world, where Jewish suffering would cease and mankind live in peace. Intellectual and spiritual degradation were everywhere, producing perversions of the Cabala and the Shulkan Aruk, a blind faith in false Messiahs, and a narrow uncompromising loyalty to rites and dogmas which drove some of the noblest spirits out of Judaism." ⁴

As has been pointed out in the case of the rise of the Father Divine Cult, the author does not fail to make it quite clear that the importance of these mystery cults to the Jews of the Middle Ages,

⁴ A. L. Sachar, *A History of the Jews* (A. A. Knopf, N. Y., 1930), p. 232.

lay in the fact that they came at a time when all other avenues of social and spiritual and cultural enlightenment for the Jews were closed. He adds:

“. . . . The importance of these two spectacular careers (David Reubeni and Solomon Molko, Messianic pretenders) lay in the pathetic hopes which they aroused in the Jewish masses. The living world was full of sorrow, there seemed to be no hope for a better day except through the miracle of God's own messenger. Whole communities were carried away as much by the cunning of Reubeni as by the melancholy sincerity of Molko. Men believed in them because their burdens made them wish to believe . . .”⁵

What has happened to the Jews, and is continuing to happen to them as a minority and subjected people, has happened to the Negroes as a former enslaved group in this country. In fact, it can safely be said that this is an almost universal type of group experience at one stage or another, and when it occurs, invariably exhibits similar forms of compensatory religious behavior. One need only look back through the pages of American history to find evidence convincing enough.

In James Truslow Adams' *Epic of America*, is the following description of religious compensatory behavior in perhaps its most extreme form:

“Just as William Bradford, in trying to account for the prevalence of unnatural vice at Plymouth, with its religious repression, had suggested that human nature, damned in one direction, would find outlets in another, so the emptiness of life on the frontier, and to some extent among the poor of the older settlements, led the emotions to find relief in wild religious orgies.”

“At first the religion of the frontier had been to a great extent the Presbyterian, but about 1800 the less intellectual and more emotional appeal of the Baptist and especially the Methodist faith swept the frontiersmen into those folds. These denominations did not believe in a learned ministry, and their appeals were all to the emotions. The almost incredible camp meetings catered to both the settler's desire for company and to his need for expression in emotional life. The inhibitions of his

⁵ *op. cit.*, p. 240.

starved social and emotional life were suddenly removed by the mass psychology of these vast gatherings, at which thousands would exhibit pathological symptoms in unison."

"One of the greatest of these, held in Bourbon County, Kentucky, in 1801, was attended by twenty-five to thirty thousand persons coming from a circuit of a hundred miles. Seventeen preachers, as well as many volunteers, preached continuously from a Friday to the following Thursday, and at one time, it is said, three thousand followers lay unconscious on the ground in religious swoons, while five hundred "jerked" and "barked" in unison. . . ."

"Although such meetings were objected to by the more substantial men, they were the natural outcome of the abnormal conditions in many sections of American life. Man craves an outlet for his emotions, and these had been completely starved in the monotonous, hard-working, lonely drab existence of the outer settlements and frontier. . . . The camp meeting is the key to much that we shall find even in present day life in a nation even yet, emotionally starving."*

And so we see that religious cult behavior, far from being a racial characteristic typical of Negroes, is, rather, a natural form of human reaction to any set of conditions sufficiently repressive to necessitate a compensatory outlet for the emotions.

This consideration of the socio-economic factors involved in Negro religious cult behavior would not be complete without some mention of the contemporary social and economic situation as a whole.

Dr. Ephraim E. Erickson describes the general condition of society in terms of a "paradox" that has arisen in modern civilization.

"It is the boast of the modern era that we are living in an advanced stage of civilization . . . Man's control over nature, his invention of machinery, the development of industrial skill and organization, improved methods of transportation, the growth of art, literature, and music, the extension of educational opportunity, and the general

*James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (Little Brown & Co., Boston, 1931), p. 127-128.

advancement of learning are evidences of what human will and intelligence can accomplish. . . .”

“But, just now there is a pause, an ominous pause in the march of progress. For along comes a sober critic to challenge our sense of values. Is man wiser because his voice can travel by radio a thousand miles, unless he has something wiser to say? Is he any better because he can travel in a day where his grandfather went in a month unless he travels to better purpose? The mere possession of the radio or the airplane proves little with respect to our civilization. The gauge for measuring their worth is how we use them.”

“Man has discovered that the application of wealth to worthy ends has not kept pace with its accumulation. He has built up a vast material empire, with every conceivable necessity and luxury to satisfy his physical needs and contribute to his ease; but, he has not made provision for just distribution, nor has he created an equality of opportunity. He sees the paradox of want in the midst of plenty. . . .”⁷

In view of this dilemma which faces society and which, among other dispossessed and handicapped groups, affects the Negro group particularly through his low economic and social status, it will be easier to understand the basic psychological factors involved in religious cult behavior. These factors will be considered in the next chapter.

⁷ Ephraim Edward Erickson, *Social Ethics, An Introduction to Moral Problems* (Doubleday Doran, N. Y., 1937), p. 1.

CHAPTER IV

A PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS CULT BEHAVIOR

In chapter II some significant comparisons were drawn between certain aspects of religious cult behavior and similar manifestations of religion and magic characteristic of primitive peoples. These were interesting analogies which might strike the superficial observer as exact analogies, but which we find it more reasonable to construe as induced by certain characteristic conditions. Chief among these conditions, is the socio-economic situation of the "lower class" Negroes and whites, whose status as minority groups is so low, dispossessed, and disadvantaged that they are forced to seek compensatory forms of emotional release through various types of group hysterical and mystical behavior. In addition, the fact might be mentioned that among all underprivileged groups, regardless of race or historical period, visionaries arise, who, being otherwise denied equal opportunities to share in the economic and cultural advantages of their society, voluntarily or involuntarily assume the role of religious and social "redeemers" and reformers of their respective groups. Then, too, it must be borne in mind that in every society and among each economic and social class there is no inconsiderable number of persons who are "spiritually starved" for one cause or another. Among "lower class" folk, these emotionally strained individuals become perennial cultists.

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to approach religious cult behavior from the historical and psychological viewpoints. This involves a consideration of two questions: First, how do these aspects of religious cult behavior come into existence in the midst of a more advanced culture, such as we have in America? Second, what factors, social or psychological, are basically responsible?

Having already seen a close resemblance, in certain features between contemporary religious cult behavior and primitive beliefs and practices, the question naturally rises, what accounts for these similarities?

Notwithstanding the numerous analogies pointed out, this contemporary religious cult behavior cannot justly be considered as a survival of primitive religious manifestations either among Negroes or any other group. For whatever may be said regarding the cultural carry over which the African slaves might have brought along

with them to this country over three centuries ago, they have, for the most part, been submerged completely, if not virtually eliminated from Negro life as a result of the long and thoroughgoing processes of acculturation and Americanization to which they have been subjected since their arrival on the American continent. It seems hardly possible, therefore, to posit any significant direct connection between the earlier primitivism and the contemporary primitivisms.

In view of these considerations, an attempt must be made to find more direct social and cultural influences which might be responsible. In this connection, it must be borne in mind that similar cult behavior exists among both white and colored, and that similar forms of religious beliefs and practices are adopted oftentimes by the Negro from certain white cults. As a matter of fact, Charles Spurgeon Johnson suggests that the prototype of the highly emotionalized Negro plantation church may be found in the eighteenth century camp meetings of the southern whites. In elucidating this point he states that:

“What the church is now to the Negro, the camp meeting was for the whites of the same section as late as a generation ago. It was the chief social and religious event of the season, a festive occasion to some, an intensely religious experience to others. Negro slaves were allowed to attend them, usually after the white people had had their session of religious enthusiasm and demonstration. It was during the heyday of their camp meetings and revivals at the beginning of the nineteenth century, that patterns of religious expression were established. It was at this time that the ecstatic shouting, screaming, falling, rolling, laughing, jerking and even barking of mass hysterics under the stress of religious enthusiasm; and the sermon patterns of exhorting, with accompanying mannerisms, were first noted. Many of the stereotyped expressions which go to make up the common prayers may be traced to the vivid language of these early evangelists. These expressions, based largely on scriptural language, are common to many parts of the country and are as fixed as ritual.”¹

Another writer seeks to account entirely for the highly emotionalized expressionism of the Negro's religion on the basis of parallel behavior patterns that existed in white revivalistic meetings

¹ Charles S. Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation* (University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 151.

up to twenty-five years ago. In supporting this viewpoint, Faris states that:

“The social situation in which the American Negro found himself, in all probability, furnished the pattern by means of which he was guided in his religious life. Extravagant as these reactions are, they can all be matched by others just as remarkable in the white race that was the teacher of the black. . . . Until the last twenty-five years, one could be pretty sure of seeing someone “shout” at the revivals of the white people, but it has practically died out at present.”²

The latter half of the eighteenth and the greater part of the nineteenth century saw an outburst of revivalistic preaching throughout Western Europe and America. In Europe, the movement, which took the form of a return to “nature” and “feeling” as the original and basic substance of not only religion and art, but also of life itself, was a reaction against the cold, systematic, “rationalism” of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in which such philosophers as Hobbes, Locke, Kant and others figured so prominently. In the period succeeding, a wave of extremism swept over the continent. It was a direct outgrowth of the disillusionments suffered by the masses of enthusiasts who saw their hopes crushed to earth beneath the avalanche of disorganization which followed in the wake of the French Revolution. Men no longer trusted the materialism which would set up a goddess of reason in the place of the God of their forefathers.

Waves of “Pietism” and “Evangelism” swept out of Germany. The idealist made a valiant attempt to regain ascendancy over the rationalist through a mystical philosophy of “Faith”. Among the Romanticists, the name applied to these “back to nature idealists”, are such historic figures as Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, the Schlegels, Winkelmann, and others.

The “Pietist” movement spread to England where we find such great evangelistic preachers as John Wesley, George Fox, and on the literary side, the extremist Romanticists. The twin movements affected America, and in this country there appeared outstanding “revivalistic” preachers like Charles G. Finney, Charles Spurgeon, Gypsy Smith, Dwight L. Moody, Evans Roberts, and others. Among the Romantic writers were included such men as Poe, Hawthorne, Brockden Brown and others.

² Ellsworth Faris, “The Mental Capacity of Savages,” *Amer. Jour. of Sociol.* Vol. 23, p. 603.

Undoubtedly this movement affected the South and the Midwest in exaggerated form because of illiteracy and greater stress of social and economic hardship. It was reflected in the camp meetings described by Johnson and Faris as the characteristic type of religious behavior among whites which, as we have seen, gave the original impetus to the plantation type of Negro church. From the small towns and rural parts of the South, the highly emotionalized form of religious services characterized by mass hysteria, was transported to the northern towns and cities by emigrant Negroes and whites. Hence a more or less direct historical and cultural connection can be traced between the Negro religious cult of contemporary times and the nineteenth century camp meetings of the whites.

However, the suggestion that the Negro slaves might have received the pattern for their plantation church from the whites does not mean that Negro and white religious behavior are parallel phenomena in every respect. There are, and perhaps always have been, noticeable and probably significant differences between them. M. J. Herskovits calls our attention to these contrasts in the following manner:

“Negroes in the United States are Christians, yet it is possible to see among certain groups of them expressions of Christian worship that are unknown in Europe. The songs of the American Negroes—spirituals—have long been thought of as African, though there are many today who hold that these are merely borrowings of well-known European hymns. Whether or not these represent, in their imagery, simple borrowings, or have taken on ‘accretions’, the place of the song in the religious service, and its accompaniment by hand-clapping, tapping of the feet, the instruments of percussion such as the tambourine, do not partake of European religious cultural behavior. Spirit-possession (by the Holy Ghost) manifested through dances (‘shouts in which the motor behavior is clearly African’), is found in some Negro churches, while among these ‘shouting’ sects, the communion service partakes largely, in both psychological implication and outward ritual, of very different elements than are found to mark the corresponding rite in white churches.”³

And this brings us to a consideration of the basic social and

³ M. J. Herskovits, “Social History of the Negro,” in *A Handbook of Social Psychology* (Clark Univ. Press, 1935), p. 254.

psychological factors responsible for the particular type of religious cult behavior examined in this study.

Granted that the American Negro, as a former slave, received enough of a basic pattern through the observance of white camp meetings to imitate and introduce it, with slight modifications, into his plantation church; assuming that this was definitely adopted from the whites, it cannot be denied that the situation under which the Negro was brought from Africa to this country and the conditions to which he was exposed after his arrival, laid the basis for his being particularly psychologically susceptible to the reception and exaggeration of certain patterns of religious behavior he observed among the white majority.

The question now before us seems to be this: What was the basic mental attitude which characterized the feeling and thought world of the newcomers from the African continent? The answer appears to be more adequately expressed in a definition of fetishism, the form of animistic belief which characterized the African mentality and cultural background. For it cannot be denied that the first generation of slaves from Africa brought with them to this country certain psychological conditionings which affected them from the outset. The meaning of fetishism and its implications are given by Chatelain as follows:

"Fetishism is the worship of inanimate objects such as stones, trees, and so on. As the monotheists believe and serve only one God, and polytheists several, so the fetishists are represented as actually possessing no other God or gods than fetish objects. Whatever diverse views have been set forth by specialists, the above is still the prevalent opinion. To the question: what is the religion of the African races? Many travellers still reply: he has no religion; he knows nothing of God or a future life; he possesses only foolish superstitions, and worships idols, stones, and other 'joojos,' 'gregrees,' or 'fetishes'."

"The term 'fetish' is employed without discrimination. It is of more frequent use in West Africa than in East Africa. On the West Coast, the word, "fetish" in French, and "fetico" in Portuguese is applied to everything supernatural or reputed to be such, and by extension to everything connected therewith, thus the spirits (both the human and the non-human, commonly called gods), the objects connected with their service (images, animals, consecrated trees or rocks, amulets consisting of horns,

rag, etc.), are called fetishes; the human mediums between the spirits and men, whether doctors, diviners, or priests in a special sense (i.e. servants of a particular spirit), are known as fetish-men."

"In Liberia and other West African regions where English is spoken, the natives, when speaking English, adopted the terminal of the white man, and terms the spirits in which they believe, "devils," and "devil-worship" is sometimes used synonymous with spirit-worship."

"All writers who have been proficient in some special tongue of African Negroes, and who have made a life-long study of the religious conceptions of the tribes among whom they have lived, whenever they express their own impression and do not blindly repeat what they have read in books, are agreed that the African Negro believes in a Creator who is invisible and is therefore not represented by an idol. Though highly revered, this Supreme Being is not formally worshipped in any stated cult; for this reason, superficial observers fail to detect both the belief in this Being and the daily spiritual service of Him."

"Between God and man are the spirits who rule the forces of nature (the water, the air, vegetable and animal life.) These correspond by their function to the gods of Greek and Roman mythology, but the natives never confused them with the Supreme Being. Nor are they confused with the names, or shades, or souls of deceased persons which continue, after separation from the body, to inhabit the upper as well as the nether world. But both the spirits of nature and the spirits of men may influence every man's life for weal or woe, and are therefore dreaded (not revered or loved), and must be propitiated by gifts (sacrifices), or consulted by divination."

"The connection between these two kinds of spirits and men is established by media. These media are either persons (priests, divines or physicians of either sex, who are indued with the faculty of being inspired or possessed by some spirit.), or objects consecrated by such persons, or otherwise believed to have acquired certain properties imparted by a spirit. The names of these spirits, the incantations, by which they are propitiated or consulted, and the objects (talismans, amulets, etc.) by which this propitiation is effected, vary from those found among other races and on other continents, but the essential parts

of the system are found to be those of the common people the world over, as well in the oldest civilizations as in the present generation."

"It has been my privilege to associate personally with missionaries laboring among all races, to have perused missionary records of many societies in their respective tongues, and also to mingle with the ignorant classes of most of the so-called Christian nations; and the more I ascertain and compare original facts, the more I am impressed with the fundamental unity of the religious conceptions of Chinese, Hindoos, and American Indians, as well as of nominal Moslems, Jews and Christians, with the American Negro."

"They all have a dim motion of the Supreme Being; but they all serve Him far less than they serve the spirits, the mysterious forces of nature, and the souls of deceased persons (ancestor worship, etc.), and put their trust in amulets, talismans, incantations, quacks, priests, soothsayers, spiritists, and a thousand and one manifestations and paraphernalia of the one universal disposition of mankind, known as superstition." ⁴

The above passage has been cited in its entirety because it presents not only a comprehensive picture of the primitive religious African mentality, but also because the author has been broad enough to tie up his particular observations regarding the African's religion with the fundamental unity of religious phenomena throughout the world. And it should be noticed, in this connection, that this description is far from the systematic picture which Christian missionaries have stereotyped of the native African background, for we see that there are many more common elements than would be supposed between native African religion and higher forms of religious belief and practice.

It was out of such a background that the African was brought to America three centuries ago. Already, as has been pointed out, his entire mentality was dominated with spiritism. Hence, it can truthfully be said that the Negro brought from Africa to America a cultural conditioning which made him highly susceptible to the kind of social (group) and evangelistic practices in vogue among the whites, and which became speedily superimposed upon his supernaturalistic background.

⁴ Heli Chatelain, "African Fetishism," *Jour. of Amer. Folklore*, vol. 7, No. 27, 1894, p. 289.

Moreover, the condition of the Negro, having been originally a slave, was and to no small degree, still continues to be different from that of his white neighbors. The plantation church, therefore, like the cults of today, served the Negro peasantry in a more intimate and psychologically compensatory manner. However, it should be noted, also, that for "lower class" whites, living in rural communities with drab routine and impoverished conditions, these practices produced a similar effect and the church served the people in a like compensatory manner.

Mays and Nicholson describes the particularly compensatory function of the Negro church as follows:

"The opportunity found in the Negro church to be "recognized" and to be "somebody" has stimulated the pride and preserved the self-respect of many Negroes who would have been entirely beaten by life, and possibly completely submerged. The Negro church has supplied this need. A truck driver of average or more than ordinary abilities, becomes the chairman of the deacon board. A hotel man of some ability is superintendent of the Sunday school of a rather important church. A woman who would hardly be noticed, socially or otherwise, becomes a leading woman in the missionary society. A girl of little training and less opportunity for training gets the chance to become the leading soprano in the choir of a great church. These people receive little or no recognition on their daily job." ⁵

All that the above authors say regarding the compensatory function of the Negro church is equally, if not even more, applicable to the cults examined in this study. This is true primarily because, whereas, the constituency of the average established orthodox Negro church is at least on the subsistence level, those making up the majority of the cult membership are on the lowest possible existence level in the economic struggle for survival. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that among them there are those who seem predisposed to place confidence and even "faith" in a "God Almighty" or a "bishop" who possesses a measure of "divine grace" and "bounty".

As a final statement regarding the function of religion for "lower class" Negroes, this observation by John Dollard seems especially relevant:

⁵ Benjamin E. Mays and Joseph W. Nicholson, *The Negro's Church*, 1923, p. 291.

"The dominant attitude was one of unquestioning belief in and a reliance upon God as a protection against everything that was feared, and in answer to everything that could not be understood."

"In so simple a society, the range of the unknown fell far into the ordinary experience. Just as God brought droughts, rain, pestilence and disease for a purpose both local and inscrutable, there was no appeal from His elections, whether with respect to the incidents of contagion, or the exigencies of the cotton crop. All is mystery colored by faith and fatalism which tended to dull both striving and desire. The conventional response to a death in the family, to acuteness of hard times, to tragedy, and to the prospect of personal death and damnation is "seeking". And such seeking partakes of all the fears which make up life. It probably accounts for the frequent "visions" and "dreams" so colored by the workday world, and for the ecstasies of release. It seems just as true of the religious experience of this group as of other similarly naive groups of which it has been observed that they were not converted to God, but converted God to themselves."⁶

In another place, the same author points out that the church may operate as a mechanism for the social control of Negroes; particularly is this function recognized by whites in the south who are far more responsive to appeals for funds to build churches than schools.⁷ From another point of view, religion serves to center the attention of a potentially militant group of underprivileged Negroes on "the blissful state of a future life" thereby diverting both their interests and their energies from such endeavors as might result in the betterment of their present condition. It would hardly be too speculative to suggest in this connection, that much of the political approval and support given the Father Divine cult in New York City, might be due, in no small measure, to a realization on the part of the administrative authorities that no more effective and economical police agency can be found to aid in "maintaining the status quo" among Harlem Negroes, than the "Peace" cult.

⁶ *op. cit.*, p. 179.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 248.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter I, which dealt with a composite picture of the cult it was found that certain features of contemporary religious behavior stood out more or less clearly and distinctly. These may be stated in a general way as follows:

1. The cults seemed to have focal points of emphasis around which all of the activities and thought patterns of the group were made to revolve.
2. The devotees were called upon to believe in wholeheartedly, the ideology and practices of the cult.
3. Within the confines of the cult, the devotees enjoyed a maximum of overt emotional expression without regard for the particular form in which such behavior might manifest itself in the performer.
4. One of the aims of the cults seemed that of building up and maintaining a group attitude of "spiritual" rapport, a condition which they appeared to consider as a prerequisite for the "visitation of the Holy Ghost" upon the "saints".
5. The teaching and preaching of the cult leaders seemed to emphasize the assumption that the remedies offered to the devotees were sufficient to meet, not only the "spiritual", but also the material needs of the faithful.
6. Cult devotees, perhaps unconsciously, tended to exhibit a definite "in-group" attitude toward fellow cultists, and a corresponding "out-group" attitude toward non-members, particularly non-sympathetic or critical observers.
7. Rhythm played a leading part in the group meetings. There appeared to be a ceaseless striving to keep things moving rhythmically. And, for the most part, the rule seemed to be, the faster the rhythm and the more prolonged the continuity, the more frenzied the activity and the greater the satisfaction derived from the services.

8. The cult leader seemed tyrannically independent and aggressive in the role which he occupied, as the formulator of the program of the cult, and as the dictator of the thinking and activities of the devotees.

In the second chapter, a number of comparisons were drawn between cult behavior and certain elements of religion and magic among primitive peoples. Chief among these similarities, may be listed the following:

1. The personalities of the contemporary cult leader and the primitive religious formulator were, in significant respects similar, physically and psychologically.
2. Both leaders made use of very much the same basic types of techniques of mass suggestion and hypnotism for appealing to and gaining ascendancy over the lay members of their communities.
3. Independence and aggression were characteristic of the leadership of both the primitive shaman or diviner, and the modern cult leader.
4. Rhythm seemed to exert a mass hypnotic effect upon the devotees of the cults in very much the same manner as it affects primitives during their ritualistic ceremonials.
5. The strong atmosphere of "cult consciousness" seemed to be a mild form of the same type of "group consciousness" which characterizes most primitive peoples.
6. Among the cultists, as with primitive peoples, "spirit-possession" figured prominently and influentially in every aspect of the community life.
7. The role occupied by women leaders seemed secondary in importance and power to that of men among both the cults and in primitive society.
8. The contemporary cult leader compared favorably with the shaman and diviner in sincerity, trustworthiness, and in the extent of his confidence in the efficacy of his methods.
9. Both leaders were vitally concerned with the economic and other urgent needs of the lay members of their group.

In chapter three, an attempt was made to point out the fact that, in view of the particularly distressing social and economic situation confronting Negroes as a minority group in New York City and Washington, D. C., the form of religious behavior found in the cults appeared quite natural as a type of compensatory reaction to these extremely unfortunate and unhappy socio-economic conditions. In this connection, it was also shown that such compensatory behavior seemed not to be essentially different from that found among other groups of people, past and present, who have been forced to undergo similar conditions of economic, social, and cultural disadvantage. These reactions, therefore, might perhaps best be considered fundamentally, as universally human rather than racial.

The concluding chapter was devoted to a consideration of the psychological factors which appeared to be responsible, largely, for religious cult behavior. Among other things, it was pointed out that the constituency of the cults studied was made up, for the most part, of that economic group which Dollard and others designate as "lower class" Negroes. And in seeking to account for the presence of the highly emotionalized, mass hysteria type of religious behavior found within this group, more or less direct connections were shown to have existed between the early nineteenth century revivalistic and evangelistic "camp meetings" of the southern and frontier whites and the Negro plantation church. It was also pointed out that two conditions prevailed which contributed toward making the Negro highly susceptible to the patterns of religious belief and practice observed among his white teachers. These were: first, his supernaturalistic native African background, and, second, the oppressive conditions of slavery and social and economic discrimination to which, as a group, he has been exposed and subjected on this continent for almost three centuries.

Two significant observations seem fairly definitely established as a result of this study. They are first, religious cult behavior, commonly designated as particularly Negroid, cannot be construed, either in nature or function, in spite of its prevalence, as a racial characteristic. And, second, as long as any group of people, irrespective of race, continues to labor under conditions of economic, social, and cultural disadvantage, sufficiently acute to necessitate emotionally compensatory forms of reaction on a comparatively large scale, manifestations of religious cult behavior, as have been revealed in this study, will continue to exist as, perhaps, a negative element in the context of our contemporary American culture.

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APPENDIX A

Directory of Religious Cults

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2. The Church of the Holy Trinity—Apostolic 1618 Eleventh St., N.W.....	68
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Other Cult Centers in Washington, D. C.

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- The Church of the Sacred Heart, 419 M St., N.W.
- The Cooperative Peace Mission, 2006 Eleventh St., N.W.
- The Bethel Pentecostal United Holiness Church, 1902 Ninth St., N.W.
- The Evangelical Christian Church, 1607 Eleventh St., N.W.
- The Father Divine Peace Mission, 1113 O St., N.W.
- The House of Prayer for All People, 601 M St., N.W.
- The House of Prayer for All People (branch), 1721 Seventh St., N.W.
- The Love Divine Spiritualist Church of Psychic Science,
816 Rhode Island Ave., N.W.
- The Psychic Science Temple, 402 M St., N.W.
- The St. John Spiritualist Church, 1717 New Jersey Ave., N.W.
- The Unity Spiritual Church, 444 P St., N.W.
- The Verbrycke Spiritual Church, 1503 Eighth St., N.W.

APPENDIX B
Descriptive Accounts of Cult Group Meetings

1)
The Assembly of Jesus Christ—Apostolic

Date: Thursday, January 19, 1938

Hour: 8:45 to 10:10 P. M.

Occasion: Testimony and Preaching Service

A hymn is being sung. There are about fifty persons, including six men, in the room. Three women and one man are seated on the platform. Behind them, and covering the entire rear wall facing the congregation, there hangs a huge pictorial map showing the astral bodies, including the planets, the earth and the sun. The earth is shown as it is believed to have appeared at the end of each of the seven "creative" stages mentioned in Genesis. This series of diagrams begins with the earth, in the "first stage", in the lower left hand corner, followed by a similar representation of the earth in each of the succeeding six stages arranged in a semi-circle across the center of the map. In the lower right hand corner is a half circle representation entitled, "New Home". Above the earth in its "seventh" creative phase, there is a blue and white square representation labeled, "Holy City". Beneath the picture of the earth in its "fifth" phase, there is another reddish-brown circular picturization of "Chaos". Extending horizontally, about six inches up from the lower edge of the map, there are six rectangular colored pictures entitled, from left to right, Repentance, Judgment, Humility, Grace, Redemption, Peace. The entire map bears the caption "Revelation of Ages". The leader of the meeting, a woman, stands below the pulpit, in front of the platform, beside the center table, directing the singing. There is no piano or other musical instrument in the room. Hymnals and Bibles are distributed among the members, they appear to be private possessions.

The hymn (chorus) is being sung over and over again: "I am saved, I am saved, I am washed in the blood of the Lamb". Hands are clapping; feet are patting; several women are standing waiting to testify. After the singing, one person says, in part: "I thank God and praise the Lord . . . Pray for my home . . . Pray for my baby . . ." Another woman says: "I thank and praise God that I am saved . . . I ask the saints to pray for me . . .". Another woman raises the hymn: "I love Jesus; he's my shelter . . . and where he leads me, I will follow". One stanza is sung. No clapping. She sits down without

commenting. Another hymn is raised by a man: "Deeper, Deeper, in the Arms of Jesus; and Higher and Higher, Every Day I Pray". Hands begin to clap. Feet are patting. The singing increases in volume and intensity . . . "Oh Deeper, yet I pray; and high-er, every day . . .". The man concludes with a very short testimony.

A woman testifies: ". . . I thank and praise God . . . to help me to carry on . . .". Another woman says: "I thank and praise God . . . for going down in prayer one day . . . I thank and praise God for the Holy Ghost . . .". Someone again raises the hymn: "Deep-er, yet I pray; and high-er, every day . . .". Two women enter; they kneel at chairs near the entrance; they rise and take seats among the congregation. Another woman is testifying; she says: ". . . Thank and praise God for being here to pray . . . pray for me that I may press on . . . higher every day . . .". Again the chorus of the hymn: "Deep-er, yet I pray; and high-er, every day . . .". One of the women on the platform rises and says: ". . . I thank and praise God for that hymn . . . I've been singing that hymn over and over all day . . . it's a wonderful privilege to be saved . . .". [A female voice cries out: "Oh Jesus"]. ". . . I truly ask you all to pray for me . . . Hallelujah . . . Hallelujah! . . .". Another woman says: ". . . Thank and praise God for his wonderful healing power . . . Thank and praise God for salvation . . . ask you all to pray for me . . .". [There is absolutely no break in the continuity of the service.] Two or more persons are standing waiting their chance to testify. All testimonies are preceded with the salutation, "I thank and praise God". Testimonies seem to be comparatively brief and to the point, possibly, the result of disciplining.

A hymn is being sung: "My Faith Looks Up To Thee; Thou Lamb of Calvary; Savior Divine". No clapping; rhythm is being kept with the feet. It seems that certain hymns only are appropriate for clapping. Two men are standing; one of them claps; three more join him. A woman's voice cries out: "Hallelujah!" He testifies: ". . . Thank and praise God for being here . . . Thank and praise God for being saved . . . ask an interest in your prayers . . .". The other man gives a very brief testimony.

A woman leads the hymn: "Look to the Lamb of God for He alone is able to save you; look to the Lamb of God . . .". Several are clapping. She testifies very briefly. Another woman says: ". . . Thank and praise God for He took my sins away . . .". Again the hymn is raised: "Look to the Lamb of God . . .". More clapping. Another woman on the platform testifies: ". . . Thank and praise God for being saved tonight . . . We can be free from all sin . . . if we live this way . . . He'll take away all sorrow . . . We don't have anything to worry

about . . .". Another woman says: ". . . I thank and praise God for prayer, tonight . . . I started over here the other night . . . and I went over to John Wesley", [Methodist Church] ". . . And they were talking about a little leaf . . . and each of us was given a little leaf . . . and she" [the woman evangelist in charge of the revival services] ". . . said 'to pin this leaf on whoever has done you a favor . . .'". And she kept telling them about the spirit . . . You know, I told the Lord, before I went over there, not to let no one go up there . . . and didn't a soul go up there that evening." [i.e. to join the church]. ". . . And after the services were over, a woman who knew I didn't belong over there, came up and said to me, 'you know you bucked that meeting tonight' . . . I'm glad that I'm saved and don't believe in all that foolishness and no such carrying on as that . . .".

The leader rises and says: ". . . All who haven't testified just stand right up and say 'Hallelujah' three times". Ten persons stand and say, in unison, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" Then the leader says: "We're going to listen to Brother Gibson, who will break the bread of life . . .". The man on the platform speaks, saying, in part:

"Let us bow our heads in prayer . . . Lord . . . through your loving kindness . . . we are able to assemble . . . We rejoice because you are still with us . . . Bless each one here tonight . . .". [The congregation is silent.] ". . . We'll give you the glory from the going down of the sun . . . to the far corners of the earth . . . Amen." He begins preaching, saying, in part: ". . . My soul is rejoicing tonight . . . These are days called the Christian's dark hour . . . Amen . . . And I feel like this . . . none of these things will harm me . . . Amen . . . Praise the Lord . . . We find all over this town tonight . . . Amen . . . plenty of big buildings . . . Amen . . . and people meeting there . . . praise the Lord . . . but it ain't nothing but leaves . . . Thank God . . . Amen" . . . [A woman cries out: "Hallelujah!"] ". . . We all got the same love . . . Amen . . . I love the Lord tonight . . . Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! . . . I was dead in sin . . . Amen . . . Amen . . . I want to appreciate what He has done for me . . . Amen . . . Praise the Lord . . .". [His words run together . . . he paces back and forth on the platform; clapping his hands, shrugging his shoulders, shaking his head, throwing out his right fist at the congregation for emphasis; banging on the speaker's stand, and speaking as loudly and as rapidly as possible]. ". . . Come and go with us . . . Amen . . . Our hearts are open . . . praise the Lord . . . Amen . . . We see the people in this condition today . . . Amen . . . but they turn away and won't go with us . . .". [Loud Amens! from other voices.] ". . . We can get full of tradition . . . but it won't do any good . . . Hallelujah! . . . praise

the Lord! . . . Amen! . . . We find in the Acts of the Apostles . . . ‘in this way there is evil . . .’ Amen . . . praise the Lord . . . People find everything they can to criticise . . . Amen . . . but God is carrying us through . . . Amen . . .”. [A woman cries out: “Hallelujah to Jesus”]. “. . . You know in Moses’ day . . . only a few Levites came over on his side . . . Amen . . . praise the Lord . . . You can’t pet nobody . . . Amen . . . The average person hasn’t got zeal enough to face the Word . . . Amen . . . I believe every man and woman . . . will feel homesick if he knew what God had in store for him . . . Amen . . . praise the Lord . . . It grieves your soul to see the condition that the world is in . . . Amen . . . You can weep and cry all day . . . Amen . . . And it takes no effect . . . praise the Lord . . . Amen . . .”. [He walks all over the platform; throwing his arms about; jumping up and down; clapping his hands for emphasis; yelling as loudly as possible]. “. . . Let us turn to the Book of Hebrews . . . we’ve got a message from the Book of Hebrews tonight . . .” [the impression is received that the speaker wishes to convey the idea that he has just this instant been inspired by the Spirit to turn to a certain passage in Hebrews]. “. . . We’ve got a message in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews . . .” [Bible leaves begin to rustle among the congregation]. A woman reads: “. . . But without faith . . .”. The speaker comments, saying, in part:

“Everybody works with the expectation of getting something for it . . . Amen! . . . praise the Lord! . . . No matter how anxious they are to work . . . Amen! . . . they want to know how much they’re going to get . . . Amen . . . Amen . . . praise the Lord . . . And here’s the Lord that’s promised Life! Home! Everything! And they won’t go and ask . . . Amen . . . Hallelujah . . . Amen . . . I love this 11th chapter of Hebrews . . . it tells you what God expects you to do . . . Amen!” [Another voice cries: “Hallelujah! Amen!”]. He continues: “. . . If you got faith you can get what you want from God . . . In the second chapter of Revelations he says: ‘Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life’ . . . Amen . . . People won’t do nothing in God’s church . . . Amen!” [Other Amens!]. He goes on: “. . . You’re working for God . . . you’re expecting a reward . . . Amen . . . And God’s going to give you a crown! . . . Amen!” [he shouts as loudly as possible] “. . . Hallelujah . . . Amen . . . God is calling for faithful workers . . . Amen . . . Stand up and be faithful to God . . . Amen . . . Hallelujah . . . Jesus says in (?) chapter of Matthew: “. . . When I come . . .”. [A woman throws up her arm and cries: “Oh! Oh! Hallelujah!”]. Another woman cries: “Glory! Glory!”

The preacher continues uninterruptedly: “. . . I thank God for a

church that takes a stand . . . Amen . . . You know how soldiers in an army have to drill to see if they can keep step . . . the faith . . . keep your lamps trimmed and burning . . .” [Entire thought was: even as one receives a certain type of disciplinary training in the army, so does the Lord subject his children to training in ‘the faith’, i.e., to keep their lamps trimmed and burning.] He continues: “. . . Thank you, Jesus . . .” [for having given him another ‘inspired’ passage to preach on.] “. . . read Songs of David [Psalms] 58:11 . . .” [directed to someone having a Bible . . . the leaves rustle]. He preaches on. “. . . You know sometimes the battle gets hot . . . but they march on . . .” Someone has found the passage and is reading aloud: “. . . So that a man shall say, verily, there is reward for the righteous . . . He dwells in the earth . . .” The speaker comments: “. . . No one knows it better than the Holy people . . . Amen . . . God is showing the people his hand . . . Amen . . . people don’t know which way to turn . . . Amen . . . God has a reward for the righteous . . . Amen . . . praise the Lord . . . You know there are two kinds of righteousness . . . Amen . . . You know some people have a kind of self-righteousness . . . but the righteous are going to have a just reward . . . Amen . . . Glory to Jesus . . . Hallelujah . . . Amen . . .” [The group remains silent]. “. . . And they’ll get you to thinking anything if you keep fooling with them . . . Amen” [Murmuring sounds]. “. . . Them that’s working for a reward ain’t got time to watch after nobody else . . . Read the 19th Psalms and the 11th verse.” A woman has found it almost instantly; she reads: “. . . Moreover, by this is thy servant warned . . . and in the keeping of them, there is great reward . . .” The preacher comments, saying, “. . . The people who have been baptized in His name will get the reward . . . Turn to Matthew, 5:11 and 12 . . .”

A woman finds the passage and reads: “. . . Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake . . . Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven . . .” The preacher goes on to say: “. . . People treat me any kind of way . . . they say everything about me . . . Amen . . . They said if I kept on talking about Jesus, I’d lose my job . . . But God’ll give me another job . . .” [loud exclamations of approval: “Amen! Hallelujah! Yes He will!” etc.]. He preaches on: “. . . When you talk about Jesus . . . Amen . . . they’re going to persecute you . . . You can talk about Rockefeller and Ford and all them big fellows, but when you talk about Jesus . . . Amen . . . Read Deuteronomy 10:17.” He pauses: A woman locates the passage and reads it hurriedly. He interrupts her before she finishes, saying: “. . . God won’t take no pay-off . . . You can’t give no hush

money to God . . . Amen . . . praise the Lord . . . Some people if you want to put something over . . . all you have to do is give them a little hush money . . . Amen . . .” [murmuring sounds]. “. . . but you can’t buy God! Amen! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Turn to James I:11 and 12 . . .”. Someone reads the passage: “. . . And no sooner is . . . than it withereth to the ground . . .”. The speaker comments: “. . . So shall the rich man fade . . . Amen . . . Blessed is the man that endureth temptation . . . for when he is tried . . . Amen . . . he shall receive the reward of life . . . Amen . . . Hallelujah! . . . You know the world is crying for experienced men . . . praise the Lord . . . God will reward them that diligently seek after him . . . Amen . . . A lot of people who had faith a few years ago . . . are now going to doctors . . . Amen . . . praise the Lord . . . Because the faith is weakened . . . Amen . . . After while they’ll bring on something else . . . Amen . . . He’s going to give the reward to them that diligently seek him . . .” He sits down. The leader turns to him and says something. He gets up again and says: “. . . Perhaps there’s someone here who wants to enter the church . . . Amen . . . praise the Lord . . . Very often people tell you about the Kingdom, but they don’t tell you how to get in . . . Amen . . . We give the Bible Way . . . Amen . . . praise the Lord . . . Now we are all born in this world just alike . . . Amen . . . Now wouldn’t it be funny if God had a lot of different ways for men to be born in the spirit?” [Several Amens!] “No, there are only two ways for men to be born in the Spirit . . . Amen . . .” [He shouts out the words] “. . . by water and the spirit! . . . Amen . . . That you might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost . . . Amen . . . If you be baptized, you will receive the gift . . . Amen . . . The Lord is inviting you tonight . . .” He extends his right hand in a welcome gesture; no one responds. He adds “Will someone lead us in a hymn . . . Amen!”

The hymn is raised: “Come to Jesus—Come to Jesus and he will give you rest . . .” The preacher goes on to say: “. . . When we were converted, we rejoiced for a while . . . if you were born in a Baptist church . . . that was a dead baptism, because he” [whoever did the baptizing] “didn’t baptize you in the Name [of Jesus] . . . He baptized you in the name of “The Father, The Son and the Holy Ghost; but you have to be baptized in the name of Jesus! Amen! Praise the Lord! . . . in order to be baptized in the name of the Son. . . Amen . . . You have to be baptized in the name of Jesus in order to be baptized in the name of the God. . . Amen . . . You have to be baptized in the name of Jesus in order to be baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost! . . . Not three in one . . . but Jesus is only one! He’s the way to salvation . . .

Amen . . . God's way is true . . . Amen . . . every word of it . . . It will be bread for your souls . . . Amen!" He sits down again. The leader rises and says: "We will now hear a few words from our pastor." A woman, dressed in black, who appears to be about forty, sitting on the right side in the last bench, rises and begins to address the group.

She says, in part: ". . . So many people don't know the summons . . . I'm so glad . . . when I first heard the spirit-filled people like ourselves . . . When I first heard, I recognized that Jesus was calling me through the saints . . ." [voices cry out, Amen! Hallelujah!] ". . . Even down in Virginia where I was born . . . in a Baptist church . . . I heard the song . . . I heard the voice of Jesus say 'come unto me and rest' . . . You all know this foolishness today . . ." [her voice is rising; she leans forward; both hands clenching the bench in front of her; using controlled, but very marked gestures with her head and body]. ". . . I was reading in the Afro . . . Faithful Mary . . . Father Divine's wife, or his woman, or something . . ." [Murmurs from the group; they turn around in their seats in order to get a full view of the speaker standing in the rear]. She continues: ". . . One of Father Divine's angels . . . she wrote a book, an expose . . . all but six hundred were destroyed . . . sold for one dollar . . . now selling for ten dollars apiece . . . and she told in this book how some parents would be ashamed of their daughters . . . how they had them rolling . . . and some of them in the nude . . ." [Murmurs] ". . . And then there's Daddy Grace and his crowd and all that mess!" She pauses as if lost for words to express her indignation. She adds: ". . . I don't know what to say . . . and right here in Washington . . . right under the dome of the Capitol . . . Why people here are worse than the folk in the Congo of Africa! . . . why people are turning to witchcraft! . . . they are going back to the days of Solomon . . . You know the other night we stopped in the St. Joseph's Baptist Church . . . a little bit of dark hole . . . and it was as dingy as it was dark! . . . and after the service, they passed out some little cards which said 'come to a spiritualist meeting . . . readings from 9 a. m. to 9 p. m. . . . you know the Baptist church is back-slidden . . . and when it comes to a spiritualist church, they're closer to the devil than even the Baptist Church!'" [Murmurs] She continues in a calmer tone "I just want to mention a few notices. Sunday evening we're going out to Bethlehem Temple . . . You all remember when they came here and what a splendid service we all had . . . Now we're going there . . . and on the fifth Sunday, Sister Violene is getting married . . ." [Murmurs]

Her voice becomes affectionate and tender; she smiles. “. . . to our Brother Sawyer . . . so I believe we ought to be at our own church on the fifth Sunday . . . you know I believe that charity begins at home . . . I believe in home first . . . my husband comes before any other men . . .” [Murmurs]. “Elder Sawyer has been a real brother . . . you know we’re supposed to marry in the Lord . . . The Lord wasn’t so mean that he took a wife for himself and then said that no one else could have one! [She smiles; murmurs from the group.] “We’re supposed to live in the Lord . . . we don’t have to go outside the church to find these things . . . we can stay right here in the Lord . . .” She sits down.

The leader rises and says: “. . . Now we’re going to take the collection . . .” Someone raises the hymn: “I am Saved, I am Saved, I am Washed in the Blood of the Lamb.” A woman passes around a little green basket.

Everyone stands. They raise both hands shoulder high, as if making a pledge, and say in unison: “And all the people say Amen! And all the people say Amen! And all the people say Amen!”

2)

Description of a Service at The Church of the Holy Trinity—Apostolic Faith.

Located at 1618 Eleventh Street, Northwest. Elder Howard H. Hennings, Pastor

Date: Wednesday, December 14, 1938.

Hour: 8:45 to 10:45 P. M.

Occasion: Wednesday Night Weekly Prayer Meeting.

At eight-thirty, there were only two persons in the church auditorium, a woman seated about midway of the pews on the north side of the church; and a man seated in one of the two chairs just below the pulpit, facing the congregation, (one of the officers). The two persons are conversing on some subject of interest, apparently of non-religious import. They turn around momentarily to observe my entrance. I take a seat on the north side of the church. Another woman enters and sits in the second row from the front. They exchange greetings; calling each other “Sister” and “Brother”. At 8:45 the prayer meeting service opens:

A hymn is raised, “In Beulah Land.” The elder seated at the front raises the hymn without any instrumental accompaniment. Two verses are sung; the chorus is hummed softly as the elder calls on Sister Brown to pray.

Sister Brown kneels down and begins praying, say in part; “. . . Thank ye Lord for keeping us looking unto thee . . . You have

sheltered us . . . kept thy love flowing in our souls . . . You have kept a will in our souls . . . We are glad to be here and to call on thy name . . ." [The other two persons are kneeling also; they chime in periodically and rhythmically with "Amens," "Have mercy Lord", "Yes Lord."] Sister Brown continues uninterruptedly. She says in part, "Lord bless our dear Sister . . ." [She is sobbing] ". . . Father, send a special blessing on Casualty Hospital . . . have mercy on those poor people . . . Oh Jesus, help me to do what I can . . . If you do these things for us, I will give you everything I have . . ." She concludes her prayer. As soon as she finishes the elder begins his prayer.

Elder Windsor says in part: ". . . Cover us with thy precious love . . . We pray that thou will make us more worthy of thee . . . take all malice out of our hearts . . . we realize that thou will soon return unto us . . . Throw around us thy strong arm of protection . . . we ask that thou will station an angel around thy people . . ." [Sister Brown raises her head and peeps over at me. Elder Windsor seems to be referring to my presence in their midst as requiring special "strong arm of protection" from the Lord]. ". . . We ask that thou will keep us from temptation . . . we are being tempted even now . . . keep us from faltering . . . help us so we may live so our lives will not weaken . . . we pray that thou will remember us even as thou remembered Peter . . . like the Holy Ghost, make intercession for us . . . Remember the sick and afflicted everywhere." [There are frequent exclamations of "Thank you Jesus," "Yes, Lord," "We thank you, Lord," "Do Jesus," "Yes my Lord."] Elder Windsor continues, saying in part: ". . . Wherever thy saints are in distress, take care of them . . . take care of thy people everywhere . . . we pray for this service . . . we thank ye for the message . . . We pray for anointment from on high . . . we pray for the ministry everywhere . . . even though we be few . . . when we are done, receive us in thy kingdom . . ." He ends his prayer, everyone resumes his seat. A sister raises a hymn. A man enters and sits up front.

Then Elder Windsor opens the testimonials by giving his own testimonial.

Elder Windsor says in part, "Dearly Beloved, we are glad to be here . . . there are not so many, but the Lord is with us . . . We are going to ask Brother Jackson to read the lesson for us . . . And we're going to ask Sister Smith to pass around some Bibles. . ." The woman on the south side of the room gets up, walks over to the front left side of the church and takes an arm full of Bibles, she distributes one to each of the persons in the room, including

myself. Elder Windsor gives way to Brother Jackson and leaves the church auditorium by way of a front-side door.

Brother Jackson rises, Bible in hand and says; “. . . We are not so many tonight, but God is with us . . . God has delivered his people as he did Daniel . . . He will deliver his people . . . I am glad to be here . . . I could be elsewhere, but like Moses I would rather suffer the afflictions of my people than enjoy the riches of the Egyptians . . . So our chance tonight is to be in the position where the Lord is with us . . . God is looking for us to take our stand . . .” He turns his attention to the Bible; selects a passage, then goes on to say, in part; “We want to read a portion of the sixth chapter of Matthew; Jesus is instructing us here . . . He is warning us what not to do; ‘Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven.’” “Dearly beloved, we must not give in order to be seen . . . Jesus is able to go all of the way . . . That’s why we should give in the Glory of the Lord . . . Because Jesus can go all the way.” He reads the second verse and comments: “. . . Many forces look to be glorified for their work, but the word of God says that we should not do that, He say that we are hypocrites . . . Paul says, if a man cleanse himself, he shall be made a vessel of use . . . so that the Master can use us . . . So Jesus is warning us not to make a loud noise about what we do.” He reads the third verse and comments: “. . . Isn’t that wonderful! He knows exactly how things are . . .” He passes on to the fourth verse, and adds; “. . . that’s his instruction about giving . . . dearest, that we shall be able to give in the spirit of God.” He closes the Bible and concludes his remarks by saying, in part; “We can’t go wrong if we heed these passages . . . Just as sure as you are born, dears, we won’t need to be unfruitful in the blessings of the Lord . . . The man or woman who nourishes these words will bear fruit. May the Lord bless you and keep you . . .” Brother Jackson resumes his seat. Elder Windsor reenters and takes over the meeting by requesting hymn 156. Then Elder Windsor adds some remarks: saying, “We thank you, beloved . . . Now, beloved, unless we hide these words in our hearts, we will be offended” [Meaning, not visited by the grace of God and therefore guilt stricken.] “Beloved, it takes the Holy Ghost to keep us . . . we thank Brother Jackson for these words . . . we thank him for those who have come . . . Now, dearly beloved, we are going to stop here . . .” He raises the hymn; “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” And makes ready for the collection, adjusting the table, etc. He says in part; “. . . Now, beloved, let us give whatever we have to give and go home . . .”

The collection is taken up at the table. The observer contributes. The women in the pews follow. Then, Brother Jackson, finally, Elder Windsor contributes. The hymn is concluded with closing remarks and announcements such as: "Now, beloved, we have had a wonderful time . . . even though our numbers were small, the Spirit was with us . . . The Lord promised that 'where two or three are gathered together, I will be in the midst of them' . . . So let us go down from this place with our hearts filled with rejoicing . . ." He raises both hands. All stand to receive the benediction.

3)

Description of Service at the Christian Holiness Church—Apostolic. Located at 1700 Tenth Street, Northwest, Rev. Sarah R. Thomas, Pastor.

Date: Friday, January 6, 1938.

Hour: 8:05 to 10:40 P. M.

Occasion: Friday Night Prayer Meeting.

At 8:05 P. M. there were three persons (two white women and one colored man) in the room. They were sitting midway of the church and seemed to be discussing non-church matters. Between 8:05 and 8:20, seven others (five women and two men) enter. One woman and one man enter the platform; the man sitting to the left and the woman behind the pulpit stand. Each person upon arriving at his seat, kneels down in prayer. The man on the left of the center table in front of the pulpit rises to open the services.

The man at the center table opens the services by saying: "We'll begin our services this evening with hymn 29, 'I've Anchored in Jesus'." One of the women in the congregation goes over to the piano and plays. Hymn books are passed around to everyone. The name of the hymnal is "Songs of Praise." Three stanzas are sung. Between each line are such exclamations as; "Glory! Praise God! Praise Him! Hallelujah!" Following this hymn, the leader calls for another, No. 58; "Standing on the Promises". There is vigorous patting of feet, and numerous cries of "Yes! Yes!" "Oh Dear Jesus!" "Glory! Glory!" Five stanzas are sung. After this hymn, a woman in the congregation calls for another, No. 30, "We'll Understand It Better Bye and Bye". Two women enter; one goes up to the platform, bowing gracefully to everyone as she passes through the congregation; the other woman sits on the front seat. The verbal exclamations are reinforced by clapping. A female voice in the congregation shouts out: "Oh Yes, we will . . . we'll understand it better bye and bye, Glory! Hallelujah!" There is a request for another hymn . . . No. 3,

"Washed in the Blood." The hymn is sung at the very highest emotional pitch attainable by such a group. The first stanza rings out as follows: "Washed in the Blood, by the Spirit sealed. Christ in his word, is to be revealed. Glory to God, in my soul doth shine. God is my salvation, and his life is mine," and then the chorus: ["Oh Glory!"] "Washed in the Blood" [Hallelujah] "Washed in the blood, the soul cleansing blood." (Oh Glory!) "Seated in the Spirit true, and washed in the blood."

Amidst the clapping of hands and the patting of feet, someone (a man seated just below the pulpit stand at the right of the center table) cries out: "Oh! Oh!" (as if seized by convulsions) and begins to mutter unintelligible sounds. Certain Hebrew sounds are recognized, but not understood, as the mutterings are run together in a broken dialect fashion. After this strange performance, lasting not more than forty seconds, the man concludes with; "Glory! Holy! Thank God!" He remained seated throughout.

Hymn No. 26, "Love Lifted Me", is requested. Three stanzas are sung. At the conclusion of the hymn, the same man who had just given the strange muttering performance, cries out with raised hand, "Thank God! Thank God!" He hisses. Then again: "Holy! Holy! Trust Him!"

There is a request for hymn No. 27, "When I See the Blood". During the singing, a woman, followed by a girl about 13 and a boy about 7, enters. In a few seconds, a white man enters; he appears to be about 40. He is neatly dressed, clean shaven, and shows no marked signs of foreign nationality. He sits in the second row from the front, kneeling before sitting, in the customary manner. The girl kneels; the little boy does not.

There is a call for hymn No. 70, "Deeper, Deeper, Deeper, Deeper in the Love of Jesus". It seems to be a favorite hymn; the voices ring out (especially that of the little girl, with her high-pitched soprano voice, who virtually screams). The first stanza runs: "Deeper, deeper, deeper, deeper in the love of Jesus; daily let me go. Higher, higher in the school of wisdom; more of thy grace to know." And the chorus, "O, deep—er, yet I pray. And high—er, every day. And wi—ser, blessed Lord. In thy precious holy word." Four stanzas are sung.

A woman cries out: "Oh God, I want to be wise! Glory! Thank God!" She sits on the rostrum. She continues in the same strain: "Oh I want to go deeper and higher; thanks be to God! We are glad that Jesus suffered and died on Calvary! We thank Him for eternal life! Thanks be to . . ." She, too, begins to make strange guttural sounds, similar to the Herew tongue and some of the same

mutterings previously made by one of the men. She ends her performance with these words: "Glory to God!" [She sways from side to side.] "Hallelujah! It gives you the power to stand in temptation. Everyone of us ought to seek to go deeper." [She moans.] "He told us to go deeper." [She claps and waves her hands.] "Thanks be to God that we can go higher and higher. Thanks be to God for that hymn!" Three more women enter; they sit among the congregation, kneeling as usual. At the conclusion of the hymn, the man at the left of the center table rises. He gives a brief testimony, saying in part:

"They tell me that in New York they have buildings forty stories high and ten stories underground. They have to start on level ground in order to build higher and go lower. Thanks be to God that we know better; we can go deeper in the spirit. Thanks be to God that we can draw water out of the wells of salvation." Other voices exclaim: "Glory to Jesus!" "Go deeper!" "It's not the name of the thing . . . don't be washed a little bit . . . go deeper." Then he begins to act strangely: He stiffens; his teeth clench and clatter; he quivers from head to foot; he makes strange sounds, similar to the above mentioned. He seems to be saying no more than "Hoa, hoa, whoo-oo-oh." After about ten seconds of this unintelligible muttering, he concludes with the words: "Thank God! Glory! I praise Him!"

A woman and a girl of about nine years enter. Before resuming his seat, the man at the table says: "Let's go down on our knees . . . let us pray for Sister Anderson . . . If you don't pray, I'm going to ask someone to pray . . ." Everyone gets out of his seat, turns around and kneels down. The observer feels compelled to conform. With the observer having his back turned and his head bowed, while kneeling, it wasn't possible to see the individual who offered up the first prayer. It was a woman, however, who was saying: ". . . please Lord; we praise thee because thou are a merciful God . . . Glory to your Holy Name. We want to invite you in, but you are already in . . ." [There is moaning, groaning and humming.] She continues, "We praise thee Lord; we ask you in the name of Jesus to take charge of this service. Take charge of every heart. Let the blood of Jesus flow over our hearts, our minds, our spirits . . . We thank thee for the privilege of coming into thy place . . . We pray that thou will open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing . . . Give us more holy boldness . . . to prove thee . . . to do the things thou hast commanded us . . ." [Oh Lord! Um-m-m-oh yes!] ". . . Lord Jesus, we pray that thou will be with those who want to go deeper . . ." [Oh yes!] ". . . Turn on the search

light of Heaven; help those to find thee . . . for they will hunger and thirst after thee . . . [She pauses as if choking; she continues]. “. . . We thank thee for the way thou hast answered prayers. We ask thee in the name of Jesus to heal the sick . . . destroy the very cause of sickness.” [Oh Holy! Yes Lord!] “. . . Remember especially Sister Anderson . . . restore her to health; she is one of thy faithful children . . . Bless Mr. Enscoe. . . . We thank thee for the faith of the Enscoes. We ask thee to bless the young man who used to come . . . he had a desire to be saved. Draw that man back to thee by thy spirit . . . stir him up spiritually . . . call him back, for he was directed toward holiness . . . We ask it all in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Another woman begins praying immediately. She says, in part: We thank thee Lord, for health and for the prayers that have already gone up . . . We come out to be made more like thee . . . We’re coming up to Calvary . . . Oh Lord, let us measure up to everything . . . Oh God, we want to be men and women after thine own heart . . . She screams out: “Oh bless your Holy Name!” “. . . Fill our vessels with oil . . . Thank thee for the vessels around the altar . . . ” [Possibly referring to the saints and the elders.] “. . . For these people in the pews; thank you for everything . . . We want you to have your way . . . Sanctify with the Holy Ghost and with fire!” [The observer glances around; it is the woman on the rostrum who is praying.] “. . . Oh blessed Lord, bless the Word, tonight . . . Open our hearts to receive the Word . . . ” [Holy! Holy! Glory! Yes!] “. . . Help us to eat “the roll tonight . . . Help us to eat it just as it comes down from this holy table . . . Give thy children liberty . . . Make a way where there’s no way . . . Feed the hungry; clothe the naked . . . Help us to know the war will soon be over . . . When there will be no more cold houses . . . no more aches and pains . . . Take care and feed the little children . . . Help the world to consider little children who are not responsible for coming into the world . . . Have mercy on thy straying children . . . they must appear before thy judgment bar to give account of the vows they made at this altar . . . Amen.”

Everyone resumes his seat. The woman who just finished praying begins to utter strange noises, similar to the above-mentioned. She seems to be saying “Ah . . . shie . . . momtie . . . es . . . ah . . . Glory to Jesus.” Then more muttering for about thirty seconds. She waves her arms and jerks backward and forward.

Someone requests hymn No. 202: “Oh, Now I see the Crimson Wave. The Fountain Deep and Wide.” [Cries of, “Oh Glory!

Jesus?"]. "Jesus, My Lord, mighty to save, points to his wounded side . . ." Cries of "Oh Yes"! . . . A man raises his hand, nervously, he shrugs his shoulders, hisses. The singing continues. ". . . The cleansing stream I see, I see. I plunge, and oh, it cleanses me. Oh, praise the Lord, it cleanses me . . ." Four stanzas are sung. Several are clapping.

A white man enters. He kneels down beside the chair, prayerfully, then, sits down.

A woman on the platform stands up and says, in part: ". . . Jesus, my Lord, mighty to save . . . We, tonight know that Jesus is mighty to save . . . Oh, Yes! . . . we thank him for the cleansing stream . . . Oh, bless his name! This is personal, he cleansed me . . . at 732—23rd Street over thirty years ago, on Easter Sunday Morning. . . . He cleansed me, I remember it well . . . down on my knees . . . talking to him . . . I stayed on my knees until he cleansed me . . . I praise him tonight . . . Oh, bless His Name! Oh, Selah! Oh Glory! Hallelujah! Give him the Glory! The stream is flowing . . ." She stops talking, suddenly and starts muttering; her teeth clatter. Others join her, making unintelligible sounds. She ceases muttering just as suddenly and cries: "Selah!" She throws her head back and cries: "Oh—bah—Selah—she—oh—bah—Selah!" The elders on either side of the collection table are also muttering, as if in reply. She cries: ". . . David!" and more strange sounds. Then she resumes her remarks, saying in part: "David says in the 23rd Psalm, 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in Green Pastures . . .' Aren't you glad tonight?" She throws her arms about, jumps up and down, she cries out, "He is my Shepherd! I shall not want! I praise him, oh yes! His blood has been spilled for us . . . He led David. He will lead us beside still waters. Oh, yes! he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness . . ." She breaks away and runs from one side of the platform to the other, and back again, shouting the words: ". . . Ain't you glad you want to follow . . . He has a Holy Name . . ." She springs up and down, clapping her hands . . . ". . . It makes me glad . . . He made the highway . . . The Holy Way . . . Everything we need is in Christ Jesus. I am glad about it tonight . . ." The white persons are nodding approvingly, but saying nothing. Several Negroes add occasional "Amens" and "Hallelujahs." She calms down, gradually, as she says in terminating her testimony: "Oh, may God bless you." [More muttering] ". . . Glory be to Jesus . . ." She resumes her seat on the platform.

Someone calls for hymn No. 114, "Since Jesus Came into My Heart" three stanzas are sung. A woman passes her collection plate.

One of the men at the collection table takes the plate after it has circulated the room, and stands up to bless the offering. The man at the end of the table is muttering strange sounds; "He-sa-he-so-ma-gua-ar-an-se-a-kee-he-ka-ye." He stops suddenly, and shouts, "Praise the Lord!" The woman on the platform spasmodically raises her hand.

Another woman sitting on the platform rises to speak, saying, in part: "... I was trying to get a message ... A Chinese boy gave me a letter ... and the spirit was deciphering it for us ... it said, 'the Lord died for us ...'" She begins to mutter unintelligibly, then continues in the same strain: "... If we would just get right with God ... This little barefoot Chinese boy ... and the Holy Ghost was deciphering it for me just as I sat there ... We just got to have faith enough! Hallelujah! ... The Lord will sanctify and baptize ... all won't be saved ... only a few will be here to hear the message..." She stops suddenly and hisses, stammers out a few more words: "Oh praise the Holy word of Jesus! ... Oh-come-sa ..." She terminates her remarks with a few announcements, saying: "... I'm asking you children just to come out here Sunday ... are there any requests for prayers?" Silence. "Then we'll have testimonies."

The man on the platform is first to testify, he says, in part: "... The Lord comes to me joyfully ... children, when we consider our condition ... get our mind on ourselves; how disobedient we are, the 23rd Psalms is enough to wake up the dead ..."

A woman in the congregation testifies, saying: "... I got converted when I was nine years old ... I saw millions of angels ... I was on my way to Asbury Methodist Church ..."

Another woman testifies "... I praise the Lord for healing my daughter ... she left here with all the misery gone ... I'm asking you all to pray for us ..."

Another woman adds her testimony, saying in part: "Truly, I can say the Lord is my Shepherd ... I am sanctified, pure and holy! ..."

A hymn is raised: "I Am Determined to Hold Up to the End." Only one stanza is sung, without the piano. Someone cries out: "Thank God!"

One of the white women in the audience testifies, saying: "A little song was singing in my heart ... Glory to God! ... I want to praise Him for ..." She mutters, shrugs her shoulders, throws back her head, jerks. Then continues: "... I thank the Lord! I praise him! bless His Name for such beautiful weather, for health, I am determined to hold out to the end ..."

The white man rises to testify, saying: "... I want to thank the Lord for being my Shepherd ... for twenty-two years I've been hearing that voice, I heard a little story once ... a boy works with me ... he said a man was preaching on the 23rd Psalms ... a pastor of a Holiness Church ... one of the brethren in his church had a farm on which there were fifty sheep ... another neighboring farmer had a much larger flock ... His fifty sheep broke through the fence and joined the neighbor's sheep. The neighboring farmer was a worldly man ... he wouldn't listen to reason ... he had so many sheep, he could not keep count of them ... He refused to take his word regarding the fifty who did not belong to him ... Then the brother who had lost his sheep, suggested that the entire flock be driven pass the hole in the fence, and he would stand on his side and call to his sheep as they passed, and if fifty sheep came through the opening, they would be considered the lost ones, if more or less than fifty came through, then the neighbor could keep the entire flock. The neighbor agreed to try the test, and the sheep were driven up to the hold in the fence. The man called his sheep as the flock passed, and exactly fifty of them came through the opening back into his lot ... The worldly farmer was convinced! ... " Then the speaker continued his own testimony, saying: "... I thank God ... pray for me : : I love you all ... I believe the 13th chapter of Corinthians should be applied to us all ... " He sat down.

A man and woman enter. They kneel first, then sit in the audience.

A woman in the congregation adds her testimony, saying: "Lord I'm so glad for the 23rd Psalm ... The Lord is my Shepherd ... He knows I have such a hard struggle with the devil ... "

One of the women leaves the platform and comes around to stand in front of the collection table. She beckons for the others to assemble around the front of the room for prayer. Someone raises the hymn: "Near the Cross."

Everyone, save the observer, assembles around the pastor in front of the room. They form a circle and kneel down. The pastor gives the signal "Contact"! And each one takes hold of the adjoining person's hand. Another hymn is raised: "Washed in the Blood of the Lamb."

The pastor begins to pray, saying in part: "... We pray thee, Lord, to come and be with us tonight ... " [There is strange muttering from several persons in the group; others are crying out, "Please Lord! Oh Yes! Jesus!" etc.]. The pastor continues to pray: "... Let thy sheep hear thy voice ... send thy children home ... Break down everything that hinders sweet communion of the Holy Spirit ... "

[More muttering and moaning from the group]. “. . . Take us to our several homes . . . reveal to us the vision . . . Thou knowest what the Chinese boy meant . . . Make us ready to accept thy message . . . Take over all unspoken requests . . . Fill our hearts and soul and minds with love . . . Now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all . . . Amen.”

They all stand; they are shaking hands. Several are leaving. Others remain and chat.

4)

Description of Service at The First Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Located at 1709 Eleventh Street, Northwest, Rev. G. E. Galloway,

Pastor.

Date: Monday, January 9, 1939

Hour: 9:00 to 10:35 P.M.

Occasion: Monday Night Prayer Meeting.

At 9:00 o'clock, there were fifteen persons, seven men and eight women, including a girl about seven, in the room. The services had begun and a hymn was being sung. There was no instrumental accompaniment. The patting of feet was vigorous and rhythmical. There were no hymn books.

A hymn was being sung, the title of which appeared to be, "I'm Thinking of God's Goodness to Me." It was being led by a woman in typical 'antiphony' style, i.e. she was taking the solo part while the congregation chimed in on the chorus. Cries of "Oh yes!, Yes Lord! and Well!" were added. The solo part was sung three times, the chorus four, concluded with a soft humming as a woman rose to pray as follows:

"Oh Lord, I come because I'm thinking of your goodness . . . Oh Lord, show mercy" [Cries of "Oh Lord . . . Oh Lord"]. ". . . Heavenly Father, you know all about me . . ." ["Oh Lord! Yes Lord!"] ". . . Come up to this branch of Zion, Lord." ["Oh Lord!"]. ". . . Thank you, Heavenly Father for thy branch of Zion" [Evidently having reference to this church—The First Rising Mt. Zion]. ". . . People won't come here even though the sign is written on the door saying, 'All welcome to this House of God . . .'" ["Oh Lord, Yes, Lord"] ". . . Thank you for this man of God you sent to lead this flock . . ." ["Yes Lord"] "Oh Lord, take care of sister Moton . . . bless my companion; you know all about him, don't let him get discouraged" . . . "Oh Lord, make me a real companion . . . Oh Lord, I don't know nobody else to ask . . . Amen."

Another prayer. This time it is a woman sitting in the front

row of seats. She prays: "... Most Sterling and Everlasting Father, search my heart." ["Please Lord"] "... We thank you God for lying down last night and getting up this morning . . ." ["Lord! Lord!"] "... You blessed us . . . come on bye, Heavenly Father, come Heavenly Dove . . . You said, my Father, to come." ["Yes!"] "You said, you'd meet us . . . In 1938, Heavenly Father, times has been hard. Oh Lord! Now Lord! I'm calling on you, Lord! You've been so much to me . . . you've been a doctor for me . . . that ain't all, You've been a rock in a weary land . . ." ["Lord, Lord! Ah Lord! Mercy, Lord!"] "You promised to hear me when I pray, Lord . . . Lord, bless this branch of Zion . . . bless sister Cook; give her more faith, Oh Lord, Oh Lord, Lord, Lord." ["My Lord! Yes Lord! Please Lord!"] "... Bless sister Strands; bless every member of Zion this evening; bless sister Mitchell . . . bless my home; bless my companion . . . Men in this world have misunderstood me . . . Amen."

A hymn is raised, led by a woman, the name of it seems to be, "The Holy Water," the first line of which was, "Let us drink this water, this holy, holy, holy water that Jesus is giving away." Three stanzas are sung; the chorus is hummed twice again. A prayer follows. This time it is a man, he says, in part: "... Father, I ask thee to search my heart and give me a clean heart . . ." [Lord! Please, Lord!"] "... God, I came to thee before, and I received consolation . . . I come to you, asking you to bless this branch of Zion . . . Thank you for guiding me . . . Many who got up this morning, have been snatched into Zion . . . Thank you, Father, for guiding me safely back to my home . . ." ["Lord, Call Him! Oh Lord, My Lord, Yes Lord!"] "... Amen."

Another hymn is raised. The name of it is, "Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown?" It is led by a woman in the front pew. She cries out: "When I reach that mansion of rest . . ." The congregation sings wildly and loudly, "Will there be any stars in my crown, in the eve' when the sun goeth down." They sing four verses. The leader of the hymn then testifies, she says, in part: "... Christians, we wonder oftentimes, if there are any stars in our crowns . . ." ["Yes! Yes!"] "... Such a saint is shining way up yonder . . . Sister Smith, will now open the covenant meeting . . ."

A woman rises to open the covenant meeting or testimony services.

She leads the covenant service with a hymn, the first stanza of which was, "I feel the fire burning in my heart." The chorus follows: "Children, you can't make me doubt it, you can't make me doubt it, you can't make me doubt it, in my heart." She gives a short testimony and sits down.

A man rises to testify, he says, in part: "... I promised Him, I'd serve Him 'till I die ... I ask you all to pray for me ..."

A woman testifies, saying in part: "... I'm glad to be here ... I can say how good He is to me ..."

Another woman raises a hymn, leading it with these words: "I've done come out from the world; Oh, I've done come out from the world ... " The girl goes out a side door. The woman sings with greater and greater enthusiasm, "Oh, I've done come out from the world ... " She screams aloud; she seems to be choking; the words refuse to come; she shouts, throwing her arms wildly about, jerking backward and forward, making a hissing noise; she stamps her feet. Then she bursts out again: "Oh, I've come out from the world ... " The congregation claps rhythmically. The little girl re-enters by the same side door. The woman continues her performance; she jumps up and down; she waves her hands; she throws her arms wildly about; she breaks away and runs over to the opposite side of the pulpit; she dashes back; she stands as stiff as a mummy and screams at the top of her voice. Then she folds her arms prayerfully behind her, drops her head for a second (as if to pull herself together), raises her head and begins to testify. She says, in part: "... I don't need to say anymore, you just watch my actions everyday of my life ... "

A woman rises to testify, saying in part: "... We so often fail to live up to the Word ... Pray for me ... "

Another woman raises a hymn in the following words; "Jesus is real, Jesus is real to me. So many people doubt Him ... I can never doubt Him. Jesus is real ... I can never doubt Him. That is why I love Him. Jesus is real to me ... " She gives her testimony: "... I am a witness. Jesus is real to me ... He is our companion ... we can see where we stand by reading His word ... I thank the Lord for a fixed mind . . . Jesus said, 'I go away to prepare a place for you ... ' Pray for me."

A man raises a hymn: "I am bound for the promise land; I am bound for the promise land; Oh, who will come and go with me; I am bound for the promise land. If you get there before I do; I am bound for the promise land ... " [Two men leave by the front door]. He gives a brief testimony and sits down.

Another man raises a hymn: "I am journeying up the shining way, Lord." They sing three stanzas. He testifies, saying: "... I am glad I had this privilege to lift my voice ... I ask you all to hold on to his unchanging hand ... Pray for me that I may grow stronger ... "

Another man testifies briefly, and gives a short prayer.

Another man gives a brief testimony.

One of the men on the rostrum, steps up to the pulpit, commands the attention of the congregation, and says: “. . . The Lord God Almighty spoke to me in Montgomery County, Maryland, between eleven and twelve o'clock one night . . . and brought peace to my soul . . . and set me out on the King's Highway . . . ”

A deacon Foster takes charge of the service by stepping up to the small table in front of the pulpit. He raises a hymn: “It Takes Love to Make Religion.”

A woman jumps up and screams. She sits back down.

Deacon Foster calls on sister Jackson to get the plates for the offering.

The plates are passed.

Deacon Foster announces that a deacon's board meeting will be held after this service. He asks for other announcements. There are none. He lifts his arms. Everyone stands.

Benediction.

5)

Description of Service at the Bible Way Church of Christ, S. E. Williams, Elder.

Date: Monday, January 23, 1939

Hour: 8:35 to 10:30 P.M.

Occasion: Monday Night Services.

At 8:35 P.M. there are thirty-two persons, including eleven men and twenty-one women, in the room. Ten of the women (saints) are dressed in white uniforms and are wearing round black hats or caps. Six of the saints are sitting in a row facing the congregation in front of the platform, three on either side of the center collection table. The other four saints sit facing these, with their backs to the congregation. They are joined by two more, making twelve saints altogether, arranged as it were, “around the altar”. No one sits on the platform. To the left, on the platform, there are three rows of chairs, three chairs in each row, constituting the choir-loft. Nearby, against the side wall, is the piano. The pianist is a woman. Four seats are on the platform. In the right-front section of the room, two rows of chairs, four seats in a row, for the men officers of the church. Four elders occupy these seats. A woman holding a small baby sits midway of the left side of the church. The first four rows of seats on this side are occupied by five women, seven girls and three boys. A hymn is being sung; the piano is furnishing accompaniment; the rhythm is “jazz-swing-time;” the chorus is being repeated over and over.

The name of the hymn cannot be discerned and there are no hymnals. The saints are standing around the collection table clapping in rhythm with the piano. Their voices scream and shout the words. Two of them are shaking all over. Only the chorus is being sung over and over. After seven repetitions, they cease singing, but continue to clap in unison with the piano; their bodies swaying back and forth and from side to side. This continues through two more repetitions of the chorus; then the piano ceases. The clapping gradually dies out amidst cries of "Hallelujah! Glory! Amen! Thank the Lord! Glory to Jesus!" One by one the saints sit down.

One of the saints is standing with an open Bible. She announces: "5th chapter of Ephesians," and reads the entire chapter; saying at the end: "We have read the 5th chapter of Ephesians." A hymn is raised; the clapping starts; the piano peps up the rhythm to jazz-swing-time; the saints shout the words; wagging their heads, swaying their bodies from the shoulders; patting their feet; their voices shows no harmony; two of them simply yell out: "Going back to God, going back to God, Oh, going back to heaven, going back to God." One saint shouts: "Oh-Oh-Oh-Glory to God! Hallelujah! Oh-Oh!" Another saint is making a series of hissing sounds. The chorus is repeated eleven times. Then more clapping without the words, followed by the cessation of the piano; and finally, the gradual dying out of the clapping, and the quieting down of the group.

A woman is standing in the congregation; she testifies: "... Thanks be to God that I am saved ... Thank God to be able to return home each day ... to my home and to my husband ... Ask you all to pray for me ..." [Cries of "Hallelujah!" and occasional clapping. The piano begins to play another jazzy tune, softly].

A woman is testifying: "... Yes! I'm on my way to heaven and I'm so glad! ... I'm on my way back to heaven and I'm so glad ... Hallelujah! ... And the world can't do me no harm ... Glory! Hallelujah! ..." Another hymn is raised; the rhythm is being whipped up to the same swing-time; the clapping recommences amidst the patting of feet and swaying of bodies and shaking of heads. The chorus is repeated again and again; then, the singing ceases; followed by mere clapping. The piano drops out; followed by a gradual cessation of the clapping. Several cries of "Hallelujah! Glory! Jesus!" And then the room is calm once again.

Another woman testifies: "... I am glad to be here [cries of "Glory! Holy! Holy! Holy! Glory!"]". "... Thank the Lord for all that's been said and done here tonight ... I'm rejoicing tonight ... I wouldn't take nothing for my journey ... I intend to go on until the end ..." Another woman raises the hymn: "Hallelujah to the

Lamb"; she carries the solo part. The piano whips the rhythm up into jazz; the clapping begins; the chorus is repeated again and again: "Oh sister . . . Hallelujah to the lamb; Oh brother . . . Hallelujah to the lamb; the same feverish rhythm and shouting and patting of feet and clapping of hands; and screaming of "Glory! Hallelujah!" A woman is standing; she begins to testify; yelling above the others to make her testimony heard. No one is paying her any attention. She shouts out: ". . . Thank and praise God . . . Thank and praise God for the Word . . . the Word is light . . . Glory to God! . . . Hallelujah! . . . and it makes you do right . . . Hallelujah! . . . You can think of God . . . Hallelujah . . . Oh, bless the name of Jesus! . . . When you're on your sick bed . . . Hallelujah . . . When you haven't got clothes to wear . . . Hallelujah . . . When you ain't got shoes on your feet . . . Hallelujah! Glory to God! She throws her arms about and screams: "Nothing good will He hold back . . ." [Others are shouting, "Hallelujah!"] ". . . sh-sh-sh-sh . . ." [She hisses]. "Sh-sh-sh . . ." The clapping continues but the singing stops. The piano continues to play softly. In the same strain she continues her testimony: ". . . Jesus! Hallelujah! . . . Bless the name of Jesus! When you haven't got a friend in the world . . . Hallelujah! . . ." [She rares backwards and bends forward; shaking from head to foot]. ". . . Oh, bless the name of Jesus! . . . Hallelujah! . . . We can't know if we don't know . . . the Word . . . I ask you saints to pray for me . . . Hallelujah! . . . Hallelujah! . . ."

The hymn is raised: "You Can't Make Me Doubt It, You Can't Make Me Doubt It, You Can't Make Me Doubt It in My Heart." The clapping and jazz time are added; shoutings begin as the chorus is repeated; the eighteenth consecutive repetition is counted.

There are forty-eight persons now in the room, including fifteen men; the remainder consisting of women and girls, and one small boy about three years old, and a small baby about nine months old. One of the saints is standing to testify. The piano is playing softly a snappy tune. Another saint screams and springs out of her chair; she falls back down; jumps up again; jerks herself out into the left aisle she springs up and down, up and down, on her toes; her head is thrown back; her face tightly drawn; her mouth and eyes apparently closed; she turns around and around. The others are clapping and shouting, "Hallelujah! Glory! Jesus! Hallelujah!" Another saint shuffles out into the aisle beside her; they spring and turn and jump up and down around each other, without apparent conflict. The second saint keeps her head lowered; her arms extended as a bird's wings in flight. She hisses. The others pay no special attention to this gymnastic performance; they continue their rhythmic clapping

and shoutings of "Glory! Hallelujah!" The piano drops the tune; the clapping begins to die out. One of the performers cries out: " . . . Oh! Oh! Oh! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Oh Glory! Thank you Jesus! Oh Glory! . . . " Both of them are wringing their fingers from the wrists. The clapping continues. The piano is again softly playing some jazzy tune.

A woman is standing in the congregation. She tries to make her words heard above the shouting and clapping of the others; she cries out: "Thank you Jesus that I'm saved . . . Praise the name of Jesus . . . for what he's done for me . . . Thank God . . . Glory be to His name . . . Glory be to . . . " She stops suddenly as if paralyzed and speechless. She trembles and shakes all over. She bursts out: " . . . Oh! Oh! Oh!" She raises both hands shoulder high; wrings her fingers; her legs sink from under her; she falls to her knees; springs up again; she shuffles out into the aisle; she bends over backward and then forward. She cries out: " . . . Hallelujah! Oh! Oh! Glory! . . . "

Another woman is standing . . . now two more . . . now another . . . all four are jumping up and down clapping and swinging their bodies. A saint in the left pew springs out of her seat; her hair shakes loose; she is a young woman, apparently in the early twenties, light brown skin, well proportioned, nice features, is thrown out into the aisle. She turns and twitches and throws her arms wildly about. She jumps and screams and shouts out: " . . . Oh Jesus, praise Jesus, glory to God, praise God . . . " [She is calming down.] "Praise God because I'm saved and sanctified . . . pray for me . . . pray for my home . . . Oh Glory, Glory, Hallelujah . . . "

One of the saints in the front row with open Bible reads from the 5th chapter of Ephesians and comments: " . . . No man who is a homonger . . . whatever that scripture says . . . whoever that scripture touches . . . ought to live right. No use being a hypocrite . . . I desire the saints to pray for me that I may . . . " A man is sitting on the platform, apparently emerging from either of the side doors opening into a room behind the platform.

The man on the platform (the pastor) stands up and says: [everyone else, including the saints, quiet down] " . . . Praise the Lord. I am glad to see you all spending your energy on the Holy Ghost" [or in the Holy Ghost] " . . . They say Saturday and Monday nights are . . . but we've got the Holy Spirit here tonight [Monday] . . . Now let us take our offering . . . I'm going to ask everybody . . . " [he speaks in a gentle, persuasive tone] "to give something in the offering . . . Now let us get our offering ready in our hands . . . No other sounds in the room; no moving around; perfect order is main-

tained. Two saints take their places on either side of the collection table.

The pastor raises a long-meter hymn: "Before I Took My Stand for the Lord . . ." He leads the solo part; the others take up the chorus; there is no piano accompaniment and no clapping. Three stanzas are sung. He offers prayer: "Lord, our Father, we thank thee for another day . . . so many things could have happened . . . sickness . . . death . . . Hallelujah! . . . Lord, baptize someone here tonight . . . Hallelujah! . . . Make us strong around the altar . . . Let the hand of the Eternal Power be seen . . . Amen" Then, turning his attention to those sitting on the left side of the church, he says: "Let everybody on this side get right up and come right around the front [collection] table . . . that's right . . ." All but three persons rise and encircle the room, laying their contributions on the table as they pass by. Then the pastor beckons to those in the center rows to stand; all but five persons in the rear seats stand and take their offering up; those on the right side are few in number and pass up to the table without a special invitation. The men officers in the right front section make their offering last. Three women go out instead of returning to their seats. Two saints are now passing collection plates to those in the rear who failed to come to the table. Someone starts a hymn: "Jesus I'll never forget what you've done for me: Jesus I'll never forget how you set me free; Jesus I'll never forget that you . . . Jesus I'll never forget . . . heaven." The piano peps up the rhythm to jazz-swing-time; the clapping begins; the shaking of bodies, the patting of feet, and the shoutings of Glory! Hallelujah! recommence. The pastor paces back and forth on the platform clapping. The saints are counting the money. Several saints are donning their coats. The chorus is being repeated over and over.

Four men are bringing pillows out from the right door behind the platform; they stand before the collection table. The money counters gather up the collection and move aside. The men lay the pillows down across the front of the seats where the six saints were sitting. These pillows constitute the "mourner's bench." The singing ceases. The pastor says: ". . . I ask those who want to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost . . . when you come up here just put your faith on God, put your faith in Him . . . when you come up here you come to lean on the arm of God . . . to receive the Holy Ghost . . . don't doubt yourself . . . put your trust right in God . . . What is in your heart or mind that will keep you from receiving the Holy Ghost . . . Amen . . . What is holding some of you back is fear . . . some of you won't surrender . . . Is there anyone here who wants to be baptized tonight? In water . . . the water is ready . . . we baptized last

night" [he extends his right arm invitingly] . . . "Is there anyone tonight? . . . As we sing, let those who want to be baptized with the Holy Ghost come up . . ."

Everyone is standing. One of the saints is coming to interview the persons in the rear. She asks the observer: "Have you got a match?" He replies: "No I haven't." She asks: "Don't you want to be baptized tonight?" He answers: "No thank you, not tonight." She passes on to the others. A hymn is being sung. The wording seems to be, "Jesus prayed every morning; Jesus prayed everyday . . ." Three persons, one woman, one man, and a boy about thirteen go up and kneel on the pillows. Another woman comes to the rear of the room; she asks each man something; she asks the observer: "Have you got a match?" He replies, "no." She asks the next man, he gives her one. She returns to the front of the room. Another woman comes to the rear; she is putting out the light in the center and in the back of the auditorium. The room is dark except for the light above the platform. All of the participants gather around the mourners. Prayers begin; a concert of prayers; nothing can be distinctly heard, a jamboree of words; an occasional cry of "Hallelujah! Please Lord!" Two saints, one in front and one behind, are standing over each of the three mourners. The pastor paces back and forth on the platform shouting. The prayers cease. A hymn is raised.

The words of the hymn appear to be: "When I hear from Jesus, I cannot tell it all, I cannot tell it all, I cannot tell it all. He took my sins away." The clapping begins; the piano swings into jazz swing-time. Three women are jumping up and down. They shuffle out into the side aisle. They shout and clap and shake their fingers. The chorus is repeated again and again. Four women are now jumping up and down shouting and clapping and swaying.

A woman tries to testify. The other voices and the clappings and the piano drown her out. She persists in being heard. She yells out: ". . . Yes, I cannot tell it all! Glory! He made me all over again . . . Praise Him! He made me over from the top of my head to the sole of my feet . . . Glory to God for his tender mercy . . . He made it possible for me to have a right to the tree of life . . . Ask you all to pray for me, for I intend to go on to the end . . ." Another woman is testifying. Another screams. The piano is playing softly, the singing ceases; the clapping continues; someone cries: "Oh-oh-oh-oh . . ." Other voices are muttering, moaning, jibbering, and shouting, (all around the mourner's lowered heads). One saint is bending low over her penitent's head (the woman mourner). She shakes her hands on each side of her head; she claps; she makes all sorts of trembling gestures around the mourner's head. The other mourners

are being subjected to a similar bombardment of gestures and gesticulations. The mourners are singing and crying and shaking.

The man mourner begins to make strange sounds. His head shakes. He is muttering: ". . . Ah-ah-ah-yeh-yeh . . ." One of the men officers is bending over the young man on the extreme end. He shakes his head. The saints continue their shouting, clapping, and cries of "Hallelujah!"

Three children enter, two boys and one girl, not over twelve. A woman is walking up and down the left aisle holding a small baby, comforting it from crying. The pastor leaves the platform by way of the rear door. Two other saints are going out the street entrance. All of the persons except the observer and another man sitting behind him have left the building. The singing dies down. The pianist stops playing and leaves the instrument. The saints continue the strange mutterings. The man mourner is keeping up a steady flow of unintelligible noises; he seems possessed. All but two of the men officers are gone. These two, together with the saints, encircle the mourners and continue to pour forth a constant stream of strange sounds and rhythmic clapping.

The pastor returns to the platform. He goes from one side of the platform to the other, interviewing the saints. He joins the shouting and clapping. He cries out: "Oh Lord! Oh Lord! My Lord!" He stamps his feet. Another voice cries out: "Oh Jesus! Jesus!" The pastor continues to shout: "Oh God! Oh Glory! Help us Jesus! Oh God!" He raises both arms and cries: "Oh God! My God! Come down! Come down! . . ." The mourners are shaking and trembling and muttering, the man especially.

Two men come back to the rear of the church. They go out the street entrance. They put out the lights in the corridor and outside of the front door. The entire building is dark except the platform and the mourner's bench around which the saints and the pastor continue their shoutings, clappings and strange sounds.

The observer leaves the building.

6)

Description of Service at the Highway Christian Church of Christ.

Date: Tuesday, February 7, 1939.

Hour: 8:30 to 10:15 P. M.

Occasion: Brothers' Night.

The most striking feature of the auditorium is the long mirror which extends the full length of the church along both side walls. It is hung about four feet above the floor and is about two feet high.

The room is heated by three small oil burning stoves, two in the front at each side, and the other at the rear entrance to the building. The fumes from these stoves are noticeably strong. No windows are open. The members seem not annoyed by this atmospheric condition. Over the speaker's chair on the platform is a large sign on which is inscribed, at the top in bold red letters the words, "Enter Ye At The Gates." Just beneath this are the words, "Have Ye Received," in the left corner. In the center is the word "WELCOME." And in the lower right corner, is the phrase "The Holy Ghost." At the bottom of the sign are the words, "Since Ye Believed". Each person, upon entering, kneels before sitting. A piano is situated in front of the left side aisle. There is no pianist. The rear-center section of the platform contains four rows of chairs, six in a row, comprising the choir-loft. Immediately in front of this is the speaker's chair, beside of which are two other seats. In front of the speaker's chair is the pulpit stand. Below the pulpit stand, on the main floor of the auditorium, is the collection table. Six women are seated in the nave, three men in the right side aisle, and eight women in the left side aisle. The pastor sits in the speaker's chair on the platform.

When the observer entered, someone was praying. It was a man in the right side aisle. He was kneeling; the others were sitting. He was saying, in part: ". . . Glory to God! Jesus, bless this service . . . We ask in Jesus name. Amen."

Then a hymn is raised: "He Is Mine, He Is Mine. Oh Jesus, my Savior, He Is Mine." Hands are clapping, feet are patting; the rhythm is jazzy. Three stanzas are sung.

The pastor rises and announces the Scripture lesson, saying, in part: ". . . We shall read for our Scripture lesson tonight, the 146th Psalm, 'Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord, O my soul. While I live, I will praise the Lord. I will sing praises unto my God, while I have being. The Lord shall reign forever, even, thy God, O Zion, unto all generations, praise ye the Lord.'" Then he goes on to say: ". . . I want to see the saints worship . . ." [exclamations of "Bless the Lord, Amen!"] ". . . and I love the church . . . My wife has often said, "if you had a church, you would live in the church, wouldn't you?" I said, ne're 'bout . . . The church is all my pleasure . . . I'd have flowers all over this pulpit . . . I believe the saints should have flowers all around . . ." Then, the pastor turns to another theme. He goes on to say, ". . . Anytime you see anybody all in trouble it's their own doings that's done it . . . nobody else . . . You all have too many partners . . . The saints are good at that, Amen!" [laughing]. ". . . and young

The elder at the right of the table stands and offers a brief offertory prayer. Then he directs his attention to the persons sitting in the left aisle and says: "Everybody stand!" Everyone stands up and marches out into the aisle, then down the aisle to the rear of the auditorium, then, across to the other aisle, then back up to the front, and around in front of the table, where they drop their monies and pass to their seats. Then the elder tells all persons in the nave to stand. They march single file directly up to the table without circulating the room. No one sits in the right side aisle. The elders count the money and announce the results to the pastor.

The pastor says: "We thank you for \$1.50 . . . I intended to ask you for \$2.00 . . . Our lowest point is \$2.00 . . . On Thursday night, our lowest point is \$4.00 . . . Sometimes we reach \$5.00 . . . I guarantee, if we make that sum, we'll never come out behind . . . but if we drop back to about \$1.50, we may fall back . . ." Then he concludes his remarks by saying: "Now, has anybody got any announcements to make?" No one speaks. He adds: "I believe not . . . So I believe that will be all tonight . . ."

All stand. They raise their hands shoulder high. The pastor gives the benediction. All say, "Amen!"

7)

Description of Service in the Church of God, Elder Michaux, Minister.

Date: Sunday, February 12, 1939.

Hour: 7:45 to 9:35 A. M.

Occasion: Sunday Morning Radio Service; local station: WJSV, National hook-up, Columbia Broadcasting System.

General Description of the Interior of the Church of God.

Entrance to the church auditorium is made from Georgia Avenue. The building is situated in the middle of the block and on the west side of the street, covering numbers 2030 to 2032 Georgia Avenue. The entire church is on the main floor without balcony or basement. The seating arrangement consists of two side aisles containing seven rows of folding chairs with twenty-three seats in each row; a nave which contains seven rows of chairs, eighteen per row, and three rows of chairs, five to a row, in the front of the church, on each side of the pulpit platform. The total seating capacity is about five hundred.

Behind the platform are four rooms, two on each side, one upstairs and one downstairs, used as dressing rooms, and church offices. The rear section of the platform, behind the speaker's chair,

is reserved for the choir. It contains four rows of chairs, ten chairs per row. In front of the choir-loft are four chairs reserved for the pastor and guest speakers. In front of these is the pulpit stand, above which hangs the radio broadcasting fixtures suspended from the ceiling. To the left of the speaker's stand, on the front edge of the platform, is an upright piano.

The church walls are white and contain no pictures. The floor is painted red and has a long rubber carpet extending along each side aisle from the entrance to the platform. There are two large windows over the entrance from the street. These are the only windows in the building. Although there is a piano on the platform in front of the choir section, there is another in back of the choir.

Just inside of the front entrance is a temporary compartment about six feet square and ten feet high, above the door of which are written the words, "Prayer Scroll Room". There are three small stained glass windows near the top on the side of this room facing the inside of the auditorium. One of these windows contains a picture of "Daniel in the Lions' Den." The next, "an angel bearing a scroll in each hand"; and the third, a picture of "Jesus kneeling in prayer" with upstretched arms. Inside the "Prayer Scroll Room" and suspended from the ceiling is a long scroll which unwinds from the roller attached to the ceiling, and rewinds into a box containing a second roller resting on the floor directly underneath a flat surface large enough to write on. Innumerable names appear upon this scroll.

At 7:45 A. M. the first ten rows of seats in the front part of the auditorium are filled. People are rapidly coming in. A prayer and praise service is terminating. No one is in the choir-loft or in the pulpit. On each side of the collection table a man is standing supervising the taking of the offering for the concluding service. Some white persons are entering. An elderly woman, followed by a girl, and then two couples of men and women, about middle aged. They take seats in the nave in the second row from the front. The collection is announced from the table. Everyone stands, and a benediction is said; during which time the members raise their right hands shoulder high. No one leaves the auditorium. It is becoming rapidly filled to capacity. It is now time for the radio service to begin.

The man standing at the right end of the collection table claps his hands twice and the congregation stands. Elder Michaux walks hurriedly up the right aisle to the platform, followed by an aide carrying a black bag. He enters the pulpit, kneels in prayer, rises and faces the quickly gathering choir. His back is to the congregation.

The people sit down.

Elder Michaux raises his right hand to begin as a white radio intermediary completes final arrangements for the broadcast. The choir members are dressed in light grey uniforms, caps to match, with white collars. There are thirty-two of them, including twelve men and twenty women. The auditorium is perfectly quiet. All attention is focused on Elder Michaux, whose upraised hand is about to give the signal to begin singing the theme song, "Happy Am I". At exactly eight o'clock, he drops his hand and the singing starts. While the first stanza is being sung, the radio announcer introduces "The Happy Am I Preacher—Elder Solomon Lightfoot Michaux, and his Radio Church." After the second stanza, Elder Michaux introduces himself by saying, in part:

" . . . Do not despair . . . ask God to have mercy, if you please, and trace the rainbow . . ." The choir raises the hymn: "There's a Rainbow through the Raindrops." Two stanzas are sung, after which the Elder interrupts again by saying, in part: "There's always a bright light shining for those who trust in God . . . When tears come, don't worry . . . It is natural . . . Have faith in God and trace the rainbow . . ." The choir and congregation pick up the cue and sing another stanza of "There's a Rainbow Through the Raindrops."

A woman jumps up out of her seat in the right side aisle and starts clapping and springing up and down rhythmically. She works her way out into the passageway and jumps up and down and up and down until the singing stops. Then everybody applauds.

After the singing, Elder Michaux says: ". . . And the only thing that will carry you through is faith in God . . ." The choir raises another hymn: "God Put a Rainbow in the Clouds." The congregation joins in the chorus. They clap rhythmically and pat their feet. Two stanzas are sung. The Elder interrupts, again to say: ". . . It's wonderful, Pilgrim . . . to have faith, Pilgrim!" The choir and congregation shout back "Yea! Yea!" Then the choir begins another hymn, entitled, "He Holds Me in His Hand; I am Trusting in His Grace." The congregation joins in the chorus, clapping and patting their feet.

In the left side aisle, a woman jumps up out of her seat and claps more enthusiastically than the others. Four others are now jumping up and down in the right side aisle. Two in the nave are springing up and down clapping and singing and shaking their heads. Others are crying, "Hallelujah! Amen! Yes!" Two stanzas are sung and the chorus is repeated five times. The singing stops

and Elder Michaux speaks again, saying, in part:

“. . . Do not lose courage . . . encourage others . . . Do not talk to yourself, for if you talk to yourself, your button is loose . . . When you are sad and blue read Psalms . . .” The choir starts singing another hymn: “Trusting His Saving Grace.” The congregation joins in with singing, clapping and patting of feet. Only one stanza is sung, after which, the elder continues: “. . . Encourage each other . . . You know how they do in a baseball game . . . The grandstand cheers the pitcher with encouragement . . . The pitcher doesn’t heed the boos . . . The devil is a bluff . . . The devil is a joker . . . If you obey God, the devil will be your footstool . . . The word “devil” means adversary . . . Troubles are stepping stones to success . . . Folks are like chinchies . . . chinchies are alright in the dark, but when the light is turned on, the chinch runs . . . Some people do their evil in the dark . . . When the light is turned on then they run under cover . . .”

The choir sings another hymn entitled, “Pour Out Your Heart In Prayer.” The second stanza is hummed by both choir and congregation. A little girl, about twelve years old, followed by a woman, light brown skin, heavily built, in her late forties (Mrs. Michaux), ascends the platform. The little girl stands beside Elder Michaux, who rests his hand on top of her head without paying any particular attention to her presence. He continues his remarks, saying: “. . . We all have our troubles . . . Presidents, soldiers . . . The nations cannot trust each other . . . But you can talk to God . . . Let your faith excel the other fellow . . . There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother . . . Do not go to a spiritual medium, go to God! . . . God will see that you get a break . . . You are God’s child . . . We are all God’s children . . . We all look alike, talk alike, smell alike.” [Many laughs.] “. . . All are the same to God . . . Pills are used to clean us out when we get constipated . . . When I was a child, my mother used to give me castor oil . . . The world is constipated . . . The world needs a pill to clean it out . . .”

Elder Michaux, then, makes a special appeal to everyone in the radio audience, no matter who or where they are, to bow their heads or bend their knees in prayer. Many persons in the auditorium rise and turn around and kneel before their chairs. The Elder recites the first sentence of The Lord’s Prayer. It is repeated by the little girl standing by his side. He recites the second sentence which is also repeated by the girl. The entire prayer is said in this fashion. The Elder modifies the wording somewhat to make special emphasis.

After the prayer, the little girl leaves the platform. Those kneel-

ing resume their seats. A man on the platform begins to play a harmonica solo. The choir joins him on the second stanza. The words ring out: "I want to be ready in judgment time." The congregation begins singing, also. The chorus is repeated twice. After the singing stops, Elder Michaux directs his attention to Mrs. Michaux, and says, in part: ". . . Snake and bird . . . Snake charms bird . . . Mrs. Michaux charmed me one day . . . A good woman ought to be talked about . . . Her price is far above rubies . . . If she cares for her home . . . Always eat at home with your wife . . . Break bread at home . . . Don't be running around in every old cafe . . . Someone will butt you over the head . . . Everyone remember that a good woman is worthy to be praised . . ." He announces that Mrs. Michaux will sing. The congregation applauds heartily.

Mrs. Michaux steps over to the microphone. A man ascends the platform and takes a seat at the piano. Mrs. Michaux sings a hymn entitled, "A Loving Example for Me." Many persons are clapping, there are cries of "Amen! Praise the Lord!" Mrs. Michaux invites the congregation (those who have purchased cards with a list of her own songs) to turn to number seven and sing along with her. Many persons, including the choir and Elder Michaux join in the singing.

At the conclusion of the hymn, Mrs. Michaux sits down and the Elder rises and tells the people, "Colored people are great singers . . . where the white man will worry, even lose his mental balance, the Negro will go to sleep . . . The Lord has blessed the Negro with a happy spirit . . . Anyone desiring a copy of these "Happy Am I" songs should write to Elder Solomon Lightfoot Michaux, 1712 R Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C., including therein sufficient monies or stamps to cover the postage . . ."

The choir sings the hymn: "He Is Mine." The harmonica player, accompanied by another man carrying a guitar, ascends the platform. They begin right in the middle of the hymn and furnish additional music. Just before the last stanza is sung, Elder Michaux interrupts long enough to say: "We want the whole community to sing; when in trouble, everybody sing!" The last stanza is sung with clapping and singing by the congregation.

A man stands beside the collection table with an open Bible in his hands. Elder Michaux instructs him to turn to Corinthians, 1st chapter, and to read from the twelfth verse. The Elder repeats each sentence after the reader, emphasizing every important word. At the conclusion of the passage, Elder Michaux announces his subject as: "The Wisdom of This World Is Foolishness to God."

Elder Michaux starts preaching, saying: ". . . God saves us by faith, not by wisdom . . . I know what I'm talking about . . . I'm not

drunk . . . I don't drink, I thank you! . . ." The congregation claps and laughs. The Elder instructs the reader to turn to the 14th chapter of St. John and the 21st verse. As the passage is being read, Elder Michaux emphasizes the word "Peace!" Peace! And the congregation shouts back: "Peace! Peace! Amen! Amen!" The Elder continues his preaching, saying: ". . . Be what you are. Shine like a star!" The reader continues the passage and Elder Michaux comments on the fact that the "peace of Jesus is different from the peace of this world," for "Jesus said, 'Let not your heart be troubled,' whereas the "peace of this world is expressed in terms of cannon . . ." Then he adds, ". . . The world by wisdom, knew not God; but it pleased God to save them by preaching . . ." He screams out: "Whoo—Ah!" The congregation shouts back: "Amen!" Many of them clap enthusiastically.

Elder Michaux turns his attention to the open Bible on the pulpit before him and reads: ". . . there were Sheperds . . ." Many persons cry out, "Amen! Yes! Alright!" Mrs. Michaux rises and waves her handkerchief several times. She steps up to the microphone and begins to sing. The congregation goes wild. Six persons in the choir are standing, jumping and clapping and shouting. Eight women in the left side aisle; six women in the center; nine women in the right side aisle, all shouting, clapping, and springing up and down as Mrs. Michaux sings. Others cry out, "Amen, Yes, Praise the Lord."

The choir and congregation stop singing suddenly and then begin again to sing "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." The radio announcer tells the radio audience that the service is going off the air. There is a loud burst of clapping and patting of feet. Mrs. Michaux pats the Elder on the back of the shoulder and says: "Do you know why I am happy? Because I know this man . . ." Then she gives her own testimony in which she says that God is good; that people are idolatrous; and that that's what is the matter with the world. She cites incidents of the miraculous healing power of God and refers to her own previous death-bed illness when all doctors had given her up. Then she prayed . . . "giving all trust to God . . . received a message . . . You shall prosper . . ." Then she cries out, "I have it!" Several women in the front seats are screaming and sobbing. One of them jumps up and shouts out, "I am a witness!" The audience calms down. Mrs. Michaux concludes her remarks and sits down.

Elder Michaux announces that the next service will be at 11:45 a.m. Some women are still shouting, sobbing. One woman in the front row of the left side aisle jumps up and screams hysterically, throwing her arms wildly about in every direction. She shouts at

the top of her voice: "Bless God! Hallelujah! Hear the Savior! . . . He will keep you . . ." She works her way out into the passageway screaming and jumping up and down. She cries out, "Bless God, Bless God!" Elder Michaux stands silently and attentively in the pulpit without interfering. She quiets down and resumes her seat. Just as soon as she sits down, another woman in the right side aisle springs out of her seat and shouts, "Thank God we've got one place to go to worship God." Another female voice cries out, "Oh, it's wonderful!"

After quietness is restored, Elder Michaux calls the attention of the people to the Union Meeting at 5:00 p.m. and the night preaching at 8:00 p.m. The choir sings a hymn entitled, "I'm all on the Altar." The Elder announces that the offering will be taken. He says, "We are all on the altar . . ." The choir repeats the chorus again and again. The people go up to the collection table to make their offering. After the collection is taken, Elder Michaux extends a welcome to the several white visitors from California. He says, ". . . The program of the Church of God is nation-wide . . . Thousands of dollars are spent each year in stamps alone . . . People are kept working all day writing letters and answering correspondence . . ."

After a few more random remarks in which Elder Michaux referred to his having been "in jail for preaching the Gospel" the congregation stands and everyone sings "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." The Elder extends a special welcome to the "many white friends that attend the services," and urges them to join in the singing, shouting, and invites them to "feel at home." He assures them that no judgement will be passed upon them if they conduct themselves as enthusiastically as anyone else.

The members raise their right hands shoulder high as Elder Michaux pronounces the benediction. Both his hands are raised.

8)
Description of the Service at the Second Church of God.

Date: Tuesday, January 24, 1939

Hour: 8:45 to 10:00 P.M.

Occasion: Tuesday Evening Prayer Service.

At 8:45 p.m. there are only two men in the room, the pastor and the caretaker. There are four seats on the platform. Painted on the wall above these chairs are the words: "Follow Peace with All Holiness, Without Which No Man Shall See God." In the front left corner is the piano. Next to it, on the left side of the platform are three rows of chairs, three in each row, comprising the choir-loft. In

the extreme front, right corner, a door leads into a room behind the platform. Near the ceiling on the right wall, are the words: "Unity in Christ." The auditorium contains two columns of seats, seven rows, five seats to a row. The pastor sits at the collection table. The caretaker is passing out both hymnals and Bibles to all. A woman has entered.

The pastor asks for Hymn No. 238: "When Jesus Answers My Prayer." Three stanzas are sung. No piano accompaniment; no clapping. Two more women enter and sit on the left side. One of the women asks for hymn No. 310; "Near the Cross." Four stanzas are sung. The chorus is repeated once. The caretaker requests No. 336; "T'is the Blessed Hour of Prayer." Five stanzas are sung.

The pastor rises and says: ". . . When we realize what it means to come to prayer meeting . . . we would rush to the church . . . This song is about prayer . . . [indicates open hymnal] . . . God comes to listen to our prayer meeting . . . Now we're going down in prayer . . . Now there may be some requests . . . I ask you all to pray for me . . . I want a closer walk with God . . . When people get hard . . . they're not so easily moved [by prayer] . . . People don't believe that such a thing as praying to get rid of your sins can be done . . ." Everybody rises and turns around facing his seat and kneels down. The pastor begins to pray:

" . . . Lord, we thank thee for health . . . we realize that since we met last time, many have gone into eternity . . . Thank Thee for these few who have left their homes to come to meet you in this prayer meeting . . . We realize that you gave your Son on Calvary . . . through your love . . . through your grace . . . We thank thee for salvation . . . We thank thee for putting our feet on the rock . . ." [Someone says: "Yes, Lord"]. ". . . We realize that to know Christ is to know our sins are forgiven . . . We are interested in our dear brothers who are not saved . . . We pray that you will be with our dear brother [the observer] who has joined with us tonight . . . Be with him in his needs . . . Bless sister Brown . . . bless sister Washington . . . Bless brother Yates . . . Help us to find someone and bring them to Jesus . . . Help us to lay aside our duties that we might meet thee here at thy house . . ." [Murmurs of "Dear Lord, Yes Lord, Please Lord," softly and pleadingly]. ". . . Bless my wife tonight . . . Bless sister Smith and brother Reed . . . Pray for the rulers of all nations tonight . . . I pray for those nations that are preparing for war . . . Lord, they are preparing to kill their brothers . . . Save them, Lord . . . And when we have done all we can do . . . save us . . . Amen."

All rise and resume their seats. A woman asks for hymn 288:

"It Is Better Farther On." Four stanzas are sung. No clapping; no shouting; no piano; no patting of feet. The pastor requests someone to pray. All rise and kneel down again, facing their seats.

A woman begins to pray: ". .. Heavenly Father, help us to do all we can to constrain someone to come to Jesus . . . Stir our hearts as never before . . . We pray a special blessing for brother Johnson [the pastor] . . . help him to constrain the people to come to thee. Bless his companion . . . may she always be an honor to him . . . bless his children . . . Save us Lord . . . Save all thy children who are outside the arc of safety . . . Pray that we may always keep Jesus before us . . . Bless the visitor [the observer] within our gates . . . ["Yes Lord, Please Lord"] . . . Help us Jesus . . . bless this whole world, Lord bless each department of this church, Lord . . . We realize that thou wilt carry us through . . . And we will give thy name the credit . . . now and forever . . . Amen."

All rise and resume seats. A woman asks for hymn No. 102. "There is not a Friend like Jesus." Five stanzas; the chorus is repeated. The pastor rises and says: ". . . You know we sometimes try to base our feelings on what somebody done to us four or five years ago . . . and they're going to hell . . . because of something somebody done four or five years ago . . . Yet Jesus was shaped in sin . . . and he suffered every pain and woe for our sakes, yet he's a friend to us all . . . come to Him and He'll have pity and compassion on us . . . He's not holding us for the sin we've done . . ." [No responses] ". . . I'm going to read in Malachi . . . third chapter . . . We don't need so much preaching, we need more talking to . . . a lot of folks fall all out in a frenzy . . . knocking over benches . . . and carrying on . . . but it don't have no effect on them afterwards . . . like a drunken man . . . You ask him the next day, and he doesn't know what happened . . . we need more talking to . . ." He reads: "Behold I will send my messenger, and he will prepare the way for me." He comments: ". . . God got to purge His people . . . that's why we have to go through trials . . . like they have to purge gold . . . The three Hebrew Children had to go through fire . . . After you've been tested, you're better able to stand up for righteousness . . . Now, we are going to Roosevelt to try to get to the folks who are oppressing the laborers . . . but God said he would handle the oppressors . . . We're going to the wrong place . . . We should go to God . . ." [Moderate gestures, moderate voice, no comments from the others]. ". . . We should ask God for the things we want, Amen. You can be in the church and yet be away from God . . . God keeps a remembrance," [he is taking each passage in the third chapter of Malachi, and after reading a verse, he comments on it]. ". . . of these who fear him . . .

God doesn't forget . . . and God will reward the faithful . . . Now may the Lord bless us all tonight . . . Very few of us have met, but I am sure that God has been with us . . . Take Malachi home with you and read it again . . . read it slowly and it will reveal itself to you . . ." He turns his attention to announcements; saying: ". . . Thursday night, I had wanted to devote that night to Missionaries . . . We want everybody to come out . . . Sister Washington, you're asleep, but I want you to hear this . . ." He adds: ". . . If you want to sing a hymn or something . . . Brother Yates, you can pass the plates for anybody who wants to give something . . ." The plates are passed. The pastor counts the offering and announces: "Thank you all for a collection of sixty-one cents . . . Let us stand." He raises the hymn: "Bless Be the Tie that Binds Our Hearts in Christian Love . . ." He gives the benediction.

9)

Description of Service at the Church of God and Saints of Christ.
Bishop H. Z. Plummer, G.E.A.; N. C. Butler, Overseer.

Date: Saturday, January 7, 1939.

Hour: 11:00 A.M. to 1:20 P.M.

Occasion: "Sabbath" Day Services.

At eleven o'clock, services had begun. A testimony was in progress. All members were standing. About one hundred and fifty men, women and children were present. A few persons, here and there, were sitting. These consisted of elderly women, very small children, and women attending babies. The testimonies were being given in rapid succession; each terminating with the words: "Church of God and Saints of Christ." All members are dressed in uniform style: The women are wearing blue blouses, dark brown skirts, white collars, brown ties, blue bow ribbons in their hair. Here and there are a few women dressed in white blouses, black skirts, white bow ribbons in their hair, and white collars with black ties. The majority of the men are wearing brown English walking suits (with swallow-tail coats), white stiff-bosomed shirts, Piccadilly collars, patent leather shoes, brown bow ties, and white low-cut vests. The other men are wearing black or dark blue suits, white shirts and black ties and shoes. All of the men are wearing either a cloth made ribbon (rosette), or a metal badge with a streamer made of ribbon and hanging from the left lapel of their coats. The all-cloth rosette decoration is for ordinary male members; the metal badge with ribbon attached, is for officers. Children are similarly dressed, i.e., older boys and girls.

After the testimony service, all sit down except the choir. The choir consists of thirteen females and twelve males including the choir-master. They are standing in a semi-circle in the center of the room in front of the pulpit. A man stands in single column, directly behind a woman; thus comprising two rows in a single file semi-circle with the choir-master standing at the center in the opening. There are five children, two boys and three girls, between ten and thirteen, in the group.

A hymn is being sung. The name can not be determined. There are no hymnals. The words are as follows: "My Lord, My Lord, and Father Abraham; when he shall save my soul from that great and dreadful day; when the Lord shall turn His back on me." These words are repeated over and over again in the same tune and rhythm. The choir members are marking-time; left-right; left-right (raising each leg high as in the goose-step); their bodies sway from side to side rhythmically.

After repeating this performance for fully ten minutes, the overseer on the platform rises, lifts a bugle to his lips and sounds a military call; two complete summons . . . it is a signal for the choir members to start marching. The choir-master gives the signal to 'forward march,' with his wand, and swings proudly out into the center aisle, leading the other choir members single-file, down the center aisle to the rear of the auditorium. After the choir-master, come the women, followed by the men. At the rear of the church, the column divides, forming a double line with alternating persons making up each. One of these lines, led by the choir-master, marches around the rear of the room over to the extreme left side aisle while the other line marches across to the extreme right side aisle. Then they march up to the front of the auditorium and across the room to their former position in front of the platform. This time, however, they are assembled into two double rows, with the women in each front row facing each other, behind which are the men. The singing stops. The children fall out and take seats in the congregation. The women step out of line and walk over to the left-front side of the church where they disappear, momentarily, into what appears to be a dressing room for the women. They reappear, each wearing purple-lined, gold-braided crowns. They re-form in their respective places in front of the platform. When all are reassembled, the choir-master gives the signal and the line of march begins again, in double columns, following the same route around the sides of the church and returning to the front, where this time, each member of the choir makes a bow to the overseer sitting on the platform. The women merely bow their heads. The men bow from their waists. After

each one has made obeisance to the leader, they return to their original positions and take seats.

The overseer rises and says: “. . . Brothers and sisters of the Church of God and Saints of Christ and Grandfather Abraham, we are going to listen to brother Barnes, who shall bring the message of the morning . . .” He resumes his seat. A man dressed in the above described brown suit, steps up on the platform and says:

“The subject of my message this morning is: ‘Stop, think, and use your own mind’ . . . Now how many of you know how to diagram a subject?” [Several hands are raised]. “. . . Now what is the subject of this sentence . . . Stop, think, and use your own brain?” A young man in the congregation replies: “You, is the understood subject.” [There is a murmuring of voices]. The speaker says: “That’s correct . . . And what is the word ‘stop’?” Someone replies: “A verb.” The leader says: “Correct . . . and how about ‘think’?” And the reply is heard: “Think is a verb.” And the speaker says: “And now what is the word ‘and’?” The answer comes: “And is a conjunction.” The speaker says: “Correct . . . what about the word ‘use’?” The reply is heard: “Use is a verb.” “Correct . . . and . . . how about the word ‘your’?” Someone says: “Your is a pronoun.” And the leader signifies his approval, then asks: “And what about ‘own’?” The reply comes: “Own is a possessive noun.” And the leader asks: “Now everybody should know what part of speech brain is . . . what is brain?” And a chorus of answers reply: “A noun!” Then the speaker says:

“Now that we know what we’re going to talk about, I want you to go along with me on a little expedition.” [He speaks in a conversational tone; no moralistic statement]. “. . . First we go out the door and turn the corner at M Street, and go up to Seventh Street. Then we turn right on Seventh Street, and go up to 1241 . . . How many of you know what 1241 is? . . . [murmurs and laughs] . . . well, you know that 1241 is a Jew store . . . Now, let’s say we’re all going into this Jew store . . . Of course, at first the Jew when he sees us all coming into his store will get excited but when he finds out that we’ve come to buy something, he’s going to start to rubbing his hands together . . .” [He rubs his hands together; laughs and murmurs] “. . . Now you go into this Jew store and you say: ‘I want to buy a suit.’ And that’s all you have to say to that Jew . . . and he has already worked out all of the details before you even got there . . . First he brings you out a suit that cost, let us say, eight dollars . . . He shows you this suit, and tries it on you . . . It just fits you . . . I used to work in a clothing store, and I know the way they do you . . . Do you know the reason why a Jew moves up into a colored neighbor-

hood? It's because he knows that colored folks don't use their brains." [Giggles and laughs]. ". . . Only a small minority of us use our minds . . . Now the Jew sits down and figures out just what you need; and then he figures out about how much money you've got to spend . . . then he figures out the best way to control your mind so as to make you pay his price . . . and if you don't stop and use your own brain and think for yourself, somebody else will use it for you and take advantage of you . . ."

"Now let me tell you how to spend your money . . . Let's say you've got a hundred dollars, and haven't got any point in mind as to how you're going to spend it . . . When you return home you'll have something you had no idea of buying, your money will be gone, and you still won't have what you wanted . . . The way to have money for the Passover . . . Oh, you may say, I ain't got nothing anyway, so there's no use me trying to save anything . . . and then, you sure won't have nothing!" [Laughs and talking] . . . "Just sit down and use your own mind and figure out the things you need . . . and leave the surplus at home . . . Then, you will have something when the Pass-over¹ comes . . . But if you spend your money for something like liquor . . . and you don't get no reward either . . . Take a man who goes to the bar-room . . . They let him spend and spend until he gets drunk . . . then if he gets too noisy, they throw him out . . . you know they have a man there who gets paid to do nothing else but to throw you out when you get too noisy . . . and if you get too bad, the bartender will call the wagon himself to come and get you . . ." [Loud laughs and talking]. ". . . So you see, you've spent two dollars and a half and you haven't got any reward . . . but if you save your money for the Passover and do your part to support the Church of God and Saints of Christ and Grand-Father Abraham;² then when you get sick, you have a reward . . . Father Abraham won't fail to come to your rescue, I declare unto you . . ."

"I am glad to have this chance to speak to you because I want you to stop and think and use your own mind . . . You know that when you spend your money at the movies, a part of it goes to the government and the government takes that money and buys bullets to kill you with . . ." [A man cries out: "That's true!"]. ". . . You wouldn't go down town and spend your money to buy a gun to kill yourself with, would you? . . ." [Laughs and talking]. ". . . If you don't use your own mind there's always someone else ready to use it for you and take advantage of you . . . Take a young lady, she buys several

¹ The Passover is in commemoration of The Hebrew ritual of the same name.

² Grand-Father Abraham is the leader of the cult in the person of Bishop H. Z. Plummer.

kinds of powders and goes before the mirror and fixes herself up [Giggles] . . . because she wants to control her boy friend's mind . . . and make him think what she wants him to think . . . that's why she tries to make herself attractive . . . Now the best way to do when you have a little money is to sit down and figure out how little you need to spend . . . Take that amount out of the house, and leave the rest at home . . . because you take these stores, they pay a man as high as ninety dollars a month just to fix up the windows as to make you spend your money . . . so as to control your mind . . . but if you use your own brain, you won't need anybody to tell you how to spend your own money . . . and you will have something for the Passover. . . ." He leaves the platform. The overseer rises and says:

"We thank brother Barnes and Grand-Father Abraham for these remarks. We all need to stop, think and use our own brains . . . We're going to have recess. Then the Sunday School will take up. After that we'll have a literary program . . ." The congregation begins to stir around. Papers are rustling; lunches are being eaten; some are leaving the room by the back of the pulpit, no one leaves by the street door.

10)

Description of Service at Mt. Zion Pentecostal Church, 6th and P Streets, Northwest.

Date: Friday, January 27, 1939

Hour: 8:45 to 10:15 P.M.

Occasion: Friday Night Preaching

At eight forty-five, there are eleven persons, including five women, two men, and four small children in the auditorium. Services have not begun. No one sits in the pulpit or beside the collection table. There is no choir-section. To the left of the platform is the piano above which there is a small sign reading: "Are Ye Dead?" There is only one section of folding chairs. These are situated in about the center of the room, and consists of eight rows, nine seats per row. One of the women in the front row holds a very small baby. In the back of the church, there are two large sliding doors pulled together and enclosing the Sunday School sections. The entire services are conducted in the basement floor of the church building. Entrance is made from the P Street side door, which leads downstairs and into the front part of the auditorium to the right platform. The main auditorium of this church building is reserved for the services of a separate denomination altogether, namely, The Mt. Nebo Baptist

Church. Outside of the building, in the yard, on the front side, is a large red sign reading, "For Sale."

At ten minutes to nine, the two men take seats on either side of the collection table. One of them opens the services by raising a hymn: "Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me on to that land . . ." There is no piano accompaniment; no clapping. There is moderate patting of feet. Five stanzas are sung. The man on the left side of the table rises, turns around, faces his chair, kneels down. Everyone else, including the observer does likewise, except the woman holding the baby.

A woman begins to pray. Others are praying too, but her prayer rises above the others; she is saying, in part: ". . . Remember me, Oh, Lord . . . Oh God, Our Father, we come thanking you for this privilege . . . search every heart . . ." [Intermittent exclamations of, "Yes Lord! Please Lord! Amen!" from the others]. She continues, ". . . Let my heart be pure . . . Oh Lord! Oh my Father Jesus! . . ." A man, the pastor, enters from behind the sliding doors in the rear of the auditorium and proceeds, while the prayers continue, to the platform. The woman continues: ". . . I ask a special blessing on sister Jackson . . ." [Cries of "Hallelujah! Amen! Oh Lord!"]. She continues: ". . . Take us through every trial . . . Bless the young man . . ." [The observer]. ". . . Bring down the power in his heart . . ." ["My God! Oh my Father! Oh! Oh my God!", etc. from the group] . . . she continues: "Make us a blessing, in Jesus Name . . . Remember my companion in Jesus name . . . Oh Lord, bring down every blessing, in Jesus name . . ." ["Well! Well! Oh Lord! Please Lord!" from the others]. She concludes her prayer: ". . . ask thee to be our guide, in Jesus name, Oh Lord! Now Lord, we ask thee to sanctify us . . . We ask these blessings in Jesus name . . . Amen."

All rise and resume seats. A hymn is raised; "It's a highway; it's a highway; it's a clean way . . ." One of the men asks the observer: "Won't you come up a little higher?" He replies: "No, thank you, I'm quite alright." The man, then asks: "You ain't no preacher, are you?" And the observer assured him that he wasn't.

The singing goes on. The pastor, sitting on the platform, starts clapping. One of the women reaches for a tambourine and begins to shake it. The rhythm is jazzy swing-time. Others are clapping their hands and patting their feet and swaying from side to side. The chorus rings out: "It's a highway; it's a highway. Walking up the King's highway." The chorus is repeated. The same stanza is sung over and over again.

Finally, the singing ceases, and one of the elders at the table rises and says: "We are going to have our Scripture lesson . . ." The

chorus of the hymn is repeated again, softly, "It's a highway; it's a highway, walking up the King's highway." The elder begins to read from the eighth chapter of Proverbs: "Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice." The congregation reads the alternate verse, "She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the path." Then the elder, followed, again, by the members. The elder concludes with the remark that: "We have read twenty-four verses of the eighth chapter of Proverbs . . ."

Another hymn is raised: "I shall not, I shall not be moved. I shall not, I shall not be moved. Just like a tree planted by the waters, I shall not be moved . . ." The tambourine is shaking; hands are clapping; feet are patting; the rythm is syncopation. The chorus is repeated again and again: "On my way to Heaven, I shall not be moved. On my way to Heaven, I shall not be moved. Just like a tree, etc."

After the hymn, one of the elders rises to testify, saying in part: ". . . thank and praise God to be living . . . Thank the Lord for taking me through the day . . . I thank the Lord for new courage . . . a better mind to serve Him . . . Thank the Lord that I am sanctified . . ." [Cries of "Amen! Hallelujah!" etc.]. ". . . Thank and praise God for all the saints tonight . . ."

A woman raises a hymn: "You'd better get religion and try to serve the Lord, while the blood is running warm in your veins." One stanza only. Another woman raises a hymn: "Jesus is mine, everywhere I go. Everywhere I go, Jesus is mine." The tambourine is shaking; hands and feet are reinforcing the rhythm. One of the elders reaches for two brass cymbals and starts beating them together. The singing rings out louder and louder: "Jesus is mine, Jesus is mine. Everywhere I go, Jesus is mine."

Another woman testifies: ". . . I am a witness on the inside . . . Jesus is mine . . . I am glad to see brother Jackson . . . and the visiting brother [the observer] . . . am glad tonight because I can report victory over sin . . . I thank God, I got a mind to carry on . . . If God don't give no increase there'd be none. I'm going to continue to trust in Him . . . Sometimes you pray and it takes so long to come . . . you kinda get discouraged . . . In due time, God answers prayer . . ." [Someone cries out: "All you need is faith!"] [Another adds: "So true!"] ". . . God makes things alright . . . I ask an interest in your prayers . . ."

A woman raises the hymn: "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus Christ and righteousness. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand." One stanza is sung. She rises to testify, saying, "On Christ

the solid rock I stand . . . Thank God for the Scripture lesson. Thank God for sister (?) . . . and for sister (?) . . . Thank God for being saved and sanctified." [Cries of "Yes Lord!" and "Amen!" from the others].

The woman with the baby stands and testifies, holding it in her arms, saying, "Father, I stretch my hands to thee, no other help I know. If thou withdraw thyself from me, Oh, wither will I go? . . . [Cries of "Amen", "Yes Lord"] . . . To all who call upon Him, he answers prayers . . . Thank God for the pastor . . . Thank Him for the Scripture . . . Thank God for being saved, sanctified and holy . . . I pray for an interest in your prayers . . . Amen."

Someone starts a hymn. The words are: "I'm going to live to all eternity. I pray on to all eternity. I pray on to the land of eternity." The tambourine is shaking, hands are clapping, feet are keeping time, shoulders sway from side to side. Three stanzas are sung. One woman is standing clapping and outsing the others. After the hymn ends, she testifies, saying: "That song is my testimony . . . I want to live on after leaving this world . . . Thank and praise God for being here . . . Thank and praise God for being sanctified . . . for keeping me from sin . . ." [Cries of "Amen! Oh Lord! Yes Lord!"]. ". . . I want to go all the way . . . I'm preparing now . . . I want you all to pray for me . . ."

The elder at the right of the collection rises and says: ". . . May the Lord help me to live right . . . I still have the mind to live right . . ." [Cries of "Amen! Amen!"] ". . . I have a mind to press on to the very end. Praise the Lord . . . There's no stopping . . . Pray for me, that I'll be humble in my heart."

A woman raises the hymn: "Nearer My God to Thee, Nearer to Thee. Nearer My God to Thee, Nearer to Thee." She claps, No one supports her. The tambourine and cymbal are silent. Another woman is clapping with her. Two stanzas are sung. Then the elder at the table rises and says: "We are thankful for this prayer and praise service . . . Thank God for Christ, tonight . . . The Lord is right behind the cloud . . . He brings the sunshine . . . Now I'm going to turn the services over to brother Mitchell . . ."

The man at the left of the table stands and says: "I guess you all know what I'm going to say . . . We want to get out of the way of the speaker . . ." He takes a small brown basket and begins to pass it around to each person himself. A hymn is raised: "There's a bright light somewhere. Don't you rest 'till you've found it; there's a bright light somewhere." Four stanzas are sung. The elders count the money. One of them says: "We thank you all for what you have done." He prays: "Lord we thank you for what you have

done for us, thank you for the offering . . . bless these who gave . . . Amen." Another stanza of "Nearer My God to Thee" is sung.

The pastor rises and says: ". . . We're glad for Jesus and what he is to us . . . I asked everyone last Tuesday to fast . . . I asked them to fast each Tuesday and Thursday . . . When you fast, you're supposed to ask for something . . . have some point, Amen! . . . Then, in telling you to fast, I endeavored to tell you what will benefit you, Amen! Now, I've been suffering with a headache . . . so many people have been complaining . . . So if we want to keep the devil from harming us, we'd better fast¹ . . . I want to say that I went through [fasted] today . . . The devil tried me . . . The coffee pot smelled better this morning than any other morning, Amen! . . ." [No response from the group]. ". . . But, we have to fast and pray to see if we can go through. Sometimes the devil hears you say you're going through, and he puts every stumbling block in your path . . ." He paces back and forth, beating his fist on the stand, and stamping his feet, violently, shouting after each sentence, "Amen!" ". . . It's a whole lot for it to cost you . . . We don't think how much it cost you . . . There's so many to hinder you from going through . . . You know it means something to go twelve hours without eating . . . The devil can try you . . . it's so hard to stay humble . . . and if you aren't watchful and pray, he'll upset you . . . Amen! Because you said you're going through . . . Now when I fast regular, it don't bother me; but when I don't fast regular . . . then, when you eat something it may make you sick. Drink a cup of Ovaltine. It will settle your nerves and calm you down. So in fasting, bear that in mind . . . Some people drink a lot of cold water, or eat a big plate of beans, this is your stomach . . . you only got one . . . you only got one life . . . Rockefeller had to eat bread and milk for twenty years, lived over ninety years . . ."

He turns his attention to the Scripture lesson, saying, "Read 1st Peter, 4th chapter, 8th verse." Then, he continued in the same strain, saying: ". . . I want you all to realize that when you're fasting, you're suffering; you're arming yourself like Christ . . . You do without daily food in order to build up a spiritual reserve. Sometimes we ask how sister so and so stays happy . . . because she's fasting . . ."

A woman in the congregation stands, and with open Bible, reads from the 1st Peter, 4th chapter, 1st verse: "For as much as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves, likewise, with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from

¹ Fasting has its analogy in primitive life and is practiced during the initiations of the shaman. It is an aid in reducing physical resistance and thereby facilitates the submergence of the psyche into a trance.

sin." The pastor comments: "There's got to be some shedding off . . . there's got to be some giving up. When we first came here, we fasted and prayed . . . we stirred up people all around . . . People were poking their heads in the windows . . ." One of the elders reads another passage: ". . . According to the Divine Power . . . he has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness . . ."

The pastor comments, saying: ". . . It was Christ that called us . . . You've escaped the corrupt things of this world . . . Add to your faith, virtue, and to virtue, temperance. Know how to eat; know how to drink . . ." [No impression left that the speaker was sympathizing in the least with alcoholic beverage consumption]. ". . . And to temperance add patience; and to patience, godliness . . . You know, our patience is so bad . . . we worry ourselves down . . . we can't wait until services are over. Yet we stand here and talk until they have to put the lights out on us . . . and to godliness add brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity . . . For if you do these things, you shall never fail . . . If you arm yourselves with these things, you shall not fall, but you've got to have all . . . You know there ain't every preacher that preaches these things to the people . . . They try to make the people happy, but there ain't no happiness there . . . there is so much witchcraft and hoodoo-working in the church today . . . There's so many people who think they've got the Holy Ghost, and they ain't got nothing, and won't find it out until Jesus comes."

He concludes his sermon by saying, in part: "Let us bear in mind next Tuesday and Friday to fast, the Lord will give us victory, and you who won't fast, we're going to pray for you. I ask you all to be on time next Sunday morning. All stand and sing; "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." They raise their hands and receive the benediction by the pastor; then say "Amen."

11)

Description of the Service at the Way Back to Pentecost Assembly.

Date: Thursday, January 17, 1939.

Hour: 8:45 to 10:20 P.M.

Occasion: Tuesday Evening Prayer Meeting.

At 8:45 p.m., a song and praise service is going on. There are eleven persons, four men and seven women present. The pastor sits on the platform behind the pulpit stand. An elderly woman dressed in white and wearing a black skull cap, sits at the small center table in front of the pulpit. There is vigorous and rhythmical clapping of hands and tapping of feet in keeping with the tune of a hymn. The

name of the hymn is, "Living on the Hallelujah Side." There is no instrumental accompaniment. Hymnals are distributed sparsely. Members, upon entering, kneel before their seats in prayer, then sit down. The hymn is being sung with increasing enthusiasm. One woman waves her arms and shouts out: "Hallelujah!" Another cries, "Oh, glory be to Jesus!" Still again someone shouts, "Praise be to God!" The interior walls are neatly white-washed. The ceiling is green. There is no piano. On the rear wall, hanging over the pastor's chair, is a picture of Christ kneeling in Gethsemane. The leader of the meeting is the "saint" in white at the center table.

After the hymn, the leader rises and says: "We'll ask sister Willis to read the Scripture . . . Let us sing No. 196, "I See a Crimson Stream of Blood, It Flows from Calvary." There is no clapping, Three stanzas are sung. A female voice cries, "Bless the Lord!" Another hymn is called for, No. 239, "Hide You in the Blood of Jesus." One woman starts to clap. She gets no support and ceases. Another woman waves her handkerchief. The leader starts clapping; no response, she stops. Six stanzas are sung.

The leader rises and says: "There is safety in the blood of Jesus; praise the Lord! There is no safety outside of His blood; praise our God! We know the blood of Jesus is sufficient . . . praise our God! It takes the blood of Jesus to carry us through these last days . . . praise our God! We believe our God will carry our banner through . . . praise our God! And for our desires . . ." [The congregation is silent]. "We thank Him for keeping us today . . . praise our God! When he was here He had a plan of salvation . . . praise our God! He came to do the work of Him that sent Him . . . praise our God! We realize that salvation was not completed, Glory to God! Neither will our salvation be completed without suffering . . . praise our God! Now we ask sister Willis to read the Scripture . . ."

A woman, Bible in hand, goes up to the table and says, "I will read the fourth chapter of Second Timothy." As she reads, there are cries of "Amen!" She has difficulty pronouncing such terms as: Thessalonica, Dalmatia, Crescens, etc. She concludes the passage without comment.

The leader rises again and says, "Truly we thank God for the reading of His Word . . . praise our God! Paul was charging his son Timothy . . . praise our God! We find so many preachers today who fail to preach the Word . . . Paul knew what it meant to suffer, praise our God! So we thank God for the reading of the Word . . . for we know we have to rebuke according to the Word of God . . . Glory to God! When God sees that His people are not walking according to His Word, praise our God! You know if I was walking contrary to

His Word, praise our God! And he rebuked me, praise our God! I would rejoice . . . We believe that every one that wants to go through with God will stand their chastisement, praise our God! . . . if they deserve it. We doesn't find it sweet; we finds it pretty bitter going up this way, praise our God! There's so many that's not willing to pay the price . . . praise our God! You have to count the cost, praise our God! If you go downtown (to buy something) you count the cost before you make the bill, praise our God! And it's just the same way with the Scripture . . . it takes your whole life. We'll ask for requests before going down on our knees. I ask you to pray for sister Guy . . ."

Another woman rises and says, "I ask you all to pray for me." Another requests, "I ask the 'saints' to pray for me that I may grow stronger . . ." A man asks, "Pray for me that I may be worthy . . ." A woman asks, "Pray for me . . ." A man requests prayer for someone (name not clear). The pastor (on the platform) asks special prayers "for all the saints and for the sick and for the brothers . . ." Then the leader, still standing, says, "We can all make our requests at the same time, because we are talking to God, not man . . . You know I believe the swifter we go into the service of the Lord, the better it is for us . . . 'cause the enemy can't slip in . . ." [Someone is humming]. "Praise our God! This tongue, this little piece of red flannel," [she opens her mouth and points to it] "is the thing that needs to be bridled. It is a very small member, but it can cause a big fire . . . We'll be led in prayer by sister Arnold."

All except the observer kneel before their seats. The hymn, "Near the Cross," is being softly hummed.

The prayers start. A concert of them; a chorus of petitions raised openly and simultaneously. No one prayer is intelligible. One hears intermittent outcries of "Hallelujah!" "Oh Lord, visit us tonight!" "Please Lord!" "Lord Jesus, help us!" "Jesus, Jesus!" [Clapping, moaning, groaning, etc.] "Bless thy Name!" "Glory to God!" "Yea, Lord!" One woman appears to be in agony. She jerks backwards and forwards. The pastor, kneeling at the railing around the platform, grasps it tightly, sways from side to side, and cries out, "Hallelujah! Praise God!" He shouts more loudly than the others. The leader turns around and says, "Sister Page." And one of the women begins to pray distinctly. The others give her the floor. Intermittent "Amens" and "Hallelujahs" continue.

She prays: "Oh Lord . . . We ask thee, Father, to teach us how to pray . . . how to gain the victory . . . how to overcome. Help us Lord. Oh, remember all thy children . . . You know us one by one. You know our names . . . Rebuke every evil spirit. Oh

Jesus, teach us the things to pray for. Encourage the downtrodden, bound up the brokenhearted. Oh Lord . . . Let thy Word . . . Hide thy Word in our hearts. Oh Father, you are our helper. You are our strength . . . Oh Lord, help us to trust in thee completely . . . Bless the chief executives of the land . . . Bless every policeman . . . Oh Jesus, remember the sick. Bless thy name . . . Jesus, Jesus . . . [she moans] Oh Jesus, let the blood prevail . . ." She ends her prayer.

Another woman's voice picks up the threads and prays: "Oh, we thank thee, Oh God, for keeping us together . . . Keep our minds stayed on thee . . . Bless Sister Shepherd and Sister (?). Bless every saint. Remember our pastor; put thy strong arm of protection around him; raise him up higher and higher". (She claps, shakes her head, beats her fists against the chair seat, and shouts as loudly as possible.) "Oh Lord, save sinners. Take us through, Lord . . . Remember conditions, Lord. Remember Brother Downing, and remember Brother Walker. Lord, touch his body and heal his afflictions . . . We realize, Dear Lord, that the blood has not lost its power . . ." She finishes her prayer.

The pastor starts praying. His voice is heavy and impressive: ". . . We thank thee for thy love. Thank thee for hearing us pray, Glory to God! . . . ["Amens!" "Hallelujahs!" etc. from the congregation.] "We thank thee for blessing thy people; for giving grace to thy people . . ." He claps, throws his arms wildly, shouts, beats upon the railing, etc. ". . . Oh Lord, we beg thee tonight to bless thy people . . . Let the blood prevail. Give thy people victory . . . Remove the stumbling blocks . . ." [moaning and groaning.] "Bless all under the sound of my voice . . . Someone is bound, Lord; bound by the demon. Turn him loose. Oh Lord, let his soul be free . . ." He ends his prayer. Everyone rises and resumes his seat.

A hymn is raised, "I Am Going to Heaven Before the Door Closes." Three stanzas are sung. The leader rises and says, "Yes, I believe we're going to see great things when we get to heaven . . ." The testimonies begin.

A woman rises and says, "I can truly say that I thank God, for I am really saved . . . For the reading of his Word . . . I love the Lord with all my soul, heart, mind, and strength . . ." Another woman says, "I am glad to be here . . . to pray with you all . . . pray for me . . ." Someone raises the hymn, "At That Great Home-Gathering, I'll Be There." A woman claps; no response; she stops. Three stanzas are sung. The testimonies continue.

A woman says, "I thank God for the 4th chapter of 2nd Timo-

thy . . . for the world is turning away from hearing the Word . . .” Another woman adds: “I praise God for this day . . . There is no condemnation. I mean to be there at the great home-gathering . . .” Again a woman, “I thank God for this prayer meeting . . . I’m laying aside everything that’s not of Jesus . . .” A man says, “I ask an interest in your prayers . . .” Another man, “Thank God for the blessings that we have received in prayer . . . Thank God for the Scripture . . . Pray for my household. Pray for my children, that God may move them, because they won’t hear the Word. God’s been calling all around them, but they won’t hear . . .” Two other women and a man testify in rapid succession. The leader rises and says, “Everyone is welcome to testify.” No other response.

The pastor rises and says: “We realize that everyone who has stood for the Word has suffered . . . Just they worked against Timothy; they worked against God. So everyone who does so, God will rebuke him . . . Jesus is the Corner-stone . . . The people of today have compromised. Amen! Everybody is oppressed with something. And you don’t know what’s the matter with you . . . I believe it’s because you need the Word of God . . . Man won’t stand the Word . . .” He concludes his message.

The leader takes charge. She says, “We thank God for a little bit of the Word of God, praise our God!” Several persons go up and lay money on the table. She continues, “When we get hungry for the Word, we don’t want any real food, praise our God! . . . Now we’re all going to stand . . .”

All stand. The pastor pronounces the benediction.

12)

Description of Service at Mt. Calvary Assembly Hall of the Pentecostal Faith of All Nations—Lenox Ave. between 129th and 130th Sts., New York City.

Date: Friday, February 3, 1939.

Hour: 8:45 P. M. to 1:00 A. M.

Occasion: Friday Night Services.

The auditorium is on the second floor. The street entrance is on Lenox Avenue near 129th Street. The auditorium covers half block on Lenox Avenue and about 150 feet around the southeast corner of 130th Street. The platform is midway of the room on the Lenox Avenue side. Four long tiers of bleacher seats flank the north and east sides. The north section contains two groups of

seats comprising eight rows, six chairs per row. This section is reserved for the "saints". Twenty-one of them, in white dresses with white skull caps, occupy these seats. Between this section and the north wall, are two more groups of individual seats for members. In the south end of the room, two groups of seats are separated by an aisle. The platform is between these two sections. Opposite it, is another group of chairs. The seating capacity seems about a thousand. White curtains shade the windows. A white cloth covered railing encircles the platform. On it, are pulpit stand and five chairs all covered with white. Just off the north end are two pianos, one grand and one upright. The latter is in use. Nearby, are the orchestra section and choir chairs. Along the walls are placards in large red letters upon which a passage from the Bible is quoted. The pianist is a man. The rhythm of the hymns is snappy and jazzy although they are standard Baptist and Methodist gospel songs. A white and a colored man are officiating. Just outside the railing sits a girl about ten. Persons entering kneel before sitting. No one sits in the pastor's chair. Eighty-seven persons, including nineteen men, are in the room.

A hymn is being sung in fast swing-time. The people, especially the "saints," are clapping, tapping their feet, and swaying rhythmically. Several of the "saints" are jumping lightly up and down clapping, shouting, jerking, throwing their arms, and crying, "Hallelujah! Glory! Glory!" "Oh! Oh! Glory to God!" etc. The singing is loud, enthusiastic, and unintelligible as to wording. The chorus is repeated again and again. As the singing draws to an end, the piano stops first, then the singers drop the hymn, but continue clapping and tapping the feet, gradually all rhythmic gestures die out and the exuberant "saints" resume seats.

Immediately after each hymn, a series of testimonies start in rapid succession. After every important statement, the speaker begins again with the words, "I thank and praise God for . . ." Most of the time the "saints" monopolize the scene; several are standing simultaneously either testifying or awaiting turn. As they speak, they throw their arms wildly, jerk, scream, shout, and jump up and down. The most enthusiastic ones compete for space in the aisles. Others lend support with cries of "Hallelujah!" "Glory to God!" etc.

Two women enter. One appears to be white. She is tall, stately and proportionately built, rather attractive, and with clear, dark brown, sparkling eyes. Her personality is magnetic and her posture one of command, dignity, and self-confidence. She ascends

the platform and sits in the pastor's chair. Following her is a heavily built older dark brown-skin woman wearing a blue dress. The pastor wears a white dress and white crown-shaped hat.

The singing and testimonies proceed without apparent interruption. The two men officiating seem bent on encouraging the participants to fuller and more overt expression of their emotions. They use sweeping motivating gestures. The pastor, Mother Horne, now waves her hand gracefully and rhythmically. As one rises to testify, these gentle gestures change and move nervously back and forth, magically, as if effecting the testifier in some manner. However, no apparent change in the behavior of the person is recognizable. While this performance continues, four young white persons enter and sit in the north end of the room.

Mother Horne rises and terminates the testimonials. Her voice is heavy; her manner dictatorial. As she speaks, dead silence falls over the place. She commands the participants to enter freely into the service and calls attention to the offering, urging each to contribute as liberally as possible. A hymn is raised. The rhythm is fast and jazzy. Clapping, tapping, and swaying recommences. The chorus is repeated over and over. Two women ushers in white pass the offering plates. Several "saints" are jumping and hissing in the aisles.

After the offering, testimonies begin again. Then more jazzy rhythm, clapping, and tapping. Mother Horne again rises to announce that a second offering will be lifted. Meantime, another hymn is sung, this time with considerably less display of group emotions. At the end, the pastor again rises and announces, "We will now listen to our young ministers who have recently been called to the preaching of the Word." No names are given, but four persons, two young men and two young women take seats on the platform.

The first speaker is a woman. She is nervous at first. Discarding her text as soon as possible, she falls back on her "Christian experience" and her recent "call" to preach. Devotees lend encouragement with feeble cries of "Yes!" "Amen!" "Preach the Word!" etc. She talks about fifteen minutes. The next speaker is a man. He begins by raising a familiar hymn. Everyone joins the chorus. The clapping and tapping is moderately enthusiastic. He preaches on the "evils of sinners" in contrast to the gospel of "sanctification and holiness" he offers. Near the end, he draws a well-rounded response from the group. He preaches twenty minutes. The following speaker, also a man, appears about forty-five. His delivery is poor. Obviously he is inexperienced and incapable of arousing much enthusiasm. Frequent gestures of "Help him, Lord"

are heard. His message is brief and ineffective. A woman in her early twenties speaks last. She is nervous and apparently inexperienced. She preys upon the sympathies of the group. She pleads her own case on the grounds of her sincerity, and mentions her "temptations" and persistent determination to "overcome." Notwithstanding, she evokes but a halfhearted response from the group.

Mother Horne calls on Sister Bailey (who accompanied her into the room) to sing a solo. Meantime, an offering is requested for her. The hymn chosen is familiar and Sister Bailey puts plenty of feeling into her singing using as many gestures as possible and inviting the group to join the chorus. She gets happy, shouts, jumps and claps. She interrupts her singing and starts telling her "gospel experience." Meantime, Mother Horne circulates the offering plate among the devotees stopping before certain ones to persuade them to give liberally. People are slipping out singly and in small groups. Mother Horne returns to the platform as Sister Bailey gradually calms down.

More persons are leaving. Mother Horne rises and says, "Let's gather round saints for a brief prayer." The remaining persons go up and kneel around the railing. A hymn is raised. The jazzy rhythm and clapping and frantic singing and shouting and jerking begins. A man comes to the rear and extinguishes the lights darkening all but the platform. Some of the "saints" are growing more and more hysterical. One drops to her knees. She falls to the floor in a crumpled position. A man hands Mother Horne a russet cloth which she spreads over the lower extremities of the prostrated woman. Two men, one lifting her shoulders, the other her knees, stretch her out. She rolls over and back, over and back. Other devotees are sinking similarly and beginning to roll. The ushers move them around so that they are free to roll clear of each other. Seven persons, including two men, are rolling. The piano has stopped playing and the pianist gone. The singing is reduced to mere groaning, moaning, and hissing. Mother Horne and the two men ushers move in and out among the rollers supervising the proceedings. The platform is vacant.

There is no indication of any forthcoming termination of these performances. All persons, except the observer, now in the room are assembled around the platform either rolling or jumping, shouting, hissing, clapping, jerking, and screaming. They number twenty-three. The observer decides not to remain longer.

Note: The observer's notes were confiscated by the ushers who searched him thoroughly before permitting him to leave the premises. This accounts for the lack of a verbatim description of this cult.

13)

Impressions of the Cult led by The Rev. Major J. "Father" Divine in New York City.

In view of the fact that no group meeting with an organized program such as is found in a worship service, was held during the period of these observations, it seems advisable to record the following account under the heading of "Impressions."

The observer was impressed by the existence of placards, in each cult center, stating that "Father Divine is God." Also, pictures of the cult leader were placed conspicuously in every nook and corner of restaurant, banquet hall, store, or "kingdom." The fact that so many reminders of the cult leader's "divinity" were deemed necessary, was the impressive thing about this situation. The observer was led to ask himself the question: Why, if these people are sold on the "messianic pretenses" of their leader, must there be so very many reminders of this fact? In the end, the conclusion was reached that this was an instance of the most thoroughgoing propagandizing of an "obvious" fallacy under the guise of "truth" imaginable.

Contrary to the impression circulated abroad, the observer found neither the banquet tables nor lodging places visited filled to capacity at any time, except in the case of the former when the cult leader was expected Sunday morning about one a.m.

Absolutely no sign of respect for either the meeting places or the cult leader (in the sense that one usually finds an atmosphere of reverence associated with a church) seemed to exist. On the contrary, these group gatherings were scenes of confusion, unconstrained emotional release, frenzied handclapping, yelling back and forth, dancing, hustle and bustle of young and old. In this "heaven," instead of there being "peace" and orderliness, there appeared to be a general "let-down" of self-control. Any public mention of the name of "Father" was the signal for an outburst of bedlam and wild hoorahs.

The observer was impressed by the bold, indiscriminate, and wholesale manner in which cheap, rag-time, sentimentalistic "blues" tunes were transported from the theatres and adapted to words exalting the person and mission of the cult leader. No song, from the "Dark-town Strutter's Ball" to "Indian Love Call" was beyond the range of incorporation within the Divine cult's hymnody.

The extent to which the sexes were separated also impressed the observer. Three-fourths of all accommodations were given over to women. Anyone unwittingly transgressing these artificial sex boundaries was certain to be strongly cautioned. The observer got the impression that neither moral nor religious grounds furnished the basis

for this division, but rather, it seemed expedient as an effective and thoroughgoing method of indoctrinating the women, who constituted the majority by far of the devotees, with the theories and practices of the cult. The female mentality seemed easier to dominate when male influence over them was reduced to a minimum.

Certain persons seemed "picked" to act as emotional prime-movers on occasions when an outburst of hysterical enthusiasm was wanted. Particularly was this noticeable at a motion picture presentation at which time scenes of "Father" were frequently flashed upon the screen. After three hours of this performance, the observer recognized that certain voices stimulated the shouting of "He's God!" "Father Divine is God!" etc.

Purchases at restaurants and banquet halls were made indirectly through the use of tickets marked "ten cents" or "fifteen cents." That this method was purely an instrumentality of convenience, did not strike the observer as covering the matter; rather, it seemed likely that a closer check-up on the transaction of all monies entered into the picture. This recalled the cult leader's oft-repeated explanation of receiving his funds from the "divine source of all supply."

A white man, Mr. John Lamb, had charge of the cult center at 152 W. 126th St. A white woman was in charge of the Peace Mission Headquarters at 123rd and Lenox Ave. A white man superintendent dictated the observer's movements at the lodging place at 36 W. 115th St. Yet, the preponderance of the devotees were Negroes. Instead of the expected appearance of the "Father," a white secretary read the message at the Banquet Hall during the observer's visit. It seemed strange that Negroes could not fill these apparently "key" positions.

The inmates of the lodge place were reluctant to accept the observer's credentials and admit him to a bed. No one of the several persons in the building wanted to assume responsibility for the stranger's presence, notwithstanding the presentation of a slip from the 126th St. Mission signed "H. R." i. e. "Heavenly Rest." Mean-time, the observer was shuttled from person to person before given quarters. The impression was got that these individuals were afraid to make the slightest move which might be construed as inimical to the interests of "Father," or offensive to the cult regulations. The observer wondered what power on earth could hold such a strong grip over the lives and thoughts of otherwise apparently normal and free persons. The dread of the "consequences" of displeasing "Father" was little short of magical, it seemed.

While in the Peace lodge, the observer felt queer. It was a sensation unlike any other. When outside the building, a sense of being

“free” again was experienced. Much of this may have been due to advanced preconditioning of the observer. Notwithstanding, the feeling of being “set apart” from the normal relations of life was too strong to be entirely a reflection of the observer’s attitude. The place was characterized by a definite “in-group” atmosphere.

While listening to “Father’s Message” as read by his secretary, the observer was impressed by the verbosity and meaninglessness of many of the long confusing terms. Facial expressions were studied and it appeared that either lack of interest or ignorance of what was being said was being experienced by most persons listening. Occasional applause greeted such phrases as “That is the Mystery” and “Peace.” Otherwise, much moving about, talking, sleeping, and eating accompanied the delivery. It was after two in the morning when the speaker finished. Undoubtedly, these speeches meant little to the majority of persons present.

Most of the devotees moved around the Banquet Hall with an air of absolute freedom. Hour after hour, many persons, especially elderly stout women, remained seated in the balcony overlooking the banquet table and moving persons below. All day there was singing and clapping and periodic outbursts of frantic shouting. Occasionally, a woman would just scream for no apparent cause. No one seemed attracted. Particularly interesting to watch, was the unusually large number of elderly women, many being considerably grey-haired, who were the most active persons in the building. They, it seemed, had surrendered all worldly claims for this exclusive right to “enjoy the kingdom as the spirit moved them.” They were “free at last.” These otherwise socially outcast old women and men had become truly emancipated within the confines of the cult. They had found not only a new “Heaven and a new Earth” but also, a savior, Father Divine, who had come to deliver them.

The observer was less impressed by the extensive retail and wholesale operations carried on by the cult than by the frequent use made of these enterprises as instrumentalities of propagandizing the cult and of selling the cult “benefits” to probable converts. This, obviously, was the value of the free movies, pamphlets, pictures, and speeches.

Countless persons, otherwise not interested in the cult set-up, and including individuals from all walks of life, seemed willing to patronize the cult’s retail establishments, apparently, without the slightest inclination to subscribe to any other phase of the cult program or doctrine.

In all meeting places visited, there was a noticeable scarcity of young men and women between eighteen and twenty-five or thirty.

The observer found little sympathetic response to any questions raised no matter what their import. It seemed obvious to all that he was an "observer." In such an atmosphere, he dared not make notes on the proceedings.

At the head of the banquet table, which was "U" shaped, a specially attired chair, plate, knife and fork set-up was arranged permanently for "Father." When the "Righteous-Government Meeting" banquet was served Saturday night, a helping of each dish, including beverage, was served to the "mystical" presence of the cult leader.

The next evening, the observer witnessed the Dennis-Roosevelt film, "Dark Rapture." During an elephant feast, the natives assembled round the carcass to devour the animal. However, each piece bitten or cut off by any native had to be tasted by the chief before being passed on to the waiting native for consumption. This reminded the observer of "Father" Divine's mystical presence before which all foods had to circulate preliminary to final disposal by devotees sitting around the banquet table.

For a "Kingdom," the rest rooms were awfully dirty. The meeting-place on 126th St. was literally spattered with paint hastily and cheaply put on. Roaches darted back and forth across the table; bones, papers, scraps of this and that were strewn about the floor; a loafer occupied every second or third chair against the wall; food seemed hastily and unappetizingly thrown together. Yet, the observer makes no pretense of having witnessed a typical meeting-place, lodging place, or eating place under supervision of the Peace Cult. Hence these observations must not be construed as exemplary from any viewpoint.

The observer regrets his failure to come into personal contact with Father Divine during his visit to New York City, and the above impressions must be judged in the light of this qualification.

14)

Description of Service at the Universal Temple of Tranquility, Sufi Abdul Hamid founder, New York.

Date: April 29, 1938.

Hour: 8:30 to 10 P.M.

Occasion: Special Miracle Performance.

Reported by Mr. Lyonel C. Florant.

At 8:30 P.M. the hall was about three-fourths filled. A gong sounded slowly and solemnly from behind blue curtains. The lights were dim. A weird chant, from unseen voices, filled the air. Slowly

down the left aisle, marched the Sufi adorned in a gilded robe and wearing a black velvet fez with a gold tassel. He carried an open book. Around his wrists hung linked jewels; around his neck, several necklaces. In front, marched a lone altar boy.

As the Sufi neared the platform, the blue curtains were drawn back slowly, revealing an altar. Three large candles, about thirty inches high and three inches in diameter, stood at each end of the platform. On the right side, also, there was a reading stand on top of which there was a light. An antique chair for the Sufi was situated on the left. Across the center rear of the platform there was a large cedar box about nine feet high, four feet wide, and six feet long. Through a partly open door, a dim shadowy light was visible.

On the right side of the hall, beside the piano, stood Daniel Haynes, star of the motion picture, "Hallelujah" and the play "Green Pastures." He was the director of the choir which kept up a soothing and monotonous chant until the Sufi had mounted the platform. As the Sufi approaches, the altar boy prepared his chair by placing across the back a piece of maroon velvet cloth. Then he walked solemnly over to the center and back to audience and palms resting together on his chest, paused a moment then suddenly swung open the doors of the cedar chest. In the semi-darkness, an illuminated image of Buddha was visible. It rested on a platform elevated and lined with velvet, enclosed, and adorned with gilded oriental trimming.

On the platform at last, the Sufi, well-known "soap-box orator," racketeer, fakir, and Black Hitler with all the pious dignity and pomp of a Pope, began to mutter in a deep sonorous tone: "Adoration to Buddha; adoration to Christ; adoration to Hermes; adoration to all the prophets of past ages . . ." Several persons burst out in a snicker. Then the choir began to sing the hymn: "I'll Never Turn Back No More." After this, the altar boy began reading the cult "Manifesto." When he finished, the lights were brightened and the Sufi rose to speak. At first, he seemed to be talking in Chinese. Later, he began speaking English.

The Sufi's remarks were broadcast over station W. I. N. S. The theme of his sermon was, "There is only one truth." He said in part: "My beloved sons and daughters, all creeds are broken branches of Oriental Religion . . ." He concluded with an appeal to the radio audience, saying: "If you need reliable, trustworthy, honest servants in your household or business, write to the Universal Holy Temple of Tranquility, or to the station to which you are listening and we can supply them to you free of charge."

The broadcast feature ended and the Sufi directed his attention to the audience, the majority of whom were Negroes. Here and there were a few whites. Most of them appeared to be mere curiosity-seekers. The Sufi said, in part: “. . . My friends, in this Temple, there will be no collections . . . We are going to teach you so that you will be able to contact the microcosmic and then the macrocosmic realms, and finally, rid yourself of all mundane things . . . You are about to witness an objective manifestation of man’s infinite nature . . . If you stay in this Temple long enough, you will get to the Universal City; a city where there will be plenty of electricity, but no light bills. You’ll have gas, but no gas bills. There will be beautiful homes, but no landlords to bother you . . . Everything will be tranquil. The woman who gives birth to the most children, at the end of each sixteen years, will get one hundred dollars . . .” [laughs from the audience]. “We’re going to get jobs for you over the radio every night. Only members will get jobs. If the jobs pay \$40.00 weekly, you’ll pay only one dollar for secretarial charges . . .”

The Sufi continued, “There will be no relief in the Universal City of Tranquility. You will live in peace and unity—tranquil as one . . . We’re going to have Communism there. Not the communism of Karl Marx where you demonstrate and strike, but the communism of Christ . . .” In a slightly stronger tone, he asserted: “We don’t need no anti-lynching bill. That can’t stop lynching! What we need is 6,500 missionaries to go down South and preach tranquility . . .” [Someone shouted: “That’s right!”] The Sufi continued: “All races and nationalities are welcome to use the Universal Temple of Tranquility.” Regarding his financial transactions, the Sufi said: “Where I get my monies for all this is my business. There will be no dues or collections . . . Classes are to be held in the principles of Buddha and Yoga.”

Next, the Sufi directed his attention to the great miracle he had promised to perform. Introducing the feature, he said: “I am going to present you to the Master who is going to put a woman to sleep and perform demonstrations that are theo-psyhic . . . We have a pack of cards sent especially for the occasion.” The Sufi left the platform. Later, the Master reappeared in a robe, and accompanied by a young girl and a woman.

There followed a very unconvincing demonstration of hypnotism and mind-reading. All lights were extinguished save two candles on the altar. First, the Sufi blind-folded the child. Then he held a number of cards in front of her which the girl described. Following this, the woman was hypnotized. While in this state, the

Sufi appeared to be sticking her with needles and sewing up her arm. No one was permitted to examine this performance from close range. Many persons seemed so disgusted that they left the building before the performance ended. Finally, the Sufi turned his attention once again to the audience, stopped the performance, and adjourned the meeting with a few remarks reminding the people of the nightly broadcasting feature.

The Sufi pronounced a long and solemn benediction.

APPENDIX C

Classified Table of Religious Cults in the United States.

- I. Faith-Healing Cults.
 1. The Church of One Faith in New York City.
 2. The Miracle Temple of Christ in Richmond, Virginia.
 3. The Mt. Calvary Assembly Hall of the Pentecostal Faiths of all Nations, founded by Mother Horne in New York City.
- II. Holiness Cults.
 1. Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God, 1916.
 2. The Church of Christ Holiness, U. S. A., 1894.
 3. The Churches of God Holiness, 1914.
 4. The Free Will Holiness Association of North Carolina, 1914.
 5. House of Jacob Holiness and Scientific Church, founded by Bishop G. W. Isreal.
 6. Kadesh (Holy) Church of Philadelphia, founded by Elder F. R. Kilingsworth, 1927 in 1934 had 11 branches.
 7. Saints of the Solid Rock Holiness, founded by Elder Holland Goff in Fayetteville, N. C., 1928.
 8. United Holy Church of America, founded in Durham, N. C., 1894.
- III. Islamic Cults.
 1. Industrial Clerical Alliance, founded by Sufi Abdul Hamid, New York City.
 2. The Moorish Science Temple in Chicago, The Religious Race, Conscious-Philanthropic Society, founded by Timothy Drew, 1925.
 3. University of Islam at Detroit.
- IV. Pentecostal.
 1. The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.
 2. The Langley Avenue All Nations Pentecostal Church, Chicago, Ill., Lucy Smith, Leader.
- V. Spiritualist Cults.
 1. The Anthony Spiritual Temple of America, founded by the "Diamond Tooth Evangelist," Anthony George of Philadelphia, Penna.
 2. The Christian Spiritual Union, founded by the late Archbishop M. N. Henry, a native woman of Benares, India. Philadelphia, Penna.
 3. The Independent Universal Spiritualist Churches, founded by Bishop Simon D. Brooks, 1934.

4. The Negro National Spiritual Association, Detroit, Mich., 1925.
5. The Orthodox Spiritualist Church of America, New York City, 1932.

VI. Others.

1. The Christian Workers for Fellowship, organized 1891.
2. Churches of God.
 - a. The Church of God, Elder Solomon Lightfoot Michaux, founder, 1928. Branches in Philadelphia and Richmond.
 - b. The Church of God in Christ, 1895.
 - c. The Church of the Almighty God, Prophet Kiwah Costonie, leader, Brooklyn, N. Y.
 - d. The Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of Truth, 1925.
 - e. The Church of God and Saints of Christ, Bishop Wm. L. Crowder, founder, 1896, Bellevue, Va.
3. Father Divine's "Kingdom" in New York City and Peace Missions in the U. S. A. and foreign countries, 1930.
4. The Refuge Church of Christ, Bishop R. C. Lawson, founder, New York City, branches in 14 states, the Virgin Islands, and Panama.
5. The Triumph Church of the New Age, Bishop W. D. Barbour, founder, 1921, 50 branches from New York to Florida.

VII. Cult Personalities.

1. Prophet Battle, Washington, D. C.
2. Prophet Kiwah Costonie, Brooklyn, N. Y.
3. Prophet Darnley, Atlantic City, N. J.
4. Major J. "Father" Divine, New York City.
5. Bishop Charles M. Grace, Washington, D. C.
6. Mother Horne, New York City.
7. Prophet Jones, Brooklyn, N. Y.
8. Prophet Martin, Washington, D. C.
9. Elder Solomon Lightfoot Michaux, Washington, D. C.
10. Prophet Moses, Pleasantville, N. J.
11. Bishop H. J. Plummer, Bellevue, Va.
12. Prophet Thompson, Chicago, Ill.