A COMMUNITY TEXT ARISES

A Literate Text and A Literacy Tradition In African-American Churches

BEVERLY J. MOSS

LANGUAGE & SOCIAL PROCESS

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Language and Social Processes provides a forum for scholarly work that makes visible the ways in which everyday life is accomplished through discourse processes among individuals and groups. Volumes will examine how language-in-use influences the access of individuals and culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse groups to social institutions, and how knowledge construction and social participation across diverse social settings is accomplished through discourse.

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—Beverly J. Moss

Introduction
Literacy in African-American Churches: A Conversation Between the Academy and the Church Begins

A DIVINE MOMENT

Almost anyone growing up in and around Protestant churches has heard the saying "God works in mysterious ways." It is a saying that is a favorite in my family and in my church. Although I thought that I believed this saying was true, I could not personally attest to its accuracy until that moment when my church community and my academic community seemed to sit down and have a conversation in my head. This unique conversation led to the research questions that have been the focus of my intellectual life for too many years to count. It is not often (well maybe it is) that one gets the seeds of a research question and subsequent project in the middle of a Sunday morning sermon, but, as one is often encouraged to do in churches, I can "claim witness" to such an event because it happened to me.

As I was sitting in church one morning listening intently to the sermon, as I had done countless Sunday mornings before, my focus drifted toward not only what this minister said but how he said it. I began paying as much attention to how people reacted to the Word as it was being preached as to the Word itself. This annoying practice of divided attention continued for several more Sunday morning worship services before I realized that I was almost as enthralled by the use of language and texts in the church as I was the message being delivered. Yet, I did not know what to make of this fascination. What was going on in this church and in my mind that kept nagging at me? Slowly I began to understand that the answer to that question was not the message but the questions that were emerging from it; they were the real message. Given my interest in literacy studies and ethnography and given my

heartfelt desire to do research that kept me connected to my community, I could not help but interpret "the message" as an invitation to "go to church." Whether or not I was being sent a divine message, I finally came to understand that I was certainly being given an opportunity. This opportunity presented itself at a time when I was thinking about where my scholarly path would lead me and if that journey would be in conflict with my life as an African-American woman from the south or if that journey would be in concert with and a celebration of that life. Up to that point, I was still not convinced that being part of the academy for an African American, and especially a woman, did not mean giving up part of one's self. Yet, here, seemingly, was an opportunity to do research in a setting that would allow me to be who I was—an African-American woman who can normally be found in church on Sunday morning. As important, I had the opportunity to do research in a setting—African-American churches—that would extend the discussion on literacy acquisition and literate practices among African Americans.

VIEWS WITHIN THE ACADEMY

Extending the discussion on literacy acquisition among African Americans was (and remains) important because of the status that literacy, particularly academic literacy, is given in the United States as a marker of success in the academy and as a marker of upward mobility. This discussion of literacy in composition studies is not about one's ability to read and write; that represents too narrow a definition of literacy. The discussion is more about the relation between how language is used and what counts as literacy. Far too many past and current discussions about African-Americans' literacy and language skills paint us in a negative light.

Too often, African Americans are still looked at as having deficient literacy and language skills that lead to problems in achieving success in academic settings. One of the major assumptions is that African-American students are not being socialized into literacy in their home communities, that they are being raised in a "literacy vacuum." Such assumptions lead to ill-conceived claims that African Americans are primarily an oral people who have little experience with literacy outside schooling, and as such are cognitively deficient. One need only look at the most recent debates about Ebonics to see how prevalent and widespread are the beliefs about the lack of literacy and language proficiency in African-American communities. In many ways, this kind of thinking reminds me of the cultural deprivation theories that were so prominent in the 1970s and the Bell Curve discussions of the early 1990s.

When I read about or hear about the many negative portraits painted of literacy and language in African-American communities, I think about my own experience growing up in and participating in African-American communities where there is much evidence of rich, complex literacy and language skills in use. So what is it that I see or that Geneva Smitherman (1977), in *Talkin' and Testifyin'*, sees that is in contrast to the negative picture I just alluded to? Have researchers ignored and/or undervalued the ways that literacy is used in the home communities of marginalized groups in the United States? What can make the portraits more complete in their depictions of African-Americans' and other marginalized groups' interactions with literacy inside and outside school?

I am but one of many researchers who has posed such questions. One important answer to the questions or various versions of them posed here that has emerged and gained momentum is that literacy scholars broaden the domains in which literacy is studied. Thus, this answer has led to important ethnographic studies of literacy in nonacademic settings: Farr's (1993, 1994) study of the social networks of Mexican-American families in a Mexican-American community in Chicago; Weinstein-Shr's (1994) ethnography of literacy in the Hmong communities in Philadelphia; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' (1988) ethnography of literacy use among poor urban African-American families in an urban New Jersey area; Heath's (1983) ethnography of literacy in Trackton and Roadville, working-class African-American and White communities in the Piedmont Carolinas; Philips' (1983) ethnography of literacy on the Warm Springs Indian reservation; Scribner and Cole's (1981) ethnography of literacy among the Vai in Africa; Scollon and Scollon's (1981) ethnography of literacy among the Athabaskan of Alaska. Each of these studies suggests that there is a great deal of rich and complex literacy and language activity occurring in the home communities of these various racial and ethnic groups. And each of these studies suggests that what constitutes "community literacy" for each of these communities (and communities like them) does not necessarily match what is known as *school literacy*.

Although current literacy research calls for more studies of literacy as it is practiced in the social contexts of various communities, and although many scholars (including me) rush to heed this call, we still find ourselves looking at a model of literacy that is based on traditional (i.e., narrow) academic notions of literate texts and literate behavior. Although more of us accept that different communities use literacy in ways that contrast significantly to those of the academy's departments, we rarely question whether these differences have led to or are a result of contrasting definitions of literate texts. In other words,

we continue to operate on the assumption that a literate text is similar from community to community—that the differences are evidenced only in how these texts are used. And we still view the academic expository essay as the model literate text (Heath, 1993). These assumptions conflict with current findings in literacy studies, particularly with ethnographic findings that suggest that not only does literacy function differently from community to community, but that literacy may be defined differently from community to community. In short, literacy is defined in context. It follows that if definitions of literacy are dependent on the context and community in which literacy is used, then the concept of a literate text must also be dependent on context and community.

Because of this body of research, in composition and education studies, we have come to understand the need for knowing how students use literacy in settings other than school. If community is to be part of the educational process, and it must be, then schools must understand the role of community. This knowledge is important in making connections between school and home. Moll (1992) argued that "the community needs to be perceived by others and probably by the community itself, as having resources that schools cannot ignore" (p. 227).

Like Moll, I seek to "understand and forge relationships" between the domains of school literacy and community and household literacy. Whereas Moll focused on Latino and Hispanic communities, looking at household literacy and its role in school literacy, I focus on African-American communities, and more particularly on a community institution—the African-American church—and its role in defining literacy[1] and literacy learning in African-American communities.

VIEWS WITHIN AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCHES

The African-American church is a particularly important community institution in which to study literacy because of its central role in African-American communities as a site of cultural, religious, and educational activities. African-American churches have a history as sites of literacy teaching and literacy learning. However, educators have traditionally viewed this site of literacy education exclusively in terms of the traditional school-based norm of teaching the individual to read and write. Although that portrayal is accurate, I argue that it is also simple and naive. The role of African-American churches in literacy education is far more complex and far more influential on its members than has

[1]Although literacy has meant many things throughout the world, since the invention of the printing press, it has been most associated with print. Since the mid-1980s, however, numerous studies have emerged that push for a broader definition.

been historically understood and thus has been overlooked as an important site of literacy and language learning. In assessing its importance as an educational center in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Mays and Nicholson (1933) asserted that the "Negro church is one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest, channel through which the masses of the Negro race receive adult education. . . . It becomes the center of religious, moral, and intellectual teaching" (p. 58). Its primacy as the center of political, social, and intellectual movements within African-American communities makes the church one of the longest standing, powerful institutions in this country.

In many ways, literacy in African-American churches can be understood more clearly by seeing it as analogous to invention, as LeFevre (1987) explained it. LeFevre argued that invention is "an act that may involve speaking and writing, and that at times involves more than one person; . . . it is an act initiated by writers and completed by readers" (p. 1). In this community institution, literacy often centers on the production of a text that is the result of a collaborative act between minister and congregation and that involves speaking and writing. That is, literacy in African-American churches involves speaking and writing, and is focused on texts in which rhetor and listeners—congregants—collaborate to complete the text—to produce the literacy event. This view of literacy, then, as a collaborative as well as an individual act moves one to critical questions in literacy studies and to an examination of several long-held assumptions. That is, African-American churches are sites where literacy often functions and differs widely from the notion of literacy in the academic sense. Text is defined and used there in unique ways. Additionally, this view of literacy has far-reaching consequences for how the members of this community, particularly its school-age children, conceive of literacy, literate behavior, and literate texts.

In this book I use ethnographic and textual analysis to explore literate texts and literacy traditions in African-American churches. Specifically, I focus on how literate texts are characterized and how they function within this community institution, and, more specifically still, on how the sermon calls into question long-held assumptions about texts and literacy. Four general questions guide this analysis:

1. What constitutes a text, particularly a literate text, in this setting?
2. How are what has been traditionally viewed as the components of the rhetorical situation—rhetor, audience, message—affected by an alternative view of text that I argue for in this book?

3. How does this "new" concept of literacy and text function in African-American churches?
4. How does this alternative conceptualization of literacy and text impact on traditional notions of literacy and texts?

A major assumption guiding this book is that literacy and, therefore, literate behavior and literate texts can only be defined through examining literacy in the contexts in which literacy functions (Street, 1984). That assumption has been amply illustrated and supported in Scribner and Cole's (1981) study of literacy of the Vai, Heath's (1983) study of working-class African-American and White communities in Trackton and Roadville, Shuman's (1986) study of teenage girls in Philadelphia, Fishman's (1988) study of literacy in an Amish community, McLaughlin's (1992) study of Navajo literacy on a Navajo reservation, and the list could go on. That is, the context in which literacy functions will inevitably shape how it is defined. A second assumption that guides this work is that literacy is a complex, social process involving multiple levels of participation by rhetors and audience, intertextual relationships (i.e., interdependent relations between oral, written, and sometimes musical texts) and complex belief systems of members of particular communities. Because the first assumption is no longer a novel theory and is, in fact, now commonly held, it does not call for extensive discussion. However, the notion of literacy as a complex social process is still in its infancy stage in many respects and deserves more attention.

LITERACY AS SOCIAL PROCESS

Brandt (1990), in her introduction to *Literacy as Involvement*, argued for a process perspective on literacy. In doing so she suggested that "texts take their natures from the ways that they are serving the acts of writing and reading" (p. 13). In support of seeing literacy as a social process, Brandt stated the following:

> literacy is the most social of all imaginable practices—hypersocial, actually, because it epitomizes the role of culture in human exchange and condenses into the channels of reading and writing some of the most crucial of our joint enterprises. (p. 1)

Brandt further stated:

> writers and readers in action are deeply embedded in an immediate working context of aims, plans, trials, and constructions (which

> themselves are tied to circumstantial and cultural contexts of all sorts). The language that they write and read finds meaning only in relationship to this ongoing context—a context more of work than words. (p. 4)

Brandt's stance sets the stage for looking at not only literacy as a social process but also literate texts as social processes rather than individual products. That is, it is through this "human exchange" that texts are developed in African-American churches. Of course, Brandt focused on the acts of reading and writing as decoding and encoding. Although she usefully complicated those concepts in her study, this book demonstrates that Brandt's definitions of reading and writing can be further complicated by examining what the participants do with and in texts in the churches I studied.

In many ways, this text aims to demonstrate as well as explain that any form of literacy is a complex, social process. In the context of the African-American church, however, there are three key components of literacy as a social process that this study highlights: the presence of multiple participants in the literacy event; the presence of intertextual relationships; and the influence of cultural norms and ideology that shape the way participants, intertextuality, and discourse interact. This list is by no means exhaustive. I have no doubt that there are many components of this process that will emerge in studies of literacy in other communities. However, I focus my discussion on the three components listed here because they have emerged as most important in this community institution. They stand out as markers of literacy in African-American churches.

Most obviously, the social nature of literacy requires that there are multiple participants in this process. That is, there is not a solitary writer nor an isolated reader; writer and reader collaborate in the act of making the text. The writer and reader also share the roles of speaker and listener, making the levels of participation more complex. This study demonstrates that these roles are interchangeable (writer or speaker becomes reader or listener and vice versa) and that without this unique role reversal, the text as it comes into being in African-American churches would not exist. Given this view, it seems problematic to continue, in the academy, to support the notion of the solitary or radically individual reader and writer. This view of the boundaries between writer and reader as blurred or interchangeable is supported by much research. Vygotsky's (1978) notion of internal speech, for example, suggests that "writers" and "readers" collaborate with each other to find meaning even when only one participant is physically present, and many theorists, following Barthes' (1977) "The Death of the Author" have challenged the autonomy of either category. In composition

studies, some scholars have argued that being a good writer demands being a good reader of one's own text and thus, in this sense, we have accepted the interchanging roles (Sloane, 1991). However, none of these scholars have examined the concept of multiple participants and multiple levels of participation in literacy events through the eyes of the participants themselves. Doing so, I believe, is the first step in looking carefully at literacy as a social process.

A second key component of literacy as a social process is its use of intertextuality. Bloome and Bailey (1992) suggested that "intertextuality is a key concept in understanding relationships between texts (including conversational and written texts), between and among events, between events and cultural ideology" (p. 198). African-American worship services are characterized by intertextual relationships that illuminate the complexity of the relations between speaking and listening, writing and reading, writing and speaking, as well as the relations between literacy events and cultural norms governing these events. Although African-American worship services appear to be dominated by oral events (sermons, prayers, songs), there is, in fact, an interdependence between oral and written events, and therefore oral and written texts. Thus, my discussion of intertextuality encompasses not only the interconnecting of texts but also interconnecting among media. There are also cultural norms that govern when and how certain texts are used and for what purposes they are used. These intertextual relations and their accompanying cultural norms have major implications for how African-American church communities create, define, and use literate texts. This intertextuality is also characterized by the social relations between participants and texts, relations that focus on process as an important factor in the use of literacy and on how such relations are established, maintained, and change. In this book, I examine the what and how of intertextuality in literate texts and literacy events in African-American churches.

The third component of literacy as a social process is the role of cultural norms and ideology—here, the complex belief system of members of African-American church communities. It is this complex belief system that shapes behavior, values, language use, and beliefs about language, and which sets up expectations and rules for the roles of participants and intertextual relations in the church. This belief system constitutes the shared cultural knowledge that plays a significant role throughout the African-American church. In most communities, such cultural knowledge contributes significantly to the creation of insider-outsider status. The African-American church is no exception.

As suggested earlier, shared cultural knowledge (or understanding, including norms, ideology, and artifacts) contributes

significantly to the roles and expectations of participants, intertextual relations, and just about everything else in this institution. That is, there are expectations and shared experiences that dictate "the way we act" and "what we recognize as acceptable behavior" in the worship styles of African-American churches. Of course, this cultural knowledge is complicated because of the multiple community memberships held by most members of African-American churches. There are even multiple communities within the church itself. A further complication is that one can be in the church and still be an outsider; that is, one can be unaware of the spoken and/or unspoken cultural norms.[2] Also, not every church to which African Americans belong will fit the model of mainstream African-American churches that are the models for this book (I address this point later in this introduction and again in chap. 1).

When one examines any culture, one tends to look to the artifacts of that culture as a way of understanding it, as part of the cultural knowledge. Anthropologists and archaeologists have long understood the importance of artifacts in describing a way of life of a people. Although some view artifacts as the physical materials and products of a people—architecture, documents, carvings, and so on—I use a much broader definition that would allow for products (i.e., institutions and practices) and processes as well to be labeled *artifacts*. From this standpoint, one of the most important artifacts in a culture is its language, including how a people define and use literacy. This point reiterates an earlier one, that literacy in a particular community or community institution cannot be separated from culture.

Positioning literacy in the role of cultural artifact provides an opportunity to look at literacy as both process and product. Scholars can examine how one learns and uses literacy as well as what literacy is and what constitutes literate texts. Furthermore, scholars can combine ethnographic (process) and textual (product) analyses to learn more about literacy in both roles. Examining the processes and products of literacy allows scholars more access to the complex nature of literacy, the multilayeredness of literacy. Thus, these three components of literacy as a social process—multiple levels of participation, intertextual relations, and cultural knowledge—provide keys to understanding literacy not only as a social process but also to understanding the multilayered nature of literacy as it functions in African-American churches.

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[2]I use *shared cultural knowledge* in a descriptive way rather than prescriptive in the Hirsch (1987) sense. These churches use shared cultural knowledge for the purpose of worship, not for establishing a national program or curriculum.

THE STUDY

A Community Text Arises emerges from an ethnographic study of literacy in three African-American churches in Chicago and one in Ohio. The first phase of this study focused on the African-American sermon as a literacy event (Moss, 1988). My goal in the original study was to look at the relationship between oral and written language in the sermons of African-American ministers who "composed" their sermons using varying degrees of writing. The three Chicago churches chosen for the original study (out of the 12 that I visited) were mainline Protestant African-American churches where worship styles were recognized as being in the tradition of the African-American church. One church, in the United Church of Christ denomination, was pastored by a minister who described himself as a "manuscript minister"—a minister who preached from a complete manuscript. The second church, a Baptist Church, was pastored by a "nonmanuscript minister"—a minister who rarely even wrote notes from which to preach. The third church, in the Pentecostal Holiness denomination, was pastored by a "partial manuscript minister"—a preacher who wrote out approximately one fourth of his sermon. These distinctions between the types of manuscripts the ministers used were important for the original study because of its focus on the relation between oral and written language in the African-American church. That is, I examined the impact of writing on the shape of the sermon as well as the service as a whole.

Specifically, in that study I spent approximately 10 weeks in each of the three churches collecting data through ethnographic methods—participant observation, fieldnotes, interviews, collecting artifacts, and so on. In each church I taped at least five sermons and collected any written texts or notes that accompanied these sermons. Because I was a participant-observer during the services in which the five sermons were preached, I also gathered fieldnotes during as well as before and after the services. I conducted multiple formal and informal interviews with the ministers—my main informants—as well as informal interviews with many members of each church.

In 1993, I began a second phase of the project, conducting fieldwork and gathering data in a fourth church in Columbus, Ohio, where the manuscript minister was "running" a weeklong revival.[3] This second phase of data collecting is important because it provides an

[3]Reverend M. has now run the revival for 3 out of the past 6 years at the church in Ohio. This revival, like most, is a 6-day event. The revival minister, a guest preacher, preaches two sermons on Sunday and one sermon each weekday evening. In southern African-American churches, revival is also referred to as *homecoming* because many former members living out of town return home for the revival.

opportunity to study one of the ministers in a setting other than his own church. I could then look for patterns across communities (different churches and states). During this period, I collected additional fieldnotes, audiotaped and videotaped seven more sermons and conducted another interview with the manuscript minister. The data I have for this minister, then, span 5 years and two different congregations. Because of the sheer amount of data I have for this minister and because he seems representative, in preaching style, of many traditional African-American preachers, he is referenced far more in this book than the other two ministers from the original study.

THE BOOK

In this volume, I seek to use these data to illuminate the ways that the primary model of a literate text is shaped and used in African-American churches. Chapter 1, "African-American Church as Community," examines how the African-American church has operated as a community within larger African-American communities. As a result, chapter 1 provides a historical, sociological, and theological perspective on African-American churches and an overview of major components of the church community.

Because I seek to examine literacy within the contexts of its functions in African-American churches, the settings for this study—the particular churches—are as important as any other kind of data. Chapter 2 of this book, "Entering the Communities," then, introduces to the reader, through ethnographic descriptions, the churches that I studied—the ministers, their congregations, and the history of each church. I also describe the typical worship services at these churches and provide a brief discussion of the types of texts and literacy events that typically take place in each church. In this book, I use Heath's (1982a) definition of a *literacy event*—"any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print play a role" (p. 92). Although the sermon is the major literacy event in this community and is the focus of the next three chapters, there are other literacy events and texts that surround the sermon that demonstrate the range of texts and the diversity of uses of literacy in this setting. Along with chapter 1, this chapter sets the context for the data that will be reported and discussed in the remaining chapters of the book.

Chapter 3, "Creating a Community Within the Sermons," highlights the features of the major literacy event and text in African-American churches—the sermon. Through close analysis of individual sermons within the context of church services, I illustrate how the sermon functions as a community text. I examine the rhetorical strategies

that the participants use to create and maintain communal bonds and, consequently, a community identity through the text. I focus specifically on the following strategies: the role of collective pronouns, the role of shared knowledge, and the role of call-and-response dialogue. All three ministers rely on these three strategies within their sermons to eliminate distance and blur boundaries between them and their congregation.

In chapter 4, "Broadening the Community Boundaries Through the Text: Reverend M. in a New Congregation," I focus solely on the sermons of Reverend M., the manuscript minister (no full names will be used), from his weeklong revival services in Columbus, Ohio. I continue to highlight rhetorical strategies that are used to create and maintain community identity. I provide further discussion of the uses of call-and-response dialogue and shared knowledge. I also describe how Reverend M. uses storytelling and intertextuality in his sermons as markers of community membership. These additional data from the Columbus church emphasize the African-American sermon not only as community text but also as cultural phenomenon. Both chapters 3 and 4 contain numerous and sometimes lengthy excerpts from the ministers' sermons. Although readers cannot hear the sermons as they were delivered and, thus, cannot hear the rhythm or intonation that signals meaning in these sermons, the excerpts provide readers with an opportunity to "see" the complexities of the sermons and get a "feel" for how each minister uses language.

The analysis in chapters 3 and 4 provides a view of a text that calls into question traditionally held notions of text inside and outside the academy. Therefore, chapter 5, "The Emergence of a Community Text" deals with the implications of this study for how text is defined. Important in this discussion are the following questions: What is a literate text in African-American churches? What are the implications for how one defines writer, reader, and audience? Who owns the text? Also, important in this discussion are the implications for the relation between oral and written texts. In chapter 5 I argue for a dynamic rather than a fixed, static definition of text. I also argue for descriptions of writer, speaker, and audience that deemphasize the boundaries between those roles and emphasize the interchangeable aspects of each role. I also argue for the blurring of boundaries between oral and written language. Finally, I end chapter 5 by exploring the implications for literacy learning and teaching of members of this community setting.

NEGOTIATING THE SITES OF TENSION

Readers of this book may likely recognize seeming tensions in the text, tensions that emerge in the voice in which I find myself writing from

time to time or tensions that emerge when an apparent shift in audience occurs. It seems useful then, as a bridge to the rest of this book, to provide a prologue of sorts in which I highlight some of the tensions that emerged as I was gathering and analyzing data, and writing this book. Some of these are personal tensions that affected the lenses through which I saw the "stories" in this study and the way I painted the pictures and constructed the narratives that are at the heart of this book. Some of the tensions are those that exist in the field of composition (and literacy) studies. These tensions lead me to resist any easy or set conclusions and, instead, to call for more self-conscious acknowledgment and examination of the competing roles any researcher must face in pursuing issues such as those involving community literacies.

Moving to a Written Text: The Ethnographic "Story"

Many of the tensions that I experienced emerged from the writing up of the research, from the scripting of this book. I began to feel in the early stages of drafting this manuscript that this book would not look like most written ethnographic reports because it relied heavily on textual analysis. Of course, I had in my mind a more "typical" ethnographic story, based on Van Mannen's (1988) *Tales of the Field* and actual ethnographies (Heath, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Lofty, 1988; and others) that appeared, at least in my mind, far less text-based than this book. So, I began to worry about what an ethnographic study should look like. Where does textual analysis fit? How can I represent the voices of the participants in a book built around textual analyses?

The questions began to swirl in my head, and the writing began to slow to almost a complete stop. Resolution to these issues about what an ethnographic study should look or "read" like seemed nonexistent until I began to think of how I came to focus on the sermon as an important literate and then community text that deserved more focused attention. It was through examining patterns in my fieldnotes and ethnographic interviews that I began to focus on the role of the sermons within the context of the worship services of the African-American churches in this study. The analyses in those aspects of the fieldwork led me to something similar to what Hymes (1982) called a *hypothesis-oriented ethnography*, where ethnographic work centers on seeking specific information. Therefore, a narrower strip of a culture is examined. Although I had data on more than just the sermons, it was the sermons and the participants' interactions with this text that emerged from the original study as an important site of investigation for understanding literate texts in the churches.

Thus, the data dictated the form and content of the manuscript. I do not mean to say that I don't feel any more tension about my

"atypical" ethnographic study. The tension remains. However, I have begun to question whether an ethnographic study must be written as a "tale" or story in the most recognizable ways. In this book, I feel as if the ministers tell their stories through the sermon excerpts, and that my analysis weaves together those stories into a larger one. The textual analysis provides an important strand of the story that I weave together.

Another tension emerged as I tried to resolve, for myself, issues about who my audience is for this book. I found myself writing for two audiences who, in my mind at least, most often were competing with each other. One audience—the participants in the churches, the people in the community institution the book is about—should be the primary audience. It is this audience who gave me the strength and courage to do this study and provided the settings for the study. It is also this audience that I grew up with and live with and pray with, and who is most affected by the issues that I raise in this book. The other audience, the academic audience, controls my fate as a scholar. They, in important ways determine when, where, and if this manuscript is published, whether the story in this book will be allowed to be told. They also are least informed about the issues I raise in this book. At times, the double audience confused me as a writer. I was not always sure for which audience I was writing. At other times, this tension angered me. Why should I have to write to an academic audience of my peers? Why can't I write primarily for the people the book is about?

While I tell myself that I was never really able to resolve this tension, I also know that, in most important ways, the academic audience won out as the primary audience. I did not feel equipped or powerful enough to fight a battle about audience with publishers, tenure committees, reviewers, and other interested parties. However, the participants in the study were never far beneath the surface once I came to understand that I am one of them. There were times while writing this book that I forgot that it was okay for me to acknowledge my role as a participant. And as a participant and scholar I made some decisions that reflect my loyalty to and protectiveness of this group.

In the writing of this book, I was asked by several readers to compare and contrast what happens in these churches with what happens in White churches. I chose not to respond to those requests for several reasons. First, this was an ethnographic study of specific African-American churches. To study White churches would require a separate study. Second, and most importantly, to compare and contrast what people in African-American churches do with texts with what people in White churches do with texts suggests that only through this comparison and contrast with the dominant power group in American society can the actions of another group be validated. Once again, what

White Americans do would be set up as the norm. For those reasons, I chose not to set up a comparison and contrast. For people who worry that this absence signals that all the events described and analyzed in this book are unique to African Americans, that was never my intention. Any of these elements could and are found in the communities of other groups. It is the combination of events, their contexts and functions, that make them unique to a community.

Another important tension that emerged concerned my own personal writing style. Throughout the writing stages of this book, various readers have pointed out places that seemed needlessly repetitious. When I reread those sections, I did not always agree. In fact, I saw those sections as some of my most articulate moments. It was only in conversation with one of my colleagues that I began to understand the tensions about the writing. When I write, I try to create a rhythm that very much depends on phrasing, repetition of syntax, phrases, and words. Of course, other readers do not "hear" the rhythm I hear when I read the sentences. For me, the rhythm was there; for some of my readers, it was not. I also use repetition for emphasis of key points. This same colleague, who had just read parts of a draft of this book, pointed out that I was using similar techniques for rhythm and emphasis that the ministers in this study used. Until that time, I had never explicitly examined how I may have been influenced by this community institution I had grown up in and what sites of negotiation I, myself, had faced, sites that I continue to negotiate. I recognize my students as multiliterate. I see myself as multiliterate, too, but I have never really investigated what that meant for my own writing. Now, I am faced with that task.

Yet another tension I faced when writing this book was how to represent orally performed sermons in the written medium. Whenever I present conference papers based on this work, I usually play excerpts from tapes of sermons so that the audience can hear the rhythm and cadence of the ministers. However, writing for publication presented several dilemmas. Even though two of the three ministers wrote parts or all of their sermons, these sermons were most effective when heard. Several people suggested that I make a tape of the sermons to accompany the book. I thought seriously about doing just that. What stopped me was an ethical dilemma. In three of the four churches in which I collected data (the fourth church was the Ohio church where Reverend M. ran the revival), the churches sold tapes of each sermon to support ministries and the general operation of the churches. To include a tape as part of the price of a book denies the churches the rights to an income that should be theirs. To negotiate with publishers and churches about percentages of royalties to be divided up seemed problematic when more sermons from one minister were used than the others, and four churches were involved. My way of resolving this tension was, of course, not to pursue

the tape issue. Therefore, the sermons are represented in writing in a manner that provides, as much as possible, the rhythm of the sermons. Of course, another tension emerged from this issue: because ownership of text is in question in this community institution, isn't selling the tapes a contradiction to the previous attitude expressed earlier by the ministers? This is another tension I have not resolved.

Community Participant and/Versus Researcher

Some of the tensions emanated from my dual roles as community participant and researcher. I mentioned earlier, for instance, that, at times, I forgot that it was okay to acknowledge my role as a community participant. In fact, it was necessary to acknowledge that role. Yet, I found that, from time to time, I was trapped by that ancient model of research that dictated that any reference to one's self in a study as the researcher be done in an impersonal, dispassionate, third person way—*the researcher*. That model tries to erase the personal, affective experiences of researchers.

When I fell into that trap (in which I was never a permanent resident), I would see my roles as community participant and researcher as opposing roles. That is, I feared that my role as a community participant who looked at African-American churches as rich resources for literacy instruction prevented me from being a rigorous researcher. "Rigorous" researchers, I then thought, looked for the negative, the failures, the deficiencies. Because I did not stay in these traps permanently, I was able to dismiss my narrow view of the rigorous researcher as nothing more than the ravings of a scholar under the pressure of book and tenure deadlines. However, I was not able to dismiss the underlying premise that somehow my dual roles as community participant and researcher would, at the least, complicate my job as a researcher and, at the most, make it impossible.

I could list many other tensions, but doing so would, I think, begin to sound like a writer whining about all the obstacles she faced while writing this book. Instead, I suggest that battling these tensions has been a valuable process for me. What I have learned is that resolutions are not possible in a research project that focuses not on static but rather on dynamic elements like ministers, congregations, and texts. I have also learned that tensions aren't always bad. It was my struggling, on a Sunday morning, with the tensions of trying to attend to two things at once—the what and the how of one of Reverend M.'s sermons—that led me to this moment. Out of that tension grew this study, which has led me to new experiences and understandings as well as new sets of tensions. Is it unreasonable to hope that out of these new tensions may grow equally rewarding work?

1
African-American Church as Community

> The [African American] church community . . . a nation within a nation
>
> —E. F. Frazier (1974)

The African-American church is one of the few institutions where class boundaries tend to break down, where education boundaries are deemphasized, where regions are spanned, where African Americans from almost all walks of life are accepted. Although there are surely differences between urban and rural churches, between large and small churches, between historically, independent African-American churches (African Methodist Episcopal [A.M.E.], Congregational Methodist Episcopal [C.M.E.], National Baptist, Inc., etc.) and African-American churches within predominantly White denominations (United Methodist, United Church of Christ, etc.), those differences are not strong enough to alter the identity of the African-American church either as an institution or as a community.

Because the African-American church is the setting for this study, this chapter focuses on this institution as community, thus providing a broader context from which to examine the individual church communities introduced in chapter 2. Included in this discussion is the situating of the church in African-American communities culturally, intellectually, and historically. The discussion also touches on the components of the church that build that community, including participants, artifacts, and behavior, rules, and customs.

SITUATING THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCH

As scholars of African-American culture have consistently pointed out, in African-American communities the church holds a role of prominence unrivaled by any other institution (Hamilton, 1972; Smitherman, 1977). Smitherman stated that "the traditional black church is the oldest and perhaps still the most powerful and influential black institution" (p. 90). Religious scholar C. Eric Lincoln (1974), emphasizing the impact of the church on Black people, states that "[their] church was [their] school, [their] forum, [their] political arena" (p. 6). Lincoln asserted that "whether one is a church member or not is beside the point in any assessment of the importance and meaning of the Black church" (p. 115); its influence spreads further than its walls.

Historically, the African-American church has been more than just another institution. Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) asserted that the "church is the cultural womb of the black community" (p. 8), and as such, "most of black culture is heavily indebted to the black religious tradition, including most forms of black music, drama, literature, storytelling, and even humor" (p. 8). It is because of its place as the center of Black culture that African-American churches cannot easily be separated from secular institutions and that sacred-secular distinctions are complicated.

Paralleling Lincoln and Mamiya's argument, Paris (1985) called African-American churches the "custodians of the black community's most basic societal values" (pp. xii-xiii). He argued that "black churches have had a prominent role in shaping, maintaining, and enhancing social order and communal solidarity" (p. xiv). At the heart of Paris' argument and Lincoln and Mamiya's as well is a belief that there is an African-American worldview that is the foundation of African-American communities. This worldview is rooted in African-American religious tradition; yet, it permeates the fabric of everyday life in African-American communities; it is the heart of Black culture. Many current scholars in the social sciences and humanities describe this worldview of African Americans as having an "Afrocentric perspective," a perspective deeply embedded in an African worldview (see Asante's, 1980, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* and Myers', 1988, *Understanding the Afrocentric Worldview* for an introduction to afrocentricity). This worldview is labeled *Black Christian tradition* by Paris (1985), *Black sacred cosmos* by Lincoln and Mamiya (1990), and *soul theology* by Mitchell and Cooper-Lewter (1986). Lincoln and Mamiya explained that

> the Black sacred cosmos or the religious worldview of African Americans is related both to their African heritage, which envisaged

> the whole universe as sacred, and to their conversion to Christianity during slavery and its aftermath. . . . Black people created their own unique and distinctive forms of culture and worldview as parallels rather than replications of the culture in which they were involuntary guests. (p. 2)

In his most recent work discussing African worldview, Paris (1995) argued the following:

> Africans brought their worldviews with them into the diaspora and, as a result of their interaction with their new environments, their African worldviews were gradually altered into a new-African consciousness. As a result of the influence of traditional African cosmological thought on each, important continuities of moral thought and practice exist between African Christians in the diaspora and those on the continent. (p. 24)

Paris chastised scholars who dismiss what he saw as strong links between the "African American experience and the African factor" (p. 19). In discussing African cosmological thought, Paris turned to the work of African religion scholar Mbiti (1975) for support. Mbiti detailed features of African religion that Paris suggests become part of the African diasporic worldview. Specifically, Mbiti's research pointed to an African belief in a supreme deity whom Mbiti identifies as God. He also importantly pointed out that God was known by many names in Africa, a point that one of the ministers in this study addresses (see chap. 4). Paris suggested that the multiple names may have led to Christian missionaries' belief that most Africans were polytheistic and to their errant goal of introducing God to Africans, ignoring that God was already known to them.

Pitts (1993), a sociolinguist who did an ethnography of African-American Baptist churches in central Texas, went even further in exploring the influence of an African worldview and demonstrated that worldview's influence on religious practices. In his study, Pitts identified rituals within these central Texas baptist churches that he connected to the African diaspora. Pitts argued that the "Afro-Baptist ritual is an extension, as well as an interpretation, of African religion custom" (p. 9). One such ritual that Pitts identified, going into trances, is, he argued, rooted in West and Central Africa.

These scholars suggest that although this worldview is tied to religion, its impact is far reaching. Because I share this assumption, I see discussion of any aspect of African-American culture—be it religion, language, or literacy—being connected to this worldview. An illustration is the work of literary scholar Hubbard (1994) who

> offers a hermeneutical discourse on the modes of religious expression that developed out of the African encounter with the New World and [investigates] how these modes of expression have been transformed into scribal tradition and have influenced the structure as well as the theme of selected works of black American prose fiction. (p. 18)

Hubbard recognized the "African factor" (African worldview) in African-American religious expression and analyzes that factor's influence in African-American literature. Hubbard's work illustrates how an African worldview permeates not only African-American religious practices and beliefs but also other aspects of African-American culture such as literary practices. Thus, he pointed to an African worldview as a constant and important context for understanding the cultural artifacts that emerge from African-American communities. I highlight this topic of worldview because it carries such import for African Americans as a community.

CHURCH AS COMMUNITY

In the past, we have often considered community only as a group of people who live in a common area. Community as a concept, however, has grown considerably past that usual and narrow definition. We now talk of professional communities, discourse communities, scholarly communities, home communities, and church communities. In many ways, community as defined by common history, common beliefs, and shared understanding is more prominent than common living area. In my thinking about situating the African-American church within African-American communities, I have come to see the church as a community itself—not as individual church communities that I address in chapter 2, but as a broader cross-locational concept of community. Conceptually, the African-American church is a body of people with a common history of, among other factors, slavery, oppression, faith, perseverance, and literacy. If we take into account the argument about worldview advanced by Paris (1985, 1995), Mitchell and Cooper-Lewter (1986), Lincoln and Mamiya (1990), and others, then the church is a body of people who share beliefs, religious and otherwise, and who have a shared understanding of their world.

This emergence of the church as community took root it seems during slavery and its aftermath. Both Pitts (1993) and Paris (1995) cited the importance of the secret meetings of slaves as precursors to the African-American church. Pitts linked the origin of the Afro-Baptist church to these secret meetings: "secret meetings were held under the

auspices of powerful political, legal, and economic units called secret societies" (p. 36). Paris suggested that the process of "Africans in the diaspora making Christianity their own" (p. 39) occurred during the secret meetings of slaves that "became the locus for the development of an alternative understanding of the Christian gospel" (p. 39).

In an earlier work, Paris (1985), in discussing this emergence of the church, stated the following:

> those nascent black churches evidenced the cooperative action of slaves to build institutions and prove to themselves and others that they were capable not only of adapting to an environment but of constructing a world of their own. In time, the black churches were destined to become a surrogate world for black people in general. (p. 6)

This construction of church as a "world of their own" symbolizes the church as community. The identities of its members were tied to this community, as were and are rules and expectations that govern social and moral behavior. Just after slavery in the rural south, the church as community was all encompassing. Frazier (1974), a noted historian, captured the essence of the African-American church as community as he explained the following:

> outside of the family, the church represented the only other organized social existence. The rural Negro communities in the South were named after their churches. In fact, the Negro population in the rural South has been organized in "church communities" which represented their widest social orientation and the largest social groups in which they found an identification. Moreover, since the Negro was an outsider in the American community it was the church that enlisted his deepest loyalties. Therefore, it was more than an amusing incident to note some years ago in a rural community in Alabama, that a Negro when asked to identify the people in the adjoining community replied, "the nationality in there is Methodist." . . . For the Negro masses, in their social and moral isolation in American society, the Negro church community has been a nation within a nation. (p. 44)

The most useful and comprehensive characterization of the African-American church comes from Lincoln and Mamiya (1990). These scholars suggested that this African-American church community is characterized by a set of dialectical tensions centered around six pairs of poles. Their model of the church is a dynamic rather than static one that shifts with the changing social demands. Lincoln and Mamiya argued that any particular African-American church may lean toward one

orientation on this continuum rather than another, but any church may exhibit tendencies from both ends of the continuum. The six pairs are as follows:

1. The dialectic between priestly and prophetic functions: *Priestly functions* involve only those activities concerned with worship and maintaining the spiritual life of members. Prophetic functions refer to involvement in political concerns and activities in the wider community.
2. The dialectic between other-worldly versus this-worldly: *Other-worldly* means being concerned only with heaven and eternal life or the world beyond. *This-worldly* refers to involvement in the affairs of this world, especially politics and social life, in the here and now.
3. The dialectic between universalism and particularism: As ethnic institutions, the historic Black churches reflected the dialectical tension between the universalism of the Christian message and the particularism of their past racial history as institutions emerging out of the racism of White Christianity and the larger society.
4. The dialectic between the communal and the privatistic: The *communal orientation* refers to the historic tradition of Black churches being involved in all aspects of the lives of their members, including political, economic, educational, and social concerns. The *privatistic pole* of this dialectic means a withdrawal from the concerns of the larger community to a focus on meeting only the religious needs of its adherents.
5. The dialectic between charismatic versus bureaucratic: As an overall generalization, the majority of Black churches and denominations tend to lean toward the charismatic pole of the continuum, especially when compared to White mainstream denominations and churches that tend to have more bureaucratic forms. (The charismatic pole has the charisma of the church leader, namely the minister as more important than the organizational structure and form.)
6. The dialectic between resistance versus accommodation: The pole of accommodation means to be influenced by the larger society and to take part in aspects of it, however marginal that participation may be. . . . Resistance means affirming one's own cultural heritage, in this case an African-American or Black heritage.

These tensions are not either-or choices. The church can have a balance between the poles or it can move toward one end of the pole or the other in response to several factors or social changes. Hence, this dialectical model can accommodate the challenges that the urban church must face and yet still be within the tradition of African-American churches. I must note here that there may be more than six pairs of dialectical tensions that characterize this community. Lincoln and Mamiya made no claims to exhausting the list. However, for the purposes of this study, I refer to this dialectical model throughout my discussion of the individual church communities in the chapters that follow. The dialectical tensions that Lincoln and Mamiya have identified become important contributions to the discussions of literacy in African-American churches because they provide insight into factors that determine the kind of community settings within which African-American churches are situated. These tensions are backdrops for a detailed discussion of components of the church as community. Two key components that I highlight in the remaining sections of this chapter are the role of the minister, a major participant, and the sermon as a genre, a major artifact.

THE ROLE OF THE MINISTER IN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCH

It has been my experience, in both small rural southern African-American churches and large urban African-American churches, that across church communities, the central and most influential figure is the minister. In many instances, the African-American minister is the central leader not only in the church but also in the larger community. And, as I demonstrate in this book, the minister is a major participant in literacy events that emerge from African-American churches.

One way to understand the role of the African-American minister was proposed by Paris (1995), who connected the lifestyle of many African-American ministers to African culture through the concept of African kingship:

> Among freed African Americans, the spirit of African kingship was transmitted to the clergy, whom the community viewed as their primary leaders embued with charismatic powers. . . . From the earliest times up to the present day, African American clergy have been acknowledged as the titular heads of their local communities and have enjoyed the highest respect and loyalty of their people, who care for their material needs and often bestow lavish gifts on them and their families. (p. 60)

Although this characterization may be less true today, we need only look at the most vocal and visible African-American persons in this country (and even religious leaders of African descent around the world) to see that the church still produces important leaders. Reverend Jesse Jackson, a Baptist preacher, was a candidate for the Democratic nomination for president of the United States in 1988 and 1992. Minister Louis Farrakhan's major support comes from the followers of the Nation of Islam, a nonmainstream yet legitimate religious movement in the United States. Finally, Ben Chavis, former director of the NAACP and now member of the Nation of Islam had been a long time pastor in the United Church of Christ (UCC) denomination. These men have used their positions as religious leaders to address social, economic and political issues, a role that is not new for African-American ministers. (Of course, I refer specifically to the men listed here, not ministers as men generically. A growing number of African-American churches are pastored by women. Most of the scholars I quote from directly regrettably use the male pronoun to refer to preachers.)

Traditionally, it has been the preachers' role to be the spokespersons for the African-American community. Lincoln (1970) provided the following insight:

> by tradition, the Black preacher has always enjoyed the status of being the natural leader of the black community. His leadership role has at times assumed a variety of forms with concomitant responsibilities: pastor or spiritual leader, political leader, social leader, and very often the leading proponent and exemplar of education. (p. 6)

Historian Carter G. Woodson (1921) referred to African-American preachers as "the best developed leaders among their people" (p. 169). Woodson also said that "the Negro preacher is granted more freedom of speech and permitted to exercise more influence than any other Negro in his community" (p. 169). What Washington (1984) said of African-American Baptist ministers can be extended to African-American ministers in general. Washington stated of the minister's role that,

> no less important is the position of the Baptist minister as the news medium of the community. He is expected to gather the local news and circulate it through his sermons on Sunday. In fact, almost all ministers in Southern Negro communities are looked to as the disseminators of information, and the pipeline of the community leads directly to them. (p. 2)

As the scholars cited here have indicated, the multiple and influential roles of African-American preachers in church, local, and broader

communities is virtually unparalled by any other figure. It is no wonder then, that they are prominent in any discussion of literacy in African-American churches.

THE ROLE OF THE SERMON IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCHES

Mitchell's *Black Preaching* (1970), although 30 years old, is still the most complete description of African-American preaching. Mitchell characterized African-American preaching and focuses on the features of the African-American sermon throughout his book. Those characterizations can be condensed to two major points:

1. Black preachers must preach in the language and culture of their people no matter how educated the preachers are. This is referred to as the vernacular.
2. Also, the preacher must address the contemporary man and his needs. (p. 29)

Mitchell adhered to the doctrine that African-American preaching takes place only in dialogue and commented on the role of the congregation in "making the dialogue a normal part of the black preacher's sermon" (p. 95). This call-response pattern in African-American sermons—the dialogue—has been well documented (Holt, 1972; Miller & Vander Lei, 1990). Mitchell characterized the dialogue as that which occurs when a member of the congregation responds "because he identifies with something the preacher has said . . . he is at home, he is interested in what the preacher is saying because he is involved, crucially involved in the issues as the preacher shapes them with scriptural reference and skillful allegory" (p. 97).

Critically important to any variety of African-American preaching is a strong sense of community. African-American preachers must create a sense of community between themselves and their congregations. Mitchell stated that through the sermon, "one has to establish a kind of intimate fellowship" (p. 185). Speaking the language of the people provides the means for establishing that rapport. Hubbard (1994) suggested that "the preacher's voice becomes the collective voice of his people. . . . Through his speech acts, he provides the vehicle by which the entire community of faith may participate in shaping its own history and in restructuring cultural memory" (p. 14)

What then are specific characteristics of the African-American sermon? Mitchell (1970) warned that because of the emphasis on individual style and variation, it is almost impossible to give an outline

of the typical African-American sermon; however, he did conclude that most African-American sermons contain illustration, storytelling, African-American language and style, and climax. Furthermore, Mitchell (1970) stated that the African-American preacher's sermon must contain the "word of God," which basically means the sermons are usually tied to the Bible by incorporating Scriptures within the sermon, being built around Scriptures, or both. Many African-American sermons feature Bible stories woven into the text or as the major part of it. Mitchell (1970) discussed other features of the sermon that he labeled *stylistic*:

1. The use of rhythm in preaching.
2. The use of intonation.
3. The repetition of words, phrases, sentence patterns, aphorisms, and so on.
4. The use of role-playing and other storytelling techniques.
5. The personal involvement of the minister in what she/he is preaching about.
6. The minister's ability to play with language, to give the congregation the "well-turned" phrase.

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it does reflect what generally characterizes the African-American sermon. Spillers (1974), in an analysis of three sermons by Martin Luther King, found that "the minister weaves analogy and allegory into the sermon, comparing and juxtaposing contemporary problems in morality with and alongside ancient problems in morality" (p. 77). Jones (1976), who called the sermon "the peak place in the African American worship service" (p. 7), listed characteristics of the African-American sermon that are quite similar to those listed by Mitchell and Spillers. According to Jones, in African-American sermons, one finds "parallelism, emphasis on experiences which parallel biblical events, symbolic language, imagery, alliteration and an absence of inhibition with respect to speaking the truth" (p. 7).

THE SERMON GENRE AS A SPEECH EVENT: RHETORICAL AIMS

In addition to looking at specific features of African-American sermons as an important factor in comprehending African-American sermons as a literacy event, it is equally important to examine the overall rhetorical purposes of sermons as a genre. Placing the sermons that I examined for this study within the context of a larger genre creates a clearer picture of

how the sermons in this study should be viewed within the local church communities from which they emerge, within African-American church communities, and the broader theological community. It is the work of scholars of this latter community on which I call to provide insight into the rhetorical aims of the sermon as a genre.

Hymes (1972, 1974) listed genre as one of the components of the speech event. We tend to think of genre in a literary context as the formal features of a type of discourse. When we think of genre this way, many times we divorce it from any kind of context. But when we look at genre as part of an event, as Hymes did, then context and form are not divorced. The speech event includes more than just the discourse. In examining characteristics that mark the sermon as a genre it seems best to begin by highlighting some stated goals or aims of the sermon. For those who believe, as I do, that form and function are dependent on each other and that the goals or aims of a message help define the communicative event, this is an important starting point.

Homiletical scholars devote much attention to the rhetorical aims of the sermon. And, as I illustrate in the following chapters, the rhetorical aims of the ministers and their sermons have a major impact on the nature of this literacy event. What follows is a brief summary of that scholarship. Achtemeier (1980) argued that the goal of all sermons and preaching is to transform the lives of the listeners by bringing to the listeners the action of God supported by the biblical Word through human words. Erdahl (1976) stated that "a sermon seeks to share a life-changing message" (p. 47). Both Achtemeier and Erdahl pointed to one broad persuasive goal of the sermon: to change people's lives through a message. Massey (1980) viewed the sermon as having many varied goals. Massey stated that, "a sermon can be preached to offer a solution to a problem, or to instruct in an essential doctrine, or to prescribe a cure for some spiritual or social ill; it can be planned to support a cause, or to sustain hearers and keep them on their feet while living under pressure" (p. 18). Although Massey's aims seem, at first, far more pragmatic than Achtemeier's or Erdahl's, it becomes clear that Massey viewed the goals of the sermon on two levels. On the one level, Massey (1980) discussed the "realistic goals of informing, persuading, encouraging, reminding, sustaining, and giving" (p. 18). On the other level, he acknowledged that "the ultimate goal in preaching is to connect the hearer with the grace of God, and nurture that hearer in the life that grace makes possible when it is accepted and regarded in full" (p. 18). What these different goals seem to show is that most sermons have multiple rhetorical aims, both pragmatic and somewhat more global or spiritual. Yet, each aim can be described within the realm of the rhetorical situation: speaker, listener, message, and purpose. Although a pragmatic rhetorical aim may change from sermon to sermon, the spiritual aim remains consistent.

This consistency seems to be reflected in the types of sermons that homileticians and theologians discuss. Mays and Nicholson (1933) identified three types of sermons: those that focus on contemporary everyday situations, those that focus on doctrinal or theological issues, and those that focus on life after death. Achtemeier (1980) identified several types of sermons: thematic (themes imposed on a text), narrative (retelling a biblical story), running commentary (movement through a biblical passage seriatim, interpreting as the preacher goes through the text), and experimental. Under thematic sermons, Achtemeier listed two subtypes: topical sermons that usually deal with contemporary worldly issues and doctrinal sermons that usually deal with theological issues. Under experimental types, Achtemeier (1980) included what she called "first-person testimony." However, she advised that first-person statements and personal narratives should be avoided as much as possible in the sermon. This is a suggestion that seems to conflict with practices in the African-American church where first-person narratives and personal testimony are valued.

Although Massey's (1980) list of sermon types may have different names than Achtemeier's, they are similar in content. Massey identified what he considered the basic types of sermons according to their popularity. He identified the most popular form as *topical*, matching Achtemeier's "thematic" sermons, where a "theme or topic controls the sequence" (p. 21). The next most popular sermon form is *textual*, "a form of design determined mainly by the divisions or sequences of thought in a single text or short passage from scripture" (p. 21). Massey called a third sermon form *expositional*, "the design of which is determined basically by an extended passage of Scripture" (p. 22). Massey's expositional type is very similar to Achtemeier's "running commentary" sermons.

Craddock (1979), who took a novel approach to sermon forms, believes that "the separation of method from content is not only artificial but unfruitful," and that "forms of preaching should be as varied as the forms of rhetoric in the New Testament, or as the purposes of preaching or as the situations of those who listen" (p. 53). Craddock stated, however, that instead of dominant sermon types, there are two dominant directions in which a sermon moves. The most traditional he called *deductive movement.*

> Homiletically, deduction means stating the thesis, breaking it down into points or sub-theses, explaining and illustrating these points, and applying them to the particular situations of the hearers. (p. 54)

This method strongly resembles the traditional academic essay.

Craddock promoted the second type of movement—*inductive*—which can be traced to Aristotle. Craddock stated that "in induction, thought moves from the particulars of experience that have a familiar ring in the listener's ear to a general truth or conclusion" (p. 54). This inductive movement also requires that the sermon rely on a large amount of shared information between preacher and congregation. For Craddock, one of the advantages of the inductive sermon is that "there is no single pattern or structure" (p. 145). He attacked the monotonous form of the "usual outline." What seems to stand out in this discussion of the sermon genre are the multiple rhetorical aims of the discourse and the basic agreement among biblical and theological scholars about what those aims as well as the sermon types are.

Other features mark the sermon in the African-American church. First and foremost, sermons are usually biblical. That is, no matter where a sermon topic is derived, a sermon's content must be based on biblical Scriptures. This characteristic seems to be a constant for all ministers and parallels what Mitchell said is expected of African-American preachers' sermons. In fact, some call for sermons to be more "biblical" (Davis, 1958; Thompson, 1981; Willimon, 1981). Another common feature of sermons is the one sentence central idea or thesis. In terms of surface features, most sermons are framed by a Bible scripture at the beginning and a prayer at the end.

I have noted these features of the sermon with emphasis on African-American sermons because they are important in any consideration of discourse patterns in such sermons. The features not only describe the sermon as a genre but emphasize the importance of not overlooking the fixed aspects of the sermon. These are features that may transcend any categorization of sermons as oral or written, and that inform all of the sermons examined later in this study.

2
Entering the Communities

"I Was Glad When They Said Unto Me,
Let Us Go Into the House of the Lord" (Psalms 122:1)

Coming into these "Houses of the Lord" is more than just entering three African-American religious buildings. For me, entering these church communities has been an opportunity to learn more about the complexities of literacy within an African-American community institution that is unrivaled in the historical and cultural value it holds within African-American communities. Becoming part of the communities of each church allowed me to see how their personalities have been shaped by their histories, their denominational philosophies, and their ministers' personalities, philosophies, and histories. And it is this kind of contextual information that is foundational to seeing how literacy works within these church communities. This chapter sets the context for a closer exploration of literacy, literate texts, and literacy traditions in the three Chicago churches through a biographical discussion of the ministers and a description of the churches.[1] Situating the stories of each minister and church, which is a primary goal of this chapter, also brings into focus the dialectical tensions described by Lincoln and Mamiya (1990). These tensions are more immediate in this closer look at the characteristics of each minister and church.

[1]Much of the historical and biographical data reported in this chapter was reported first in my dissertation, *The Black Sermon as a Literacy Event* (Moss, 1988) and reported later in "Creating a Community: Literacy Events in African-American Churches" (Moss, 1994).

ENTERING REVEREND M.'S CHURCH COMMUNITY

In the Heart of the Community . . .
Ever Seeking to Win the Community's Heart[2]

As already detailed at the beginning of this book, my entré into this research had elements of divine inspiration. What I did not reveal is that those divine moments occurred when I was attending Reverend M.'s (the manuscript minister) church. At the point that I began to react as a researcher as well as a worshipper, I knew that my role had changed in Reverend M.'s church. That was the beginning of my negotiating not an entry into the community but an intellectual and emotional reentry into that community. That reentry began when I started to take note mentally of the uses of oral and written language during the service. I wondered how much this minister used writing in his sermons, particularly because he did not sound or look as if he were reading. Then, I wondered what kind of influence this minister's sermons, specifically the way this preacher used language, might have on his congregation. It was at that point that I knew that a research question and accompanying project had been born.

This minister, whose sermons had planted the seed of a research idea in my mind, became the first minister in my study. When we met for the first time (I had attended the church for some time, but I had never met this minister) and I explained my project, I received my first surprise—he preached from a written text. This surprise was mostly the result, I think, of my academic training, specifically my experience with many academic lectures that sound like written language when they are read. In the academic arena, especially English studies, the written text dominates so much so that even the oral presentation sounds like a written text. This was not the case with this minister. I discovered during the course of the study that many members of his congregation were unaware that he preached from a complete manuscript. Through my initial conversation with Reverend M. (as he is referred to from now on), I began to think about the relation between oral and written language in African-American sermons.

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[2]The quotations that appear at the beginning of each introduction to the ministers and their churches appear on the front cover of the church bulletins of the three churches in this study. Those statements provide some insight into the personalities and identities of each church, each minister, and each congregation.

REVEREND M.

Reverend M., a charismatic man who is in his early 50s, licensed to preach at 17 years old and ordained 8 years later, has been a pastor since 1972. He is the son of highly educated parents. His father was a minister in Philadelphia, and his mother received a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania at a time when it was rare to see an African American, especially an African-American woman, on campus in any role other than one of service. Reverend M. has followed in his parents' footsteps in regard to education. He has a bachelor's degree in English, a master's in literature, a master's in history of religions, a Doctor of Divinity degree, and several honorary doctoral degrees. In addition to his academic training, he has studied music and foreign languages, served in the Armed Forces, and traveled around the world. As is evident in the following chapters, all of his training and experiences have influenced his sermons.

Reverend M. states that his seminary training focused on academic scholarship rather than preparing to preach. He explains that this kind of training had an influence on what he preaches and, specifically, his understanding of how the Black religious tradition fits within the context of world religions. As I illustrate later, Reverend M., often in his sermons, provides information about how a particular ritual in the Christian African-American worship tradition is similar or dissimilar to an African religious ritual. Also, deeply committed to addressing political and social issues as well as religious issues, Reverend M. includes in his sermons many illustrations that concern politics from the local to the global level: criticisms of Chicago politician Ed Vrdolyak, former U.S. President Ronald Reagan and South Africa's former president, P.W. Botha. He does not shy away from relating Biblical politics to world politics nor does he shy away from criticizing politicians from the pulpit. As highlighted in the previous chapter, Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) suggested that when an African-American church is concerned with the political and social concerns of its members and of society, that church leans toward the "communal" and "this-worldly" ends of the dialectical continuum (see chap. 1). I do not suggest that there is not an emphasis on the members' spiritual and eternal lives; there is that concern. Yet, there is no separation of this-wordly from other-wordly. Privatistic concerns are not emphasized over communal matters.

Reverend M. also educates his congregation about different cultures, telling them about the cultures of the people in the countries that he visits, particularly the cultures of peoples of color. He constantly introduces Hebrew, Arabic, and African concepts to the congregation in the context of a particular sermon's message. Again, his background in world religions and his fluency with languages provides him with a

broader perspective about religion than many other clergy. His focus on the bonds between peoples of color is one of the traits that sets Reverend M. apart from the other two ministers in the study. Reverend M.'s vita, several pages long, reveals that he is also a scholar, having published several articles and a book. Through conversations with him and observations of him, I found that he is also an insatiable reader and lover of music. In his sermons, he often refers to books he is reading, and many times on entering the sanctuary, I would see him playing the organ or piano. In fact, several years ago, when Reverend M. preached a week-long revival at the church I currently attend, each evening that I entered the sanctuary, he was playing the organ. Reverend M.'s knowledge of music, world religions, and languages is on display for his congregations.

PREPARING THE SERMON

The ethnographic interviews I conducted yielded a wealth of information about what this minister believes and the way he works, particularly how he views himself as a preacher. I asked the minister to describe the process he goes through to prepare his sermons from choosing a topic to delivering the sermon in the pulpit. How he prepares his sermons reflects this preacher's style and training. He states that the process of preparing a sermon varies "depending on how the inspiration comes sometimes." The minister explains that the process is different when he is preaching a series of related sermons (as he was doing at the time of the interview) as compared to times when he is not preaching a series. I was fortunate enough to collect three sermons that were part of a series and two that were not.

For Reverend M., preparing a sermon that is part of a series requires that he think through what direction he wants the sermon to take, what he wants to cover in the series, how many Sundays the series will cover, and so on. He must "sit down and think and meditate." He does long-term advance planning. Once all of the necessary decisions have been made, the series becomes easier for him to prepare. For however many weeks that the series covers, the topics are selected. For example, during the time of my fieldwork, Reverend M. preached a series of sermons on the Lord's Prayer. He knew that he would preach sermons on the first six petitions of the Lord's Prayer:

> (1)Our Father, (2)hallowed be Thy name, (3)Thy Kingdom Come, (4)Thy Will be Done. (5)Give us this Day our daily bread, and (6)Forgive us our Debts as we Forgive our debtors

His topics, therefore, were picked for the next six Sundays.

When Reverend M. is not preaching a series, he must select a new topic each week. Where do they come from? He says that his topics can come from anywhere, while he is driving in his car, in the middle of another sermon, during a conversation with someone, or from something that he reads, which he does consistently and constantly. He says that "preparation for the next sermon usually begins after the benediction of the present sermon." Reverend M. describes the mechanics of his process as follows: Leading up to Thursday of each week, the day he writes his sermons, he does reading, praying, listening, meditating. He says that he reads "insatiably." He reads the Bible, devotional material for his own personal life, theological journals of a wide range (from right-wing conservative to left-wing liberal), scholarly books (at the time of one interview, he was reading scholarly material on the Old Testament), biblical textual criticism, and "always books by and/or about Black people." One of the more interesting comments he made was that sometimes he gets an idea from a novel. During the time of one interview, he was reading fiction by Black women. He pointed out that he does not read to find a sermon, but in that reading process something might "hit him or hit where the people [his congregation] are." Sometimes his reading yields him an illustration for a sermon. He generally tries to read three books a week, one from the religious/theological field, one from the Black history area, and one fictional piece by or about Blacks. All of this usually takes place before Thursday.

On Thursday he tries to block out time for writing. It generally takes this manuscript minister from 16 to 20 hours to do the actual writing of the sermon. Reverend M. explains that the model he uses for preaching, that of Dr. Gardner Taylor, noted African-American preacher and theological scholar, says that "for every minute you preach, you should have spent 1 hour preparing." He generally spends 4 to 6 of those 16 to 20 hours thinking, listening, and meditating. He must decide what structure an idea will take, how he will open and close a sermon, what illustrations he will use, and so on. He jots these items down in note form. Then he spends 6 to 7 hours actually writing the sermon. At the end of Thursday evening, this minister's draft is usually 85% to 90% completed. Reverend M. is a one-draft writer who occasionally adds or deletes something. From sermon to sermon, there were very few editing or revision marks on his manuscripts.

After I collected manuscripts and tapes and compared them to each other, I was struck by how detailed the manuscripts were and by how closely the manuscript and the oral transcripts matched each other. The oral performance rarely deviated from his written text. How does this minister-writer compose such a detailed sermon in one draft? This one draft in one sitting suggests that Reverend M. knows what he is

going to write when he sits down to start drafting each sermon. Actually, he does a great deal of prewriting and planning before he starts to write. He explains that he "jots down some notes and thoughts which seem to have been formulating over the previous 4 or 5 days"; then, he starts to draft the manuscript. Reverend M. says that when he sits down to write the sermon, he hears it in his head. This means that not only are the words and "The Word" (from the Lord) in his head, but so is the rhythm. He hears how the sermon is supposed to sound. That would also suggest that this minister's written texts likely include features that reflect oral language traditions.

The audience influences, to an extent, some stages of the sermon preparation. What role does the congregation play? Reverend M. answers that question by stating that the congregation is an integral part of his sermon planning, and his concept of audience is quite telling. He imagines himself sitting in the first pew looking up at the pulpit. He views himself as a person with needs, questions, troubles. He asks himself, "What do I need to hear from heaven this day?" This conscious effort to see himself as part of the congregation/audience, not to separate himself, he says, means that when he preaches to himself, inevitably he will touch on something that strikes a chord with the congregation. He seems to try to identify those common elements that bind him and his congregation together as African-American men and women. This minister is very concerned that his sermons are relevant to his congregation. Therefore, he tries to be familiar with the contemporary issues affecting them. By working hard to maintain his communal link with his congregation, he is more apt to prepare sermons that are relevant to them.

Finally, after the preparatory stages just explained, Reverend M. is prepared to deliver the sermon. He is not a chanter, that is, he does not display the sing-song rhythm for which many Black preachers are noted. Yet, he does display a rhythmic quality in many parts of his sermon that sometimes adds emphasis to the message (this topic is addressed in more detail in chap. 4). While Reverend M. is in the pulpit preaching, he rarely moves around, possibly because he has his text on the podium before him. Although he is fairly stationary, he relies, often, on hand and facial gestures, in addition to words, as a means of communicating. He does not move from the pulpit until he is in the midst of his climax. At that point, he steps down in front of the pulpit where he metaphorically "opens the doors of the church." This opening the door of the church is the moment at which people are invited to join his church. Some churches refer to the act as "walking the aisle" because that is the literal action that one takes—walking down the aisle to the front of the pulpit—to signal that you want to join the church.

REVEREND M.'S CHURCH

Some churches are a reflection of their denomination's teachings, some are a reflection of the congregations' wishes, and others are a reflection of their ministers' visions. This church seems to fall into the latter category. Many of the programs that exist in this church are a result of Reverend M.'s philosophy and ideas brought to fruition. As stated in chapter 1, this pastor's church just celebrated its 31st anniversary, and Reverend M. has pastored this church for 22 of those years. His effectiveness as a pastor can be measured by the growth of the congregation and the church's programs since his arrival. The membership has grown from fewer than 100 members to approximately 5,500 members and is now one of the largest United Church of Christ congregations in the country, an interesting fact given that the United Church of Christ is a predominantly White denomination.

During the time that the data were collected, this church was always full, with standing room only. Worshippers arrived 50 minutes before service started so that they could get seats in the sanctuary. Those who arrived late (30 minutes before service) had to stand along the walls if there was space or sit in an overflow room and watch the service on a big screen monitor. At the time of the study, there was an 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday service. Now, in addition to the two morning services, there are also a Sunday evening service, a Wednesday evening service, and a Saturday afternoon service. To accommodate this growing ministry, this church has built (since the completion of this study) a new worship center. This worship center includes a much larger sanctuary, classrooms, church offices, a cafeteria, a restaurant, and more.

The church is unique because of the extensive programs it offers its congregation and the community. It has a federally approved credit union; a reading, writing, and math tutorial program; a day-care center; a legal counseling service; a large pastoral counseling staff; an educational program that concentrates on educating the church membership about their religious and cultural roots as an African people; broadcast ministries; and much more.

The ideology that permeates throughout this church is evident in most every aspect of its operation from the language used in the services to the types of organizations. Reverend M. stresses to his congregation that they should be "unashamedly Black and unapologetically Christian." This statement is part of the oath that the congregation takes when accepting new members into the church every first Sunday. By clearly identifying themselves as Black Christians, the members of this church stress their commitment to their culture. That commitment can be seen throughout the church, for example, in the African garb the choir wears occasionally, the African songs they sing,

the traditional spirituals and gospel songs they sing. These practices, among others, clearly mark this church's cultural roots. This commitment exists also in the youth organizations—"Building Black Men and "Building Black Women"—which are organizations where African-American women and men help young African-American girls and boys, respectively with their transitions into adulthood.

Again, Lincoln and Mamiya's (1990) categories come to mind. They described churches with liberation theologies as having prophetic functions, functions that focus on political and social action. Reverend M.'s church certainly has a liberation theology. In addition, Lincoln and Mamiya described African-American churches that "affirm their own cultural heritage" within a White society as leaning toward a "resistance" orientation rather than an "accommodationist" orientation. Reverend M.'s church, which is perceived by many inside and outside the church as operating from Afrocentric principles, is certainly one that affirms its cultural heritage, thus identifying it with a resistance orientation.

Among many African-American communities in Chicago, the congregation of this church is also viewed as middle class. One long-time native of Chicago who once belonged to a Black nationalist organization described a large portion of this church's members as "ex-nationalists turned middle class who seek a church which is very political and very Black." This is the church. However, the minister views his congregation as a mixed group, not predominantly middle class. He takes pride in the diversity of the congregation. While the members of this church represent a range on the socioeconomic ladder, there are a large number of members who are viewed as "professionals." There are judges, lawyers, doctors, educators, businesspeople, entertainers, and so on. A TV documentary on the roles of large and small urban African-American churches, which aired nationally, featured Reverend M.'s church and addressed the perceived "middle-classness" of this church ("Keeping the Faith," 1987). It is a church that stresses education but does not make the less formally educated feel uncomfortable. Yet, the apparent upward mobility of its congregation makes this church appealing to those who identify with the middle class. Interestingly, many members of this congregation live in the suburbs but drive to the heart of the Chicago's southside to attend this church. This church's dedication to the African-American community attracts members who, although they may not live in the community, want to maintain their ties within that community.

Despite the middle-class identification of this church, it is rooted in the tradition of the Black church (as discussed in the introduction and developed throughout this book), and the minister is rooted in the tradition of Black preachers. My interviews with this minister confirm

what I had observed previously: Reverend M. takes great pride in being identified as "in the tradition of Black preachers." He believes in making connections between the traditional African-American church and the contemporary African-American church; therefore, he uses the language of the African-American community in his sermons (this topic is addressed in the following chapters). Reverend M.'s careful use of language establishes a sense of community, communicating ideas and attitudes about Black people, and it also promotes certain community values. At the center of the sermon as a literacy event are the activities that surround language use in this church.

LITERACY EVENTS SURROUNDING THE SERMON

As in most churches, in Reverend M.'s church, prior to the sermon, there were numerous literacy events in which the congregation participated. These events involved the use of different types of oral and written texts. Typically, as soon as one entered the sanctuary, he or she was given a church bulletin. The Sunday bulletin at Reverend M.'s church, averaging twelve 8 x 11-inch pages per Sunday, provided the Order of Worship, the monthly Bible memory verse, the lyrics for the opening hymn, the scriptural responsive reading, the Scripture for the sermon, plus church-related and nonchurch-related announcements. Periodically included in the bulletin were editorial essays from Reverend M. concerning what he considered pressing issues for his African-American congregation.

Church-related announcements included a list of sick and shut-in members, a day-by-day listing of church-related activities (programs, meetings, etc.) for the upcoming week, and announcements about special programs or projects. Nonchurch-related announcements included employment opportunities, apartment advertisements, announcements about cultural and political events in the city, and reminders about important dates (e.g., voter registration deadlines). Clearly, for the congregation, the bulletin is an important method of disseminating information to the membership. Before service started, most members of the congregation could be observed reading the lengthy bulletin page by page.

While the reading of the bulletin itself is a major literacy event, it is one that is individual in nature. That is, each member can choose to read it, take notes within the bulletin, or converse with others about information contained within it, thus engaging members in literate acts. Yet, the congregation's participation in those literate acts is not necessarily in unison. There were, however, a few literacy events that took place within the service that did engage the congregation as a whole. The responsive reading, the memory verse, and the scriptural

reading are all events, printed in the bulletin, which serve as opportunities for the congregation to learn biblical Scriptures, which becomes important knowledge shared by Reverend M. and the congregation (I address the concept of *shared knowledge* in more detail in chap. 3 and chap. 4). The responsive reading, in particular, is a moment when the community reads aloud together. Everyone is expected to participate. In the responsive reading, which occurs early in the service, a deacon and the congregation read alternating verses from a biblical passage (the deacon reads a verse, the congregation reads the next verse). These passages are also printed in the rear of the hymnals. Following is a responsive reading from one of the services I attended. The bold print designates the parts that the congregation reads.

THE MODEL PRAYER
Luke 11:1 Matthew 6:5-15

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. Luke 11:1

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 6:5-15

The memory verse is a Bible verse assigned monthly and printed in the bulletin each Sunday of that month. Each Sunday before the altar prayer, the congregation is asked to recite that verse from memory. The scriptural reading is the Scripture lesson that Reverend M. reads to his congregation at the beginning of his sermon. It is the Scripture on which the sermon is based. Although the congregation remains silent during this literacy event, they are asked to read along in their Bibles or the Bibles provided by the church. Beginning with the bulletin and the literacy events that the bulletin highlights, it is obvious that Reverend M. and his congregation are engaged in numerous literacy events throughout the service. Value is placed on reading, memorizing, and reciting. Value is also placed on community participation. The Responsive reading, scriptural reading, and memory verse all function to make the community—the congregation—more familiar with the Bible as a text. The sermon moves the congregation from memorizing the text to comprehension and application.

REVEREND M.'S TEXTS

Of the five sermons I collected from Reverend M., the latter three were part of an eight-part series on The Lord's Prayer. The second sermon was a Mother's Day sermon. That leaves the first sermon as the only one whose topic was not dictated by a "special" day. Although the topics were affected by an occasion such as Mother's Day or the preaching of a series, the lengths and the structures of the sermons did not seem to be affected.

One of the more notable characteristics of Reverend M.'s sermons is the consistency in the physical features of the sermon. This consistency is seen in various aspects of his written texts, particularly size and organization. The written sermons average approximately 3,800 words. The following reports the number of words per individual sermon and the titles of those sermons:

> Sermon 1: "Living in the In Between"—3,540 words
> Sermon 2: "A Real Mother"—4,192 words
> Sermon 3: "The Lord's Prayer Pt I"—4,110 words
> Sermon 4: "The Lord's Prayer Pt II (His Kingdom and His Will)—3,578 words
> Sermon 5: "The Lord's Prayer Pt III (Our Daily Bread)—3,507 words

There are 685 words separating the longest from the shortest sermon, a difference of almost two and one-half pages or approximately five

handwritten pages (in the manuscript minister's handwriting) on 5 x 8 inch paper. Each of the manuscript minister's sermons was handwritten on the same size paper, using the front and back of the paper. His oral performance also appears to be fairly consistent in length of performance, rarely going over 30 minutes.

This consistency continues with other aspects of the sermons. As mentioned earlier, each of the five sermons is framed by a Scripture reading at the beginning of the sermon and an invitation to join the church accompanied by a hymn of invitation at the end of the sermon, a practice common in most churches. Each sermon seems to have three major parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. The conclusion is more commonly known in the African-American church as the climax. In the introduction, the minister introduces the subject of his sermon, connects it with the Scripture and basically sets up a context for the sermon. When the manuscript minister was preaching the series, much of the introduction was devoted to highlighting the previous Sunday's sermon and building a bridge to the current sermon. The body is the major text or explanation of the subject using sacred and secular examples. And the climax usually includes some kind of personal testimony and appeal to the congregation to join the church. Even though the minister preached the same sermon at the 8 a.m. and the 11 a.m. services, he did change the endings of each sermon and, therefore, the hymns of invitation also changed at each service. In his manuscripts, this minister wrote out both versions of his 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. endings.

For the purposes of this analysis, I entered each sermon into the computer, but I tried to duplicate as much as possible the physical appearance of the handwritten sermons. The following passage is a page from the manuscript minister's fifth written sermon. Following this passage is the same passage, but reproduced from the transcript of the actual oral delivery.

Written text:

Whenever you've got a Kingdom . . . that means there's a King somewhere . . . and when you make God King . . . you are praying a dangerous prayer . . . because you are challenging the fallacious claims . . . of the State
The State likes to think of itself as all powerful
Witness the State's position on chattel slavery
Witness the State's position on segregation and Jim Crow laws
Witness the State's position on Apartheid and Divestment
Witness the State's position on Constructive Engagement.
Witness Ed Burke, Ed Kelly and Ed Vrdolyak's position on letting a Black man be mayor

Witness . . . somebody was asking me what I thought about the latest conservative racist being appointed to the Supreme Court. . . . A court already stacked by Ford, Nixon and Ronnie And I asked them . . . are you talking about the same Supreme Court which issued the Dred Scott decision??

Oral version (from transcript of delivered sermon):

Whenever ___ says you got a Kingdom
that means
there's a king somewhere
And when you make God King you
are praying a dangerous prayer
because you are challenging the fallacious claims of the State
The State likes to think of itself as all powerful
Witness the State's position on chattel slavery
Witness the State's position on segregation and Jim Crow laws
Witness the State's position on Apartheid and divestment
Witness the State's position on Constructive engagement
Witness Ed Burke, Ed Kelly, and Ed Vrdolyak's position on letting a Black man be mayor

Witness
Somebody was asking me what I thought about the latest conservative racist being appointed to the Supreme Court

A Court already staffed by Ford, Nixon and Ronnie
And I asked them
Are you talking about the same Supreme Court which issued the Dred Scott decision

This minister's text does not look like a typical written piece, particularly his unconventional use of traditional punctuation markers. For example, there are few periods; ellipses are not used to indicate deleted information, but to indicate pauses. (Any use of ellipses in Reverend M.'s texts in this study is his.) At times he uses double question marks and, in some instances, single question marks that seem to signal a rising intonation and not a question. It seems that this minister has established his own visual code using punctuation marks to "mark" his texts for delivery. One can also see that the only difference between the oral and written passages is a few words in the first lines of the passages. Most changes from written to oral texts occur on the sentence level. Rarely did the minister add more than a sentence or change a word in the oral delivery of the written text. Yet, he did speak

of moving away from the text when God moves him to do so. (I report on such an example in chap. 4.)

This consistent pattern also surfaces in the five sermons in the form of repetition. The manuscript minister uses repetition of words, phrases, sentences, and sentence patterns as a regular part of his sermons. It is interesting to note that if a phrase is repeated five times in the oral sermon, it is written down five times in the manuscript. This highlights not only the level of detail in the minister's written texts but also the way that Reverend M. is able to capture his own "voice" in his written text.

ENTERING DR. N.'S CHURCH COMMUNITY

The Church of Faith and Freedom

Whereas my introduction to the manuscript minister and his church was as a parishioner, my introduction to the nonmanuscript minister—Dr. N.—and his church came out of my role as a researcher. I was in search of a nonmanuscript preacher for the original study. I had already been to 10 other churches in the Chicago area when a mutual acquaintance recommended Dr. N., a minister with whom she had worked in a political organization. Just a couple of weeks later, another acquaintance, a member of Dr. N.'s congregation, invited me to hear her preacher. Because I had received two recommendations to hear this preacher, I decided he must be impressive. Thus, my entry into another church was set in place.

My first visit to Dr. N.'s church was in the role of participant-observer. When I walked up to the church, I saw a beautiful, old brick building that reminded me of churches I was familiar with in my home state of North Carolina. When the service began, I was immediately drawn to the booming, vibrant voice of a tall, balding, brown-skinned, 50ish man standing in the pulpit speaking through an unnecessary microphone. I found out a few minutes later that this was Dr. N. I made no contact with him at this service nor during the next two services that I attended. However, during the first service, this minister verified, in the course of his sermon, that he was a nonmanuscript preacher. Before this verification, I had begun to think that he used a written text of some sort because he appeared to look down at a text at the beginning of his sermons as he stood behind a podium in the pulpit. However, this pattern was not repeated during the time that I did fieldwork at this church.

The indirect introduction to Dr. N. by one of the people who recommended that I go to his church proved to be helpful in the initial interview. I seemed to receive instant credibility when I mentioned her name. I arranged this initial appointment to formally meet Dr. N. some 3 weeks after I had been observing him. When I broached the subject of my studying him, Dr. N., like Reverend M., the manuscript minister, was very open to the idea and very cooperative. After the initial meeting, the formal part of the study at this church began. I taped five services at Dr. N.'s church, took fieldnotes, gathered biographical data on Dr. N., and developed relationships with a few members.

DR. N.

Dr. N. is the senior pastor of a north suburban, Chicago-area predominantly Black Baptist Church that just recently celebrated its 126th anniversary. Thus, this is a church with a long history of serving the African-American community. This preacher initially came to this area as a faculty member at a nearby well-known seminary and as a specialist in homiletics and African-American theology. He was on faculty at this seminary for 15 years. During the latter years of his faculty appointment, he also served as senior pastor of this church. He was probably one of the few professors who also pastored a church full time. In his church, he is addressed by his academic title "Dr. ____" instead of "Reverend _____" (thus I refer to him by his academic title in this book). Dr. N. brought to this church not only a traditional training from years of preaching experience mostly in smaller churches, he also brought a scholarly foundation. And although this scholarship includes the study of noted Western philosophers such as Heidegger and Kant, this minister has devoted much of his scholarship and his ministry to Black theological issues. His doctoral study in divinity at a highly esteemed southern university's seminary included homiletics and philosophy. Many academics might be surprised at Dr. N.'s scholarly training given his status as a nonmanuscript minister. For some, nonmanuscript equals illiterate, rather than learned.

Like Reverend M., Dr. N. has a basic philosophy that guides his ministry. That philosophy, printed on the cover of the church bulletin, advocates "faith and freedom for Black people." He says that he is "unapologetically, a race preacher," meaning that his mission as a preacher is to spiritually uplift and guide African Americans. His ideology means that many of the subjects he discusses in his sermons are directed solely to African-American communities. He has dealt with liberating African Americans spiritually, financially, and politically; he has discussed AIDS in the African-American community, African-

American pride, racism, and so forth. He has also been very involved in and identified with African-American political organizations such as Operation PUSH. Obviously, he sees the pulpit as the perfect place to discuss politics. Many times, issues of politics are used as illustrations in a sermon. Tied to political issues raised in the pulpit are social and economic issues. The politically centered discussions focus on their impact on Black people, which is in keeping with this minister's identification of himself as a race preacher. Thus, like Reverend M., Dr. N. embraces the prophetic and resistance functions of Lincoln and Mamiya's poles.

Committed to his people, this minister's philosophy and commitment are evident in almost all aspects of his sermons. Dr. N. credits his experience as a preacher in a southern church and his experiences while in divinity school in the south with playing a major role in his training to pastor to African-American people. Although he was born in a midwestern, fairly white-collar city, it was his experiences in the south that introduced him to the traditional Black worship patterns that so many Black preachers exemplify. He now describes the congregations of many urban churches as full of transplanted southerners who are used to the southern Black tradition of worship, a sentiment echoed by G. Davis (1985), who noted the important influence of the southern Black church tradition on Black churches in general.

PREPARING THE SERMON

According to the preparation stages Dr. N. described, his sermons are planned to a degree "in his head"; yet the actual words in the discourse are unplanned. He says he begins by asking himself "What is the one question that everyone in the congregation is asking?" He tries to locate that question. He says that on the Saturday before the sermon, he usually takes a long walk and thinks and prays about that question. He also reflects on all the things that have happened during the week because they influence what he thinks about while working on the next day's sermon. During this time of reflection and prayer, he asks God if this question he has located is a legitimate question; then, he asks himself where in the Bible the answer is provided. He then looks to the Bible for support.

After studying the Bible, Dr. N. is usually ready to go to bed. He says that the sermon incubates while he sleeps. Sometimes, he does not pick the actual sermon subject until he is on the way to the church on Sunday morning. On two occasions, this minister jotted down notes before the sermon. Each time he did this while in the pulpit just before he was to preach, and each time the notes were written on the back of a

page from the bulletin. One page of notes consisted of three short lines or points; the second set of notes consisted of a reminder to congratulate his assistant pastor on his wedding anniversary and four numbered phrases that were points for the sermon. He also wrote down what proved to be the title of the sermon. He had no notes for the other three sermons that I taped. There seems to be no set pattern for when this nonmanuscript minister uses notes and when he doesn't. Whenever he does use notes, they can hardly be called extensive.

I admit that because this minister writes little or nothing at all, it is almost impossible to measure the degree to which his sermons are planned or unplanned. Yet, the preparation process he described signals a long incubation stage. This minister says that he and other nonmanuscript preachers who are good are good because they listen to themselves; they study themselves and practice and perfect themselves. He says that not using a manuscript frees him from fixed ideas and allows him to be more responsive to the congregation. Obviously, he associates inflexibility or "fixedness" with writing.

His concept of audience has a great influence on his sermons. He says that one of the reasons that he does not like preparing a series of sermons in advance is that he does not want to ignore "breaking" issues that concern Black people, wanting his sermons to be relevant to his congregation. He says that much of his message comes from listening to the congregation during the sermon. As he puts it: "Not only are they in a dialogue with me during the sermon, they are also in a dialogue with God." This minister, who says that he understands the different "Amens" from the congregation, sees these simultaneous dialogues as part of the sermon. In fact, he seems to depend on the feedback of the congregation during the sermon for some of the content of the sermon.

Out of curiosity, I asked Dr. N. what he taught his students to do when he was a professor, use a manuscript or not? He says that the students always had to give one "impromptu" or nonmanuscript sermon, but he generally required that they write their sermons beforehand. He felt that for new ministers, writing the sermons taught them a certain kind of discipline. However, he advised that ministers should do whatever best suited their styles. What best suits this minister's style is not to write his sermons. Yet, the interviews with him indicate that the sermons are not totally spontaneous. Years of experience, reading, and training contribute to his planning and well-preparedness.

Dr. N.'s preaching style is very similar to that of Reverend M.'s in that he remains stationary behind the podium throughout most of the sermon. When Dr. N. moves away from the podium to the center of the pulpit, it usually signals the start of the climax of the sermon. His

booming voice rings throughout the church during the service. His voice might be considered one of authority because it commands attention, and his training in voice (singing) may add to its effectiveness. Again, like Reverend M., the manuscript preacher, Dr. N. also has a background in music. That is not a rarity in the Black church. Many preachers combine great oratorical skills with musical talent. He uses varying intonation patterns throughout his sermons. Again, as with Reverend M., the audience's responses sometimes correlate with the intonation patterns of this preacher's speech. The louder he gets, the louder they get. When his voice indicates excitement, the congregation gets excited.

Dr. N. also relies on physical gestures to communicate. These gestures carry as much meaning as words do, sometimes more. He believes that there is a range in the congregation from the unlearned to the highly educated: "You have to have two languages going, one that talks to emotion, feeling, intuition and the other of the highly intellectual nature." Dr. N. explains that in the Black church he reaches some people with words; he explains, for instance, that "'celestial skies' equals heaven for some." However, he points out that those words mean nothing to people ruled by emotions. But a hand gesture pointing upward and turning his face and eyes upward communicates the notion of heaven to those people who attach less meaning to words. This raises the issue of how much value some congregants attach to words in this setting. It also raises the issue of how this minister and others identify and communicate with the multiple levels of audience that make up their congregations. This minister, as evidenced by his identification of the different kinds of language use people respond to, seems to have a special awareness of this multiple audience issue. More importantly, he seems to meet the needs of his congregation.

DR. N.'S CHURCH

This church is the oldest of the three churches in this study. Its location in a middle-class suburb and its long history suggest that this church serves a rather middle-class Black population. Indeed, many of its members do fit that label. Like the congregation of the manuscript minister's church, this church has a large number of Black professionals. There are teachers, judges, lawyers, doctors, businesspersons, and corporate executives. Additionally, because this church is located very near a major university, there are a large number of Black college students, both on the undergraduate and graduate levels, who attend. It is necessary to point out that this church, unlike the other two churches in the study, is not located in a Black neighborhood. People drive from various distances to get to Sunday morning service. Despite these facts,

the minister indicated that he did not really see his church as middle class although he recognized that there are a large number of professionals and what he calls intellectuals in his congregation. His perception does assist him in not preaching over the heads of those who are limited in their vocabulary and educational levels.

This church's organizations are concerned not only with the operation of the church but also with education and community fellowship. It has an administrative staff consisting of the senior pastor and an executive assistant pastor. There are assistant pastors in charge of special ministries, educational ministries, and youth ministries. There are the traditional deacon, trustee, and usher boards. There is also a library committee and a group who run a precollege seminar for church members who are going off to college. The focus on education reflects one of the priorities of the minister, who champions the value of higher education in his sermons. This church has numerous organizations that promote fellowship among the congregation such as the singles' ministry, the widows' and widowers' club, the bowling league, and the softball team. There is also a church-run marriage counseling program. These organizations and programs show how many diverse groups the church tries to serve. It also emphasizes the church as the center of not only religious activities and political activities but social activities as well. During the summer (when I collected data at this church), many of the activities that occurred were social ones. On one Sunday, members of the softball team left service early to play in a tournament. This role of the church as the center of social activities is important in creating a complete picture of this minister and his congregation. They are a group of people who worship together and fellowship together. This is part of the personality of this church.

LITERACY EVENTS SURROUNDING THE SERMON

The literacy events surrounding the sermon in Dr. N.'s church are quite similar to those in Reverend M.'s church. On entering the sanctuary, worshippers received from ushers a Sunday bulletin that included the order of service, church announcements, names of sick and shut-in (home-bound) members, names and positions of the ministerial staff, church office staff, and officers of the church, and on occasion, forms to fill out (e.g., Vacation Bible school or church picnic registration forms). Rarely did the bulletin, which averaged about seven 5 x 7 inch pages, contain nonchurch-related announcements.

Although there was no assigned memory verse, there was an opening hymn, responsive reading, and Scripture listed in the order of service. Each of these elements resembled almost exactly their

counterparts in Reverend M's church. However, whereas Reverend M.'s church bulletin included separate handouts of the complete responsive reading and opening hymn, Dr. N.'s congregation looked to the Order of Worship to find where these texts could be located in the hymnal or Bible. Following is a copy of the Order of Worship for an 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. service. Note the many moments in the service (which I indicate through italicizing) where the congregation is involved in reading, reciting, singing, or listening to some type of written texts.

ORDER OF WORSHIP
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 1987

8:00 A.M.

Call to Worship.....Dr._____
**Processional*....."God is Already Here"
*Invocation.....Minister
Responsive Reading.....Selection 574
*Gloria Patri.....
**Hymn of Celebration*.....Selection 141
Announcements & Welcome to Visitors.....
Tithes & Offerings.....
**Doxology & Offertory Prayer*.....
Musical Selection.....Choir
SERMON.....Dr._____
*Invitation to Discipleship.....
**Benediction*....."Praise God"

9:30 A.M.

Sunday School.....Fellowship Hall

10:45 A.M.

Baptismal & Devotional Services.....

11:00 A.M.

Call to Worship.....Dr._____
**Processional*..... ."God is Already Here"
*Invocation.....Minister
Responsive Reading.....Selection 574
**Gloria Patri*.....
**Hymn of Celebration*.....Selection 141
Announcements & Welcome to Visitors.....
Tithes & Offerings.....
**Doxology & Offertory Prayer*.....
Musical Selection.....Choir
SERMON.....Dr._____
*Invitation to Discipleship.....
**Benediction*....."Praise God"

(*) Congregation Please Stand

DR. N.'S TEXTS

Although the average size of Dr. N.'s sermons equaled the average size of the manuscript minister's sermons, approximately 3,800 words, that comparison is deceiving. There are large differences in the lengths of the individual sermons:

> Sermon #1: "The Power and Blessing of the Fathers Who Can Let Go and Let God"—5,500 words
> Sermon #2: "You Are What You Eat, But It's Good to Know What You're Eating"—2,500 words
> Sermon #3: "Spiritual Presence and the Power of Prayer"—3,115 words
> Sermon #4: "The Power and Meaning of the Lord's Supper"—3,300 words
> Sermon #5: "The Quest of Faith for A New Sense of Self"—4,400 words

Unlike the manuscript minister's texts, there is no consistency in the length of the sermons. The 3,000-word difference between the longest and the shortest sermons translates to a nine-page difference in the size of the transcripts. However, the actual word count only confirms what was obvious during my observations, that the sermons varied drastically in length.

Like the manuscript minister, each of the nonmanuscript minister's sermons opens with a Scripture reading and closes with a hymn of invitation. On special Sundays such as Father's Day and Communion Sundays, the titles of the sermons generally reflect the occasion. The first sermon I taped and analyzed is a Father's Day sermon. The second and fourth sermons are Communion sermons. Even though I list the "titles" of the sermons, Dr. N never lists titles of his sermons in the Sunday bulletins as Reverend M does, perhaps because their sermon preparation differs so drastically.

Each of the five sermons studied includes an introduction that Dr. N. uses not only to introduce the congregation to his subject, but also to explain why he chose it. The body of the sermon, like that in Reverend M.'s sermons, is an explanation of the subject using sacred and secular examples. The climax or conclusion in each of the sermons is an appeal to the members of the congregation to join the church, accept Christ, change their lives, or act in whatever manner the sermon has laid out. Also, in two sermons, this appeal was accompanied by some kind of personal examples of how the minister's life has been changed by God. The overall organization is quite similar to that of Reverend M.'s sermons.

Dr. N.'s sermons are characterized by one dominant theme: African Americans must think more positively, and through God, that positive thinking can occur. The following is an excerpt from a transcript of one of Dr. N.'s sermons:

We only hear a small part of God's power in our lives. When I look at the eyes of our people,
And sometimes I go around the country.
And you know how it is,
You can look at their eyes and see the mark of slavery on us, And that mark says doubts.
Our children start out by saying, "No, I can't." They go to school, And where do they learn it from? They learn it from their parents.

"I can't."

"I cannot spell, I cannot write."
No More!

Even in such a small excerpt, the theme is evident.

Because there is no written text, I cannot comment here about the physical features of the text as I have done in the previous discussion of Reverend M.'s sermons or as I do later in the discussion of Reverend P.'s texts. However, what is striking about Dr. N.'s texts is the shifts in point of view and voice. Even in the short excerpt just presented, his shifts from the group perspective to his individual perspective are clear. When hearing this sermon and listening to it again when I was transcribing, I could hear clearly Dr. N. altering his voice from his confident, worldly voice to the less confident voice of the children with low self-esteem. This shifting perspective is explored later in the book in chapter 3.

ENTERING REVEREND P.'S CHURCH COMMUNITY

I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord.

When discussing my project with a friend from graduate school, this friend invited me to come to his church for a visit. Thus, my entry into another church began. This church, a Pentecostal Holiness Church located on the far southside of Chicago in the heart of a lower working-class African-American community, was the smallest of the three churches in the study. Like the previous church in the study, when I saw it I noted how beautiful this big, red brick church was. As I walked up

the steps into the narthex, the outer foyer of the sanctuary, I found myself a little nervous because I was getting ready to enter a Pentecostal Holiness Church. I was bringing all of my "baggage," my previous experiences with holiness churches in the south, with me. In North Carolina, Pentecostal Holiness churches are the most fundamentalist, politically conservative, "holy rollers" denomination that I know of. Of course, I had only been to a few Pentecostal Holiness churches so my views were not necessarily supported by a great deal of evidence. Nevertheless, there I was wondering what I would find on the other side of the door. To my surprise, I found not holy rollers but a small congregation that sang anthems and spirituals. That made me more nervous because I had grown up in a church where gospel music was the standard. I also had walked into a beautiful, large, old church that seemed nearly empty. The quiet was so overwhelming that I felt a little out of place. I settled into a seat and looked around until I spotted my friend and his wife sitting several rows ahead of me. Once the service began, my anxiety died down, and I began to see that even though this church was different from what I had expected, it was a mainline African-American church.

REVEREND P.

I actually went to Reverend P.'s church in search of a nonmanuscript minister. My friend described his minister as one who did not write his sermons. What I found, when I talked with the minister, was that he wrote too much to be considered a nonmanuscript minister (approximately one fourth of his sermon was written), and he wrote too little to be considered a manuscript minister. Yet, this minister placed himself more on the nonmanuscript end than the manuscript end, suggesting that a continuum exists rather than a dichotomy—manuscript versus nonmanuscript. I refer to him as a partial-manuscript minister because of the amount of text Reverend P. wrote and to distinguish him from the nonmanuscript minister. I decided to add this minister and church to the study because they added another layer of diversity to the study that I had not previously thought about. And I suspected that this minister, with his partial manuscript, might be representative of the way a large number of African-American preachers prepare their sermons.

Reverend P., in his early 40s, is the youngest of the three ministers in this study. Although he has the least amount of education of the three ministers, he was very well-educated—completing his graduate work at the time of this study. In addition, he has studied in several special seminary programs that, although they do not offer

graduate degrees, prepare ministers to preach and pastor a church. He even states in one of his sermons that he goes to seminars and takes courses on preaching and the ministry to become a better communicator. What this congregation has in Reverend P. is a role model who is constantly trying to improve himself as a preacher and pastor mostly through education. Like the other two ministers in this study, Reverend P. served in the military. After his honorable discharge from the U.S. Army, Reverend P. became a full-time minister. He pastored his first church in 1974 in Memphis, his hometown.

The members of Reverend P.'s church were very proud of their minister. Although he was far more modest than the other two preachers, his congregation was not modest about him. Member after member commented to me about what a good preacher this minister was. A few of them knew that I was doing research but they did not know the research topic. Others only knew me as a friend of their fellow member. The first time I finally heard the minister preach, one of the members came up to me after the service to say "Can't he preach?" This was a rhetorical question. The affirmative answer was implied in the question. One member who knew that I was doing research was concerned that I was going to evaluate his minister negatively. Although he always laughed when he made comments about my coming in and "writing bad things," his protective streak was evident each time he raised this question. I found this protective streak to be evidence of the high esteem in which Reverend P. is held by his congregation and also to be evidence of the suspicion in which many scholars are held who study aspects of African-American communities.

This minister's preaching style seems to be an extension of his personality. During my observations of and conversations with him, I found Reverend P. to be rather quiet and reserved. He is rather low key in and out of the pulpit. Although low key, his straightforward style is immediately evident. In the pulpit, he, like the other two ministers, remains stationary while preaching, evokes the call-and-response patterns of worship in his sermons, uses voice intonation to add emphasis to statements, and uses hand gestures, as well, to communicate. And even though he has a text, he makes infrequent eye contact with the text and maintains eye contact with the congregation. This minister's effectiveness is measured by his congregation's seeming admiration of him both as preacher and a man. I had the opportunity to socialize with members of this church on one occasion. Any reference made to this minister during that occasion was positive.

Considering how proud this congregation seemed to be of Reverend P. and considering that he had been assigned to the largest church in the denomination (the Chicago church), Reverend P. had

every reason to be brimming with self-confidence. However, I found Reverend P. to be extremely modest, almost self-effacing, about his achievements and abilities. That modesty went along with the reserved personality that I commented on earlier. When describing his sermon style, Reverend P. said his sermons were arranged a certain way because he was not good at other kinds of arrangements, particularly topical arrangements. Yet, he also questions the legitimacy of preaching topical sermons. He described himself as being more of an exegetical preacher that he viewed as the most legitimate type of preaching. Many works on preaching support him (H. Davis, 1958; Thompson, 1981). Exegesis involves close reading of the Scripture as a basis for the sermon; it deemphasizes choosing a sermon from outside the Bible—a practice common for both Reverend M. and Dr. N.

Reverend P. is not as widely travelled as the other two ministers in the study, nor is he as political in the pulpit. He never included any political statements in his sermons during the time that I was in his church. The extent of his political statements was urging people to vote in the upcoming election, a statement that he made during the announcements, not during the sermon. His style is not to mix politics and religion in the pulpit even though he does feel that one of the characteristics of the Black preacher is that he or she feels perfectly free to discuss social and political issues in the pulpit. Although Reverend P. discusses few social and political issues in the pulpit, on one occasion, he did use the pulpit to tell women not to wear pants to any function held at the church because some members had complained about women wearing pants to some of the church programs. This policy suggests the conservative nature of this church. Reverend P. basically sees the pulpit as the place to expound on the word of God. This is reflected in his sermons and his interviews. This minister believes that sermons should be explanations of the Bible. His goal is to explain the Bible to his congregation as best as he can. Thus, in Lincoln and Mamiya's dialectic poles, he would definitely lean toward the priestly, other-wordly, and privatistic functions. That is, this minister and his church are more focused on the spiritual needs of the members and less focused on the broader social and political needs of the members or the larger African-American communities.

PREPARING THE SERMON

It is clear that Reverend P.'s philosophy on preaching is reflected in his preparation. He chooses a book in the Bible from which he will preach; from this book he chooses his subject. He says that he "tries to stick with the text [the Bible] and avoid topical preaching." He believes that

ministers "should not impose a topic on the scripture" but should go from the Scripture to application to the needs of the people. That is, ministers should choose their subjects from the Scriptures and not from something they hear or see or read in a newspaper. Once he chooses the book and passage of Scripture from which he will preach, he then goes through his library and looks for reading material in the form of scholarly commentaries on the books of the Bible. He selects commentaries on the book from which he will be preaching and lays them aside. Then, over the next few days, he prays and meditates over the passage. He says he generally tries to read the passage 15 to 20 times. As he meditates, he asks, "What is this passage saying to me?" It is significant that he uses himself as an audience first before he tries to relate the passage to his congregation. He believes that he must have a strong understanding of the text before he can try to make others understand it.

Reverend P. then compares different translations of the Bible to see that he has a working understanding of the passage. By comparing different translations, he can look for differences that may affect the meaning, not unlike reading different editions of the same literary text. Once this minister has gone through these stages, it is generally Thursday or Friday. On Thursday or Friday of a typical week, he starts to examine the commentaries he set aside earlier in the week. As he studies the commentaries, he prepares a working draft of his sermon. The working draft includes notes from the resource material (the commentaries). On Saturday or early Sunday morning, he prepares the preaching draft, which does not make any reference to the resource material. Contrast this practice of not making reference to the resource material to Reverend M.'s practice of consistently making such references in his text. I would never have known about the working draft and the uses of commentaries had I not asked Reverend P. how many drafts he wrote. This preacher, like so many other Black preachers I have heard over the years, finds that in the Black church, the people do not want to hear "a lot of quoting from a preacher." He says "Black people look for an element of personal testimony [from the minister]." He does not include quotes from the commentaries in his preaching draft because he feels that his congregation would not really appreciate that practice.

When asked how the congregation affects how he prepares his sermons, this minister answered that he has three goals with each sermon. He wants the congregation "to feel something, remember something, and do something." These three goals seem to cover several rhetorical aims: expressive, informative, and persuasive. It seems that this text, the sermon, has multiple purposes, and it must reach multiple audiences. This minister describes himself as "a shepherd feeding his

sheep." His sheep, the congregation, are made up of different groups. He constantly asks himself if he has addressed the needs of the elderly who are lonely, or the young professionals who have problems on the job, or the other groups in the church. He says the greatest challenge of a minister is to reach the multiple groups in the congregation. He also says that sometimes he wants to say to the congregation that "I'm preaching this to myself, and I'm just letting you listen." This statement is very similar to the statement that the manuscript minister made about asking himself what he needs to hear. Both of these men see themselves as having as much need of hearing a sermon as the congregation. It makes them part of their congregations.

Reverend P. also talked about the role that his seminary training plays in his sermon preparation. He sees the major influence of his seminary training in how he views the Scripture. He was taught "to be faithful to the text," which here refers to the scripture. As stated earlier, he spends a great deal of time trying to understand the text and trying to make sure other people understand the text. His seminary training taught him to do this through exposition, and he sees his sermons as an exposition of the text—the Scriptures. As discussed later, my analysis shows that this minister's sermons resemble a literary line-by-line explication of a text. This minister, in fact, describes himself as a "plow horse" plowing through the text or passage, a way of preparing a sermon that makes the organization very simple. The sermons are simply organized around the passages. This minister also views his written text as a "blueprint" for his sermon, the oral text. He says that most seminaries encourage ministers "to be involved in some kind of writing process," to write some part of their sermons, and they encourage new ministers to write large portions of their sermons. This minister writes a small portion of his sermon because he believes that this practice frees him to be spontaneous in the pulpit. If an idea comes to him that isn't in his written text while he is in the pulpit, he will use it. He is not tied to the text, a sentiment that is echoed by Dr. N.

REVEREND P.'S CHURCH

The congregation, like their minister, can be described as somewhat low key. Holiness churches generally have the reputation, in the Black church community, as being even more active and expressive than most Black churches. They also have the reputation of "staying in church all day." I even asked my acquaintance at this church how long the service was when he first suggested that I visit his church. He said "it's never more than 2 hours, unlike most Holiness churches." This congregation and its service did not fit the image I had of how their service was

supposed to be, an image that was shaped by my experiences with Holiness churches in the rural south. The low-key nature of the congregation was evident in many ways, most notably in how the congregation proceeded through the service. As in the other churches, the congregation was more active in some parts of the service than in others. Yet, their participation was not as intense or perhaps as verbal as in the other two churches. For example, when the senior choir sang, the congregation generally listened fairly quietly rather than standing or clapping to indicate that they were moved by the song. This could be because the choir sang anthems and spirituals more so than gospel music, and anthems and spirituals, which sometimes move people to tears, do not seem to invite the same kind of vocal responses from the congregation as gospel songs do. There is a gospel choir at this church, but they sing less frequently than the senior choir.

The time that Reverend P.'s congregation was most vocal was during and after the sermon. During the sermon, the congregation participated in the call-and-response patterns that are traditional in the Black church, but the response seemed limited to a few verbal statements. I noted that the congregation rarely showed excitement by standing or clapping during the sermon, even during the climax. Yet, many members, especially men, answered the preacher during the sermon mainly with "amen" and "umm-hmm" or an affirmative nod of the head, and the congregation consistently answered the minister as a group with "yes," "that's right," and "Lord." Additionally, individual voices can be heard over the group responding "preach" along with other comments that were unclear. As in the other churches, the more excited the minister becomes (when he raises his voice), the more vocal the congregation becomes. The more low key this minister is during the sermon, the quieter the congregation. Unlike the other two ministers, however, this minister seems to "wind down" during his climax, and his congregation winds down with him. The congregation's response seems to reflect the minister's preaching style—straightforward and reserved, but not so low-keyed that the service does not resemble a traditionally expressive Black church service. However, I saw few people outwardly carried away by emotion in this church as I did in the other two churches. The congregation was far more verbally communicative after the service.

Because this church was smaller (about 550 members on the official role but only about 100 attending with some regularity) than the other two churches, more members of the congregation knew each other; consequently, they knew when there were visitors even when the visitors did not stand to identify themselves. I was recognized right away as new, and members of the congregation came up to me after the services each Sunday to greet and welcome me, treatment that other

visitors and new members also received. Because few members knew about my research, they saw me as a potential member. I was constantly asked if or when I would join their church. I was surprised that more of the congregation's outgoing personality did not appear during the service.

Although each of these churches and each minister had unique personalities, each church and minister also shared the legacy and tradition of African-American worship. Each church and minister was committed to the African-American communities that they served.

LITERACY EVENTS SURROUNDING THE SERMON

The literacy events that surround Reverend P.'s sermons are quite similar to those in the other two churches. The bulletin is the first piece of text that worshippers receive on entering the church. Like most bulletins, it contains the Order of Worship, church announcements, a list of the ministerial staff, church officers and staff, and names of the sick and shut-in members. It also contains the biblical citation for the memory verse. Unlike in Reverend M.'s church where the memory verse is printed in full in the bulletin, in Reverend P.'s church, the book, chapter, and verse citation was provided, but the congregation had to look up and read the verse on their own time. Additionally, the memory verse changed weekly rather than monthly. Finally, the bulletin included the citation for the day's Scriptures and a space at the end of the bulletin called "sermon notes," a blank space where people could take notes on the sermon.

The worship service opened with a hymn from the hymnal, then a call to worship that was printed in the bulletin. This call to worship, from the Scriptures, resembles the Responsive reading in the other churches, although it is much shorter, usually no more than two short verses and is the second act in the order of worship. There is no Responsive reading in this church's service. There were two Scriptures cited in the bulletin. The first one was usually read by a layperson early in the service, and the second one by Reverend P. at the beginning of the sermon. Again, the literacy events in this church followed the patterns in the other two churches and probably most churches. Reading or listening to texts were common occurrences.

REVEREND P.'S TEXTS

Although the analysis of Reverend P.'s sermons is based on the transcripts of the oral performance, this minister does have written texts.

The size of both oral and written texts are reported here, along with the sermon titles:

> Sermon 1 "King Jesus or King Self"—5,117 (transcript of oral), 1,217 (written)
> Sermon 2 "Marks of a Spirit-Filled Christian"—5,345 (oral), 1,022 (written)
> Sermon 3 "Bottom Line"—4,520 (oral), 1,200 (written)
> Sermon 4 "Prison to Praise"—5,200 (oral), 1,055 (written)
> Sermon 5 "How's Your Conversation"—4,630 (oral), 1,231 (written)

The oral texts average approximately 5,000 words per sermon, whereas the written texts average 1,100 words per sermon, a little more than one fifth the size of the oral texts. There appears to be no correlation between the size of the written texts and the size of the oral texts. That is, a large oral text does not necessarily equal a large written text. For example, the smallest written text leads to the largest oral text. Even though there is no correlation between the size of oral and written texts, the size of the partial-manuscript minister's sermons are quite consistent. There is only a 131-word difference between the largest written text and the smallest written text, and an 825-word difference between the largest and smallest oral texts. When the three ministers' texts are compared in terms of size, it would seem that the two ministers who write portions of or all of their sermons may have more control over the lengths of their sermons than the minister who does not write. That is, the two ministers who write some part or all of their sermons may use the written text to dictate how long their preached sermon will be.

The following two passages are the written and orally delivered versions of the same passage in Reverend P's first sermon:

Written text:

after the dust settles shall it be business as usual
I continue on my way as ordinary, nominal, nice free
loading [illegible]
Generally people don't like free loaders the person tries to get by
The individual who refuses to carry their weight we despise have
little patience
How do you think God feels toward free loading Christians
Does Jesus demand anything, Does it cost anything to be his follower
I want to speak on the demands of
discipleship

Oral (transcript) text:

Or is it after the dust settles
it'll be business as usual
I'll continue on my way as the nominal ordinary freeloading Christian
You know generally people don't like freeloaders
right
you know there's something about freeloaders
that you just sorta of
you think they just kinda rub you the wrong way
people who never want to carry their share of the load
if you go out to dinner
and they always are the ones who don't have any money
or you need to chip in and get something
and they're always are the ones who say
see me next week
Uh you have a dinner
and and we sit down and talk about
you bring the ham
and you bring the beans
and they'll say
I'll bring the napkins
but it's just generally something about those kind of people
that generally you find yourself kind of drawing away from them
because
you know
they don't want to carry their weight
they want to freeload
they just want to get by
and we live in that kind of society
where so many people want to freeload
they just want to get over
you know
if I can stay home with Mom and Dad
and never give anything never contribute anything
it might be working
but if I can get by
ay that's good
but oh my friend
where that stealing is most despicable is in the church of Our Lord Jesus Christ
people come to church
and they just want to freeload
they don't want to carry their end of the log at all

but they want you to carry on the whole program
you do it all
and let them come
and sit and enjoy
but does Jesus demand anything of us as his disciples
Does it cost anything to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ
because that's what I want to speak on this morning

The staggered lines in the written text are the minister's spacing. He says the staggering helps him see his text better. Reverend P.'s written text serves as a "blueprint" for his oral text. The oral passage most notably contains elaboration of examples, and that seems to account for the major difference between the two passages and the oral and written sermons in general.

Finally, the basic structure of Reverend P.'s sermons are the same from sermon to sermon and match that of the other two ministers' sermons: Scripture reading, introduction of subject, establishing context, body of sermon, and climax, hymn of invitation. The variation occurs in individual preaching styles.

SUMMARY

The information in this chapter is the backdrop for the picture of the text I paint in the following chapters. As is suggested in this chapter, each minister and church has its own identity; yet, there are many similarities. The services are similar in order. Each church provides the congregation with the opportunity to engage in many literacy activities. Each minister is learned in the Western theological tradition; yet, each minister is as learned in African-American worship traditions. Each minister has a strong opinion about the relationship between his sermons and those who his sermons serve. Yet, there are also obvious differences: the sizes of the church, the personalities of the ministers and congregations, the way each minister prepares his sermons, and so forth. Whatever these similarities and differences, however, these church communities are sites in which literate texts take prominence and where literacy thrives. They are also sites where alternative pictures of literate texts are offered. One such alternative picture is examined more fully in the following chapters.

3
Creating a Community Within the Sermons

> That's why I like those old black geniuses of our race. They not only know how to say something; they also had something to say.
> —Reverend M.

One of the early lessons that most students of rhetoric learn is that form and content are not separate entities, that the most skilled rhetors are those who know both what to say and how to say it. This lesson was never more clearly realized than in the sermons of the three ministers in this study. For me, seeing this principle put into practice in the context of African-American churches and sermons was like being taught a new lesson, for studying these rhetors in this community setting gave me the opportunity to see the lesson about form and content taken to a new height. In African-American sermons, there is no boundary between form and content; they are coterminous. Even to attempt the separation of form and content in this setting would destroy the sermon as it exists in African-American churches. As a result of this lesson, I have seen through new lenses that, in African-American churches, how one says something and what one says are the dual but inseparable foundations for creating community within a group. That is, the good preacher—the genius—knows the Word and can preach it; he or she can capture the congregation with the "how" and "what" of the sermon. Knowing the Word is more than knowing the Bible and the history of Christianity, however; knowing the Word also means knowing African-American culture and history—knowing the people—and using that knowledge to bring the Word to the people. These new lenses have allowed me to see that "having something to say and knowing how to say it" is not simply about form and content. It is about community expectations and values; it is about the relationship between minister and congregation, speaker

or writer and audience; it is about boundaries, fixed and blurred; it is about using a text to establish and maintain a community. In African-American churches, it is about literacy.

Knowing what to say and how to say it are the major tools these ministers use in constructing a text that relies on community identification and participation to be completed. The ministers in this study suggest that through the sermon they must build a common community for people who belong to multiple communities, and they must allow space for the congregation, the audience, to talk back in the sermon. Thus, the sermon is no mere monologue. Instead, it is a dialogue between minister and congregation in which the minister directs the dialogue but the congregation participates in the dialogue by providing feedback. Most often referred to as call-and-response, this dialogue is characterized by feedback from the congregation that urges the minister on ("Preach" "Go on now"), feedback that lets the minister know that the congregation agrees with him or her ("I know that's right" "Amen"), or feedback that lets the minister know that the members of the congregation feel the spirit ("Yes, Lord!" "Jesus!"). Many times, particularly with Reverend M. and Dr. N., the dialogue becomes more like a polylogue or conversation. For example, these two ministers begin reciting a Bible verse and the congregation completes the verse, a practice that I discuss in more detail later in this chapter. For now, however, it is important to note that the dialogic interaction between minister and congregation within the sermon and the communal aspects of the sermon make it a unique kind of literate text in society.

This chapter is particularly concerned with the rhetorical strategies the ministers use and the features within the sermon that provide a foundation for constructing a community identity and consequently a community text. More importantly, the analyses in this chapter (and in chap. 4) reinforce my position that literacy in this community is a social process that relies on multiple participants, intertextuality, and shared cultural knowledge.

CONSTRUCTING A COMMUNITY IDENTITY: IDENTIFYING WITH THE PEOPLE

In establishing and maintaining a community through the sermon, these ministers must rely on several rhetorical devices or strategies, some of which they share and some of which are unique to each minister. The ministers in this study understood that much of their success as pulpit preachers depended on the how and what of their sermons—the form and content. They also understood that the foundation for constructing a community identity often began with them, the leaders in the dialogue.

Therefore, each minister sought to establish himself as part of the group while at the same time maintaining the proper amount of distance from the congregation that a minister in most African-American churches must maintain. That is, to be effective preachers, these ministers must simultaneously create bonds between them and their congregations. In other words, they must build trust between their congregations and themselves; they must construct their own identities as part of the congregation. At the same time, these ministers must show that they are leaders, that they are worthy of standing in the pulpit before the congregation. This move to the pulpit from the pew requires some distance from the congregation. However, the very fact that the minister emerges to the pulpit from the pew—in other words he or she emerges from the community—goes a long way in establishing that community identity for which these ministers strive. These dual and sometimes conflicting roles—group member and leader—when fulfilled successfully, lead these ministers to be skilled rhetors—knowing what to say and how to say it in order to establish community ties while making a separate place for themselves.

Creating this community bond with their congregations through the text is a complex process that requires that the ministers and congregation constantly negotiate new community identities. They become one community moving toward the same goals. Additional complexity is present because the common community to which minister and congregation belong may and usually does change throughout the sermon and from week to week and year to year. For example, the minister cannot always rely on appealing to the congregation's membership in African-American communities to make a point. I refer to African-American "communities" rather than "community" because it is important to understand the diverse experiences that African Americans have despite a shared cultural background. At times, the minister must appeal to the congregation's membership in the Christian community, or the specific church community, or the Chicago community. Therefore, establishing this community identity is a complex task. A key to completing this task successfully is that the ministers know to whom they are preaching; they know their audiences; they share a history, cultural backgrounds (ethnic, popular, and so on), religious beliefs, and community values, among other things. It is because of this knowledge of audience that these ministers are able to establish community ties and construct a community identity.

"WE, US, OUR": BECOMING ONE COMMUNITY

As I argued in an earlier article (Moss, 1994), "Creating a Community: Literacy Events in African American Churches," for the ministers,

> placing themselves in the congregation and seeing themselves as part of the group helps them to keep their sermons relevant to the congregation, helps build trust between the minister and the congregation, and, therefore, makes it easier for the congregation to hear and accept the message that the minister is preaching. (Moss, 1994, p. 166)

Speaking in terms of group membership is one of the most effective and obvious strategies that each minister uses to construct community identity. A consistent strategy that the three ministers use to indicate group membership is the use of first-person plural pronouns—*we, us, our*. Generally, in English, use of one or more of these pronouns is an indication that the rhetor is placing him or herself in the group about whom he or she is speaking or writing—"them and me"—or with whom he or she is speaking or writing—"you and me." The functions of first-person plural pronouns are lessons usually learned in grade-school language arts classes. What is not learned, however, is how complex and powerful these pronouns can be as they function to signal group membership.

The following section illustrates how powerful these pronouns are as they signal not only group membership and its multiple layers but also the multiple functions of first-person plural pronouns. Although this strategy is not unique to African-American ministers, they call on it often. Consider the following examples from Reverend P., the partial-manuscript minister:

Example 1:

Teams that are divided
The morale suffers, and **we** don't fare so well on the field.
You know there's simply no telling what **we** can do if **we** pull together

Example 2:

You see
One of the reasons that **we** are frequently overcome when **we**'re in a prison-kind of situation in life
Is that **we** fail to pray
And when **we** fail to pray
We ought to plan to fail

Example 3:

> but as long as **we** allow the enemy to come in and sew [sic] seeds of division and bitterness among **us**,
> **We**'ve failed to be as accepting as we can be in this community for Christ

These three examples show Reverend P. placing himself with his congregation by using "we." Reverend P. avoids accusatory "you're the sinner, not me" language in these statements by indicating that he, too, is vulnerable to the situations he has described. He is part of the "team" that must pull together to achieve; he can sometimes be overwhelmed and fail to pray, which results in failure; and maybe, at times, he has failed to be as accepting as he can be, just like the rest of the people in the congregation. By placing himself in the group with his congregation, Reverend P. has taken steps toward constructing a community identity and toward building a community.

Example 3 is important because it clearly indicates the community that Reverend P. is striving to build and the identity he wants to construct for himself and his congregation—the community for Christ and a Christian identity. Whenever Reverend P. speaks as part of a community, using first-person plural pronouns to indicate his membership, he almost exclusively places himself within three communities—his specific church community, the broad community of humans, and, most importantly, the Christian community. He tries to tap into examples of human nature (thus the team analogy in Example 1), and he tries to appeal directly to the people in his congregation, tapping into their general and specific needs. Example 2 appears directed more toward the congregation than a broader group. However, the dominant community, the one that Reverend P. sees himself and his congregation making a joint journey toward, is the Community for Christ. Even though this journey is led by Reverend P., it is a joint journey, a discovery process for the group. Language in his sermons such as "as we are going to discover," "we will encounter in the Church today," "as we look at this letter" reinforces this communal process of discovery and the journey in which Reverend P. and his congregation participate. Even though Reverend P. uses this collective pronoun strategy effectively as indicated in the example just given, he uses it in his sermons the least of the three ministers.

This strategy along with the others I identify later is really one that helps the ministers create an "I am one of you" persona in their sermons. Arguably, every minister, consciously or subconsciously, creates a persona that he or she thinks will contribute to his or her success as a preacher; however, Reverend P. sees his success as less

dependent on the persona he creates in the sermons than the message of the sermons themselves. Of course, he does acknowledge that in African-American churches, the message and the person(a) are as inextricably bound as are form and content. So, despite Reverend P.'s limited use of the collective pronoun strategy, he wholeheartedly believes that he had to become one with his congregation.

Dr. N. (nonmanuscript) employs the collective pronoun strategy far more than Reverend P. as a way to help him construct a community identity. Consider the following example:

Especially in a society like **ours** where we have churches on every corner.
People at this hour
Jam packed in sanctuaries,
But somehow or another,
It's quite evident that
We are here but **we**'re not often sure why **we**'re here.
We're not clear about what it is that makes this moment a unique moment.
We're not certain, if you will, even what is supposed to happen to **us** at this moment.
We have clues from the past that seemingly there is a presence here that makes things different,
But unless **we** can understand clearly with **our** minds,
precisely what it is that is going on in this place at this time
And in the thousands and perhaps millions of other churches at this hour around the country and around the world,
We will never make this
Something that can be effective for **us**.

Dr. N., because of his status as a minister, supposedly knows what this "something," this "unique moment" is that he is discussing in this particular sermon. Yet, he places himself alongside his congregation who does not know, the people who are not clear. Why? Isn't he supposed to lead by example and to have knowledge that the congregation may not have? As I mentioned earlier, the ministers in this study spoke often of the tension between being in the group and leading the group, of creating that bond with their congregations while maintaining the proper amount of distance. That tension is not an either-or proposition. The ministers must do both. Dr. N., while trying to lead his congregation to some understanding of "why we're here," must also be part of the community as they strive for this understanding. Therefore, Dr. N. is showing that he, too, must try to understand why he is here and what is unique about this moment. In doing so, he is actively constructing this community bond with his congregation.

Also of interest in this example is the community to which Dr. N., himself, is bonding. His primary audience is his very own congregation, but his secondary audience is clearly churchgoers around the globe. Everyone in a church at that particular time is struggling with this issue, even the ministers. However, the previous example indicates a limited number of communities to which Dr. N. identifies with in his sermons. Consider the following example:

I want to say to the fathers and the males in particular,
It is time that **we** begin to live beyond the limits of **our** small minds.
It is time that **we** gain some sense and perspective on the magnitude and the magnificence of the earth and the universe.
We see **ourselves** as full participants,
Engaged not merely as second class or subclass participants,
but at the highest level
Of sharing in this world.
It is time that **our** visions
expand beyond the confines
of **our** small world
That **we** begin to move out not because **we** have a guarantee of anything, but it's time that **we** live like a church.
And the richness of the possibility that if **we** use what God has given **us**, **we** can be as great as anybody.
It is time somehow or another **we** gain a sense of faith in **ourselves**.
We can believe that somehow or another, God in all of his magnitude and magnificence can imbibe himself in **us**.
What **we** see other people do **we** can do it too

This example comes from Dr. N.'s Father's Day sermon. And as he indicates in the first line of this quotation, Dr. N. is speaking to the males in his congregation. Of course, all the males in his congregation are African American. It is not a big leap to see that this statement is directed to African-American males.

Given Dr. N.'s basic stance as a "race preacher" (see chap. 2) the historical, political, and social context in which the sermon took place and Dr. N.'s consistent focus in most of his sermons on how African Americans as a race must think bigger, or expect the best out of life, it is no big surprise that many of the communities he bonds with and the identities that he seeks to construct are African American. In the Father's Day example, Dr. N. is asking that males, especially African-American fathers, have broader and larger visions for themselves. He explains that they can have that vision if they have faith in a "magnificent" God. Although he clearly establishes a bond with this group—he is after all an

African-American male, an African-American male who does have a broad vision, who is not small-minded, who believes he can do anything—he is a person who has achieved success on many levels—financial, educational, political, professional, and so on. So why identify himself with a group that, in some ways, he is clearly not a member of? The persona that Dr. N. has created is one of a successful, confident African American who believes that all things are possible with faith. He sees himself as an example, a role model. Yet, to be accepted as a legitimate role model, to be persuasive, Dr. N. has to show his congregation that, although he is successful, he is still one of the people in the community; he has not "forgotten where he came from." By placing himself in the group despite his obvious differences, Dr. N. may be sending an implicit message: "We come from the same place, and I made it through by faith, and you can make it the same way." Thus, a big part of Dr. N.'s message involves showing that he is a person "from the hood."

Reverend M., the manuscript minister, is quite skilled at creating bonds between himself and his congregation through the use of the collective pronouns *we, us, our*. He certainly relies on the strategy far more than the other two ministers. Consider the following excerpt from Reverend M.'s sermon "Living in the In Between":

So often **we** look for God in the spectacular only,
But God has a way of slipping up on **us** in the unspectacular,
Of coming quietly in ways that can almost be missed.
We look for him in a palace,
And he shows up as a Palestinian.
We look for him in a royal bassinet and here he is in a reeking barn.
We look for him in a spacious mansion being waited on by servants because of his rank.
And here he is in a small cell with Nelson Mandela being mistreated and locked up because of his color.
We look for him in the White House lawn signing into law school prayer amendment, and here he is languishing with Winnie Mandela and dodging the law of apartheid which has banned them because they speak the truth.
We look for him at a coronation ball and here he is in a crowded barrio.
We we we look for him at the head of government and here he is in the heart of the ghetto.
We look for him in the president and here he is in prisons.
We look for him to show up as a strong macho man and here he is in the person of a strong black godly woman.
We we look for him to show up

In the white strains of "Hail to the Chief" and here he is showing up in a black South African strike.
We look for him to be residing in an old stately mansion high up on a hill and instead he's there hanging on an old rugged cross over another hill.

I have highlighted this excerpt from Reverend M., first, because throughout the passage, he establishes his bond with multiple communities, and second, because he employs multiple strategies to establish community bonds. "We"—the minister and his congregation—look for God to show up in the extraordinary. What might the extraordinary or the "spectacular" be? In this excerpt, the minister gives his congregation a list of circumstances where God shows up. His circumstances span religious, racial, political, economical, geographical, gender, sacred, and secular boundaries. These various boundaries are important because they signal the many communities and social circumstances in which members of Reverend M.'s congregation might find themselves. Consequently, when trying to construct a community identity, Reverend M. must appeal to or tap into various communities. The "we" in this excerpt could be one community that looks for God in various spectacular circumstances, or the we in each example could represent a variety of communities crossing the boundaries listed previously—Black Africans and diaspora Blacks, the American political community, the Christian community, the church community, the community of African-American women, urban America, and so on. These communities or social situations are evident from the references that Reverend M. makes in the excerpt, references that people pick up on if they follow world and national current events, or know the Bible; the references are from both secular and sacred contexts. This excerpt shows how cleverly Reverend M. blurs the boundaries between secular and sacred. This excerpt is also just one typical example of how Reverend M. combines the use of collective pronouns with reliance on shared information to construct this community identity, an issue that I pursue in more detail later in this chapter.

Reverend M. also experiences much of the same tension that Dr. N. experiences in trying to establish himself as part of the community he is constructing. Consider the following two examples from two other sermons by Reverend M:

Example 1:

Some of the meanest, most miserable, ungodly people I know got more degrees behind they names and make more money than most of **us** will ever see in a lifetime.

Example 2:

Since **we** pray as a congregation, every Sunday in the year this dangerous and deceptive disciple's prayer
and since most of **us** pray it almost absent mindedly, not having any idea what **we** are saying or praying . . . .
Just what it is **we** are saying when **we** address him who brought all of creation into being,
and just what it is **we** are doing when **we** dare to sing the doxology which closes out this powerful prayer **we** pray week after week.

In the first example, the "us" is so subtly used that it is possible for listeners to miss it. Yet, the "us" is significant because with that one little word, Reverend M. places himself within the group, his church congregation, who are not mean, miserable, ungodly people with degrees and money. Ironically, Reverend M. has about as many degrees as one can get, a bachelor's degree, two master's degrees, and a doctor of ministry degree. He drives an expensive car, makes an enviable salary, and lives in the church parsonage in an upper middle-class neighborhood. Yet, he constructs an identity in this instance that downplays his credentials and status. Although Reverend M. does have all of these credentials and his congregation is aware of and appreciates his status, he does not want to separate himself from his congregation because of his educational and socioeconomic status. I must also point out that there are many members of Reverend M.'s congregation who have more degrees and make more money than Reverend M., but it is counterproductive to building a community to point these details out in the sermon.

The second example is a good illustration of how Reverend M. includes himself in a communal act—praying. He speaks of himself and the congregation as a single unit in the act of praying. Like Dr. N., however, he makes himself part of a group that does not understand something—the complexities of The Lord's Prayer—thus minimizing or even overlooking his role as the minister. Yet, because he is about to embark on a five-sermon series on The Lord's Prayer and because of his scholarly background, both the congregation and I can logically deduce that Reverend M. does not pray this prayer absentmindedly and does know what he is saying and praying. But Reverend M. consistently makes himself part of the community to whom he's preaching, the *us/we* who pray week after week a prayer that we really do not understand. This practice is consistent with Reverend M.'s position that to preach relevant sermons, he has to place himself in the congregation and ask himself "What do I need to hear"? This strategy seems effective for helping to construct his desired community identity.

I do not want to leave readers with the impression that the ministers only focused on commonalities, only focused on "we." In every sermon, the ministers set up distinctions between themselves and the congregations. The ministers put emphasis on "you, not me," "not us." And members of the congregation had to have room to think about and see to their individual needs. There were moments when both congregation and ministers needed their distance from each other. Even when this happened, however, the distance created was not sustained because the ministers' overall goal was to connect with the congregation.

COLLECTIVE "I"

Just as the previous discussion illustrates the multiple functions of first-person plural pronouns and the multiple layers of group memberships that are subsequently revealed, the following discussion focuses on the multiple functions and multiple layers of group membership that the ministers' use of first-person singular pronouns reveal—*I, me, mine.* Although a rhetor's use of first-person singular usually indicates a focus on the self, the analysis of the ministers' sermons indicate that the use of first person-singular can signal a concern for audience and communal bonding.

With Reverend M.'s question, "What do I need to hear today?" and a related question by Dr. N., "What is the question everyone in the congregation is asking?"—two seemingly separate perspectives become one. That is, Reverend M. sees himself as part of the congregation; therefore, the questions that he is asking or the issues that seem most pressing to him ("What do I need to hear?") are questions and issues with which the congregation is concerned ("What is the question everyone in the congregation is asking?" from Dr. N.'s perspective). This fusing of perspectives—that the congregation's and the minister's perspective become one—gives the minister the unique role of being the voice of the congregation, of being able to speak for them, at times. And it is the speaking for the congregation that I am concerned with in this part of the chapter.

The previous section of this chapter highlighted the ministers' uses of collective plural pronouns as a strategy for signalling community identity and creating bonds between ministers and their congregations. It would seem then, that first-person singular references in the texts would create distance and would be at odds with the overwhelming desire of the ministers to establish and maintain community identities. However, in these ministers' sermons, more often than not, the ministers' uses of first-person singular pronouns did more to make those communal bonds stronger. I focus in this section on the "collective I"—those moments in

the texts when the ministers' use of "I" is ambiguous, when the ministers are speaking for themselves and for the congregation, when the ministers become the "voice" of the congregation.

At times, these moments are signaled by obvious markers that indicate that the minister is speaking in the voice of the people. Consider the following examples, the first from Reverend P.'s "Prison to Praise" and the second from Dr. N.'s "You Are What You Eat":

Example 1:

And there may be some people this morning who feel as though
I'm in prison.
I'm in prison because I'm confined.
I'm a shut in.
I'm in a bad marriage.
Other circumstances in my life are out of control
and I feel as though I'm in prison.

Example 2:

I know there's something saying to you right now,
I want that power.

I want that something on the inside,
That hole in the rain. I want that something on the inside
That burnage of pain.
I want that something on the inside
and I can't explain it.
I want it this morning.

The highlighted line in each example is each minister's signal to the congregation or some group in the congregation that he is speaking for them. The "I" represents quite clearly, in those examples, that the ministers are quite deliberately trying to locate the "place" where members of the congregation are emotionally and spiritually and bring them to another "place." The markers also could imply that the ministers may not be in the same places as the people they are speaking for. These examples, however, with such obvious markers and such room for breaking community bonds, are rare. In the sermons of these three ministers, more likely and most evident are the moments when the ministers are speaking for themselves and the congregation, when the boundaries between speaker and congregation are blurred and have no markers. These examples are numerous and subtle. They signal that necessary bonding between the minister and congregation that I spoke of earlier.

Although each of the three ministers are quite skilled at using this strategy, the one who uses it most frequently is Reverend P. This fact was surprising to me given that Reverend P. used the previous strategy, collective plural pronouns, the least of the three ministers. Consider the following examples from Reverend P.'s "Marks of a Spirit-Filled Christian" and "Prison to Praise":

From "Marks of a Spirit-Filled Christian":

You see
to be filled with the spirit
means to be possessed by the spirit.
It means the Holy Spirit is now in charge of my life.
To be filled with the spirit
means that I am empowered by the spirit.
Those temptations that our brother referred to
in which I would be continually yielding to
that I would be continually falling down before.
Because I have now the spirit of Christ in my life,
I have someone within me
that enables me to resist temptation.
I have someone who is within me and able to say "no" to the devil and say "yes" to God.
I am empowered
and this is what it means to be filled with the spirit.
I am empowered by the spirit of the Lord

From "Prison to Praise":

And this is what is needed in the body of Christ.
I shouldn't have to go into the world to find fellowship,
but when my marriage is stormy,
when my children are going astray,
when my job is played out,
I ought to be able to come into the body of Christ
and surround myself
with a few Godly individuals who won't talk about me
but who will pray with me and help me ride out the storm.

In these two examples, Reverend P.'s use of "I" may signal a personal reference. Clearly, listeners and readers could look at these excerpts of text as Reverend P.'s use of personal examples, a popular and necessary rhetorical device among these three ministers. The first example, particularly, could be interpreted as Reverend P. discussing how he has been empowered by the spirit of Christ. I do not think that would be a

"wrong" interpretation. Reverend P. states that "in African-American churches, people want to know what God has done for you [the minister]." And this first example is a strong illustration of what God has done for Reverend P. Yet, to see the "I" as only referring to Reverend P.'s experience would diminish the rhetorical sophistication of Reverend P. and the other ministers, establish rigid boundaries where they do not exist, and overlook the "genius" of these ministers in maintaining communal bonds.

Even in showing the people "what God has done for the minister," Reverend P. must also identify with the group and tap into the group's concerns. He does so in both examples. It is not just Reverend P. who is empowered by the spirit of Christ. It is not just Reverend P. who has "someone within me that enables me to resist temptation." It is not just Reverend P. who may have a stormy marriage, who may have children who go astray, who may have a troubled job situation. Given the way his congregation talked about and perceived him, none of the latter problems were major concerns for Reverend P. (the congregation's perception is more important here than whatever reality may have existed). Many people in his congregation find themselves in these "places." Many people are empowered by the Lord; many people face the problems that Reverend P. has listed. However, by speaking in first person, by using a symbolically personal example, Reverend P. does not use the authoritative and often accusatory "You who are sinners" with the accompanying silently loud "Not me, I'm perfect" implication. He does not separate himself from the congregation. He blurs the boundaries between "I," the minister, and "I," the voice of the people. He manages to speak for the people and himself simultaneously. That skill takes both rhetorical sophistication and the "genius" of knowing what to say and how to say it.

In illustrating what God has done for them, the ministers in this study often use personal statements that take on the tone of a personal testimony. There is evidence of that particularly in the first example from Reverend P.'s "Marks of a Spirit-Filled Christian" just excerpted. Usually a testimony is a very specific story that one tells about some tragedy or bad time(s) a person has experienced and how God (and one's faith in God) has brought that person through the bad times. Testimonies are usually quite detailed and specific to the person narrating the story. Those types of testimonies occur in these churches. However, another type of testimonial statement appears in these ministers' sermons—testimonial-like statements that are more general than the normal testimonies. That is, the congregation does not hear from the minister a detailed story about how the Lord brought him or her through a bad marriage or through a specific illness. Instead the congregations hear the kinds of examples that follow:

Example 1:

A Jesus that I know lives
He is not a dead Jesus
This Jesus that I serve
This Jesus that I know is alive
How do I know he lives
Because he walks with me and he talks with me
He tells me I am his own
Jesus is the light of the world
Jesus puts joy in my life
Jesus gives me peace when I'm sorrow
(taken from Dr. N.'s "You are What You Eat")

Example 2:

Be still and know that God is God
Shut up for a while and listen
Jesus Jesus Jesus I can't do it by myself
Jesus I have to say
my strength is too weak
Jesus help me
(taken from Dr. N.'s "Spiritual Presence and the Power of Prayer")

These examples cited from Dr. N.'s sermons have that testimonial-like quality even more so than the excerpts from Reverend P.'s sermons. Yet, these examples are not personal testimonies. They are more like a mantra that reminds the congregation of the power of God. The testimonial-like statements could be viewed as commonplaces in the sermons where the ministers use a collective "I" as a call to recognize God's role with each individual.

Dr. N., in engaging in a kind of mantra or general testimonial about the role of Jesus in his life, is calling for each individual to acknowledge this role. In a sense, Dr. N. models what he wants his congregation to do. In doing so, even in a general, nonspecific manner, in focusing on his personal relationship with Jesus, Dr. N. involves the congregation in his own personal journey, thus strengthening the community identity he has sought to establish. The congregation's involvement was evident in the volume of feedback and level of emotion these two examples garnered. When Dr. N. was seemingly speaking about himself, testifying to how he knows that "Jesus is alive," calling on Jesus to "help me" because "my strength is too weak," the congregation responded as if he was talking about them. Like Christ, he symbolically takes on their quest for goodness and righteousness, showing them by this "ritual" the possibility of success, as one whom

the spirit has hit. Shouts of "Yes," "I know he is," "Jesus," "Help me Jesus," among other statements rang out across the sanctuary. In those moments as in other similar moments in the sermons, Dr. N.'s experience and call to Jesus became the congregation's experience and call; he became a voice for the people. Dr. N. explains this phenomenon by stating that "the preacher is the vicarious success of all people." This statement refers to sacred and secular successes.

Dr. N. believed that he represented spiritual success for the people—even that his concerns are their concerns. Thus, his testimonial-like statements blurred those boundaries between minister and congregation. The "I" in many of his statements, such as those cited earlier, represent him and the people (Moss, 1994). Dr. N. can, by virtue of his religious journey and his role as preacher—a role that signals that he has the verbal skills, the "genius"—captures what the people are feeling and articulates it for them. They experience through him what they may not be able to name.

Reverend M., like Dr. N., uses these testimonial-like statements to great effect in his sermons. His use of them comes almost always at the ends of his sermons during the climax. And these testimonial-like statements tended to move the congregation to the same kinds of responses as I witnessed in Dr. N.'s sermons. However, Reverend M.'s congregation was often moved to stand on their feet, to applause, to tears, as well as the normal verbal feedback. Given that the climax in African-American sermons—the peak time—are highly charged moments in the sermon, it was not surprising that Reverend M.'s congregation would be so moved by his "testimonies" highlighted in that part of the sermon. Consider the following examples from Reverend M.'s "Lord's Prayer Part II (a sermon from a series of sermons on the Lord's Prayer) and "A Real Mother" (a Mother's Day sermon):

LORD'S PRAYER PART II

All things work together for good to them that love the Lord.
He's blessing me
even when I can't see it.
He's blessing me
Even when I don't know he's blessing me
Even when it seems like I take him for granted.
He's blessing me
When I lay down to sleep at night.
He's blessing me
When I open my eyes in the morning.
He's blessing me
When I open my voice and got something to talk about.

He's blessing me
When I put my feet out and can walk.
He's blessing me.
I can say it rejoicing.
The Lord is blessing me.

The song that the choir begins to sing in the background is "The Lord is Blessing Me Right Now." Here the Reverend and the congregation engage in intertextuality (which I discuss in detail in chap. 4).

A REAL MOTHER (Mother's Day sermon)

I really hurt in the heart for the Lord because He first hurt in the heart for me.
His hurt in the heart made Him give me life.
He gave me liberty.
He gave me victory.
He gave me Jesus.
He gave me Calvary.
He gave me a home beyond the skies.
He gave me a new name over in glory.
You don't know what he's done for me.
I hurt in the heart for him and it feels good down in my soul.

In both of these examples, Reverend M. tells the congregation, again in a general way, what the Lord is doing (and has done) for him. Even as Reverend M. is listing all the ways "the Lord is blessing him" in the first example, his congregation is showing that they identify with him with their responses—"Yes, Lord," "Yes, he is," "Amen," and with their claps. All those moments and "places" where the Lord is blessing him are moments and "places" that are not unique to him. As he names these places, people in the congregation can see themselves in those very same ordinary places. Simultaneously, the musician begins to play and the choir begins to sing "the Lord is Blessing me right now, right now." Reverend M.'s words becomes the choir's words and vice versa, and the choir and the minister become the voice of the congregation.

The second example, from "A Real Mother," functions in much the same way as the first example. The victory, calvary, liberty, and new name, among other things that the Lord gave Reverend M., are also the very same things He has given to others. While Reverend M.'s statement seems like a personal testimony (and could rightly be seen as such), he is not alone in his experience. He knows that he is not alone; that he speaks for others. Therefore, the "me" is representative of everyone to whom the minister is preaching.

Finally, of interest is the first two lines and the last line of the second example that include the phrase "hurt in the heart." This phrase comes from an earlier part of the sermon where Reverend M. explains that according to Dr. Frederick G. Sampson, a well-respected, famous Black preacher and theologian, in the ancient Sanskrit language, there is no word for "love." The equivalent term for "love" is "hurt in the heart." Thus, "I really hurt in the heart for the Lord because He first hurt in the heart for me" can be rephrased to "I really love the Lord because He first loved me."

That the examples given here function as personal, testimonial-like statements and as statements that represent the congregation illustrates again the complexity of the use of first-person plural and singular pronouns. Hubbard (1994), connecting the sermon to Bakhtin's notion of authoritative discourse, stated that it is "within this world of authoritative discourse that the Black preacher must struggle to win his voice and, equally important, an audience that will give assent to his testimony" (p. 5). That the ministers are successful speaking for themselves and others using the first-person plural indicates that first, they are "one with their congregation" in many important ways and that this "oneness" is recognized by both parties; second, that the congregation has given the ministers the authority to speak for them; and third, and, I think, most significantly, that the boundaries between ministers and congregation are clearly blurred. Sometimes, those boundaries are nonexistent. (For a fuller discussion of blurred boundaries see chap. 4.)

SHARED KNOWLEDGE: "BRING IT TO ME IN A CUP I CAN RECOGNIZE"

In an interview with Reverend M. in which we were discussing how to use the familiar to teach and preach a new message, Reverend M. stated that people want the preacher to "Bring it to me in a cup I can recognize." I use that statement as subheading for this discussion on shared knowledge because it occurred in the context of Reverend M. discussing how the preacher "must connect with the congregation where they are" in order to be effective. As previous discussions in this chapter illustrate, there are various strategies that ministers use for connecting with their congregations, for building that community identity. This section focuses on how the ministers in this study use shared knowledge to signal "in-group" communication, group memberships, community identity, or all of the above. "Bringing it to them in a cup they can recognize" is about audience expectations and demands, and the ways those expectations and demands affect the

ministers' sermons. It is these expectations and demands and how the ministers meet them that is the foundation of shared knowledge in the context of this study.

The principle that seems to undergird this reliance on shared knowledge is that the ministers use the familiar to reemphasize or reacquaint the congregation with old (or shared) information; that ministers use the familiar to make the congregation look at something familiar in a different light; that the ministers use the familiar to introduce the unfamiliar, something new; and that the ministers use the familiar to provide avenues for the congregation to enter into the text and become part of the dialogue that constitutes the text. However, to be successful at using shared knowledge as a strategy, the ministers must know their congregations well; they must make judgments about what their congregations know, what their congregations' expectations are, and "where they [the congregations] are." The three ministers must look to common backgrounds between them and their congregations to help them make accurate judgments about their congregations.

What constitutes shared knowledge? In this discussion, I use a broad operating definition of shared knowledge. In the context of this study, *shared knowledge* came to refer to those moments when ministers (and congregation) relied on common backgrounds and situational contexts (and sometimes linguistic contexts) to play a part in meaning making within the sermon (and the service). Most often, this strategy is evidenced by ministers alluding to a reference for which there is no apparent explanation in the text (examples follow later). The ministers (and congregations) rely on their shared knowledge, situational context, or both to make meaning of the reference. This strategy is complicated by the multiple cultures, subcultures, and communities that the ministers share with their congregations and by the multiple roles each participant plays as members of these various cultures, subcultures, and communities. Thus, this operating definition of shared knowledge extends beyond African-American churchgoers and even beyond African Americans. As the following discussion illustrates, shared knowledge spans cultural and community boundaries, global and local contexts, secular and sacred traditions. And because, as I established earlier, form and content are coterminous, shared knowledge extends beyond the references used in the texts—the message (which some may view as content)—to the message and how it is transmitted. Thus, "bring it to me in a cup I can recognize" is, at times, quite similar to "knowing how to say something and having something to say." Finally, shared knowledge relies on collaboration between minister and congregation. Miller and Vander Lei (1990) pointed out that "in Black oral interaction, the author collaborates not only with another writer but with the audience of the discourse" (p. 51). This collaboration is central to the creation of a community text.

"SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF THE PEOPLE": CODE SWITCHING

Both Reverend M., the manuscript minister, and Dr. N., the nonmanuscript minister spoke, in their interviews, of the importance of "speaking the language of the people," reconfirming what Mitchell (1970) suggested, that in Black congregations no matter how educated the minister or the congregation are, the minister must be Black. That is, he or she must sound Black. What does sounding Black mean, and why is it significant? The second part of the question is dealt with first. The phrase "sounding Black" probably raises all kinds of red flags and invites a range of responses. Given the recent debates about Ebonics—is it a legitimate language, a dialect, or broken English—as it relates to how some African Americans use language, sounding Black is a loaded term. Responses to the phrase could range from it being labeled a racist concept, or an essentialist[1] concept, to "it's the language of the hood." All of these responses could be true at some point. But within the context of this study, this discourse community, and particularly these ministers, sounding Black is a positive concept that focuses, again, on the ministers' rhetorical skills to create a community within their African-American congregations. Sounding Black is significant because it shows that the minister is still in touch with his people and that he is still one of them. Also, it provides the minister and the congregation the opportunity to "use English in a way that makes it their own" (Dr. N.).

Sounding Black is tied to cultural expectations that speaker and listener hold in this church setting. These ideas are intricately bound to establishing and maintaining a sense of community. Although the earlier sections of this chapter stress multiple communities, this section stresses one community—a possibly idealized African-American community. So what does sounding Black mean? There is really no one answer to that question. In this study of three Black ministers of urban Black churches, there are expectations set up by this cultural setting, a Black church service. One expectation is the use of what is commonly associated with Black language features (Vernacular Black English [VBE], another term for Ebonics) in the sermons. Each minister makes use of these features to varying degrees. Although these ministers are steeped in standard English, having been trained by White schools in the Western academic tradition and language, they have, simultaneously, remained steeped in their own Black culture and have found the need to make use of the broad range of language features that identify these ministers as part of the Black community and Black church tradition. They understand the social messages that language

[1]See Spivak's (1987) discussion of strategic essentialism.

conventions carry, that certain discourse conventions gain validity when used by the powerful in the community, as these ministers are, and that language builds community. The congregations in this study want their ministers to be educated, to have academic credentials. They want their ministers to be good with language. Verbal agility is highly valued in this community (Kochman, 1972). However, being good with language includes not only being able to manipulate standard English, but it also includes being able to use features of Black English—to "sound Black."

One of the ways in which the ministers in this study show that they are speaking the language of the people is through code switching in the sermons. "Code switching involves introducing into the context of one language stretches of speech that exhibit the other language's phonological and morphological features" (Valdes-Fallis, 1978, p. 1). Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez (1972) argued that code switching is "a symbolic process akin to that by which words convey semantic information. Code switching, in other words, is meaningful in much the same way that lexical choice is meaningful" (p. 98). Valdes-Fallis (1978), like Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez, reported "that code switching has been found to be neither random nor meaningless. Rather, it is a device that conveys important social information ranging from role relationships between speakers to feelings of solidarity, intimacy, and so forth" (p. 7). Saville-Troike (1982) stated that, "code switching may be quite unconscious, and the fact of switching itself may be as meaningful in expressing a closer or more informal relationship as the referential content or specific language forms used" (p. 63). Each of these scholars pointed to the role of code switching in expressing social information such as role relationships, group identification, and so on. Saville-Troike (1982) further stated that,

> metaphorical code switching occurs within a single situation, but adds meaning to such components as the role-relationships which are being expressed. Since speaking different languages is an obvious marker of differential group membership, by switching languages bilinguals often have the option of choosing which group to identify with in a particular situation, and thus can convey the metaphorical meaning which goes along with such choice as whatever denotative meaning is conveyed by the code itself. (p. 63)

The ministers code switch between standard English (SE) and VBE.[2] I view SE and VBE as two equal language dialects,[3] with one, SE, being the prestige dialect sanctioned by those in power in the United States. The code switching in which the ministers engage is social and metaphorical. These ministers use code switching as a means of expressing group solidarity, expressing social information, or "bringing the message home to their people." It can also be argued that the meaning does change when something is stated in VBE rather than SE. Lu (1991) argued that the language conventions of a particular discourse community play a significant role in shaping meaning. Meaning does not exist independently of language. Hence, the ministers may indeed code switch because they see VBE as a language dialect that can convey meaning that SE cannot.

When the switching does not convey social information, Valdes-Fallis (1978) labeled it stylistic switching that she defined as a "personal rhetorical device to add color to an utterance, to emphasize, to contrast, to underscore a context, to create new poetic meanings, and the like" (p. 10). I argue, however, that stylistic switching can also express social information. In fact, how can the two be separated? The examples that follow show that the code switching involves both morphological and phonological forms and correspond to often used VBE features such as double negatives, copula and auxiliary be deletion, weakening of final consonants, deletion of postvocalic //-r// in the possessive, and other features (Labov, 1972).

A close analysis of Reverend M.'s texts indicate that the code switches that appear in the transcripts of the oral sermons also appear in the written sermons. This indicates a high degree of planning on the part of the manuscript minister and points to Reverend M. using code switching as a rhetorical strategy. One of the more common switches for this minister was use of the double negative and "ain't" in phrases:

> Half the prayer is over . . . and we *ain't said nothing* about our needs and our desires.

This statement illustrates that the minister uses an alternate code for a phrase within the sentence. Other examples at the phrase level follow this pattern:

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[2]I must note here that there is a difference between code switching from Spanish to English and code switching from Black English to SE. When speakers switch from English to Spanish and vice versa, they are shifting from one language to another.

[3]These language dialects have a grammar of their own that leads some to argue that SE and VBE (or Ebonics) are separate languages. For a more detailed discussion of VBE, see Baugh (1983).

> That means that there's a king somewhere. This *ain't no* democracy. God *ain't nobody* you vote into office and if he *don't* perform like you think he ought to perform . . . then you vote him out. This *ain't no* democracy. This is theocracy.

Other examples show copula and auxiliary be deletion:[4]

> What *you* praying *bout*?

This example shows the deletion of the helping verb *are* and a phonological code switch at the word level from *about* to *bout*. Similar patterns were found in other sermons:

> *Health not* what it ought to be praise you *Home not* what it *spozed* to be praise you.
>
> *How you gone make it . . . 'til* next payday-future
>
> Church folk—disciples *round here* testifying

The SE form of the copula is deleted in these several examples. As well, phonological code switches, *supposed* to *spozed* and *around* to *round*, occur. Some code switches involve deletion of postvocalic /r/ or /s/ in possessive adjectives and substituting subjective pronouns for objective pronouns:

> Some of the meanest, most miserable, ungodly people I know got more degrees behind *they* names and make more money than most of us will ever see in a lifetime.
>
> You can't keep *them* streets hot.

Throughout Reverend M.'s texts, I found numerous examples of code switching. These few examples show some of the choices that he made in his movement from one dialect to another. Most of his switches seemed to occur on the sentence level. That would suggest stylistic switches done for emphasis, contrast, or to underscore a context. All of these reasons could be working in this minister's texts. He signals, with the code switching, his verbal agility. That all of the code switches are written in the manuscripts suggests even more that these are stylistic switches. Reverend M. is very much aware of the context of the sermon event and very much aware of what language forms and uses have the most impact on his congregation and what is acceptable in this context.

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[4]A copula deletion means the expected form of the *to be* verb is deleted. For example, "the sun bright" is grammatical in VBE rather than "the sun is bright." An auxiliary *be* deletion would follow a similar pattern: "the sun shining" rather than "the sun is shining."

He understands how his audience, his congregation, will receive his message and his uses of code switching. "The ability to interpret a message is a direct function of the listener's home background, his peer group experiences, and his education. Differences in background can lead to misinterpretation of messages" (Gumperz & Hernandez-Chavez, 1972, p. 100). Reverend M. seems to have taken all of these elements into consideration either consciously or unconsciously. His congregation does not seem to misinterpret his messages. The tapes show that no unusual silence occurs during any of these code switches. Silence in this context would be the first sign of misunderstanding or not understanding. What seems most noticeable in this minister's use of code switching is that he seems to communicate to his congregation not only the impact of the message he's preaching in language that is their own, which in itself reveals social information, but also he communicates that he, along with them, is always part of the Black community.

Reverend M. was, by far, more inclined to use code switching in his sermons than the other two ministers were. Yet there were examples of code switching in varying degrees and rhetorical moments in the other two ministers' sermons. Although there are similarities in the use of code switching among the ministers, each minister's own preaching style must be taken into account when examining their uses of code switching.

Because Dr. N., the nonmanuscript minister, does not write his sermons, his code switches are most likely more spontaneous than the manuscript minister's. Yet, as pointed out earlier, spontaneous does not mean random or meaningless. In fact, as I address in more detail later, Dr. N. is quite conscious of the rhetorical power of code switching. The code switches in this minister's texts, although following similar VBE patterns as presented in the earlier discussion, illustrate Dr. N.'s interpretive use of this rhetorical pattern.

Double Negatives:

If I could win the lottery right now, *I wouldn't have no problem.*

You *ain't got nothing* anyhow.

That "anyhow" is not put into a negative form is surprising. It would have fit right into the pattern established by the rest of the statement. "Ain't got nothing" seems to have the same denotative meaning as "don't have anything," but it just doesn't seem to carry as much weight or emphasis as Dr. N.'s statement carries.

Copula deletion:

As long as *you in* Mama's house, you ought to act like a boy.

When you get deep down into the stand, *you so* deep.

Combination of features:

We been down so long that down don't bother us no more.

This statement sounds as if it could come right out of the Blues, a musical genre, which makes extensive use of Black English. The minister seems to express a feeling or state of being that is incapable of being expressed by SE.

Habitual aspect:[5]

We be together.

Phonological switches:

You're always *gonna* be better off than you are.

Cause the truth will set you free.

Because these shifts occur on the sentence level, Valdes-Fallis would argue that the switches are most likely stylistic, and they convey social information. Dr. N. talked in an interview of a word having a different meaning in the congregation based on how the word is pronounced. He stated that when a minister says to a Black congregation "you must be born again," with emphasis on the *r*, that it does not mean the same as "you must be bon agin" where the *r* is not pronounced in *born. Surely* with the *r* sound clearly pronounced is not the same as "sholy" without the *r* pronounced and with the *u* pronounced as an *o*. Dr. N. points out that the congregation can "feel" the statements with the code switches. This minister's use of code switching is in keeping with his position that "no one should be so learned in the language of the master that they've forgotten how to talk to their own people." Dr. N. recognizes that there are power relations tied to language use. For many Black people, the use of the term *master* brings up images of slavery where *the Master* who was in charge spoke a language different from the language of the Black people who had no power. *Master* reinforces that there is the language of the people in power and the language of those without power. "Knowing how to talk to his own people" suggests that one communicates in this particular community by speaking the community's language and not the power language, a political and

[5]"We are together all the time."

rhetorical move. Dr. N.'s statement also emphasizes the bond that must exist between minister and congregation and that how one speaks affects that bond.

Reverend P., the partial-manuscript minister, does not seem to consciously view uses of Black English features in the sermon the same way that Dr. N. or Reverend M. do. Yet, he does use features of VBE in his sermons but to a much smaller degree than the other two ministers. Although most of the code switches are phonological, there are a few that are morphological:

> *Ain't* for *is not; em* for *them, they* for *them, ain't* for *are not*
>
> You take a cup of shortening by itself and endeavor to eat it and it *ain't* very good. You take a bottle of vanilla by itself, it *ain't* very good. You take a cup of sugar by itself, it *ain't* very good. But you let *em* work together.
>
> You let some of these folk around here make up *they mind they ain't* going to do something.

The last statement includes an example of dropping the postvocalic /r/ in favor of using the third-person plural pronoun as a possessive pronoun. When Reverend P. was role-playing in one sermon, he used several Black English features:

> Old self-will says "I'm *gone* do what I *wanta* do. I'm *gone* marry who I want to marry. I'm *gone* date who I want to date. I'm *gone* come to church when I feel like *comin.*
>
> Some people are so self-preoccupied that they'll say *"they talking* about us over in that corner."

Many of the code switches in Reverend P.'s examples are of the same type as the examples from Reverend M. Questions that arise when examining the role-playing quotations are why does Reverend P. code switch during the role-playing? The role-playing does mark the situation and possibly the language as special or unique. Does he feel that the language during the role-playing imitates the language of the congregation? Is it how his people speak? If yes, then why aren't there more code switches throughout the sermons? Or are more code switches necessary? It may be that with each of these ministers in each of these churches, code switching on a small scale could serve to signal to the congregations that the ministers still know how to speak the language of the people.[6]

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[6]It is important to point out that many of the features that I have highlighted are not used only by African Americans or by all or even most African Americans.

Code switching emphasizes that members in the congregations and the ministers hold memberships in multiple discourse communities, signaled by the moves between SE and VBE. Again, the ministers show their verbal agility, their rhetorical repertoire, and the congregation places even more value on such traits. One word of caution—as I have indicated in this analysis, this use of VBE or Ebonics is not used equally or the same way by each minister nor is it the only way that these ministers connect to their African-American congregations.

SHARED KNOWLEDGE, COLLABORATION, AND DIALOGUE

One of the more fascinating uses of shared knowledge in the three churches centered on the ministers' and congregations' uses of dialogue within the sermon. In earlier discussions, I highlight the dialogic nature of traditional African-American sermons. Specifically, I focus on the feedback that the congregation provides for the minister. However, most of that feedback is in the form of affirmation, encouragement, or personal expression of the spirit touching a participant. This type of participatory feedback, or call-and-response, is a phenomenon that has reached beyond sermons to most aspects of public performance in African-American communities (political rallies, concerts, movies) and has influenced many African-American orators. Consider the sermonic "talks" of academic Cornel West. In addition to those types of "dialogue" (the quotation marks indicate the nontraditional nature of this dialogue), another type of dialogue occurs. Although clearly part of the call-and-response interaction, this dialogic interaction relies heavily on the congregations' previous knowledge of biblical Scripture and on their ability to "read" (or hear) spoken and unspoken cues.

Consider the following three examples from Dr. N's sermons:

Example 1:

Dr. N.: God said "I have come that you may have life"
Congregation: (responding in unison) Abundantly

Example 2:

Dr. N.: I'm glad today that God has given me a mission that is larger than [inaudible] Because where there is no vision the people do what?
Congregation: Perish

Example 3:

Dr. N.: And rather than act on faith,
Now now faith is what?
The substance
Congregation: of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen
Dr. N.: That's all it is

In each of these three examples, there was no warning that Dr. N. was going to engage the congregation in this call-and-response dialogue. However, the readiness of the congregation to respond indicates that this was not a unique occurrence. More importantly, there was nothing in the Scripture reading or previous parts of the sermon that supplied the congregation with the correct responses to Dr. N.'s calls. Dr. N. relied on his congregation's knowledge of biblical Scripture to supply the called-for response. Some knowledge of the Bible—the ability to memorize Scripture—is part of Dr. N.'s expectations of his congregation. He also relied on their ability to recognize the call as one that demands a congregational response. Dr. N.'s congregation was aided in their ability to recognize his call by the explicit use of markers that signal questions—"how" and "what."

Interestingly, the third example featured was used by Reverend M. in one of his sermons:

Reverend M.: Faith is
Reverend M. and Congregation: the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen

What is different when Reverend M. makes his call is that, unlike in Dr. N.'s sermons, there is no explicit marker to signal a question. And Reverend M. does not stop to let his congregation complete the verse alone. They join him in completing the verse from Hebrew 11:1. Reverend M.'s congregation is able to hear (or read) the unspoken cue that they should respond in an expected fashion—namely to respond with Reverend M. to his call. Like Dr. N., however, the correct response to the call is considered shared knowledge. Repeatedly, I witnessed this call-and-response pattern based on biblical knowledge. I witnessed a guest minister at Reverend M.'s church, who had never before been in his church, successfully employ the same strategy. And I remembered that the same strategy had been employed in the church in which I grew up in South Carolina. It seems reasonable to suggest then that one of the characteristics of literate behavior in this community institution, despite the many ways in which African-American communities may vary, is having enough knowledge about the Bible to provide accurate responses

to ministers' calls for reciting Bible verses. These responses by the congregation represent enactments of community.

How does this knowledge come to be shared? The answer to that question is rather complex and can usually be answered with "it depends." In many cases, particularly with older members, the Bible was the major "text" in the home and the only book that many of them read or had read to them. Often, the same Scriptures were read repeatedly because they seemed to speak to the needs of the people, to provide some comfort. This process has taken place not only in the home but also in the church. There are some Scriptures that are popular from church to church, minister to minister (like Hebrew 11:1, "Faith is the substance . . .") that are referred to often. Over the years, these popular Scriptures are stored in members' memories. The members do not even remember learning the Bible verses. People who cannot read come to know these verses as well as those who are formally educated. In addition, this knowledge is developed through Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and the like. There are various church activities that contribute to literacy development.

However, some methods of learning Bible verses are more direct. In Reverend M.'s and Reverend P.'s churches, the congregation had a monthly memory verse that they were to learn and recite each Sunday morning during that month. The memory verse was printed on the Sunday bulletin. So it is conceivable that at some point, the Scriptures that become part of the sermon could have been part of the memory verses. In addition to the monthly memory verses, each church has Bible study sessions where members (and nonmembers) can study the Bible in depth. These weekly study sessions no doubt contribute to several participants' abilities to recognize, understand, and memorize verses. Clearly, memorizing Bible verses is valued in each of these churches, and thus, the data points to memorization of text as a marker of literate behavior.

What these examples point to is the collaboration that takes place between ministers and congregations in the text. In this instance, that collaboration depends on each participant knowing his or her role—minister as leader and congregation as respondent (Miller & Vander Lei, 1990). In other instances, the collaborative roles are not so distinct nor is the collaboration so easily discernible. These examples also point to the form and content of the shared knowledge as important factors. The congregations "recognize the cup" and the message that the ministers are providing.

EXTENDING BOUNDARIES THROUGH SHARED KNOWLEDGE

As stated earlier, the shared knowledge in these sermons extends beyond the biblical. One of most helpful ways to illustrate this point is to look closely at the following examples from the ministers' sermons. Each example relies on shared knowledge from various communities. Consider Example 1 from Reverend M.'s "Living in the In Between" and Example 2 from Reverend P.'s "Marks of a Spirit-Filled Christian":

Example 1:

Nothing out of the extraordinary like down in verse nine
Where it's now you see him and now you don't
Then [Reverend M. makes swishing noise] two men show up in white, like they've been beamed down from the Starship Enterprise

Example 2:

And they have put down their malt liquor, their Seagram's Seven, Wild Turkey, Johnny Walker Red, Budweiser, their happy smokes

In both of these examples, the ministers rely on their congregations' knowledge of popular culture to understand their allusions and thus make meaning. Reverend M., in Example 1, assumes that his congregation is familiar with *Star Trek* and its famed Starship Enterprise. One presumably does not have to be a Trekkie to conjure up a visual image of Captain Kirk and his crew (or Captain Picard and his crew) being beamed down from the Enterprise. Similarly, one does not have to be a heavy drinker or use marijuana to recognize the references that Reverend P. makes in the Example 2. Reverend P. relies on the congregation's knowledge of popular culture, albeit a particular aspect of popular culture, to make meaning of this example.

Other examples relied on shared knowledge of issues that are predominantly of interest to African Americans but not exclusively. Consider the following two examples again from Reverend M.'s "Living in the In Between":

Example 1:

God gives proof that if you kill a King you cannot kill what King stood for.
That if you silence a Tutu,
Ban a Boesak,
Defeat the candidacy of a Chisolm,
Derail the movement of a Jackson, or denounce the teachings of a Malcolm X,

The truths that undergird these men and women of integrity will keep on
coming and keep on coming and keep on coming.
[loud applause from congregation accompanies these final lines]

The final lines of this excerpt allude to Sterling Brown's poem "Strong Men Keep On Coming," a poem that Reverend M. recites in its entirety in a later sermon, "What Makes You So Strong?" referred to in chapter 4.

Example 2:

He never heard the thunderous ovation that a James Cleveland, or a
Trumaine Hawkins has heard as they brought thousands to their feet.

In Example 1 the references are obviously to black political leaders in the United States and South Africa. Although these people are known across the world, they have special significance to a congregation of African Americans who these leaders represent and sometimes speak for. Of particular interest is the first line of the first example where Reverend M. plays on the word *king*. He relies on shared knowledge and context for the congregation to pick up the reference to Martin Luther King. In Example 2, he relies on his congregation's knowledge of African-American contemporary gospel music to identify the late James Cleveland and Trumaine Hawkins, two extremely popular gospel singers in African-American communities.

The ministers also relied on knowledge they shared with their congregations that came about as a result of their memberships in their specific churches or their residences in Chicago. Reverend P. often referred to people in his sermons whom he assumed people knew: "brother Blair" or "Bishop A.B. Williams." Insiders in the church clearly knew to whom Reverend P. referred. Each minister referred to Harold Washington, the deceased former mayor of Chicago, who was the first African-American mayor of Chicago. Reverend M. often referred to Ed Burke and Ed Vrodolyak who were political nemeses of Mayor Washington. Dr. N., in the following example, relies on his congregation's knowledge of Chicago landmarks and noted residents:

Then you get downtown,
And you see John Hancock spurring up the heights up there.
Then you see [inaudible] standing up there.
Somebody owns those buildings.
Somebody owns every one of them.
And then you get downtown.
You start asking "who owns them?"
Then you find one little building standing about that high

[Dr. N. makes gesture with hand]
They say that's owned by John Johnson
Then our chest starts swellin out.
No!
Don't let their chest run out because we got a building four stories high.
What else? What else?
What about thinking of owning John Hancock's?

What is interesting about this excerpt is not the John Hancock building reference (most people living in Chicago have seen the Hancock building). What is most interesting is that Dr. N. relies on shared knowledge in Chicago; that John Johnson owns *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines and that the building that is only four stories high is the corporate office for the Johnson Publishing Company.

In many cases, the ministers relied on shared knowledge of historical concerns. Reverend M. was most skillful employing that particular strategy. Examine the following example from Reverend M.'s sermon "The Lord's Prayer Part III":

A privatized an individualistic selfish and self-centered notion of [a] you and me God Community!
We count. It doesn't matter about anybody else.
That's the God of Thomas Jefferson who held slaves.
That's the God of Emmanuel Kant, John Locke, and Adam Smith,
All of whom acted as if black people did not exist or if
they did exist they were not white people.
And the same things holds true for brother Karl Marx.
The God of Harriet Tubman however is an us God.
Community!
The God of Martin Delaney is an us God.
Community!
The God of Ida Wells is an us God.
Community!
The God of [inaudible] David Walker, Sojourner Truth, and Mary McLeod
Bethune,That God is an us God.
A God of community not a God of private concerns only!

It is not difficult to see how Reverend M. has categorized the two groups of names he has referenced in this excerpt. From his perspective, the first group from Thomas Jefferson to Karl Marx are those who ignored Black people and the concerns of Black people even as they apparently argued for a more democratic society, but not for Blacks, only for themselves. The latter group, from Harriet Tubman to Mary McLeod Bethune, was

concerned not with just themselves and their own but with a more inclusive community. The only information or explanation that the congregation receives about either group comes from the linguistic context in the excerpt that points to the two groups. Reverend M. relies on shared knowledge between him and his congregation to make meaning from this excerpt. The references require some knowledge on the part of the congregation of American, African-American, and European philosophy and history. Most Americans would have been introduced to the names in the first group mentioned no later than high school (with the possible exception of Kant). Most Americans would have been introduced to only a couple of the names in the latter group in high school—Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth.

So what might Reverend M. assume about his congregation based on an analysis of this excerpt? He assumes that many of them are educated, well-read, or both; that they know history and philosophy. He assumes that they know African-American history, particularly about the African Americans who fought for the abolition of slavery and for the rights of newly freed former slaves. He also assumes that many of them know American and European philosophy and history so that they recognize the names of the people who were considered to be the "great thinkers" in Western culture. Of course, all the great thinkers tend to be White men, a point that is a not so subtle undercurrent in Reverend M.'s example.

It is possible that Reverend M. is attributing to his congregation his own personality and traits. He is a well-read, educated person. However, he is not alone. As I suggested in chapter 2, this congregation is considered to be one of the most highly educated African-American congregations in Chicago. It is quite possible, even likely, that a large portion of Reverend M.'s audience shares his knowledge of history and philosophy. It is also quite possible and likely that some members of the congregation were clueless when trying to understand the references in the previous example; they did not share the common background with Reverend M. that would allow them to access all of the references included in the above mentioned excerpt. Because of the diversity of experiences within the congregation, there is difficulty in connecting with everyone. However, as discussed earlier, the long list of references does include some names common to the majority of congregants.

In Reverend M.'s case, there are also other factors to be taken into account. Reverend M. is also teaching. He is throwing out a carrot—"it is part of your responsibility to know, to learn about these people." Reverend M. emphasizes the value of education in this church, not just formal education, but the things one can learn on one's own by reading. One need only attend services at his church a few weeks to recognize

that Reverend M. places much emphasis on reading about the world and gaining knowledge. In Reverend M.'s church, there was a tremendous effort put forth by Reverend M. and his staff to emphasize the importance of African and African-American culture, including history, literature, art, music, religion, and philosophy. He constantly advised his congregation to read about their African-American culture but not just to stop there. He advised them to learn about other cultures and to "read what your enemies write" so that you know what they are up to. He emphasizes religion within a global context. He emphasizes that Christians have to be ready to fight in God's army, and to be ready, one must be armed with knowledge. Reverend M., thus, tries to broaden the base of knowledge for him and his congregation that provides him with a broader base of shared knowledge from which to pull examples for his sermons. Thus, his use of references such as the previous ones can serve multiple purposes, one of which may be to inspire those who are not familiar with the names he cited to investigate on their own these people. This broad knowledge base is seen in another of Reverend M.'s sermons.

Consider again the following example from Reverend M.'s "Living in the In Between," which was highlighted in an earlier discussion in this chapter. Look closely at the broad knowledge base that Reverend M. calls on and assumes his congregation can also call on to "connect" with him and this part of the sermon:

So often we look for God in the spectacular only,
But God has a way of slipping up on us in the unspectacular,
Of coming quietly in ways that can almost be missed.
We look for him in a palace,
And he shows up as a Palestinian.
We look for him in a royal bassinet and here he is in a reeking barn.
We look for him in a spacious mansion being waited on by servants because of his rank.
And here he is in a small cell with Nelson Mandela being mistreated and locked up because of his color.
We look for him in the White House lawn signing into law school prayer amendment, and here he is languishing with Winnie Mandela and dodging the law of apartheid which has banned them because they speak the truth.
We look for him at a coronation ball and here he is in a crowded barrio.
We we we look for him at the head of government and here he is in the heart of the ghetto.
We look for him in the president and here he is in prisons.
We look for him to show up as a strong macho man and here he is in the person of a strong black godly woman.

We we look for him to show up
In the white strains of "Hail to the Chief" and here he is showing up in a black South African strike.
We look for him to be residing in an old stately mansion high up on a hill and instead he's there hanging on an old rugged cross over another hill.

It is with this example that Reverend M. extends the boundaries of cultures and communities, global contexts and local contexts, secular and sacred traditions. He makes references to an American presidential song and a religious symbol; he makes reference to South Africans and Hispanics, Palestinians and African Americans. His references are sometimes explicit, other times implicit and subtle. Again, not only does his congregation have to have the knowledge that helps them connect to the spoken, but they must also be able to hear the unspoken, that "reeking barn" refers to the barn in which Jesus is born, that "barrio" is a Hispanic ghetto. Clearly, Reverend M. thinks highly of his congregation and their abilities. His pedagogical stance, unlike that in many of the schools that the children in his congregation attend, is not based on a deficit model when making judgments about his congregation's knowledge base.

Reverend M.'s heavy reliance on shared knowledge, particularly that of a broad knowledge base of his congregation is complicated because his congregation is so mixed. It is quite likely that there were some people sitting in the pews who did not recognize many of the references alluded to in the previous excerpts. Are they excluded? By appealing to such a broad base of shared knowledge, Reverend M. extends the boundaries of communities to which he and his congregation can identify. In his long list of references from across so many contexts and communities, each person in his congregation will be able to grasp on to some part of the message, maybe not the same part as his or her neighbor but some part. No one is left out who is willing to enter. Although the appeal to such a broad base of shared knowledge may exclude some, it may provide more opportunities for others to take part in the dialogue within the text.

Reverend M. is also skilled at using the familiar—shared knowledge—to introduce the unfamiliar to his congregation. He states that he "uses the cup people recognize to bring something new." In other words, Reverend M. finds that because his congregation is so familiar with the sermon as genre and text and with certain cultural knowledge, he can use their familiarity to introduce totally new information to the congregation. This point is most easily illustrated by examining an excerpt from a sermon on probably the most familiar prayer in the Bible, The Lord's Prayer. Specifically, in the sermon, "The

Lord's Prayer Part I," Reverend M. focuses on the well-known opening of "Our Father" to discuss the many ways of addressing the Lord. It is in the familiar context of the sermon and the familiar context of The Lord's Prayer and its opening, "Our Father," that Reverend M. introduces the new—a discussion of ways of addressing "Our Father" in African religions (see discussion of African religion's multiple names for God in chap. 1):

In African religions God is called the one who exists by himself
And he is called the one who is met everywhere
He is called the great ocean headdress in the horizon
And he is called the wise one
The all seeing the one who brings round the seasons
The **Zulu** call him he who bends down even majesties
The **Zulu** call him the irresistible
The **Bankutu** speak of him as **Nzambi**
The **Yoruba** call him **Olaroon**
The **Ashanti** call him **Neonmi**

This section is but one small part of a much larger section of the sermon in which Reverend M. goes through a long list of names for "Our Father" including the many names in the Bible for which Reverend M. provides for the congregation the book, chapter and verse of the Biblical reference (as if he were citing references in an academic paper). In that sense, this excerpt is part of a pattern that is quite obvious and familiar to the congregation. The congregation has been told that this new information has to do with African religions. Reverend M. provides this new information on how the Supreme Being in Africa is referred to, using in some cases literal English translations and in other cases the name as used in the African tribal language. Implicit in this discussion, of course, is the notion that the name of the Supreme Being may be different in the land of the African-American congregation's ancestors, but the concept is the same. They are referring to the same God that his congregation prays to when they say "Our Father." Yet, the congregation is given the comfort of learning the implicit and explicit message through the familiar context of The Lord's Prayer. In this instance, using the familiar—the shared knowledge—to teach the unfamiliar is an effective way of teaching a people about their culture, their heritage. It was a technique the people responded to well as evidenced by their affirmation and encouragement of Reverend M. through their feedback. This example is also important because of the diasporic connections of the religious traditions of African Americans and Africans.

"HE SURE CAN PREACH!"

The use of shared knowledge to teach new knowledge as just discussed was an effective way for Reverend M. to display his knowledge. An important factor in evaluating the three ministers in this study is how important it is to the congregations that their ministers have broad knowledge bases. There are other criteria for being judged a good preacher. As I alluded to in chapters 1 and 2, contemporary African-American congregations want preachers who are good with language, who are smart, who have credentials. In short, they want someone "who has something to say and knows how to say it." When Dr. N., Reverend P., and Reverend M. display their knowledge of the Bible, of world and local history, of politics, of African languages, and so on, they are showing their credentials. They are showing that they deserve to be in the pulpit, that they have the credentials to lead a church. The congregations as well as the ministers are aware of that dual role the ministers have of being leader of the community and part of the community at the same time. Being able to show your credentials by displaying your broad knowledge base without sounding "uppity" or worse "sounding White" is acceptable and expected behavior in these churches. The congregations are proud, and they like to brag about their preachers. In each of the churches, I was constantly reminded by members of the congregations that their minister "could preach!"

Although the discussion of shared knowledge raises many questions about what ministers assume about their congregations and whether some people are excluded from the "dialogue" if the ministers' assumptions are wrong, it also points out the extent to which the ministers in the three churches depend on in-group communication to be effective preachers. The ministers can easily measure their effectiveness by the response of the congregation. In most cases, a completely silent congregation equals a failed or, at least ineffective, sermon. Although I never witnessed a silent congregation during my observations, I have been in other churches where congregations sat silently while the minister preached. During those moments, the silence was deafening. The way to avoid that silence is to "connect with" the congregation. It would seem highly unlikely, maybe even impossible, for these ministers, particularly Reverend M., to rely so heavily on shared knowledge and consequently common backgrounds with their congregation if they had not established strong communal bonds with their congregations. These communal bonds that shape this community identity are emphasized and strengthened even more by the use of shared knowledge. Using shared knowledge signals to both insiders and outsiders that there are boundaries, albeit nonfixed boundaries, which

designate community, which signal what is valuable to know, believe, and do in a particular community.

Important questions come to mind, however. Given that these boundaries do exist to designate community, is community relegated to each minister's individual church? Do these nonfixed boundaries only exist in individual churches, or do they stretch across time and space, expanding or broadening our definition of community and text? Chapter 3 paints a picture of a complex community, a community of minister and congregation working together to create a text which is itself complex. Yet, the picture is of three individual church communities. Given the cultural knowledge that shapes African-American worship traditions, community boundaries should expand beyond the confines of one church's walls. Chapter 4, therefore, focuses on how Reverend M. expands the boundaries of community across time and space. Specifically, in this chapter, we have an opportunity to see Reverend M. creating community through the sermons in a church other than his own. This next chapter focuses on Reverend M. as he was a guest preacher running a week-long revival at a church in another city. Taken together, chapters 3 and 4 provide a multidimensional picture of both the major literate text and how it functions in and among African-American churches.

4

Broadening the Community Boundaries Through the Text: Reverend M. in a New Congregation

What happens to the goal of creating a community identity through the sermon when a minister preaches not to his or her home church but to a different congregation? Are the rhetorical strategies that the minister uses with a "new" congregation similar to or different from the ones he or she uses with his or her own congregation? What constitutes shared knowledge when a minister is not preaching to his or her home church? I was given the opportunity to pursue these questions in 1993, 5 years after I had completed the original study with Reverend M. and the other two ministers.

Reverend M. ran a week-long revival at the Ohio church in which I was a member. After an exchange of letters and phone calls with Reverend M., I reestablished contact, set up tentative interview times, and started preparing myself to do fieldwork during this revival.[1] The opportunity to do this additional fieldwork is significant to this study because it allows me to illustrate that the sermon as a literacy event and the literacy traditions that are evident in the three churches highlighted in previous chapters, are not unique to those three churches. These literacy principles operate outside the ministers' home churches. To avoid overlap between chapters 3 and 4, I devote most of chapter 4 to a discussion of features not discussed in chapter 3. But the "new" features that I highlight, namely uses of storytelling and intertextuality, can be found in the sermons of Reverends N. and P.

[1]Reverend M. ran the revival for four consecutive years, at the church in Columbus. This revival, like most, is a 6-day event. The revival minister, a guest preacher from out of town, preaches two sermons on Sunday and one sermon each evening, Monday through Friday. In southern African-American churches, revival is also referred to as *homecoming* because many former members living out of town return home for the services.

SETTING THE SCENE

Although I had not seen Reverend M. in 5 years, this was not the first time he had been to Columbus to participate in a worship service with this congregation. He and many members of his congregation had attended the installation service of my minister (an event that took place before I joined this church) in Columbus. He was also the person who had recommended this minister, Reverend S., be hired at this Columbus church. She had been an assistant pastor at Reverend M.'s church and had interned there as a graduate student pastor. Additionally, the "Sisterhood," women's groups at both Reverend M.'s and Reverend S.'s churches, had visited with each other over the years. And one need not look far to see Reverend M. and his church's influence on Reverend S. and her church. Reverend M.'s church had even contributed financial gifts in the past to this church. Thus, Reverend M. was no stranger to this congregation. Therefore, there was much anticipation about his arrival to preach the revival, which included two Sunday morning sermons and one evening sermon each week night.

My anticipation led to nervousness on my part because my only contact with Reverend M. in the previous 5 years had been the letter and phone call that we exchanged the week before to reestablish contact and gain permission to gather additional data. I had also sent him a letter several years earlier with his copy of my dissertation. Therefore, when I arrived at the early service at 7:50 a.m. on a stormy, Sunday morning in a downpour, I did not quite know what to expect. My first thoughts were those of worry that Reverend M. would be preaching to a near-empty sanctuary because so few people were there, and service was to start in 10 minutes. When I entered the sanctuary, I looked around and saw Reverend M. at the back of the church near the fellowship hall door. After putting my things in a pew, I turned to the back to go speak to Reverend M. and reintroduce myself, but he had headed down the side aisle to the front of the church to the organ, a move that was to become a regular pattern over the next 5 days. He had just started to play when I arrived at the organ. He looked up at me with no glimmer of recognition until I said, "I'm Beverly." Then he smiled, said hello, and we reconfirmed our appointed time for an interview over lunch. Just a few minutes later, service began with a near empty sanctuary. However, by time for the 10:30 a.m. service, there was standing-room only.

I began my fieldwork by attending both services on Sunday, and continued with the Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday evening services; I also collected audiotapes of each sermon and videotapes of the last three sermons. Finally, in addition to conducting an open-ended interview with Reverend M., I also conducted open-ended interviews with members of my congregation. The data reported in this chapter come

from the five services and sermons at which I was present and from the accompanying audio- and videocassettes.

One of the important discoveries to emerge from this most recent fieldwork and analysis was how little Reverend M.'s sermons changed for this Columbus congregation. Even though he spoke to me about having to make adjustments when he preached to a new congregation, Reverend M. seemed to make few noticeable adjustments with this congregation in terms of the rhetorical strategies used in his sermons. Maybe there were so few changes because Reverend M. was familiar enough with this congregation that he could count on certain things. He could count on preaching to urban African Americans who, like members of his own congregation, worshiped within a traditional African-American style. He could count on preaching to a congregation whose service and daily operation were conducted very much like his own because he had mentored and trained the minister. Thus, there was already a community identity that Reverend M. and this congregation shared. There were already shared expectations from all participants. Consequently, the rhetorical strategies that I highlight in this chapter are remarkably similar to those of sermons to his own congregation. Two of these strategies—use of dialogue and shared knowledge—I discussed in the previous chapter; two I introduce here—use of stories and music as examples of intertextual relationships. However, although I introduce the latter strategies in this chapter that focuses on Reverend M., they were strategies that were used consistently by Dr. N. in his sermons also. Through the analysis in this chapter, community identity is cast in broader terms. Not only were Reverend M. and the congregation creating and maintaining communal bonds through the sermon, but Reverend M. was also placing himself and the congregation within an already established community. He was linking them with their history, strengthening their cultural bonds. The discussion in this chapter illustrates this process. Finally, in this chapter, I use more and longer sermon excerpts as examples in order to illustrate the complexities, multilayerdness, and extended examples of intertextuality evident in African-American sermons.

A NEW CHURCH

The Columbus church, like Reverend M.'s Chicago church, belongs to the United Church of Christ denomination. It is a 21-year-old church that, at one point prior to 1991, had less than 15 active members and no minister. Services were held in the party house of a low-income apartment complex where parishioners sat on metal folding chairs. This was the state of the Columbus church when Reverend S. arrived from

Reverend M.'s church to be minister. Since then, the congregation has moved into a new church, and the membership has increased to approximately 200, making it one of the fastest growing churches in the denomination. Reverend S., who calls Reverend M. her mentor and her pastor, patterns herself and her church after Reverend M. and his church. Therefore, here one finds many of the same auxiliary organizations, although on a much smaller scale, that one finds in Reverend M.'s church. One also finds similarities in the way that the worship services are conducted. This is the setting for Reverend M.'s running of the annual revival in 1993.

ENTERING A NEW CHURCH: THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES

Even though Reverend M. was preaching to a congregation different from his own, it became clear early in the fieldwork that he did not consider this congregation totally unfamiliar; nor did he feel the need to abandon many of the strategies that were evident in his home church sermons.

One of the patterns that leaped out at me as I sat in the pew during all the sermons and as I listened to tapes and reviewed fieldnotes was the high level of participation in the sermons by the congregation. Of course, this is a pattern that I had become so familiar with over the years because of its prominence in most African-American churches that I had begun to take it for granted. It is a pattern that almost any discussion of African-American preaching addresses. Just as in the three churches highlighted in the previous two chapters, in this church, the congregation and Reverend M. engaged in a call-and-response dialogue. At times during the revival sermons, the feedback from the congregation was so intense that it was impossible to separate speaker from audience. Again, this is not new to African-American churches. Yet it was fascinating to see that this type of collaborative response, this "talking back," was as effective between Reverend M. and this "new" congregation as it was between Reverend M. and his own congregation. Consider the following exchange from "It's Shoutin' Time":

When you shout before the battle is over (Preach!)
It puts things in a proper perspective (Yeah!)
It puts you in a posture of obedience (Yeah!)
And it puts things in a proper perspective
But finally
When you shout before the battle is fought
It puts the enemy in confusion (Yeah! That's right!)

The parenthetical expressions, responses from the congregation, do not appear on separate lines because there was little or no pause between the minister's statement and the congregation's response. Often, the congregation's response overlapped with the minister's statement. This type of feedback was typical in the sermons Reverend M. preached to this congregation as was applause, people standing, cheering, and so on. Practically every sermon Reverend M. preached ended with the majority of the congregation on their feet clapping and talking back to Reverend M.

One of the more interesting highlights of the dialogue or call-and-response collaboration occurred in a sermon within the sermon. In one evening sermon, for example, Reverend M. discussed how his mother used to talk back to preachers anywhere, he took on the roles of both his mamma and the preacher:

She be sittin' there sayin' "Well, well," "Don't you see?"
"Help yourself!" (laughter from congregation)
"Yes sir"
"Glory"
Preacher say "He's a Burden Bearer"
My mamma say "Yes he is"
Preacher say "He can make a way"
My mamma say "Yes he can"
Preacher say "The Lord will provide"
My mamma say "Yes he will"

This enactment of his mother involved in the dialogue with the preacher not only paralleled the behavior of many in the congregation to whom Reverend M. was preaching at that very moment, but it also established this behavior as a cultural pattern. Note Reverend M.'s preference for direct speech rather than reported or paraphrased speech. His description of his mother was from his memory as a child in Philadelphia. Now, he is standing in front of a congregation in Ohio almost 40 years later engaging them in the same practice, a practice that has become ingrained in the African-American church. Also of note is Reverend M.'s style shift into a form of VBE, a style shift that occurred throughout the sermons when he preached in his own church as well as in the revival sermons.[2] Note, for example, the habitual past tense "she be sittin' there sayin'" and the absence of -s on verb endings in third person singular, "my mamma say" and "the preacher say." Reverend M. shifts from SE to VBE when he feels that it fits the topic, when it will make his meaning clearer (for some) when he needs to "bring it to them

[2]See the discussion of code switching in chapter 3.

in a cup they can recognize," or when he needs to "sound Black." At times, the shift is purposeful and, at other times, it just happens. Whenever it happens, it is always rhetorical; that is, it is always meaningful for both Reverend M. and the audience. Finally, Reverend M. can and does move in and out of VBE and SE at will.

SHARED EXPECTATIONS AND SHARED KNOWLEDGE

Other patterns stood out as well because they were as dominant in Reverend M.'s revival sermons as with his own congregation. One of those patterns was Reverend M.'s reliance on shared knowledge, in this case knowledge of the Bible. As I discussed in the previous chapter, to engage in scriptural dialogue, Reverend M. relied on shared knowledge of Biblical Scriptures between him and his congregation. That same expectation of shared knowledge surfaced in Reverend M.'s revival sermons. Consider the following examples from three of the sermons:

It's Shoutin Time:

Reverend M.: His word said what
Let the redeemed of the Lord what?
Congregation: Say it
Reverend M.: Say so

Living With the Five Senses:

Reverend M.: First in Isaiah
You remember Isaiah heard God describing the work
and the way of the Messiah
What did he hear Him say?
He shall feed his flock like a
Congregation: Shepherd
Reverend M.: Shepherd

When You Forget Who You Are:

Reverend M.: lot of 'em preach a gospel that says
y'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God
But the Word says
Congregation: All have sinned

Each of these examples, like the ones in the previous chapter, indicates an expectation on Reverend M.'s part that the congregation will respond at the appropriate time with the appropriate response, which it did. The congregation showed no signs of surprise or

discomfort on the occasions when Reverend M. engaged them in this scriptural dialogue. It was expected behavior within the community institution based on shared knowledge.

Yet, as indicated in the previous chapter, shared knowledge is a complex issue. It refers to those moments in the text when the minister and congregation rely on common backgrounds and experiences, a shared knowledge base and situational contexts to help them make meaning within the text. A contributing factor to the complexity is the multiple memberships that both minister and congregation members hold and the multiple roles they play in various cultural groups, subcultures, and communities—some of those memberships and roles shared and some not. Shared knowledge operated virtually the same in the revival services as it did in Reverend M.'s home church. I was struck again by the range of knowledge that Reverend M. assumes on the part of a congregation, especially one that is somewhat unfamiliar. I was also struck again by Reverend M.'s use of the familiar—the shared—to introduce the unfamiliar.

First, as highlighted in the previous chapter's discussion of Reverend M.'s reliance on shared knowledge, even when visiting a sister church, Reverend M. relies on a broad knowledge base from which he makes references, from which he pulls examples. That knowledge base spans cultural and community boundaries, historical and contemporary time frames, secular and sacred traditions. The boundaries are so blurred and the base so large that I wondered whether anyone other than Reverend M. possibly understood all the allusions he made in the shared knowledge moments. Yet, as I think the following examples illustrate, it is because of the broad knowledge base, the crossing of so many boundaries, that so many people in the congregation did connect with Reverend M.'s sermons. Because of the volume and diversity of examples or references in these shared knowledge moments, Reverend M.'s sermons were far more inclusive and accessible rather than exclusive and inaccessible. One member stated that anytime she is unfamiliar with a reference from Reverend M. that the "unfamiliarity peaks my curiosity" and she tries to find out what she does not know.

Reverend M.'s sermon "What Makes You So Strong?"[3] is filled with moments of shared knowledge that cross boundaries. Constructed around three basic questions—What makes you so strong, Black man?

[3]"What Makes You So Strong?" is both the title of the sermon and title of the published book of Reverend M.'s sermons. This book is a collection of 10 sermons Reverend M. preached from 1990 through 1992. Originally, the sermons were preached as part of a series of services honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. However, two of the sermons were preached in 1993 during the revival in the Columbus, Ohio church.

What makes you so strong, Black woman? What makes you so strong, Black people?—this sermon contains some of the most remarkable examples of reliance on shared knowledge in the 12 or more sermons I have collected from him over the years. Consider the following examples from Reverend M.'s "What Makes You So Strong?":

Example 1:

How is it that three hundred and seventy years of slavery, segregation, racism, Jim Crow laws and second class citizenship cannot wipe out the memory of Imhotep, Aesop, Akhenaton, and Tutmose II
What makes you so strong, Black Man?
How is it that after all this country has done to you, you can still produce a Paul Robeson, a Thurgood Marshall, a Malcolm X, Al-Hag Malik Al Shabazz, a Martin King, a Ron McNair?

Example 2:

You break out in a W.E.B. DuBois and a Booker T. Washington You break out in a Louis Farrakhan and a Juwanza Kunjufu You break out in a Judge Bruce Wright and a Gene Pinchum
You break out in a Luther Vandross, a Magic Johnson, a Michael Jordan, and a Harold Washington
I don't care what field we pick
You produce a giant in that field

Example 3:

How is it that three hundred and seventy years of that
Does not kill the spirit of a Nzinga, Cleopatra, Nefertiti, Makeda, the Queen of Sheba . . . .

Example 4:

How is it that after all this country has done to you
After all white women have done to you
After all white men have done to you
After all black men have done to you
After all your own men have done to you
You can produce a Angela Davis, a Toni Morrison, a Betty Shabazz, a Winnie Mandela
What makes you so strong, black woman?

Example 5:

You keep turnin' out Zora Neale Hurstons and Mari Evans
and Mary Se Condes and Anita Bakers and Gladys Knights
and Winnie Mandelas
The mothers of Zimbabwe
The mothers of Soweto
The mothers of Angola
The mothers of Namibia
The mothers of [ ]
The mothers of Columbus
What makes you so strong black woman?

Each of the names in the five examples carries no defining information except what the congregation members can glean from the linguistic contexts in which the examples occur. The congregation knows, for example, that the names in the first two examples are of strong Black men, and that the names in Examples 3, 4, and 5 are of strong Black women, and as Reverend M. states in his text, the people are from various fields. That much information is provided. However, the congregation is left to rely on that shared knowledge to fill in the fields. The names span hundreds, even thousands of years, continents, oceans, and professions. They are ancient African ancestors, queens, philosophers; they are civil rights leaders, anti-apartheid leaders, activists, entertainers from the early and latter parts of the 20th century; literary giants, past and present, icons of popular culture; they are educators and astronauts; they are today's popular athletes. Local, national, and international figures, past and present, fill up the lists in the examples. Most importantly, there are so many names on this list from so many different fields that everyone in the congregation is bound to recognize at least one person, most likely several people. His examples are so broadly based that they appeal to someone who is an admirer of rhythm and blues singer Luther Vandross or astronaut Ron McNair, African physician Imhotep or basketball star Michael Jordan.

Although it appears that Reverend M. has constructed examples that might intimidate some because of the broad knowledge base that they must have to know, the examples seemed to have the opposite effect on the Columbus congregation. Rather than focusing on who they did not know in the lists, they focused on who they did know. They also focused on how great Reverend M.'s knowledge is to be able to construct those lists. One member explained that Reverend M. "has decided to use all of his experiences and travels in his sermons but not in a condescending way." Another member said about Reverend M.'s use of examples that cross so many boundaries that "he is always

teaching." She saw the use of examples such as those just cited as teaching and preaching moments. It did not matter that she did not know all the references; she was happy to be introduced to her own heritage. My own response was like most of the congregation's. Even though I recognized most of the references, I didn't recognize all of them, but I knew from the context and from my own knowledge base of sports, literature, entertainment, history, and other aspects of African and African-American culture that these people were all examples of strong Black men and women, and that I, too, was being taught about my heritage.

Even though I did not include the audience response in the transcription of the examples, in my fieldnotes and the original transcriptions, I noted how much louder the "talking back" became in these parts of the sermon, particularly in the examples on Black women. Of course, the majority of the congregation were Black women. That is the case in most mainline Protestant African-American churches. Reverend M. recognizes the role of women and acknowledges it in his example, which hails mothers in Africa and mothers in Columbus as strong Black women. Although some women in the congregation may think they know very little about mothers in Africa, they do know about mothers in Columbus. Reverend M. connects to the congregation "where they are" and uses "a cup they can recognize to bring something new," a link between Columbus mothers and African mothers.

Examples 1 through 5 are important for other reasons than just the shared knowledge aspect. Reverend M., in a direct yet somewhat subtle way, is also sending the message "look at us Black folk; we've achieved great successes in all kinds of fields throughout the world, over time, under extraordinarily adverse conditions." Each name that he speaks provides this African-American congregation more information about its heritage and more reason to be proud of their heritage, to be "unashamedly Black." In that sense, he is very much teacher and preacher. Reverend M. also is using history to uplift very much in the way that has occurred throughout the tradition of African-American churches. These types of examples also show how close to the "prophetic" and "communal" poles on the Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) scale (see chap. 1 for a detailed discussion of the dialectic poles Lincoln and Mamiya set up) Reverend M. is. That is, he is concerned with liberation and all aspects of the lives of church members. Lincoln and Mamiya also suggested a dialectic pole between resistance and accommodation. Lincoln and Mamiya stated that "resistance means affirming one's own heritage, in this case African American heritage" (p. 15). Clearly, as noted in chapter 2, Reverend M. is on the resistance end of the dialectic. The previous examples indicate how faithful Reverend

M. is to uplifting his African-American people and focusing on the needs of his African-American congregation. Reverend M. preaches to Black folk about the Word and about Black folk. He is very attuned to his audience. Many of his comments in our interviews speak to how important it is that he stay in tune with his audience, that he "know where they are."

I mentioned earlier that I was also struck again, as I was when discussing Reverend M.'s sermons to his own congregation, by Reverend M.'s use of the familiar—the shared—to teach the unfamiliar to this "new" congregation. This strategy highlights another level of complexity of shared knowledge. As pointed out in the previous chapter, shared knowledge is based on more than knowledge of information or a simple list of names. It is also knowledge of the African-American sermon as a genre and knowledge of expected behavior within the context of that genre. Reverend M. uses the sermon, a familiar context, to teach or share new information with congregations.

As expected, much of that information is about the Word of God—the Bible, but a large amount of that information is about African and African-American culture. Sometimes the lessons are explicit and sometimes implicit. That is, sometimes Reverend M. provides a full explanation, such as the one he gave of the what, when, where, and who of the Harlem Renaissance in one sermon. He does so again with his detailed narrative about preaching at the Black Theology Project on Martin Luther King in Cuba (an excerpt is provided later in this chapter), a narrative that provided the congregation with background knowledge on this event. Other times, he just lists names in the context of an example, as he did in the previous five examples of strong Black men and women; the beauty, in the use of the lists is that the information is both shared and new knowledge. Reverend M. is simultaneously introducing some in the congregation to new information like Imhotep and Nefertiti as strong Black people and relying on a sense of shared knowledge because he does not provide any details about these people.[4]

Sometimes, using the familiar to teach the unfamiliar is as simple as drawing an analogy between something the members know quite well and something less familiar. Consider the following two examples from "Living With the Five Senses," the first one just a brief one-line analogy and the second one a long, detailed, elaborately woven analogy:

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[4]Reverend M., in his published collection of sermons that includes "What Makes You So Strong?" provides endnotes for most of the African references in his text. These endnotes explain who each of the references are.

Example 1:

Gabriel, the master musician
the Wynton Marsalis of the heavenly sphere[5]

Example 2:

And [Tom] Skinner came and gave us the theology according to Michael Jordan.
Michael Jordan is a great theologian.
He's got a theology we need to adopt.
What do you mean?
I mean this.
Every time Michael gets to the top of that post position
When they pass him the ball,
Three men are assigned to stop Michael [congregation: "That's right!"]
Soon as the ball touches his hand,
He knows he's got six hands coming to try to block him from shooting.
When you notice that happens,
Michael does not stop,
Call time out and go over to the sideline and say
"Coach Jackson,
Could you please do something about these three men they put on me?
Would you go over there and talk to the coach of the Portland Trailblazers and explain to him that they need to take at least two of those men off of me so that I can do my best?"
No No No No!
Michael doesn't do that.
Michael puts that tongue out [Reverend M. mimics Jordan]
Starts backin up,
Weaves and bobs and comes around,
Goes up under and then something says
"In your face!"
And that's the theology that African Americans and the African-American church needs to adopt.

Whereas Example 1 draws an analogy between the earthly talents of jazz and classical trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and the heavenly talents of Gabriel, it is Example 2 to which the congregation reacted strongly. One does not have to be a basketball fan to understand the Michael Jordan

[5]Reverend M. explained in a 1994 revival sermon at the very same church in Columbus where he preached the 1993 revival sermons that he had done a recording with Jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. Marsalis, who had never met Reverend M., requested that Reverend M. perform the preaching solo of a song on one of Marsalis' albums.

reference. So when Reverend M. began to explain his "in your face" theology by using Michael Jordan's basketball skills as an example, he was providing them with a very familiar starting point to make meaning of his words. Also, because it was NBA playoff time when Reverend M. preached this sermon, Jordan and the Chicago Bulls were the topic of conversation in print and broadcast journalism on a daily basis. Would the Bulls threepeat? Does Jordan have a gambling problem? Will the Bulls fall to the Knicks? In this case, using the familiar to teach or preach about the unfamiliar was made easier because of Jordan's role as a popular culture icon.

Often, for Reverend M., using the familiar—the shared—meant relying on local knowledge of the congregation to help people understand a point or to emphasize a point, as is illustrated in the following example from "It's Shoutin' Time":

Now you know a lot of us,
Now that we've gotten affluential
And moved to the suburbs of Columbus,
We don't live on Mt. Vernon no more.
We live out in Westerville in the suburbs.

In this example, Reverend M. mentions two locations, Mt. Vernon, a street in the heart of the African-American community on the near eastside of Columbus, and Westerville, a northeast suburb of Columbus. Reverend M.'s use of local knowledge in this example gave the congregation a more concrete picture of those who have forgotten the struggles of the past, forgotten how those people in the past could not even drive through a Westerville, but would still "sing the praises of God anyhow" when they were in the midst of hard times.

As mentioned earlier, the context of the African-American sermon and worship style is itself part of the familiar or the shared. Sometimes, placing new information within the boundaries of a sermon makes the information more accessible to the congregation. For example, it is within the context of the sermon that Reverend M. teaches this Ohio congregation about the African origins of shouting and teaches them the Arabic word for shouting "sout." It is within the context of the sermon that he explains to people how eskimos kill wolves with the wolves' own blood, that the first Black woman to get a medical degree from Harvard did so in the early 1800s, that Esther's original name was Hadassah, that there was an East African slave trade before there was a West African slave trade, and that Africans and African Americans have been reaching great heights since the beginning of time.

To emphasize the sermon as shared knowledge is important in this community because how one receives information is as important as what information one receives. As I pointed out in chapter 3, for most African-American preachers, the how and what—the form and content—are inseparable. That is not always the way form and content are addressed in the academy. Members of the congregation could encounter some of the very same information in their schools as they did in these sermons (although most likely not the same amount of information about their African and African-American culture). But they may not find the information presented in school as accessible as that which they receive through Reverend M.'s sermons. I address this aspect of literacy and learning in a later chapter, exploring the relation between learning styles and cultural norms.

The way that Reverend M. used shared knowledge in his home church hardly differed from the way he used it with this Columbus congregation. That there is not any real difference suggests several things. Most importantly, it suggests that Reverend M. assumes that communal bonds already exist between him and this Columbus congregation; he relies and builds on those bonds. This discussion suggests that the multiple community identities he seeks to establish with his own congregation are similar to the community identities that he seeks to establish and maintain with the Columbus congregation. Also important is that the boundaries—the expectations—extend beyond the individual churches to broader communities. Most likely, the boundaries are culturally situated. Reverend M. assumes a broader cultural context from which to establish and maintain community identities.

THE ROLE OF THE NARRATIVE: TELLING STORIES

In *Black Preaching*, Mitchell (1970) highlighted the importance of storytelling in African-American sermons, a point that is reiterated by several other scholars (Jones, 1976; Smitherman, 1977; Spillers, 1974). More importantly, it is a sentiment reiterated and put into practice by the ministers in this study. Although storytelling was an effective strategy for Reverend M. and Dr. N. in their own churches (Reverend P. used the story less frequently than the other two),[6] I highlight Reverend M.'s use of the narrative in his sermons during the revival because it was so striking, and because the discussion also extends to the way he uses narrative in his sermons to his own congregation. The narrative, the storytelling tradition, dominated the sermons as the major identifiable strategy for illustrating a theme. Smitherman (1977) suggested that not only is

[6]I have discussed Dr. N.'s use of narrative in Moss (1994).

> the storytelling tradition strong in Black American culture, . . . the relating of events becomes a black rhetorical strategy to explain a point, to persuade holders of opposing views to one's own point, and in general to "win friends and influence people." (p. 148)

Smitherman referred to this storytelling tradition as *narrative sequencing*.

In 1994, Reverend M. returned again to Columbus to run the revival for a second time at the same church where I gathered the data (just the year before) on which this chapter is based. It was during this 1994 visit that we discussed the role of stories in the sermon and in African-American culture. Reverend M. suggests that "Black folk relate to stories; they don't want that logical, syllogistic form. . . . It's [storytelling] part of our heritage. It goes back to the Griots." Reverend M. is echoed by Smitherman, who acknowledged the Griots as "revered persons," storytellers who maintain and pass down an accurate record of tribal history through stories. This discussion with Reverend M. took place just after one of his sermons on a week night. When I asked him about the role of stories in his sermons and their affect on the congregation, before he provided the answer just cited, he informed me that he was addressing the role of stories in the next night's sermon, "Lost and Found." It is this part of that sermon that is transcribed here:

So Jesus told them three parables.
Webster reminds us that a parable is a story,

A simple story told to illustrate a moral truth.
Something simple to teach something profound.

I was talking with Dr. Moss last night about that, this is the African way of pedagogy, the Black way of teaching
The Black way, the African way of teaching is not so much by syllogism and linear arguments, it is by telling a story Stories like the Anansi stories in West Africa, Central America and Belize in the Caribbean,
The Brer Rabbit stories,
The stories from the painful experiences of chattel slavery.
The Lord Jesus told them three stories:

One about a lost sheep
One about a lost coin
And one about the lost sons

This particular sermon is based on the parable of the lost coin. Although there may have been a line or two added to the sermon based on our discussion the night before, as Reverend M. had indicated, he had

already prepared this sermon and had already included a discussion of parables or stories. Again, Reverend M.'s position is supported by Smitherman (1977) who stated that, "the rendering of sermons in the traditional Black church nearly always involves extended narration as a device to convey the theme. Rarely will Black preachers expound their message in the linear fashion of a lecture" (p. 150). An academic lecture where there is a thesis statement and three or so points that follow to support that statement is what comes readily to mind. Another important point to make here is that Reverend M., in that statement about the story being the African way of pedagogy, confirms that he sees himself as a teacher as well as a preacher. He might even suggest that the roles of preacher and teacher cannot be separated.

Given Reverend M.'s basic philosophy that stories or parables are part of the tradition of Black folk in the African diaspora and his belief that Black folk relate better to stories than linear arguments, it should be no surprise that Reverend M.'s sermons are full of parables. In this part of the discussion, I use parable and story interchangeably based on the definition that Reverend M. has provided in the aforementioned excerpt. These parables are often based on Biblical parables; sometimes, they are personal, many times, they are stories about someone else who Reverend M. knows, and sometimes, they are someone else's story as told to Reverend M. Whatever the source of the parable, they were the major strategy used to illustrate points in the revival sermons.

"When You Forget Who You Are" is a sermon based on the Biblical story of Esther. It even begins with the traditional narrative frame "once there was, . . ." a version of the "Once upon a time" traditional beginning of stories. Consider how Reverend M. introduces this story:

> Once there was a girl named Hadassah
> and Hadassah had a series of problems

Reverend M. explains that Hadassah was renamed Esther and then he illustrates her problems using narrative. Her main problem, of course, was that she "forgot who she was."

Although another sermon, "What Makes You So Strong?", is organized around a series of questions, the sermon also focuses on the story of Samson. Reverend M. retells the story of Samson and what makes him so strong. And even though the story of Samson is compelling, it is the story with which Reverend M. ends this sermon that I want to highlight. It is Reverend M.'s dramatic telling of the story that illustrates Smitherman's (1977) point that in the sermon, "the thematic motif is dramatized with gestures, movement, plot, real-life characterizations, and circumlocutory rhetorical flourishes" (p. 150).

Specifically, Reverend M. tells a story about an event that he witnessed. In the story, the main character is using a simple example to illustrate something profound, and Reverend M.'s retelling of the story with sound effects is an example of telling a simple story to illustrate something profound. Consider this parable excerpted from "What Makes You So Strong?":

When I was a student at divinity school,
the third year I was there I had a great great experience that will live forever in my memory.
They have at the University of Chicago Divinity School every year what they call Baptist Day.
Why?
Because the University of Chicago is a Baptist School,

And Rockefeller
Y'all know John Rockefeller?
that Rockefeller money?
They were Baptist and they put a lot of money in the University of Chicago.
So in their nod toward God day,
They had this Baptist Day thing once a year.
And they invite all the Baptist preachers from the city to come up and fellowship on the campus of the divinity school.
And they'd let them hear lecturers in the morning and afternoon.
And you bring a sack lunch.
They provide you with that red punch that you find in churches all over the world.
Sack lunch means you bring your own lunch in a brown bag.
And my third year in school we had a masterpiece of a lecture.
This was 1972.
One of the professors there lectured on this whole mythology
of Jesus and the resurrection.
He pointed out that there was a Jesus.
There was a historical Jesus.
He was a good man,
But he did not get up from the dead . . . . . .
For two hours and fifteen minutes he lectured like that.
At the end of his lecture he said "Are there any questions?"
And it was so quiet in that room you hear a rat urinating on cotton at a hundred yards.
He got a room full of preachers,
Baptist preachers, most of 'em Black.
And one of the brethren stood up in the back

Lookin' sorta like Reverend Troy Sr.
White hair, dark-skinned brother.
He stood up and reached into his little sack lunch, his brown paper bag,
And he pulled out an apple
And he said,
"Yea, yea I gotta question Doc
I ah (makes crunch sound to imitate eating apple) I never been to none of dem places you were (Crunch) lecturin' bout today (Crunch) Macedon (Crunch) the garden tomb
And I don't know none of dem fellas (Crunch) that you were quotin'
I read one or two (Crunch)
But I don't know 'em personally like you know em (Crunch)
But I do have a question
And my question is
Was the apple I just ate was it bitter or was it sweet?"
The professor said
"I could not possibly answer your question
I did not taste the apple"
He said
"Well that's what I wanna tell you about my Jesus
You ain't tasted Him either
Ohhh taste and see that the Lord is good
I tried Him for myself
I tasted Him myself and He's sweet
I know this ain't nothin' I read bout
This is somethin' I live everyday
Don't tell me He ain't risen
I just talked to Him this mornin"
Oh yea He's sweet
Say yeah [congregation responds: Yeah]

Although a transcription cannot capture the physical gestures, facial expressions, and tonal rhythms that contribute to meaning making for most African Americans who are a part of this speech event, Reverend M.'s excerpt does include some of the dramatic elements of which Smitherman spoke: gestures, movement, plot, real-life characterizations, and circumlocutory rhetorical flourishes. Also important to note is that it is not clear whether the final seven lines are part of the Baptist preacher's story or Reverend M.'s or both, because Reverend M. moves seamlessly from the story to "opening the doors of the church" and inviting people to "walk the aisle." This story-within-the-story is typical of the way that Reverend M. uses narrative.

In "It's Shoutin' Time," Reverend M. structures the sermon around three stories. He opens the sermon with a story that explains the origin of the sermon title, namely a narrative about his mother's history of shouting. He continues with this narrative throughout the sermon, sometimes stepping away from it to make another point but always returning to it. He adds a second biblical parable—the story of the soldiers shouting in the Book of Joshua, chapter six. Reverend M. interweaves the stories about his mother and the soldiers to make a powerful statement about people shouting at the most unpredictable times. However, it is the final narrative that I highlight here because it encompasses the way Reverend M. uses story in his own church and in this guest church. Consider the following story that ends "It's Shoutin' Time":

Arlene _____, Dexter ____ was tellin me,
they was tellin my story all over the country,[7]
I don't care, tell it!
My daddy say after you say it one time publicly
it's public property. (laughing)
But it's my story. (That's right!)
So since this is my story
let me tell you how I know
when you praise Him ahead of time,
it gets victory for you (Yeah!)
In 1984,
one of the highest preaching moments in my life will live forever with me,
came as I was preaching as a member of the Black Theology Project.
I sat on the board.
I have sat on the board for over a decade of the Black Theology Project,
and we have been invited five times now.
We've been down to Cuba,
the [ ] Council of Churches,
Raoul Suarez,
the Baptist Student Movement hosts every year since 1968,
a theological hornada on the life, work and ministry of
Martin Luther King
Every year they have papers presented by theologians and pastors from
North America, Central America, and South America
And the way the [ ] works,
you have a paper in the morning presented by one country
and then responded to by the other two countries.

[7]I have used spacing (indentation) and punctuation to signal Reverend M.'s pauses and to assist the reader in reading this long excerpt.

It reverses in the afternoon
a paper presented by the other country responded to by the other two countries.
And at night we have some cultural activity
to look at the African presence in Cuba.
The Africans
by the way
in Cuba
have a museum in Guanabacoa that puts most of our African-American museums to shame.
They know exactly what tribes are on the islands
Where they are settled
What artifacts they brought
What music they brought
what foods they brought
And most of us don't wanna be Africans (Say It!)
But the Cubans know what they're doing.
They got it together
And in 84' on Tuesday they asked me
"Pastor _____
would you please preach the dedication service for the Martin Luther King Jr. Center
that we are opening here in Havana?"
I was highly honored and highly flattered
There were some great preachers in that group.
Wyatt T. Walker was one of them.
And Wyatt was one of Martin King's right-hand associates.
yet they asked me to preach.
I was so flattered.
I was humbled.
I was just excited.
I didn't know what to do.
I was just all bubbled
except for the fact that my translator
who was the same age of my oldest daughter.
My translator kept bugging me.
She said
"Pastor _____
I need your manuscript."
You see when you deliver papers.
we send our papers in a month, six weeks ahead of time so that the translators can familiarize themselves with them in any idiom.
And while you reading your paper with them little earphones

on,
they do simultaneous translation.
And you just dial any channel you want to.
You can hear it in Portuguese.
You can hear it in French.
You can hear it in Spanish or in English.
But when you preach,
ain't no lil simultaneous translation goin on.
You gotta say two or three sentences or a paragraph
then stop and let your translator say those two or three sentences.
So she wanted the manuscript so she could familiarize herself with it.
They asked me on Tuesday,
she asked me for my manuscript on Tuesday
I ain't have no manuscript.
She asked me on Wednesday
I still didn't have no manuscript.
And what was interesting is that every evening as we go on
our cultural affairs,
I would sit beside her because I was talking to her about Jesus.
She was not a [ ].
And what I was tellin y'all brothers last night about a personal relationship.
she never heard about a personal relationship with the Lord
Jesus Christ.
She knew about Nietchze.
She knew about [ ].
She knew about Lenin.
She knew about Marx.
She was studying for the Communist Party,
but she had not yet been accepted into the Communist Party. She did not know anything at all about the church except
for the Catholic Church
where you have to be rich to get your baby baptized in Cuba.
And she knew about Martin King and the Baptist Church.
She never heard of no United Church of Christ;
no Congregational, Christian, African Methodist,
African Methodist Episcopal, Zionist,
never heard none of that!
More importantly,
she had never heard about Jesus!
So every day,
and she's the same age as my oldest daughter,
I'm sittin beside her on the bus talkin to her about Jesus. Tellin her the story about Jesus.

Talkin to her about a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ,
about how He died for her,
He died for me.
And every time I would finish talkin
she say, "Have you finished your manuscript yet?"
[chuckles from the congregation]
And I said, "No."
Thursday I said, "Baby listen, I can't give it to you till
God gives it to me."
She said, "I don't understand."
I said "this preachin business is not just me talkin bout what I want to talk about,
I gotta talk about what the Lord wants me to talk about.
And the Lord has not given it to me yet."
She looked at me real funny.
I start talkin again about the personal relationship with the Lord and talkin to the Lord in prayer.
Finally, I gave it to her on Saturday.
When I gave it to her I said, "Now let me warn you,
sometimes I deviate from what's on that piece of paper."
[laughter from congregation]
She said, "Pourquoi?" Why? Why?
I said "because I'm tryin to serve the bread from heaven.
It is the bread of heaven this gospel that we preach.
And sometimes the Lord will give me something fresh out the oven,
it's too hot,
it'll burn the paper up." [clapping from congregation]
And if He gives it to me right out the oven
I'm gonna give it right when I get it."
I said "don't worry
I'll warn you and it won't be anything difficult,
nothing you can't translate,
nothing you can't say."
Sure nuf,
on Sunday night,
I got down to the end of the message,
and I was trying to demonstrate and illustrate that on April 4, 1968 when that shot rang out in Memphis and King fell on that balcony of the Lorraine Hotel dead,
it looked like it was all over.
It looked like the movement of Africans for freedom,
one hundred years after they'd gotten out of slavery
it was all over.

And as I was saying that it was all over,
there was no hope,
the Lord gave me something right out the oven.
I turned to her and I smiled and I said, "Goethe"
And she looked at the paper and looked at me.
And I shook my head
and so she put the paper down and just stared at me.
[laughter from congregation]
We had talked about Goethe that week.
Johann von Goethe is a guy wrote dis thing, "Faust."
Yall know,
Remember the story of "Faust" who had sold his soul to the devil? (yeah!)
Well that story about Faust selling his soul to the devil has been done in plays.
It has been done in operas.
It has also been done in art.
And right now hanging in the London Gallery
there's this beautiful art painting of the picture between
Faust and Mephistopheles,
that dual that they had is depicted this way.
There's a chess board that shows Faust on one side of the chess board and Mephistopheles on the other side.
She translated that.
Faust only has a king, a queen, one pawn and a bishop left.
Mephistopheles, satan, has got his men left.
Faust is sweatin and lookin all upset.
Mephistopheles is leering and grinning cause he knows he's got him.
And the name of the painting is "Checkmate."
It's all over.
And she translated that.
Well,
each day tourists go through the London Gallery
and each day tour guides take a group through explaining what each painting costs,
what the acquisition costs were
How much Lloyd's of London has insured it for.
And then they move painting by painting, gallery by gallery.
And one day nobody noticed that when they got to this painting called "checkmate,"
that as the group moved on
one man stayed behind.
He just kept walkin back and forth staring at the painting. The group moved to the next painting.

He didn't move.
he just stared at the painting.
They moved two paintings down.
He didn't move,
he just kept staring,
walking back and forth looking at that painting.
They moved into the next gallery.
He just stayed at that painting.
They moved into the next gallery.
He stayed right there in front of that painting.
They were two galleries down when they heard his voice come booming down the hall. . . .
"It's a lie! It's a lie!
The king has another move!" (All right!)
Nobody knew when the group went through that this man was the international chess champion.
See,
to the ordinary eye
it did look like checkmate.
But to the master's eye,
He could see a move that the ordinary eye could not see.
And on April the fourth nineteen sixty-eight
it looked like checkmate.
But to the Master's eye,
He could say "it's a lie!
The king has another move!" [clapping from congregation]
Then I said "early one Friday afternoon
when the sun went out about 12:01,
start lookin like checkmate up on Calvary!
When they bowed his head and died around three.
They just knew it was checkmate! (Yeah!)
All night Friday night it looked like checkmate! (Yeah!)
All day Saturday it looked like checkmate! (Yeah!)
All night Saturday night it looked like checkmate! (Yeah!)
But early on Sunday morning!
Early on Sunday morning! (Yeah!)
God said, "It's a lie! It's a lie!
The King has another move!" (Yeah!)
Only you know what happened?
You know what happened?
People up on their feet just like you are.[8]

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[8]This statement indicates that the Ohio congregation has been moved so by the sermon that they have risen to their feet.

Only they weren't lookin at me.
Wutn't nobody lookin at me.
They were all lookin at her.
You know why they were lookin at her?
I understood Spanish.
She had stopped translating what I was saying. (Whooah!)
She had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ! (Yes!)
She was shoutin over there, "Thank you Jesus! Thank you Lord! Thank you Lord!"

I include this story in its entirety because it shows the complexity of the story as a speech event, an event that is written down in a text that Reverend M. has in front of him. One of the most obvious elements of this story is the layered embeddings of narrative, the telling of the story about the London Gallery painting based on Faust placed within the conversion story of the translator, which is in turn embedded within the story about Reverend M. going to Cuba and being asked to preach. While some would argue that this is one big narrative with several themes or points, I suggest that this excerpt contains several related stories with several related themes under one narrative frame. Because the related stories occur seemingly in one event (actually there are several events—the bus ride, the sermon, the translator's conversion, and so on), one might overlook or ignore how skillfully Reverend M. weaves these stories and themes into one story and one theme. One might even overlook how Reverend M. takes a complex rhetorical act and makes it seem like a simple parable.

The Cuba story is also in keeping with Smitherman's (1977) earlier statements about narrative sequencing, dramatic motifs, plot, real-life characterizations, and so on. Most importantly, this story about Reverend M. in Cuba, about this translator, about this painting in the London Gallery, and about "the King having another move," was a story that appealed to the congregation. My fieldnotes and transcripts indicate their high degree of participation. Throughout this story, they laughed at funny comments, and they clapped. In the latter part of the story, several responses punctuated the story: "Yeah," "yes," "alright." And finally, at the climax, almost every person present was on his or her feet clapping and "talking back." When I talked to members of the congregation about this particular story, they described it as "exciting," "unbelievable, . . . the way he'd take a preached word, put it in a story, make it live and something that you could apply immediately." Another commented that "I love a good story."

One can also see that in this story Reverend M. relies on a familiar context to introduce new information. While he is telling this

conversion story, a familiar type of narrative within the sermon, he also introduces information about the Black Theology Project, about the London gallery and tidbits about Cuban culture, and about the story of Goethe's *Faust*. He reminds the congregation of the date and place that Martin Luther King was assassinated.

There are several other things going on in this story that should be noted. First, Reverend M., at the beginning of the story, addresses the issue of ownership of text, an important issue in the academy where plagiarism can ruin one's career and has economic consequences. As the excerpt indicates, Reverend M. believes that once he publicly preaches a sermon or tells a story within a sermon, that sermon or story is available to be used by others, and "it ain't yours no more" (Reverend M.). Although I address this issue of ownership of text in more detail in the following chapter, I point out how prevalent Reverend M.'s position is on owning sermons among African-American preachers. Even though a particular sermon may be associated with a particular preacher like "What Makes You So Strong?" and "When You Forget Who You Are" are with Reverend M. (especially now that they have been published), it would not be unusual to hear parts of those sermons or different versions of them in other preachers' sermons. This will be particularly interesting in light of Reverend M.'s published volume of sermons. Now that they are copyrighted, will they be looked at as fair game? Reverend M. notes, with humor, that other preachers have already retold his story across the country.

Rosenberg (1970), in his study of a Black preacher, discussed this minister's "Dry Bones" sermon. The minister and Rosenberg acknowledged the plethora of "Dry Bones" sermons that have been preached in African-American churches. Many African-American ministers joke about there being so many versions of the "Dry Bones" preached by so many different preachers that it does not belong to anyone. Thus, Reverend M.'s statement about ownership of text is important to consider in light of the academy and the copyright laws, and in light of the congregation's participation in the text. How would one copyright the dialogue that occurs?

Thus, an important question arises from the previous discussion regarding the relationship between Reverend M.'s use of stories and establishing a community identity. How does the story contribute to this community identity that is built within and through the sermon, if at all? Clearly, Reverend M. is concerned with those things that African Americans as a community or cultural group (as Reverend M.'s discussion of African pedagogy implies) identify with—the story or parable being one of those things. Thus, he relies on his knowledge of the expectations that African Americans have as a community about

religious discourse or discourse in general. Because he meets community expectations, he strengthens community ties and consequently community identity. Not to meet community expectations could place a strain on those bonds. It isn't the use of stories or parables alone that builds community identity, but the story along with the other textual and nontextual strategies that have been and will be discussed that create the community identity through the text.

INTERWEAVING SONG AND SERMON: INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE CHURCH

The central role of music and song in the African-American worship service is well known. As I noted in chapter 1, the African-American sermon itself has a rhythmical, musical quality. Turner (1988) stated that, "the spectrum of musical expression ranges from the sonorous delivery, which has a pleasant melodiousness, meter, and cadence to the full-blown chant or song" (p. 21). Several analyses have been done of the African-American chanted sermon, that songlike preaching style made popular by southern African-American preachers (for further discussion see G. Davis, 1985; Rosenberg, 1970), and the "musicality" of African-American sermons (Spencer, 1990). Spencer (1990) noted the connection between the use of melody and rhythm as an African tradition and an African-American preaching tradition:

> in Black preaching and West African folksinging, both fluctuate in pitch due to the voice being used as a practical tool of the expression rather than an instrument of *bel canto*. And both use repetitive cadential formulas melodically, rhythmically, and textually. (p. 228)

Spencer suggested that, "it was the rhythmic use of language that enabled black preachers such as Martin Luther King, Jr., to communicate the power beyond the literal word" (p. 231). Indeed, the rhythmic quality of King's sermons contributed greatly to his status as one of this world's greatest orators. The ministers in this study, although not chanters, made use of the rhythmic and melodic quality described earlier in their sermons. Reverend M., however, not only has this rhythmic quality to his sermons, he also uses songs within his sermons.

Possibly due to his musical background—he is an accomplished musician and singer and his doctoral dissertation focuses on the African-American music tradition in the African-American church—Reverend M.'s sermons represent an interweaving of the written word, the spoken, and the song. This interweaving of the three elements listed here represent what Bloome and Bailey (1992) referred to as intertextuality. As cited in the introduction of this volume

"intertextuality is a key concept in understanding relations between texts (including conversational and written texts), between and among events, between events and cultural ideology" (Bloome & Bailey, 1992, p. 198). African-American worship services abound with intertextual relationships. In many ways, my own analysis is centered on relations between texts, events, and cultural ideology, none of which can be separated from participants. As is evident so far, texts cannot really be separated from events, and cultural ideology dictates how the texts and events are constructed, received, and used.

As indicated in chapter 2, during the worship services in the three churches, oral and written texts are interrelated; speech events are interrelated, and texts and events grow out of a cultural tradition known as an African-American worship tradition. The sermon itself acts as a vehicle—an event—through which intertextuality works. As was evident in the previous chapter, for example, it is through the sermon that biblical texts are woven into the daily lives—"daily texts"—of the participants, namely the ministers and congregations. Those lives can be represented through personal testimony or narrative (as has been illustrated in this chapter). It is through the sermon that Reverend M. weaves together his written text, scriptural texts, biblical and personal stories, along with nonbiblical written texts and songs.[9]

I focus, in this discussion, on the intertextual relations between musical texts and Reverend M.'s sermons.[10] There are three ways in which this intertextuality surfaces in the sermons: (a) the song that ends the sermon is an extension of the sermon, (b) song lyrics are spoken often within the sermon, and (c) verses of songs are sung within the sermon as illustration of key points.

Reverend M. explained that when he prepares sermons for his own congregation, he always picks the song the choir sings at the end of the sermon because he considers those songs to be part of the sermon. They extend the message. Even when Reverend M. was running the revival in the Ohio church and working with a relatively unfamiliar choir and musician, he quite often steered the choir to sing a particular song at the end of the sermon. Consider the following examples, which were cited earlier as part of the narrative discussion, from the end of the sermons "It's Shoutin' Time" and "What Makes You So Strong?":

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[9]As I pointed out earlier, a concept related to intertextuality is *hypermedia*. Hypermedia models itself on the interaction of texts from different media—in this case, spoken, written, and musical.

[10]Although I am using Reverend M.'s sermons to demonstrate how he uses this feature of interweaving song in the sermon as an example of intertextuality, Reverend M. is not the only minister who uses this feature. The same feature was used in Dr. N.'s sermons within Dr. N.'s own style.

"It's Shoutin' Time":

She had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ [congregation response: Yes!]
She was shoutin' over there, "Thank You Jesus" Thank You Lord" "Thank You Lord"
The enemy was confused
God got the victory
Satan had lost a soul that he thought he had
I just wanna thank you Lord [line from song "Thank You Lord"}
[clapping from congregation]
Come on let's stand on our feet together
Praise God
[Thank You Lord
Thank You Lord
Thank You Lord
I just want to thank You Lord . . .

The bold-faced lines indicate the moment when Reverend M. and the congregation began to sing the song. This is also the moment at which the doors of the church were opened (also known as the call to discipleship when people are invited to join the church by walking down the aisle). Even though the bold-faced type indicates the beginning of the song, the song is a continuation of the latter part of the narrative and sermon. It was the translator's shouting of "thank you Lord" that created a space for this song in the sermon. And it is Reverend M., who thanks God for getting "another victory," who maintains the theme expressed in both the end of the narrative and the song.

Consider the following excerpt from "What Makes You So Strong?":

I tasted Him myself and He's sweet
I know this ain't nothin' I read bout
This is something I live everyday
Don't tell me He ain't risen
I just talked to Him this mornin'
Oh yeah, He's sweet
Reverend M.: Say Yeah
Congregation: Yeah
Reverend M.: Say Yeah
Congregation: Yeah
Reverend M.: Let's stand together on our feet He's sweet I know
He's sweet I know
Personal relationship, He
He's sweet I know oh

Clouds may rise
Clouds may rise
Strong winds may blow
And strong winds may blow
But I'll tell the world
But I'll tell the world
Wherever I go
Wherever I go
[Reverend M. and congregation in unison]: **He's sweet I know**

The excerpt from "What Makes You So Strong?" operates very much like the previous excerpt from "It's Shoutin' Time." "He's Sweet I Know" does not signal a break from the sermon but an extension of the theme at the end of the narrative. It is within the narrative that the "He's sweet" theme is introduced. The song just becomes part of the sermon. The song also enabled the minister and congregation to move in a seamless fashion from one part of the service to the other. Of course, the striking difference between the two excerpts is that in the latter one, Reverend M. recites the lines from the song and the congregation then sings it (the bold-faced type). This is not an unusual practice in African-American churches. This congregation was used to this practice with their own minister. The practice has its origins in southern rural African-American churches in which hymns were "lined" and/or "raised" (see Heath's *Ways With Words* for a discussion of "raising a hymn" or Spencer's *Protest & Praise* for a detailed discussion of hymns). That is, a leader in the hymn choir would recite a line from the hymn and the congregation would sing it in long meter style (a slow sung version replicating the "talk" of the leader) without music. The leader and congregation would go through the entire song in this fashion until the song was completed. I grew up in a small, rural, southern African-American church that continues to "line hymns." Therefore, the contemporary version of this practice, displayed by Reverend M., was not something new. And because so many urban African-American churches have a large number of members from small southern towns, they found this practice to be "just part of our tradition." In fact, this practice is a literacy tradition within many African-American church communities, a tradition that is called on by Reverend M. in this Ohio church.

Also, part of "our" tradition is quoting song lyrics or titles to help illustrate a point in the sermon, just the way some people quote lines from literary texts. Reverend M. makes use of this practice constantly in his sermons, as is evident in the previous examples when he cites a line from the songs that end the sermon. Most often, when Reverend M. quotes lines from songs in his sermons to his own

congregation, they occur at or near the end of the sermon. However, in the revival sermons, they occurred in various places in the text. This use of song lyrics and titles serves to increase the musicality of sermons. Spencer (1990) stated that,

> quotations from these sources [songs] evoke a musical disposition in the listener, not only due to the poetic form of these genres, but because familiarity with the lyric prompts recollection of the music. . . . To be sure, the congregation, as an integral component of the preaching event and of making or breaking the "song," is a conduit of the "surplus" and has direct bearing on contemporaneous sermonic form. (p. 241)

Surplus refers to that element expressed through music that "extends beyond literal words" (p. 226). Spencer's discussion of the consequences of the congregation's familiarity with the lyric and song for the sermon marks a strong relation between this familiarity and the congregation's role in the preaching event—the sermon. Again, reliance on shared knowledge forges to the front. What also forges to the front is the relation between song and sermon. Consider the following examples that illustrate how Reverend M. uses quotations from songs within his sermons:

"Living With the Five Senses":

Listen
Listen to our ancestors
They praise him
They sang **"You can't make me doubt him I know too much about him"**
Listen to your grandparents
They were just sayin' **"If anybody ask you who I am you tell them I'm a child of God."**
They had overwhelming obstacles facing them like we got facing us
They sang **"Hallelujah anyhow"**

"When You Forget Who You Are"

You forget all those old songs we used to sing. (Yeah!)
Songs that carried us through the darkest night,
Songs that sustained us when we didn't have half of what we have today,
Songs like **"I will trust in the Lord,"**
Songs like we sang Sunday **"I love the Lord He heard my cry."**

We done forgot all dem common meter long meter short meter hymns.
We don't like

In fact some of us gonna join a church where they don't song those old timey songs because we want our children to have a better Babylonian education and not sing them

I find these two examples particularly interesting because not only does Reverend M. rely on the quotation of the lyric or the title to evoke a certain sensory and spiritual response, he links these musical texts with their roles in the history of African Americans. He addresses how these songs represented the strong faith that African Americans relied on to get them through the rough times. Looked at in this light, these songs are placed within a cultural context; they become part of what shapes cultural expectations of how these songs were constructed and used in the past and how they are used now. For Reverend M., they become markers of one's cultural identity and markers of one's attachment to their cultural heritage—songs that remind the African-American congregation where they come from, who they are, and, as Reverend M. says, "whose they are."

This intertextual relationship is even more evident and literal when Reverend M., in the sermon, sings. Here, I am not referring to the chanted style of preaching in which the delivery of the sermon moves into a songlike cadence. Of course, that practice is also exemplary of the intertextual relations between music and the sermon. However, in this discussion, I refer to Reverend M. singing verses of actual songs in the sermon. Although this practice occurred regularly with Reverend M., it was in one sermon, "Living with the Five Senses," that the revival congregation was exposed to and participated in this practice several times. Consider the following example in which Reverend M. sings lines from two songs:

You get fired up for singing groups (Alright!)
All you old folks my age and older
One sister told me this morning
She said "All them songs you was singin
they're from my era
I know every last one of em
You right on my street"
And Walter
my age you just you just let them let them hear the first line of
Won't you stayyyyy
Stay in my corner [congregation members clap, some stand and clap, some sing along, and most laugh]
All them old folks say "oh yeah that's my jam"
. . . . And you young people

Stop laughing at us old folks
Stop laughing you young people
Stop laughin at us
Cause y'all get fired up over Boyz II Men
Although we've come
To the end of the road
Still I can't let you go
It's unnatural
You belong to me
I belong to you
God knows if you can get fired up over a singing group
I can get fired up over my savior

Both songs, "Stay in My Corner" and "We've Come to the End of the Road," were major rhythm and blues hits, the first one in the early 1970s and the latter one in 1993. That Reverend M. broke into song rather than reciting the verses as he did in excerpts cited earlier excited the crowd. People laughed, clapped, waved their hands, stood on their feet, sang along, or all of the above. Of course, both of these songs are secular songs that appeal to different age groups in the congregation. They are examples of how Reverend M. uses shared knowledge, of how he puts the message "in a cup they can recognize." In this case, the cup is a secular song. It is worth noting that Reverend M. is familiar with and feels free to use secular songs, thus, blurring the boundaries between secular and sacred.

Later in this same sermon, Reverend M. sings again. In discussing how the congregation's ancestors praised God through song, he states,

They didn't have fancy praise teams
But they would just stop in the middle
Out in the middle of the woods somewhere
In the middle of a church service with no accompaniment whatsoever
And just start up the church house saying
I love the Lord He Heard my cry
I love the Lord He Heard my cry [sung in a slow long meter fashion]

When Reverend M. began to sing, the congregation sang the second line with him. In another instance in "It's Shoutin' Time," the congregation took over the song and thus the text:

But my mother and father used to sing this song around our house
Some of you know it

You grow up grew up hearing your parents or grandparents sing it
Now that you got some "edjamication"
You don't sing it no more
But you used to hear your parents sing it
I thank you Jesus ([congregation: All right? Yeah]
I thank you Jesus [congregation begins to sing]
I thank you Jesus I thank you Lord
Ohhh You brought me
Yes you brought me
From a mighty a mighty long way
A mighty long way
I thank you Jesus
Thank you Jesus
I thank you Jesus
Thank you Jesus
I thank you Jesus I thank you Lord
Ohh You brought me
Yes you brought me
From a mighty long way

Reverend M. sang the first two lines of the song, and the congregation continued to sing until they completed the entire verse. Reverend M. had no choice but to wait until the congregation finished the verse and allowed him back into the text. In this example, the congregation is integral in "making the song" as suggested earlier by Spencer (1990). This song also happened to be one that was sung often in this particular church. Thus, this congregation could prove that by knowing and singing the song, they had not let their "edjamication" cloud their collective memory.

Reverend M. accomplishes several things when he sings. First, he keeps the songs fresh in the minds of the congregation. As he stated earlier, these songs, especially the hymns and the old-fashioned way that they were sung are part of African-American history and culture. They are more than just words; they are instruments of survival, instruments of faith. Second, he provides another avenue from which congregants can enter the text and become part of the dialogue. Third, whether he is singing secular or sacred music (and the boundaries between the two sometimes blur) but particularly secular, he signals to the congregation that he listens to their music; he is in touch with the younger and older members of the congregation—he can identify. Fourth, and possibly most importantly, he introduces a multilayered text where music and spoken and written texts interact and, thus, community is enacted through the shared experience.

SUMMARY

This chapter is important because it signals that many of the strategies used by the ministers to create a community identity through the sermon do stretch across time and space and are not unique to one specific church community. Although this chapter features Reverend M. with a congregation other than his home congregation, he was not singled out because he was so different from the other two ministers in the strategies he used in his sermons. In fact, his sermons are representative of sermons preached by African-American preachers in mainstream, predominantly African-American churches. Clearly, his sermons to the Ohio congregation held many of the same features that were highlighted in the previous chapter, such as using shared knowledge. Even the features introduced in this chapter, storytelling and intertextuality, which were not addressed previously are not unique to Reverend M. These features are evident in varying degrees in the other ministers' sermons. The data presented in this chapter reinforces the African-American sermon as a complex, multilayered text. The data continue to show a picture of a text that is shaped by the cultural and community expectations of how oral, written, and musical texts become one and of how African and African-American traditions merge to shape the text.

5
The Emergence of a Community Text

The overarching question that has guided the analysis in this book is "What constitutes a literate text in African-American churches?" This question has proven to be a complex one that has spawned other important questions and complex answers. From the analysis in the previous chapters emerge questions about boundaries within texts, roles of participants in creating and "composing texts," and expectations about how texts are used and owned. Clearly, the sermon as it is constituted in the churches explored in this book is a complex, dynamic text that has multiple layers and that functions as both process and product within its community context. The data reported in chapters 3 and 4 point to a community institution, the African-American church, in which the main text—the African-American sermon—demands that educators and researchers rethink or broaden their conceptions of what constitutes a literate text, and by implication their conceptions of composer (e.g., writer and/or speaker) and audience. This rethinking process has major implications for literacy learning and teaching.

In this chapter, I explore a number of these areas based on the analysis in earlier chapters: how we define writer and/or speaker and audience, how we think about multiple shifts in point of view, how we approach the questions of ownership of text, the relation between oral and written language, and the relation between rhetorical concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos. Finally, I explore the questions that this analysis raises for classroom practice, particularly classrooms where writing and language instruction occurs.

THE BLURRING OF BOUNDARIES

Any discussion of the definition of text that emerges from the analysis in this study must center on the blurred boundaries between ministers and

congregations and the intertextual relations that exist within the text (between participants and texts, modes of texts, participant and participant, and so on). Numerous theorists, particularly those interested in reader-response and reception theory (Barthes, 1977; Fetterly, 1978; Iser, 1974; Rosenblatt, 1978) as well as in the challenge of computer-mediated communication (Bolter, 1991; Landow, 1992; Lanham, 1993), have called into question the roles of the author or writer and reader. African-American ministers and their congregations enact such calls by virtually turning the notions of audience and writer upside down, as evidenced in the churches in this book. As the previous analysis indicates, the sermon is a dialogue between minister and congregation. Even though a minister, like Reverend M., may write a complete manuscript from which to preach, that minister must allow space for the congregation to enter the text and take part in the dialogue. In the examples cited in chapters 3 and 4, this dialogue takes place in the form of question (direct and implied) and answer conversations, congregants providing feedback (encouragement, affirmation, and so on) to the minister in the sermon, and the congregation taking over the text as when the Ohio congregation took over the song "I Thank You Jesus" in one of Reverend M.'s revival sermons.

The earlier discussion of the dialogic nature of the sermon indicates that time after time, the roles between speaker or writer and audience interchanged. Audience became writer and/or speaker, at times, co-creating the text with the minister. This practice was not just an occasional occurrence but an expected one. The boundaries between minister and congregation—between composer of text and consumer of text—were at times so blurred that what clearly began to take shape from the analysis was the concept of a community text. In fact, as I examined the sermon and the roles of the ministers and congregations in producing the sermon, it became increasingly difficult if not impossible for me to conceive of the sermon as anything other than a community text where multiple participants must be present to "write" in order for the text to exist. That is, the African-American sermon is a text that not only emerges from a unique community institution, but it also functions uniquely in that institution. Its role very much depends on the relationship between the participants in the worship service to create and shape the text. In short, African-American sermons, a major literate text in this community institution, are sites of interaction between writer or speaker and audience, sites where, occasionally, audience becomes speaker and speaker becomes audience.

This concept of interchangeable roles between writer or speaker and audience and the expectations attached to those roles point to the inadequacy of those terms. Particularly inadequate are the terms *writer*

and *speaker*. A more appropriate term might be *composer* rather than writer or speaker, because neither term adequately characterizes what the ministers or their audiences do. They write and speak. *Composer* encompasses both writer and speaker, yet does not privilege one over the other. It is interesting that in composition studies, there is much discussion about the composing process, but little discussion of the writer as a composer. The point here is that the composer is not a solitary individual, writing in isolation. The composer is the specific African-American church community made up of multiple participants who themselves are members of various communities. What the participants share are their cultural bonds as African Americans, their participation in an African-American worship tradition, and their shared experiences as residents of large urban cities. Each time that the participants come together to experience a sermon, to create a text, they bring with them their shared and diverse histories and experiences, their common cultural backgrounds. These shared experiences and cultural backgrounds seem to outweigh the differences in educational backgrounds, socioeconomic class, age, gender, and so on that exist in each of the churches. And it is these experiences that they share, their cultural bonds, that allow the participants to compose a community text through which they create a community identity.

This community text demands that minister and congregation—the composers—meet certain community expectations, expectations that dictate behavior related to the making of and receiving of this text. As highlighted in an earlier discussion on how the ministers prepare the sermons, the ministers, particularly Reverend M. and Dr. N., chose sermon subjects that related to the congregation members' concerns not only as Christians but as African-American Christians. The ministers also chose topics that spoke to each of them as individuals facing their own struggles. As Reverend M. described earlier, he sees himself sitting out in the pew and he asks himself, "what do I need to hear from the pulpit?" Most likely, other people need to hear that, too. Reverend M.'s point is that ministers must not separate themselves from the congregation and think that they are only preaching to "them." This participant stance, however, reinforces that ministers who place themselves among the congregation are both writer and reader, speaker and listener, composer and audience. So that when the ministers are preparing their sermons either by writing complete manuscripts, writing outlines, jotting down notes, or making mental notes, they are constantly taking on dual roles. Therefore, it is not a big leap for them to make from speaker to listener in the pulpit when the congregation demands such a move. In fact, the ministers expect to make such moves.

Thus, if the ministers occupy the dual roles of composer and audience, what then of the congregation? What is their role in relation to the text? While the ministers are clearly the participants who have the most visible control of the text—the ministers in this study chose the topics, the related Biblical Scriptures, and composed the majority of the text—the congregations were by no means passive bystanders at the mercy of the ministers. It is no secret that typical African-American congregations are active participants in the sermon. This study only confirms what many others have reported in that respect. Congregations are not without some control in the making of the text.

Because of the dialogic nature of the sermon, the congregation is a necessary participant. Not only must ministers allow spaces for the congregation to enter the text, but ministers must also be prepared for the congregation to select its own spaces where it chooses to enter. When the congregation "answers back" or encourages the minister through vocal and physical responses (clapping, standing, shouting, waving hands, and so on), they are composing, and thus, completing the text. For the three ministers in this study, most often, when a congregation remains silent throughout a sermon, a dialogue has not taken place, the congregation has not entered the text, and the text is a failure.[1] Hence, the congregation, the audience for this text, like the ministers, is both reader and writer, listener and speaker, audience and composer. For the community, listening and reading require active, verbal participation.

Within these African-American church communities, the roles of composer (writer or speaker) and audience (reader or listener) are then further complicated by the role of a higher being who composes the Word—God—the origin of the Word. Each minister, while going through complex, extensive preparatory stages of composing a sermon, points to this divine inspiration as the source of the sermons. In Reverend M.'s story about his experiences in Cuba, he says "I can't give it to you until God gives it to me," meaning he can't prepare his sermon until God gives him the Word to preach.

Mitchell (1989) stated that in most churches, particularly African-American churches, both minister and congregation believe that God speaks to the minister, who in turn passes the message on to the congregation through the sermon. In this case, the minister is also a transmitter of God's Word. Thus, this view of where the Word originates suggests a collaborative act in which there is a hierarchy: God,

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[1]Pitts (1993) rightly pointed out that there are places in African-American worship services where silence or, at least, a more meditative mood are acceptable and expected, namely during devotional services that normally precede the main worship service.

the preacher, and the congregation respectively contribute to the making of the sermon. The hierarchy, however, is not a fixed one because it is believed that in most Christian churches God can and does speak directly to the members of the congregation as well as the preacher. Consequently, the minister and congregation could even occupy the same level in the hierarchy. Again, boundaries can and do blur. At no point, however, is there a solitary writer; even when these ministers are in their studies writing or composing mentally, they are not composing alone. They are aware of the congregation who will take part in the composing event and of God's Word as the words they preach.

SHIFTS IN POINT OF VIEW

The boundaries of the composer and audience roles are further complicated by the ministers' constant shifts in point of view. Most congregants are used to preachers speaking to them in second person ("You should take time to pray," "y'all don't know what I'm talking about," "Give God the glory"), a practice followed by each of these ministers from time to time in their sermons. However, it was the ministers' shifts in point of view into first-person plural and singular that most significantly contributed to the blurred boundaries between the ministers' roles as composer and audience. It was at these preaching moments in the discourse that the ministers' dual roles were most evident and that the ministers' emphasis on their place in the community was most important. As an earlier discussion suggests, each minister emphasized the communal bonds between him and his congregation by constantly speaking in a collective voice: *we, us, our*. By consistently making the congregation and themselves one big group striving toward the same goals and facing similar struggles, the ministers were successful in establishing and maintaining the community identities I spoke of earlier. Again, in the case of these ministers, the use of first-person plural pronouns emphasizes communal bonds and eliminates distance between participants.

When the ministers shift to the first-person singular point of view, the boundaries between participants not only blur, they seem to disappear altogether. In chapter 3, there are several sermon excerpts from the ministers, especially from Reverends P. and M., in which, although the ministers are speaking in the first person singular, they seem to be speaking not only for themselves but for the congregation as well. The "I" becomes a collective "I" or a representational "I" where the minister becomes one with his congregation. As indicated in my fieldnotes, it was during those preaching moments, when the minister seemed to become one with the congregation, that the level of audience

response was at its highest. The dialogue was most visible and the congregation appeared most moved. Thus, this practice of shifting point of view that many academics would label an ambiguous point of view and criticize as something needing to be "fixed" in student essays, was viewed as neither negative nor ambiguous in these churches. Clearly, the ministers know when shifting the point of view will be most rhetorically effective. They have the authority, by virtue of their roles in their churches, to speak for the people. This authority was granted because the ministers and congregation had achieved the community identity for which they had been striving. Authority was also granted to the ministers by the congregation because the ministers demonstrated in the sermons that they could provide personal testimony to what God had done from them. Mitchell (1989) stated that, "it must be clear that he [the minister] is filled by the same joy he declares to his congregation. If indeed the preacher has not tasted and seen that it is good, he has nothing, really, to say" (p. 369). This type of testimony was another way for the ministers to identify with the congregation, to show that they, too, had struggled just like members of the congregation. The ministers could speak for themselves and the congregation at the same time because of their shared experiences; the ministers' struggles were the people's struggles.

These shifts were also strategies that made me rethink, yet again, how I view the minister as the composer of the text and the congregation as the audience. When the minister places himself with the audience and/or when his voice becomes their voice, he is both composer and audience simultaneously. At those moments, the boundary between minister and congregation is so indistinct because the minister and congregation become one, at least during the preaching moments described previously.

"WHOSE TEXT IS IT?"

The discussion thus far has centered on the roles of the participants, and particularly on the ways that the ministers and congregations interact within the sermon, complicating traditional rhetorical concepts of writer or speaker and reader or listener (and by implication the concept of text). But the discussion also has implications for an issue which looms large in the academy, namely intellectual property or ownership of text. Attitudes about ownership of text raise important issues in this study because they raise concerns about literate behavior and literate texts in the African-American church. Increased computer technology, electronic texts, changes in copyright laws, and a growing body of literature on collaboration have all led to discussions among academics, publishers,

advertisers, and countless others about "whose text is it?" Closer to academic home, Kinko's, a national copying company that was found in violation of copyright laws, eliminated its course packet copying services in order to avoid copyright infringement. The World Intellectual Property Organization is hard at work on these issues, while in the United States, the Clinton administration signed into law the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (October 1998), and Congress passed the "Sonny Bono" bill to extend Copyright to life plus 70 years. As evidence of its growing importance in Composition studies, at recent (1994 to the present) Conference on College Composition and Communication meetings, a half-day workshop has been devoted to this topic, and the journal *Computers and Composition* recently devoted a special issue to the topic of intellectual property. Additionally, there have been national and international conferences devoted solely to issues about intellectual property. In light of this growing concern about ownership of text, it is ironic that in the three churches in this study where the sermon as text is so important, ownership of text was not voiced as a major concern. Indeed, the ministers' dominant attitude about ownership of sermons contrasted significantly with prevailing attitudes in the academy and with U.S. laws.

The prevailing attitude about ownership of text in the academy is that once someone makes a statement that is tangible in a written or oral text (i.e., that is not considered common knowledge), that person "owns" that statement. Any use of that statement or any part of it must be attributed to the original source in some form of a citation. I found the three ministers in this study taking a considerably different view of ownership of text. Not once did any minister interviewed for this study indicate that once he preached a sermon it was his sermon and no one else had a right to it. Furthermore, the ministers did not expect citations.

Reverend M. made an important statement that characterizes how the preachers feel about "whose text it is." In one of our interviews (referenced in chap. 4), he states that "the sermon belongs to the moment." Once it is preached, it is impossible for the same sermon to be preached again. Mitchell (1989) and the ministers in this study suggest that even when a minister preaches a sermon a second time, it is not the same sermon. When the preaching moment changes so does the sermon. Because the sermon is a dialogue, when the congregation changes, the dialogue changes. Thus, a new text—a new sermon—is created despite the minister using the same topic and Scripture and many of the same words. This process points to the sermon as a text that is constantly being written, rewritten, and reinterpreted. Mitchell suggested that even a manuscript sermon is not a fixed entity because every time that manuscript is read, it is reinterpreted, and a new text emerges. Although

historically, literacy as equated to the printed word was meant to eradicate the problem of impermanence, in these African-American churches, even the written sermon is not permanent. Derrida (1976), of course, took great pains to demonstrate that although writing must by definition be iterable, its meanings can never be permanent.

Reverend M. makes another statement in one of his sermons (also highlighted in chap. 4) that is even more important for understanding how ownership of text is viewed in these three churches. He recalls what his father, now a retired minister, used to say to him: "Once you preach it publicly, it ain't yours no more." This statement is one that Reverend M. still follows. It is a statement, however, that is completely antithetical to academic principles of ownership of text. People who do not cite their sources are plagiarists and subject to disciplinary actions in academic and publishing circles. Yet these ministers, all of whom have been educated in traditional educational institutions, maintain that sermons are public property. This means that the ministers in this study may borrow phrases, statements, ideas, topics, and so on from other sermons preached by other ministers and that other ministers may borrow from their sermons. Rarely, however, if ever, has anyone spoken of an entire sermon being borrowed. This borrowing seems to happen with enough consistency in African-American churches that many ministers would be hard pressed to name the original sources for some statements. And they would probably argue that finding the original source is not necessary because each minister (and congregation) takes a piece of discourse and makes it his or her own within the preaching moment.

However, in light of the increasing number of collections of sermons that are being published (including a collection of Reverend M.'s sermons), this attitude about ownership of text may change because of publishing companies' copyright privileges. Although Reverend M.'s attitude has not changed because of his sermons being published, what role will the publishing companies have in dealing with copyright issues? Although sermons have been published for centuries, doing so is still a relatively new phenomenon for African-American preachers. A more popular and acceptable tradition in African-American communities has been recording sermons.[2] Reverend C. L. Franklin (father of singer Aretha Franklin) was one of the most famous African-

[2]There are several collections of sermons by African-American preachers that have been published. Several collections of Martin Luther King's sermons (and speeches) have been published, as have sermons by Vernon Johns, a predecessor of King's. More recently, collections by J. Alfred Smith and Ella Pearson Mitchell have gained popularity. Yet, the published versions are not as popular as the recorded versions.

American preachers in the United States because of the widespread sales of his albums. Recordings of sermons are popular because they fit more closely within the oral tradition than written sermons. The recordings tend to be of live worship services so that listeners feel a sense of having "gone to church." Cassettes, of course, have taken the place of albums, and there are a growing number of churches with tape ministries—churches that record the sermons on cassette for the purpose of widespread distribution (and fundraising). With recordings and publications, certain sermons become identified with certain preachers. For example, "The Eagle Stirs His Nest" has been identified with Reverend Franklin and "What Makes You So Strong?" has come to be identified with Reverend M. Yet, there is still no major push within African-American churches to move toward a more academic practice of citing sources within the sermons.

Reverend P. and Dr. N. hardly ever cited sources other than Biblical Scriptures in their sermons. Yet, Reverend P., in one of his interviews, discusses reading and using published commentaries to help him prepare his sermons. He feels no need to mention these commentaries in his sermons. He is not expected to by his audience. Reverend M., unlike many African-American preachers, does cite sources (critical and biblical) in his sermons, yet he sees his own sermons as public property. He walks a delicate line between two community institutions' expectations about ownership of text.

The African-American church's philosophy about intellectual property has already contributed to major conflicts in academic circles. Several scholars have accused Martin Luther King, Jr. of plagiarism because he allegedly did not cite the sources for many of the ideas that appeared in his articles and sermons. Miller (1992), whose *Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Its Sources* highlights many of the sources of King's sermons and writings, points to the traditions of the Black folk pulpit and Black Baptist preaching (particularly in the form of King's father) as having the greatest influence on King, Jr. Miller (1992) reported that "Martin Luther King, Sr., and his friend Benjamin Mays [noted scholar and former president of Morehouse College] described the practice of borrowing as "very common" among the preachers they knew" (p. 35). However, Miller reported that the elder King later denied this practice in a 1983 interview with Miller. The elder King may have felt and actually been caught between the tensions of the African-American preaching and academic traditions. His wavering position may have had more to do with his knowledge that the academic position on borrowing challenged the African-American preaching tradition.

The younger King, Baptist preacher and son of a Baptist preacher, was raised in the same Black preaching tradition as the ministers in this study. Again, this tradition taught him that no man or woman could own language—stating something in a public forum made it public property. King, Jr. seemed to have fallen victim to being evaluated by the standards of academic and publishing institutions whose rules were alien to the community with which he was most identified. Among African-American preachers, the dominant view is that only God can own words. Even if that were not the dominant view, the ownership issue would be complicated by the dialogic nature of the sermon. What part of the sermon, for example, is attributed to the congregation? If, as is stated earlier, when the participants change, the dialogue changes, then, there is no fixed text to own. Thus, "who owns the text" is a complicated question. The answer can easily be "everyone and no one" or, as stated earlier, the being with whom the Word originates—God.

EXPLORING THE ROLES OF ORAL AND WRITTEN TEXTS

Although the focus of this book is not on the relation between oral and written texts in the African-American church, key issues about that relation emerge from discussions in this text. As noted earlier, the African-American sermon is widely regarded as part of the rich African oral tradition of African Americans. Yet, this "oral" text has as its foundation a written text—the Bible (Moss, 1994). Each of the ministers in this study (as do most ministers) begin their sermons with Scriptures from the Bible, and no matter how many or what kind of secular examples they use to illustrate the sermon's theme, they point to the Biblical Scriptures as the authoritative example.[3] These Biblical Scriptures, whether parables or commandments, are interwoven with contemporary, "real" examples within each sermon. It is mostly through the sermons that the ministers are able to help the majority of the congregation comprehend the Bible and apply its teachings to their everyday lives. Thus, based on Heath's (1982a) definition of a *literacy event*—"any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print play a role" (p. 92)—these ministers' sermons are literacy events.

Although there are differences in the ways that the ministers use the Bible in their sermons (as indicated in earlier discussions of each

[3]African-American preachers are not unique in looking to the Bible as the authoritative written text. Indeed, the Christian tradition, particularly the Protestant movement centers on the bible in the way that the Islamic religion centers on the Qur'an, its holy book.

church community in chaps. 2, 3, and 4), it would be safe to say that the sermons are illustrations of Biblical Scriptures, or illustrations of how the Bible has an answer for people's everyday struggles and concerns. As noted in previous chapters, for example, Reverend P.'s sermons are based almost solely on explication of the Scripture he has chosen for that sermon. That is, transcripts of his sermons read like a line-by-line explication of a poem. His original written sermon, about one fourth the size of the actual transcripts, consists of four or five sections. Each section is based on two or three verses of Scripture accompanied by brief explanation of those verses. Generally, Reverend P.'s sermons are based on a 9- to 12-verse Bible Scripture. He focuses on two verses of the Scripture, explains them, and then, moves on to the next two verses of the Scripture, explains them, and so on.

Reverend M. and Dr. N. are more versatile in how they incorporate Biblical texts in their sermons. Both primarily use Biblical and secular parables to illustrate particular themes, yet, both will explicate text from time to time. And, Reverend M. will sometimes cite Scriptures as support for his points the way that academicians cite sources in formal essays. In fact, Reverend M. cites nonbiblical sources in his sermons in a very academic way. This practice is highly unusual in African-American churches. Yet Reverend M.'s congregation accepts his practice without question. However, this discussion of the way the ministers incorporate the Bible into the sermons is meant as an illustration of how much this seemingly oral text—the sermon—and this written text—the Bible—are interdependent.

Other issues, of course, emerge. For Reverend M., who writes a manuscript, or for any minister who falls within the African-American worship tradition who uses a manuscript, there must be room for the oral contributions to the sermons from the congregation. In other words, a minister who writes a complete manuscript from which to preach will still have a sermon where oral and written texts mix because the congregation's part of the dialogue is always oral and always spontaneous. Consequently, reading a written sermon as the text is illusory because the oral text has yet to interact with the written text. Until the oral and written combine, the text is incomplete.

INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Bloome and Bailey (1992), citing an earlier work by Bloome (1989), suggested that intertextuality only occurs within an event when participants recognize and acknowledge the intertextuality and when the intertextuality has social significance within the event. In the previous discussion, I emphasized the relation between oral and written

texts, their interdependence. That discussion also emphasizes the social significance of the relation. That is, the participants recognize the call for dialogue; they recognize and acknowledge the roles of oral and written texts through their participation in the text. This interaction allows that participation. Essentially, I emphasize the intertextual relations between oral and written language within the sermon. The analysis in the previous chapters along with the previous discussion demonstrates the complexity of intertextuality within the sermons. However, that complex intertextuality was further heightened by the role of music within the sermons and the participants' expectations about the roles of oral and written language and music within the text.

Musical Quality of Sermons

As the entire worship services of the churches in this study were characterized by intertextual relations between spoken, written, and musical texts, so, too, was the sermon characterized by those same intertextual relationships. First, it is common to think of African-American sermons as musical (see discussion of Spencer in chap. 4), with much written about the chanted sermon. Yet, even those preachers who do not use the sing-song style known as chanting tend to rely on rhythm as a tool. The rhythm of the typical African-American sermon is as meaningful as the actual words. In fact, the rhythm and words together contribute to meaning. The spoken or written words alone do not tell the story that the ministers wish to tell in their sermons. Even the dialogues in the sermons take on a rhythmic, musical quality as one can see from the longer call-and-response examples in chapters 3 and 4.

What contributes most to the rhythm of the ministers' sermons in this study is their use of intonation and repetition. Repetition of sounds, words, and phrases are used by these ministers not only for emphasis but also to establish a rhythm in their oral delivery. It is important to note that Reverend M. would often write down a phrase as many times in his manuscript as he was to repeat it in his oral delivery. He would also use punctuation marks to signal that a rising intonation was necessary. As stated earlier, Reverend M. hears his sermon as he writes it. His manuscripts include markers to signal changes in intonation and elements to be repeated, which suggests that Reverend M. is always conscious of the way the oral and written text and their rhythmic quality work together. He, like the other ministers, was conscious of the sermon as a verbal performance.

Music or Song Within the Sermon

As illustrated in chapter 4, Reverend M. not only used song lyrics in his sermons but he and the congregation (usually prompted directly or

indirectly by the reverend) also sang songs within the context of the sermon. Many African-American preachers use lines from sacred and secular songs to illustrate themes. In this case, the ministers rely on the congregation's shared knowledge to tap into their memories of a particular song and its context. Reverend M. also frequently broke into song in his sermons to make a point. Usually when this act occurred, the congregation would sing along with him. At one point, as I noted earlier, the congregation in the Columbus church took over the text and kept singing. However, the minister usually signaled when it was appropriate to use song within the text by initiating the musical interlude.

The interaction between musical, oral, and written text constitutes intertextuality in the following ways: first, the participants recognize and acknowledge that these modes interact; second, they understand that each mode invites participation from the participants within the sermon event; and third, all participants are aware that music (and song) is an integral part of the sermon (and of course the entire worship style) and that music adds another layer to the sermon. This multilayeredness is most clearly evident in Reverend M.'s text. Music is every bit as important and essential as the spoken and written words.

Finally, any discussion of intertextuality must also look at the relation between it and cultural ideology. Bloome and Bailey (1992) suggested that "there are certain cultural rules for what texts can be related at a given time" (p. 199). These cultural rules also govern who has the right to speak (or sing) at a given time. From this discussion and in chapters 3 and 4, it is clear that all the participants within the three churches in this study understood and applied these cultural rules. They understood the what, who, when, and where of rules of participation and interaction of texts. They understood that the minister took a leadership role in the constructing of the text, but that the congregations, as participants in the community institution, would become part of the dialogue and thus collaborators in the constructing of this community text.

RHETORICAL APPEALS IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN SERMONS

The analysis of the African-American sermon in this study also raises questions about commonly held notions of rhetorical appeals. Even though I have not used the terms themselves, one can easily see the relevance of the discussion in this book to the academic applications of the rhetorical proofs of *ethos, pathos,* and *logos.* In the Western rhetorical tradition, generally, three appeals constitute the rhetorical strategies that rhetors use to communicate with an audience, whether the intent is to

persuade, to inform, or to entertain. Those appeals—logos (reason), pathos (emotion), and ethos (personal authority/persona)—have characterized rhetorical strategies from the classical period of Aristotle's time and indeed are common appeals today.

Traditionally, logos or reason has been privileged over pathos and ethos in Western thought because of its seeming reliance on rational, logical thought.[4] Rhetors who have relied on pathos and ethos have been criticized because of a "lack" of reason or logic. Only recently have scholars and teachers begun to challenge the hegemony of logos or reason in Western rhetorical thought (Foss & Griffin, 1992; Lamb, 1991). In searching for a relation between traditional conceptions of logos, ethos, and pathos and black discourse, Bizzell and Herzberg (1990) pointed to Gates, who called into question the meaning of logos as it relates to Black discourse. Although Bizzell and Herzberg suggested that for Gates "logos is an appeal not to logic in the traditional sense but to language itself," they are not able to offer a definition of logic or reason in African-American discourse, or its relation to ethos and pathos. Yet, as I examined African-American discourse in African-American churches, I have reached a new understanding of the relation among these proofs as they are united in African-American sermons.

Most studies of African-American sermons, including this one, point to the central role of the minister as rhetor. The minister's authority as speaker (and writer) holds prominence in African-American churches. Throughout this study, I have highlighted the role of the minister in using the sermon to establish a certain identity. I have highlighted the dual roles of the minister as leader and group member, and how the sermon becomes a vehicle for the minister (and congregation) in shaping his or her identity. Thus, not surprisingly, ethos is privileged in this community institution. Also well documented is the high value placed on emotion in the church setting. One of the goals of the minister as rhetor is to tap into the emotional side of the congregation so that they are moved to accept the Word of God and to participate verbally in the sermon. Thus, high value is placed on pathos.

Yet the churches in this study (or most African-American churches) are not community institutions where ethos and pathos reign, and logos has no place. The place of logos is not the issue so much as what constitutes logos, or reason, in these churches. I am reminded of Reverend M.'s statement (quoted in a previous chapter) from his sermon

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[4]Walters (personal communication, April 15, 1993) reminded me that the theory says logos matters most, but in reality, logos is no more important than ethos and pathos. We need only study advertisements or what happens in faculty meetings to see this reality in operation. Walters argued that "we privilege the illusion of logos."

"Lost and Found": "The Black way, the African way of teaching is not so much by syllogism and linear arguments; it is by telling a story." Although he is talking about teaching in general in African-American culture, Reverend M. is also explaining, as I pointed out earlier, why he privileges the story over the linear, chainlike arguments characteristic of traditional notions of logic. The story takes the place of rigid argumentative forms (such as the syllogism or the enthymeme). The story counts as logical evidence. Whereas Aristotle places the narrative (or the story) under example, a form of logos, the story, in these churches, is commonly discussed as if it were separate from logos. Clearly, Reverend M. sees the story as different from traditional logic.

What can be counted by the ministers as logical evidence may be most important in distinguishing logos in African-American religious discourse from logos in the Aristotelian tradition. As has already been established, the ultimate authority is God's Word represented through the Bible. Therefore, logic cannot be separated from the Bible. However, the story and a form of the story, testimony, also count heavily as logical evidence. As has already been established, participants in this community want to know "what God has done for you." However, the testimony cannot be separated from the testifier, nor can the story be separated from the storyteller. And neither the story nor the testimony is deemed effective unless related to the congregation in such a way by the speakers that they move the congregation to identify with the speaker, the event and the point of the illustrations. In other words ethos, pathos, and logos must work together. To produce effective rhetoric, their boundaries must blur.

In thinking about the ministers' rhetorical strategies for building community, what emerged from the data was pathos, ethos, and logos not as three separate appeals but as interdependent, bounded appeals where reason, common sense, faith, emotion, cultural knowledge, and persona are all bound so tightly together that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to pull any one element out to stand on its own. This "way of knowing"—this way of looking at ethos, pathos and logos suggests an alternative view of the three appeals. Granted it is an alternative that needs more interrogation,[5] but one which suggests the inadequacy of any system which separates ethos, pathos, and logos or which privileges one form of logos over other appeals. In Aristotelian rhetoric, the three appeals are not separate, but often in the modern classroom, they are taught as if they can operate separate from each

[5]That interrogation began in small part with Gates' (1988) *The Signifying Monkey*, but has been furthered by Campbell's (1993) dissertation study, *The Rhetoric of Black English Vernacular: A Study of the Oral and Written Discourse Practices of African American Male College Students.*

other. This study further suggests that ethos, pathos, and logos must be examined within the cultural context in which they are used and not looked at as universal concepts.

AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL OF A LITERATE TEXT

Although all writing is context-dependent and all writers are social beings influenced by the world in which they live and their individual cognitive abilities, the picture of the solitary writer isolating him or herself and producing a written text independent of a community of readers or the social situations in which he or she exists is still a dominant, although inaccurate, one. The dominant model[6] of a literate text in the academy, especially in classes where literacy is taught, is the written text, monologic in voice (and most often in authorship), where meaning claims to be autonomous in the text. This text is most closely identified with the essayist academic literacy identified decades ago by Scollon and Scollon (1981). In recent years, research on collaboration (Ede & Lunsford, 1990) and on the power of narrative (Bahktin, 1981) has called into question the single authorship notion of the literate text and the insistent focus on exposition. The analysis offered here provides a concrete example of the sermon as a community text, a text that enacts collaboration, narrative, and multivocality. This text, the African-American sermon, calls the single-authored, single-voiced, expository academic written text into question at the same time that it illustrates its alternative.

The model of literate text that I have illustrated in this book, however, does not supplant the academic expository essay as the dominant model of a literate text in this society. Nevertheless, as Farr (1993), Walters (1994), and Heath (1982a) suggested, the academy should acknowledge the existence of alternative models that operate simultaneously with the essayist model and acknowledge that large segments of U.S. society have as their primary model of a literate (formal not everyday conversational) text something other than the essayist model, or have more than one primary model of a literate text. Millions of African Americans, be they devoted churchgoers or not, are influenced by the model of literacy, and therefore of literate text, that emerges from the African-American church. Therefore, many African-American students come to school with that model of a community text as part of their linguistic competence.

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[6]As scholars do more studies of writing in the disciplines, more models of literate texts in the academy emerge. Abels' (1994) dissertation study of literacy in the discipline of dance is one such study.

Although they do not focus on the African-American sermon as a community text, studies done by Courage (1993) and Balester (1993) demonstrate how strong an influence African-American sermons have on the academic discourse of many of their African-American students. In particular, Janette, Courage's subject who is a pentecostal minister, and Max, Balester's student, rely heavily on the African-American sermon as a model for their formal essays. Ball's (1992) study of the organizational patterns of African-American adolescents' oral and written discourse links one of the students preferred patterns, narrative interspersion, with that of a practice associated with African-American ministers (see the discussion of Reverend M.'s use of narrative in chap. 4). Ball identified narrative interspersion, placing a story inside a text, as the African-American students' (in her study) preferred organizational pattern in informal oral and written texts and in academic written prose. With the sermon as their dominant model of a literate text, what many students like Janette, Max, and possibly Ball's students are likely to face in school when trying to achieve essayist academic literacy are several sites of negotiation between a model of literacy in their home communities and a model of literacy in their school communities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LITERACY LEARNING: SITES OF NEGOTIATION

The previous discussion points to several key issues that, when examined in light of how those same issues are viewed in academic settings—namely settings where essayist literacy is valued as the norm—can be labeled sites of negotiation. These sites are important for those students who must negotiate their ways through them in order to maintain their literacy in their home communities and master essayist literacy in a particular academic community. These sites of negotiation can become sites of conflict that present obstacles for students—or, they can become sites of common ground on which students can build. Sites of conflict are where the practices associated with and valued in the African-American sermon model are in conflict with the practices commonly associated with and valued in the academic essayist model. Sites of common ground are those where the practices and values commonly associated with each model are similar.

As the previous discussion indicates, the most important potential sites of conflict to emerge from this study include the following:

- Shifting boundaries between writer or speaker and reader or listener.

- Shifts in points of view.
- Shifting ideas concerning ownership of text.
- Shifting boundaries between oral, written, and musical language.
- Shifting definitions of rhetorical concepts of argument, particularly logos, pathos, and ethos.

This list is by no means exhaustive, as there can be numerous potential sites of conflict in a text. For instance, Balester (1993), in discussing the "ritualized, formal language" used by her student Max in his essay, pointed to types of language and phrasing as potential concerns for students whose prose models that of the African-American sermon. It is important to note, however, that these sites are not fixed. What becomes a site of conflict or common ground depends on the participants, types of text, and the context in which the literacy event occurs. Nevertheless, examining just a few potential sites of conflict for students who have the African-American sermon as their primary model of a literate text and yet who are attempting to master the essayist academic model of a literate text should prove useful.

What Constitutes a Written Academic Text?

A major probable site of conflict to be negotiated is what the academic literate text—the essay—should look and sound like. Clearly, the sermon, with its dialogic quality, its multiple voices, and its blurred boundaries does not look or sound like the academic expository essay. That is not to say that there is not any common ground, but normally the distinctiveness of each type of text stands out.

As the entire analysis in this book demonstrates, however, the alternative literate model that the African-American sermon provides would require that students who have this model as their primary model find ways to build on what they know about the sermon as a text to compose academic texts. For example, the boundaries of an academic essay are more distinct, the form more rigid, the voice more monologic than in a sermon. Students may take major risks in trying to produce a written text which tries to incorporate oral or rhythmical qualities in their essays. The repetition of words, phrases, sentences, or sounds which are necessary parts of the sermon may be deemed by an academic audience as unnecessary distractions in an expository essay.

Conceptualizing Writer and Audience

In most academic settings, the roles of writer or speaker or composer remain separate from that of audience except when writers write for

themselves (journals, diaries) or when writers are revising their own texts. Rarely does the audience participate in the composing of the text.[7] They certainly do not take over the text. Many students who are influenced by the way the writer and audience switch roles within the sermon may have a difficult time negotiating between contrasting ideas of what a writer does within different discourse communities. In an academic discourse community, these students must negotiate the demands of composing a single-voiced, monologic text. As writers, they may make assumptions about the roles of their audience that are erroneous in an academic setting. In short, they may assume a type of active participation on the part of the audience in supplying parts of the written text that is deemed inappropriate in an academic context.

Points of View

As is highlighted earlier in this chapter, another potential site of negotiation for students operating with the sermon as their dominant model of a literate text is the concept of the writer's (or speaker's) point of view. Whereas professional or experienced writers may have freedom to shift points of view within a text, in essayist academic literacy, the composition student learns that a "good writer" maintains a consistent point of view. In the three churches in this study, a "good composer (writer or speaker)" shifts the point of view for emphasis. Many times, this shifting in point of view coincided with the ministers' shifting "voice" from that of preacher-leader to that of preacher-group member. The ministers' shifts in point of view are easy to follow and clearly are sophisticated rhetorical strategies that contribute to meaning-making in the sermon. Students who are not as skillful rhetors as the ministers or professional writers may not understand the subtleties of when and where shifts in point of view should take place. And as long as students are taught rigid rules such as never shift point of view and are not given the opportunity to investigate issues like point of view, they may not develop the sophisticated abilities that their ministers or professional writers possess.

SITES OF COMMON GROUND

Just as there are potential sites of conflict, potential sites of common ground can act as bridges that aid students in their negotiation between

[7]The exception occurs through activities like peer response when students engage in discussions about each other's texts and brainstorming exercises where students get ideas from each other. Even though these activities take place in many writing classes, they are rarely recognized by teachers or students as moments when the audience becomes composer.

differing models. These sites of common ground allow students to make use of the strategies they bring into the classroom from their home communities. Courage (1993) said of his student, Janette, that,

> Janette had acquired language abilities, attitudes, and conceptions about reading, writing, and communication in general that facilitated her initial encounters with academic literacy. In her essays, comments during class discussions, and answers to my many questions, she exhibited a conception of speaking and writing as public acts, a sense of her own sermons as spoken texts with distinct forms and purposes, a desire to use forums such as the church and classroom to communicate useful information to other people, respect for textual authority, and awareness of an audience's need for evidence and persuasive language. (p. 486)

Clearly, the type of literacy promoted in Janette's African-American church provided her with a foundation for acquiring academic literacy. Courage described the way that Janette adapted her strategies for composing her sermons to composing an essay that required that she analyze a literary text. These strategies were quite similar to the ways that the ministers in my study composed sermons. Janette identified a key passage in the literature, interpreted it, then illustrated its relevance to people in her community. The ministers in my study treated biblical Scriptures in much the same way. Although in their planning of a sermon they may have begun with an issue and then moved toward a key biblical passage, the actual performed sermon always began with the key Scriptural passage and then proceeded with illustration and interpretation. Sometimes, the illustration of a passage's applicability to the community and its interpretation occurred simultaneously. The point is, however, that the strategies were complementary.

Other sites of common ground also emerge. These ministers' use of textual evidence, for instance, may be useful in helping students understand how to integrate written sources as evidence within their academic texts. The sermons also provide good examples of texts that integrate different types of evidence within the text: textual evidence, personal narratives, historical evidence, and so on. Additionally, the sermons in this study promote a type of literate text with a beginning, middle, and end and with a major point that the rhetor is trying to persuade the audience to accept and act on. This sense of the text as persuasive also ties in to the sermons as pieces of discourse produced by rhetors with keen senses of audience awareness and needs.

The ministers and congregations recognize that for the ministers to be persuasive, they must understand and meet the expectations of their audience and community. They must use rhetorical devices that

will be meaningful to the audience. This same principle holds true for students learning academic written literacy. Although some of the rhetorical devices that the rhetor has at his or her disposal may change based on the different community expectations, what does not change is the rhetor's need to analyze and understand his or her audience and then to use the appropriate strategies. In other words, each model recognizes the communicative purposes of their texts and participants.

The greatest problem faced by many students whose primary model of a literate text does not match that of the primary model in academic literacy is finding the tools to help them recognize the sites of negotiation, be they sites of conflict or common ground. And the next problem they face is having the proper strategies to turn these sites into resources that can make them multiliterate. These tools and strategies must be taught in the classrooms if literacy and language learning are to take place.

In *Signifying as a Scaffold for Literary Interpretation*, Lee (1993) both investigated and demonstrated how the classroom can become a site of negotiation where students are taught to turn a nonschool discourse strategy into a resource valued as a school task. Specifically, Lee investigated "the link between one specific social practice, signifying, a ritualized form of talk in the African American community, and the school task of teaching literary interpretation" (p. 9). Lee teaches African-American students in an urban high school to identify uses of signifying, a discourse practice most know from their home communities, in African-American literary texts, thus engaging them in a form of literary interpretation. She creates a bridge between "home" and school. Lee (1993) argued that for these students, "it is precisely because it is so highly valued and so widely practiced that signifying has the potential to serve as a bridge to certain literacy skills within a school environment" (p. 11). During and after Lee's study, she engaged in conversations with the teachers in the high school about how to provide students with the tools and strategies for doing literary interpretation by making use of students' prior knowledge and shared experiences. Lee demonstrated that signifying can be a site of common ground between a home discourse and an academic discourse.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PEDAGOGY

Although the sites of negotiations that students face are important to examine and understand, it is the sites of negotiation that teachers and researchers face that I view as more crucial at this moment in classrooms. The findings reported in this study and other studies of nonschool literacy and language practices will be wasted if teachers and

administrators concerned with literacy and language instruction, particularly writing instruction, do not find bridges between the community and the classroom. We cannot place the burden on the students alone to recognize and find strategies to negotiate their ways through sites of conflict and common ground.

Educators must first accept the reality of multiple literacies, and then design pedagogies, as Lee has done, which acknowledge and make use of alternative literacies. I am not suggesting that the essayist academic model of literacy be totally forsaken. Rather, I am suggesting that many more students may be successful in acquiring and using essayist academic literacy if teachers begin to understand the nonschool literacies that their students have mastered. Several ethnographers have used their ethnographic findings to design classroom activities based on the nonschool literacies of groups of students (see e.g., Au, 1980; Heath, 1982b; Moll & Diaz, 1987). These activities were successful in engaging the students in actively participating in the classroom activities; then teachers were able to design other classroom activities that moved the students toward more school-based literacy activities.

Composition teachers can also make more use of discourse analysis in the writing classroom. For example, instead of dismissing alternative models of literate texts as inferior and useless, we can design activities that make these texts as well as the academic essay sites of interrogation and analysis. Teachers can provide students with tools to analyze extended pieces of discourse—their own, examples the students and teachers bring from their home communities, examples from academic communities. These analyses should not be done to evaluate the texts but to discover those sites of conflict and common ground in them. One of the keys to this type of classroom activity is to examine the sites of conflict between the different types of academic texts (maybe from different disciplines), between the students' texts and academic texts, and between the nonschool texts and academic texts.

By asking students and teachers to bring in and analyze samples of formal discourse (written or spoken) from their home communities, several things are accomplished:

1. Teachers and students will become researchers looking at discourse outside the classroom.
2. The choices that the students and teachers make about what counts as formal discourse will provide some insight into the type of discourse that each values.
3. Teachers will broaden sites for learning beyond the walls of the classroom.

4. If enough participants bring in different types of discourse as samples, students and teachers will begin to get a sense of their home discourse as not *the* model but one model, and teachers may similarly see academic models in the same way.

I acknowledge that making bridges between types of literate texts is more complex than I have been able to present here. Although I have offered an initial suggestion of how to approach constructing such a bridge, I would be naive to think that this rethinking of composition pedagogy could occur without much hard work by composition teachers, without a change in teacher-training, and without more research on literacy in nonschool settings and how to effectively apply findings from such research to classroom practice. I also do not wish to ignore the political and social constraints that make such a move difficult.

In fact, one of the reasons alternative models of literate texts have not been acknowledged is that those models do not carry the social prestige that academic models carry nor do the communities from which many of these alternative models emerge carry much social or political power. Although the community text model presented by the sermon is highly valued in most African-American communities, its value decreases tremendously in the classroom as a model, in part because of the community from which it emerges. U.S. schools and universities still carry with them the ideology of the dominant power force in U.S. society. Although several recent movements are attempting to turn the composition classroom itself into a site of interrogation, the most notable being critical pedagogy, these movements continue to reinforce the essayist academic model of literacy as the only model and consequently, continue to reinforce the dominant ideology that operates in our classrooms. Critical pedagogists, such as Giroux and Aronwitz (1985), and Giroux and McLaren (1989, 1994) promote composition classes being turned into sites where all ideologies are interrogated, but the students are still expected to produce texts using the dominant discourse model. Feminist critics, in some instances, are beginning to question the use of dominant discourse models. This study offers those interested in such movements suggestions for how to move beyond the traditional academic forms and genres that inevitably recreate dominant ideologies.

CONCLUSION

Bloome (1987) reminded us that "literacy and literacy instruction always occur within a context (or, perhaps more accurately, within multiple contexts)" and that "literacy is a dynamic concept with shifting

definitions and shifting contexts of literacy activity" (p. xviii). Compositionists must, then, be ever mindful that there is no fixed definition of literacy, only context-dependent definitions, and be ever mindful as well of the social nature of literacy. This book offers a context-dependent definition of a literate text and, by implication, a context-dependent definition of literacy. These definitions rely heavily on the social situation from which the literate text and literacy emerges and functions. When a minister preaches one sermon to two different congregations, the sermons are considered different; when the context of literacy activities change, the definition of literacy also changes.

Rethinking literacy as a dynamic concept also reinforces the social nature of literacy. This study demonstrates that literacy in the African-American churches represented in this study is a process involving multiple participants in a dynamic setting who use shared cultural knowledge and literacy skills to create a community text, a text that itself is not fixed. Like literacy in so many other settings, literacy in these churches cannot be separated from the cultural expectations of the community. What constitutes a literate text, who can create it, and how that text functions are all tied to the values attached to reading, writing, and speaking within the churches and the broader African-American communities. This book demonstrates that literacy is a complex social process that points to reading, writing, and speaking as interrelated acts with indistinct boundaries. This study points to composers of texts and consumers of text not as having separate roles but as having interdependent, sometimes interchangeable roles. It is these interdependent, interchangeable roles, these indistinct boundaries, and the cultural norms that govern them that are at the root of literacy as a social process in African-American churches.

Finally, I end this discussion of literacy where I began in the introduction—by emphasizing literacies rather than literacy, and by emphasizing the complex, multilayeredness of literacies. Compositionists and others involved in literacy instruction must operate with broader concepts of literacy and literate texts, continue to explore the nonschool literacies of our students, and begin to build bridges between nonschool and school literacies.

Unresolved Tensions

I end this book by going back to the end of the introduction and the sites of tension. One of the misconceptions I had about writing this book before I began was that, through this book-writing process, I would answer unanswered questions about literacy and literate texts; that I would advance my argument about how we in the part of the academy in which I reside should begin to think broadly about what constitutes a

text. However, I now find that although I have advanced my argument, I have not answered the questions. Therefore, I find myself awkwardly at the end of work that feels unfinished. At this stage, there is no finite ending, only many more questions and unresolved tensions with which I have struggled throughout the writing of this book. I find that these tensions come from the feeling that all I've done is expose more gaps to study, more sites to investigate. Like the students I discuss in the previous chapter, I find that I faced, and still face, many sites of negotiation. These unresolved tensions, many of which became sites of conflict, have as much to do with what is in this book as with what is not in this book. I hope, however, that highlighting a few of the more troublesome tensions I struggled with will provide readers a glimpse through the lens that I looked through to write the story I tell in this book about the participants and their interactions with the sermons in their churches.

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Author Index

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D

E

A Community Text Arises emerges from an ethnographic study of literacy in three African-American churches. These data illuminate the ways that the primary model of a literate text is shaped and used in African-American churches. Chapter 1 examines how the African-American church has operated as a community within the larger African-American communities. Hence, this chapter provides a historical, sociological, and theological perspective on African-American churches and an overview of the major components of the church community.

Chapter 2 introduces, through ethnographic descriptions, the churches that the author studied and chapter 3 highlights the features of the major literacy event and text in African-American churches—the sermon. Through close analysis of individual sermons the author illustrates how the sermon functions as a community text. Chapter 4 focuses solely on the sermons of one minister to highlight rhetorical strategies that are used to create and maintain community identity. The analysis in chapters 3 and 4 provides a view of a text that calls into question traditionally held notions of text inside and outside the community. Therefore, chapter 5 deals with the implications of this study for how text is defined and the relation between oral and written texts.