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Congregational Music in a Pentecostal Church

BY QUEEN BOOKER

PENTECOSTALS TODAY are widely regarded as highly devout Christians, distinctive for their religious fervor in worship, their high-spirited singing, and their enticing instrumental music, which has been referred to as "the flip side of disco."¹ Although the Pentecostal movement is over 100 years old, little is known about Pentecostal or Holiness churches, particularly the black congregations. And even less is known about congregational-music practice of the black churches over the years.

In this paper I propose to give an account of such practices as I have come to know, based on my research, my conversation with others, and my own personal experiences. The folk churches of the rural South are perhaps the best sources for studying the musical practices of the Pentecostal churches, for many of them are still evolving: attempting to hold on to their old traditions, they are at the same time being forced to "catch up" with modern times. Typical of these churches is the St. Luke Church of God in Christ (hereafter, COGIC) located in Tutwiler, Mississippi, which is the subject of my discussion.

I have attempted to reach back into the past, through my own life and through the lives and memories of my mother, grandmother, and god-mother—all of us, members of St. Luke's. I wanted to recapture the spirit of the old traditions which once were at the center of their lives—and mine—and which were central to the Pentecostal movement in general. Today it seems that the freedom and spontaneity of the traditional COGIC worship service have almost disappeared, but perhaps in its music the spirit, if not the practice, of the past still lives.

With a view to finding documentation for my rather vague suppositions, I interviewed members of my family; the ministers, "sisters," and other congregational leaders of St. Luke's; and leaders of other COGIC churches. Concomitantly, I read everything available about the origin and development of musical practices in the black Pentecostal church. The resultant profile of the St. Luke COGIC and its congregational music is based on the findings of my research and oral histories. To place St. Luke's in proper perspective, however, I will first discuss briefly the early history of the black Pentecostal movement.

YES, LORD!

CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST
HYMNAL

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Pentecostals believe that the worship service should be "Holy Ghost filled"; that is, members of the congregation should become possessed by the Holy Spirit during the course of the service. They demonstrate this "Holy Ghost possession" by the way they dance, sing, and "speak in unknown tongues." The last-named is often referred to as "glossolalia." The Holiness movement began in the late 1850s, but it was not until the late 1880s that black Christians became actively involved. Because of its extraordinary impact on both the black and white church, its effect on the content and spirit of the worship service, and on black culture in general, the Holiness movement must be counted as of extraordinary significance in the history of black Americans.

Two men in particular played important roles in the development of the Pentecostal movement—the black minister William J. Seymour (c1850s–c1922), who later was called the Father of Pentecostalism, and the white minister Charles Parham (1873–1929).² A member of the African Methodist Episcopal (hereafter, A.M.E.) Church, Seymour first began questioning its teachings regarding sanctification and spirit baptism in the 1880s. He became interested in the Holiness movement, and after being "genuinely converted," he left the A.M.E. church in search of other disaffected Christians who believed, as he did, in true salvation; that is, in living strictly according to the teachings of Jesus.³ Eventually he came into contact with a small group of Christians known as the Evening Light Saints, who were a part of the Holiness movement.⁴ It was as a member of this group that Seymour sought to live the holy life and to work toward final salvation, known to this group as "holiness," which freed the sinner from all sinfulness of the heart and inner man. Later he accepted the pastorage of the congregation.

Through this group Seymour came in contact with the "black saint" Lucy Farrar, who helped him to understand that there was more to sanctification and spirit baptism than just being sanctified. She believed that there were two different experiences: the one, a spirit baptism, or the experience of being "washed in the spirit," which was usually accompanied by the speaking in tongues and the holy dance; and the other, sanctification, which demanded that the sanctified live a Christian life. Farrar, who had been moved to speak in tongues when she attended a small Bible school in Kansas, greatly stimulated Seymour's fast-growing interest in the practice of speaking in tongues. The Evening Light Saints did not accept the practice, however, and he was asked to leave.

Seymour then went to study with Parham, at that time director of a small, integrated, Bible school in Topeka, Kansas. Parham had noticed that his students were experiencing glossolalia, and he gave them his enthusiastic support. Others began to take notice, and his school received a large amount of publicity as the first place in the

United States where glossolalia was practiced. Although his students experienced glossolalia, Parham himself never did.⁵ And his enthusiasm for the practice subsided rather sharply, as his ministry faltered because of his poor health.⁶

Seymour had gone to Parham to learn more about the Holiness movement, but he did not accept everything that Parham taught. Moreover, Seymour introduced some practices to the students of which Parham did not approve, foremost among them, "holy-rollerisms."⁷ Seymour felt that the experience of spirit baptism included the holy dance, that is, holy rollerisms, as well as speaking in tongues. Finally, he actively rebelled against Parham's teaching and left Kansas.

Little is known about Seymour's activities during the years 1904 and 1905, except that for some time he was active in Houston, Texas, and that Lucy Farrar became one of his faithful followers. What is known is that early in 1906 he was invited to accept the pastorage of a small, black Nazarene church in Los Angeles, which he accepted, arriving in Los Angeles in April 1906. Although he had a brief association with the Nazarene church, he was not accepted as its pastor. Then he began holding prayer meetings in the home of one of the church members, which soon attracted the attendance of many people who were seeking the true salvation Seymour preached, and especially the experience of speaking in tongues.

It happened on 9 April 1906: worshippers at a prayer meeting began to speak in tongues. The experience was overwhelming, and the continuous services attracted wide attention. From that time on, the number of people receiving the "spirit" began to increase so rapidly that soon the house could no longer hold them all. In September Seymour moved his group to an old abandoned building at 312 Azusa Street, where he began a revival. It was successful beyond measurement, and so highly publicized that people, black and white, came by the hundreds from all over the world to attend. Undoubtedly planned to last a few weeks, the revival lasted instead three years. After it was over, in 1909, people returned to their churches to disseminate the teachings of Seymour and his belief about the relationship of Holiness to the baptism of the spirit.

The Azusa Street Revivals represent a milestone in the history of the Protestant Church: they were the genesis for the founding of new Pentecostal denominations and, equally important, for the reorganization of existing Holiness groups according to Seymour's doctrines and disciplines—among the latter, for example, the Church of God and the Church of God in Christ, which had been founded in the late nineteenth century. The Azusa Street Revivals brought about the renewal of the Holiness movement, and this under black leadership!

The Azusa Street services were characterized by shouting, weeping, dancing, falling into trances, speaking and singing in tongues, and the interpretations of messages from these tongues into English.⁸ There were no robed choirs, no hymnals, no order of services, only a great deal of religious enthusiasm.⁹ The attraction of the Mission for ordinary people was that the poorest could worship there and not feel intimidated by stained-glass windows, elaborate chancel furnishings, and other rich appointments of traditional churches. The location of the Mission in a lower class neighborhood was convenient for traveling, since most of the participants lived nearby.

Among those moved to action by the Azusa Street Revivals was the Baptist minister Charles Mason, who became "displeased with the lax teachings" of his denomination and set out to establish a church which would benefit the poor people and would be "spotless in the sight of God."¹⁰ He had founded the Church of God in Christ in 1895 at Memphis, Tennessee, and it was incorporated late in 1897 at Memphis. After attending the Azusa Revivals, Mason declared his COGIC to be Pentecostal, thus freeing the church from religious constraints, and allowing its members to use as congregational music "spirituals, chants, hollers, and shouts" in whatever way they chose.

Baptist minister Charles Jones, a close friend and associate of Mason's, was also dissatisfied with the teachings of the Baptist Church. For a period he was an affiliate of COGIC, then in 1896 he left COGIC to establish his own church; in 1901 the church was incorporated as the Church of Christ, Holiness, USA.

The Azusa Street Revivals changed the religious-music practices of black church people. It was inconceivable then that the music of the Revivals would so greatly affect the musical practices of so many people, the unsanctified as well as the "holy," that this music would bring forth a wealth of spirituals, blues, and jazz performance in the twentieth-century church. It was not realized then that the freeing of the invisible church would allow black worshippers a "new" way of expressing themselves spiritually, since their congregational singing did not have to conform to the rules of a mother church.

Later this new music would combine with the blues to become "gospel" music. In her autobiography, gospel singer Mahalia Jackson discussed the great influence exerted on her life by the Sanctified or Holiness churches in the South. She believed that "blues and jazz and even the rock-and-roll stuff got their beat from the Sanctified Church," that it was this church which gave its followers the "freedom to interpret" the songs of jubilation as they wished.¹¹

MUSIC AT THE ST. LUKE COGIC

Gertrude Holden, my grandmother, was born in 1921. Much of what she recalled were stories that her mother had told her about the church and its early beginnings. Her mother, Mary, claimed to have attended the very first meetings of the Church of God in Christ back in 1897, at Lexington, Mississippi. My grandmother did not remember all the details exactly, but she did remember that her mother had said, "it was the church people had been waiting for."¹²

Hattie Jean Wright, my godmother, became involved with the COGIC when she was young, back in the mid-1910s. She worked with the choirs and young people of the church and eventually, in the early 1960s, became a church mother. She devoted all of her life to the service of the Lord, especially the musical aspect of serving God.¹³

My mother, Charlene Booker, was born and reared to be part of the COGIC church and its way of life. As a young person in the church, she was actively involved in organizing the gospel choir. She was also a leader in establishing and furthering the development of the children's choir, which is now an important part of the evening worship services at the church.

I belong to the fourth generation of COGIC members in my family. During my life thus far, I have seen a transition from the traditional way of singing the music of the church to a totally new way. I was choir director for two years at the St. Luke COGIC, where my family has held membership for the past seventy years. Through the memories of my mother, grandmother, godmother, and me, lives the history of one Church of God in Christ, as does the Christ within us all.

The St. Luke COGIC was established in 1916 under the leadership of the Reverend Henrie Dalley who, like Mason, was formerly a Baptist minister. The church's early meetings were held in the home of one of his first converts, Sister Bessie Johnson, who had joined his following at Brazil, Mississippi.¹⁴ Like many new churches, the St. Luke church had no permanent meeting place, no money, and few members. During its first few years of existence, "the members met in the homes of different members, usually in the homes of one of the newest converts." By 1921 Reverend Dalley, now become "Elder" Dalley, had secured rooms in an old building, the Masonic Hall, to use as a place of worship. But this was not satisfactory, for the congregation could meet there only for the Sunday morning services.

Finally, through extensive fund-raising and tithing, the church was able to raise enough money to enable it to rent an unused Baptist church on Pond Lake in 1925. The location was very convenient, for most members could travel to the church either by foot

or by horse and buggy. The building could accommodate only about twenty-five to thirty people, however, and by 1934, the congregation had outgrown it. In March 1934, the church began again a fund-raising campaign and raised enough money to buy a church on the edge of Tutwiler, Mississippi, in December 1935. On 25 December 1935 the church had its first dedication service.

But this building was relatively small, and it was obvious that soon a larger building would be needed, especially since the town was growing so rapidly, and Pentecostalism was becoming so popular among black Christians. In February 1939 Dalley and his church members began erecting a building on Main Street in Tutwiler, and by 1 January 1945, the new building had been completed. In addition to the altar, it was equipped with a "real choir loft" and a pulpit.

The new building was able to hold all the members, for the congregation had stabilized, and the congregation remained there until 1975. Then a new church was built across the street, and its name was changed to Wright's Temple. St. Luke's now had over 150 members; and in the surrounding Mississippi-Arkansas area there were now over 150 COGIC churches.

During the years when the church was still growing, the structure of the worship service was at the center of the church's concern, not the place in which the services were held. During its early years, the Church of God in Christ did not distribute printed programs; its services were basically "unstructured and were marked by informality and spontaneity," this to insure that worship rituals would not "quench the spirit."¹⁵ No sermon topic was announced, "for the minister received a revelation from God during the service" and gave this message to the congregation directly as he had received it from God.

Congregational singing took place without accompaniment; there were no musical instruments, no choir, no hymn books.¹⁶ "Glossolalia, healings, testimonies, shoutings, dancing, and other manifestations of religious enthusiasm" were integral parts of the worship services. Typically, the songs tended to be bits and pieces of traditional hymns or spirituals, which were performed in call-and-response manner, the response employing as text the phrase "the Lord answers prayer."

St. Luke's, like the mother church, had no printed programs for its services and used no musical instruments, but there was much spontaneity. Nevertheless, the services tended to move along in certain predictable patterns: The opening song, for example, which was sung in unison, typically consisted of three or four lines of text. In performance, each line was repeated six times. This song eventually became a kind of theme song for the church service as a whole because it "brought in the spirit" and, as well, "calmed it

down."¹⁷ Next came the prayer, which was distinctive for its chants, directed to God by the chanters. During the prayer, at least two or three persons would become "possessed," and the feeling of warmth that this generated continued throughout the service.

After the prayer there was a song-and-testimony service, during which each person sang his own song, telling about his condition—usually the song was something made up during the week about his or her condition. The collection of the offering came next, after which came the sermon, which was the high point of the worship service.

It was the sermon that prepared the congregation for the "tarrying" services, which took place after the sermon, being held primarily for new converts who had not yet spoken in tongues. During the sermon, members of the congregation responded to the preaching by shouting such phrases as "Yeah!," "Tell it like it is!," "Oh glory!"

Over the years, these responses acquired tunes, thus the shouting was replaced with singing. Once the minister had reached the climax of his sermon, members of the congregation gathered in a circle around the altar and began calling on Jesus to "come and fill our cups." This was the "tarrying" for the Holy Ghost. It was evident that a member was possessed if tears filled the eyes, if he or she executed a dance quite unlike anything anyone had ever seen or moved into a shuffle-like dance, taking care not to lift the feet from the floor, and, most of all, if he or she began speaking in an unknown tongue. Genuine possession had to include all these things; there could not be one without the others.¹⁸

By two or three o'clock in the morning, the spirit either would have "calmed down" or have so filled the possessed that they would "shout all the way home."¹⁹ The big test as to whether or not one had received the Holy Spirit and was filled with the Holy Ghost came at 6 a.m. the next morning. If a shouter was "too tired or sore to get out of bed to go to work or do whatever he was supposed to do, he was not doing nothin' but fakin' it."¹⁹

Spontaneity continued to be the chief characteristic of the worship services of COGIC churches through the years. But the singing practices changed as new members came into the church, bringing with them new ideas. Some persons began the practice of filling in the pauses between the lines of songs with extra phrases in order to add more liveliness to the singing.²⁰ One woman, for example, always sang:

I woke up this morning
With no bread on my table
But surely, I know
That my God is able.

Later, the congregation began the practice of adding the phrase, "Oh yes" at the end of each line of the original song.²¹ In these early years, the congregation still refused to allow the use of any types of musical instruments in the church, even though the profane world was bursting with beautiful jazz and blues rhythms by this time. The rejection of musical instruments no doubt reflected the teachings of Seymour, who was firmly against admitting such "luxuries" into the worship service. The Azusa worshippers testified again and again that instruments, trained choirs, and hymnals were unnecessary. "Many times we do not need these song books of earth . . . the Lord simply touches us by his mighty Spirit and we have no need of organs or pianos, for the Lord plays the piano in all our hearts."²²

By 1921 the St. Luke COGIC had developed a repertory of "congregational songs."²³ These songs provided one-line refrains for the congregation to sing, while the soloist was expected to improvise his or her part. A song might last as long as an hour or more, for different song leaders or soloists would "pick up" where the previous one had "left off," and the singing would continue. Like members moved to speak in tongues, there were those who became possessed and were moved to sing in tongues, and in such instances a song might last any length of time.²⁴

A song introduced into St. Luke's service at this time, which is still popular today, is the following one:

SONG LEADER:	RESPONSE:
Witness	for my Lord
Witness	for my Lord
Don't you want to be a witness	for my Lord
Don't you want to be a witness	for my Lord
I am a witness	for my Lord
I am a witness	for my Lord
Yes, a witness	for my Lord
Yes, a witness	for my Lord
I have to be a witness	for my Lord
I have to be a witness	for my Lord
I want to be a witness	for my Lord
I want to be a witness	for my Lord

Among other phrases that the soloist might employ were these: "Can't you be a witness; Love bein' a witness; Lord, Lord, witness; Oh, Lord, witness; Say it for me, witness." In summary, the soloist was free to add whatever came to mind.

The positive aspect of this song, and the hundreds of other similar ones, is that it allowed for full congregational participation in the musical portions of the service since the responses were so easily learned. The congregation could further participate by accompanying the singing with hand-clapping and foot-stomping.

Under such conditions, even the most illiterate could take an active part in the worship service; none would feel intimidated.

Though Pentecostals like to claim that this kind of singing was an outgrowth of "glossolalic singing," or "singing in the spirit," it seems clear that other traditions are also represented. The call-and-response certainly points back to the singing style practiced by the slaves on the plantations, as does also the improvisation, shouting, and drumming produced by hand-clapping and foot-stomping. From the vantage point of the present, it seems clear that Pentecostal singing freed the black worshippers to draw on the African traditions that the plantation "invisible church" had kept alive.

The first significant changes in St. Luke's congregational practices came in 1925 after the church had moved into its new quarters on Pond Lake in Tutwiler. The previous occupants had left behind a piano, and Elder Dalley resolved to put it to use. Through coercive preaching and much quoting from the book of Psalms—particularly Psalms 150, which directed worshippers to "praise God in song and in dance," with stringed instruments, with the trumpet and various other instruments—Elder Dalley was able to convince most of his followers that instrumental music should have a place in the church. Those who remained unconvinced left the church, taking out memberships in churches that were less "progressive."

The first pianist hired by the church was a blues/jazz musician, who could play only by ear. He was required to play, however, only during the testimonial services. It was believed that to have instrumental music during prayer, "tarrying," or the sermon might have interfered with the work of the Holy Spirit. The acceptance of the piano, however, eventually opened the door for other musical instruments to enter the church and become integral parts of the worship service.

By the late twenties, tambourines were being used during the worship service. The shaking of the instrument caused the small cymbals to ring, which was considered helpful in ringing in the spirit during prayer and the sermon, and the continuous beating on the back of the tambourine produced rhythms that helped the congregation to "keep time" during the singing and "tarrying" parts of the service. By 1935, drums and the saxophone had been added to round out the musical forces of the service. Sometimes when the service got "real high," the congregation would cease singing, allowing the pianist and other instrumentalists to play on until either they got tired or the shouters got tired.²⁵

St. Luke organized its first choir in 1935, the same year that instrumental music was introduced into the church. Most of the choristers had trained voices, and they sang such traditional hymns as "Come Ye that Love the Lord" (Isaac Watts/Robert Lowry),

adding a refrain to the verses, or "Leave It There" (Charles Tindley). Although sung a capella, the hymns yet had a jazzy sound, undoubtedly because of the influence of the jazz-blues instrumental music used to accompany congregational singing during the song and testimonial services. Whatever the reason, there was a distinct difference between the sound of the COGIC trained choir and that of, say, a Baptist- or Methodist-trained choir.

In 1940 the St. Luke COGIC congregation got a new pastor, Elder Frank Hill, who believed that music should have an integral function in all parts of the worship service. Under his direction, for example, the piano and the saxophone played responses during the prayer service in the same way as the congregation sang responses. Then the piano and saxophone were gradually given more active roles in other parts of the worship services. Finally, Elder Hill brought in a guitar, and of course a guitar player, reasoning that it would encourage the young people to come to church more frequently.

This met with strong opposition from the congregation, which Hill countered by preaching from Psalm 150, recalling that King David did say to praise the Lord with stringed instruments, in a stand reminiscent of Elder Dalley's a few years earlier. Hill used the harp as example: "The harp," he said, "is a guitar without the funny sound."²⁶ In using the term "funny sound," he meant that the music of the harp admittedly had a more angelic sound than that of the guitar, but the latter was nevertheless a stringed instrument appropriate for use in the church.

This time the congregation rebelled. The guitar was declared too noisy and discordant; moreover, the services were getting too wicked because of all the confusion. Some of the instruments would have to go! It was finally decided to get rid of the horn, which was considered more secular than any other instrument. So the saxophone was banned for several years.²⁷

During the years 1940-1950, St. Luke went through several changes, some of which were necessitated by the need for finding activities that would keep people involved with the church. Some members suggested that a gospel choir be organized, but this did not receive general support, especially since the hymn choir had already been established. Matters came to a head when seventeen or so teenagers began meeting regularly to sing together after church services on Sundays or after mid-week services. Generally they sang spirituals in a bluesy or jazzy style. The adults criticized the young people for "dipping" in the devil's work, but Elder Hill saw it as an opportunity to give them something to do and thus keep them out of trouble. So he set up a Saturday night "joy service," giving the young people total responsibility for the musical performance.

At first, attendance at these services was disappointing; they were regarded as "too secular." Elder Hill refused to admit defeat, however: in the fall of 1949, he invited several members to a worship service, where he "surprised" them with the choir's presentation of two congregational favorites, "I Love the Lord" and "We are the Royal Children." The untrained voices of the choir brought back to the adults cherished memories of spirituals almost lost in the past. Listening to the singing, the older members got "possessed" and went home with a new perspective on the gospel choir.

By January 1950, the gospel choir had won the privilege of singing on the third Sunday of the month, thus displacing the hymn choir. The hymn choir, however, was used to represent the church on formal occasions and when the church had been invited to send groups to other churches to sing. As its membership increased, the gospel choir became more and more popular; those who joined came from "the world," and they preferred songs with a personal message sung in a jazz-blues style to hymns sung in the traditional style. Soon, the gospel choir was given two Sundays a month for its presentations, and by the early sixties, both the gospel choir and the hymn choir were performing on Sundays. By the late sixties, the hymn choir had become obsolete; the church had only one choir, the gospel choir. The choristers were untrained, but they sang the hymns as required, except that the hymns were "arranged" so that they were "livelier."

By 1965 the informal and unstructured character of the worship service had largely disappeared; the order of service had become routinized as follows:

- Opening song and choir processional
- Prayer
- Singing and testimonies
- Collection
- Choir song (improvised)
- Choir song (usually a hymn or rearranged spiritual)
- Sermon (text not announced in advance)
- Closing song and choir recessional

The choir did not sing at the Sunday evening service, where the minister usually preached a sermon on "The Lord's Supper."

As the years passed, there were other changes in the worship service. By the mid-seventies the "testimonies" part of the service had been eliminated. If someone had a testimony to give, he or she had to wait for the Sunday-night or Friday-night services. The "tarrying," once believed the only way to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, also disappeared from the weekly service, becoming instead an important experience of the annual revival services.

During the sixties, the gospel choir became such an essential component of COGIC church programs in the Delta area that the

churches began to sponsor choir competitions, which eventually led to the setting up of choir conventions on the district level. Competition among the various choirs grew intense; it was not enough that each choir should be "good," each wanted to be "the best." One way to beat the competition was to sing the most popular gospel songs, such as those made famous by the Reverend James Cleveland and the Hawkins family singers. Those songs were lively and personal, and they generated the feeling that the gospel choirs wanted to capture in their singing. Why waste valuable practice time in trying to make up their own? So the choristers would listen to recordings of Cleveland or other recorded gospel artists and try to reproduce the sounds they heard as closely as possible. This practice of course eventually led to the loss of originality among the choirs; they all began to sound alike. At some conventions, there was "no distinction what-so-ever" between the "copy performances" and the professional recordings.²⁸

As the gospel choir settled in at St. Luke's, its members began to demand a wider variety of musical instruments so that the sounds they heard on the professional recordings could be duplicated in the worship service. In 1979 St. Luke's, now renamed Wright's Temple, allowed a bass-guitar and a saxophone to be added to the "church orchestra." And despite stiff opposition from the older members of the church, the church purchased an organ. Now Wright's Temple felt it was "keeping up with the times."²⁹

With the deletion of the "testimonies" from the morning services, more structured singing was demanded of the congregation. By the 1980s the COGIC church fathers had decided to publish a hymnbook for special use by the COGIC church. This was an important decision, not lightly made: few Pentecostal churches used hymnbooks, and this would be the first time Pentecostal churches would have their own official hymnbook. A Task Force on the Hymnal was set up under the direction of Norman N. Quick, and two years later the hymnbook was completed. The year of its publication, 1982, coincided with the Diamond Jubilee Year of the Church of God in Christ, Inc., and its title, *Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal*, incorporates a favorite and very old song response of Pentecostals, "Yes, Lord!" The importance of this song is suggested by the fact that it is entered in the hymnbook even before the Preface and the Table of Contents. An introductory comment includes the following:

Since the inception of The Church of God in Christ, the praise "Yes, Lord!" has carried a wealth of spiritual meaning. Bishop C. H. Mason sang this quite free, dynamic, and spiritually lifting praise to pull the congregation together in commitment and spiritual communion. . . .

The new hymnbook is quite large, including 525 hymns, gospel songs, and responses; a selection of scripture readings; and Other

Aids to Worship. Predictably, there are spirituals and gospel songs of black songwriters, but, surprisingly, there are also many gospel hymns of white writers and traditional hymns of such writers as Watts and Wesley—most of these, songs that would not ordinarily be sung in black Pentecostal churches. One gets the feeling that the compilers of the hymnbook were trying to impress those outside the COGIC as well as those within. Nevertheless, the collection was intended specifically for use by COGIC churches, and can be purchased only from a COGIC bookstore.

With the adoption of the new hymnbook, the old type of singing gradually disappeared from the worship service, and now has become almost obsolete. The Order of Service differs little from that of any other black Protestant service:

- Choir processional
- Prayer
- Doxology
- Scripture reading (selection is announced)
- Choir (freely composed song)
- Congregational songs (two songs chosen from the hymnal)
- Announcements
- Choir (song related to the sermon)
- Sermon (topic is announced)
- Collection
- Opening of the doors of the church
- Choir recessional
- Benediction

It is of interest that although the number of parts to the service has tripled since 1916, the time occupied is but a fraction of that necessary for the old-time services—about two hours today, as compared to all day and most of the night in earlier times.

Changes in regard to music in the church are equally as striking. The choir has developed special skills in performing the sacred spirituals to the accompaniment of secular instruments, instruments that at one time were not admitted to the church. There is little or no emphasis on the recruitment of trained voices to sing in the choir, and hymn singing is becoming more and more an important part of the service. If a stranger were to visit Wright's Temple today, he or she might find it difficult to believe that a COGIC service was in process. But if he should remain there long enough, it is possible, just possible, that the wail or cry of a sister would once again set off that "good ol' time" feeling among the worshippers, and for a moment, just for a moment, the COGIC would be its "ol' self" again.

NOTES

1. Robert Haze Booker, Jr. (author's brother), interview with author.
2. Douglas Nelson, "The Black Face of Church Renewal" (Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1885), 2.
3. Nelson, 2.
4. James Tinney, "Who Was William J. Seymour," *Spirit: A Journal of Issues Incident to Black Pentecostalism* 1 (1978): 13-14. The discussion of Seymour's activities that follows is drawn largely from Tinney and Nelson.
5. Nelson, 2.
6. Ibid.
7. Tinney, 14.
8. See further in Jon Michael Spencer, "The Heavenly Anthem: Holy Ghost Singing in the Primal Pentecostal Revival," *The Journal of Black Sacred Music* 1 (Spring 1987): 2-9.
9. Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 107.
10. See further in Synan and in John Thomas Nichol, *Pentecostalism* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966), 102-103; *Doctrines of the Church of God in Christ* (Nashville: Church of God in Christ Press, 1963), 6.
11. Jacquot, Constant H., *Yearbook of American Churches*, 1971, 39.
12. Mahalia Jackson, *Movin' On Up* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1966), 30.
13. Gertrude Holden (grandmother of author), interview with author.
14. Hattie Wright (godmother of author), interview with author.
15. Charlene Booker (mother of author), interview with author.
16. The discussion of the early years of the St. Luke COGIC is based largely on my conversations with Gertrude Holden.
17. Bishop Timothy Titus Scott, interview with author.
18. The following discussion on tarrying and spirit possession draws on Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 30.
19. Gertrude Holden, interview with author.
20. Hattie Wright, interview with author.
21. G. Holden.
22. Spencer, 14.
23. H. Wright.
24. Spencer, 6-9.
25. The discussion of the history of the St. Luke COGIC through the 1960s is based largely on my conversations with H. Wright.
26. G. Holden.
27. Charlene Booker, interview with author.